

Recomendaciones a los académicos hispanohablantes: Cómo escribir mejor en inglés para publicar en revistas académicas internacionales- The Handout

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Difference between a Purpose Statement and Thesis Statement

A Purpose Statement

The goal of this paper is to examine the effects of Chile's agrarian reform on the lives of rural peasants. The nature of the topic dictates the use of both a chronological and a comparative analysis of peasant lives at various points during the reform period. . .

A Thesis Statement

The Chilean reform example provides evidence that land distribution is an essential component of both the improvement of peasant conditions and the development of a democratic society. More extensive and enduring reforms would likely have allowed Chile the opportunity to further expand these horizons.

Temper generalizations

Never make general claims unless you really can prove them – qualify them in some way. Words that can temper generalizations include: *as a rule, for the most part, generally, in general, potentially, normally, on the whole, in most cases, usually, the vast majority of, a large number of, it is likely that, have tended to.*

Giving examples is also a good way of backing up generalizations.

Good transitional phrases

Likewise, in the same way, similarly, in comparison

Shows similarity, comparison, drawing a parallel

On the other hand, in contrast, nevertheless, despite, in spite of, on the contrary

Contrasts with what has gone before, dissimilarity

First, second, to begin with, at the same time, later, finally

Placing in order, showing a temporal sequence

Thus, accordingly, therefore, because, in consequence, as a result, because, owing to, since

Shows causality, cause and effect

As has been said previously

Referring back

For example, for instance, such as, thus, as follows
Examples

In other words, namely, to be more precise, that is to say
Explanation

Also, for example, in other words, moreover, more importantly
Addition, reinforcement
Finally, in brief, in conclusion, in short, overall, to conclude, to sum up, this paper has demonstrated
In summary, conclusion

Use the active voice rather than the passive voice

Using the passive voice (the subject receives the action) rather than the active (the subject does the action) is a classic error even amongst experienced writers, and has the immediate effect of adding unnecessary words which means that the sentence loses impact.

Here, the second sentence is much clearer than the first because the weight of the action is taken by the verb. It also results in fewer words.

Example

The reason why he stopped composing was because his health started failing.
Failing health caused him to give up composing.

There may be times when using the passive voice makes better sense as, for example, when the verb or the object of the sentence are more important than the subject.

Example

Women were given the vote.
Skating is forbidden.

A related fault is to use noun formulations of verbs, such as *implementation* for *implement*:

Example

"The implementation of the plan was successful" for
"The plan was implemented successfully".

Avoid wordiness

A "circumlocution" is the use of many words when just a few will do – an easy trap to fall into when trying to make a point a little more forcefully! Here are some examples, together with simpler ways of expressing the same idea:

It is possible that
May, might, could

There is no doubt that
Doubtless

Used for ... purposes
Used

He is a man who ...
He

In a hasty manner
Hastily

At this point in time
Now/then

In the near future
Soon

Prior to, in anticipation of, following on, at the same time as
Before, after, as

Notwithstanding the fact that, despite the fact that
Although

Concerning the matter of
About

The reason for, owing to the reason that, on the grounds that
Because, since, why

If it should transpire that, in the event that
If

With regard to
About

Owing to the fact that, due to the fact that, in view of the fact that
Since, because

This is a subject which
This subject

In a situation in which
When

Is able to, has the capacity to
Can

On the occasion of
When

For the purpose of
To

The question as to whether
Whether

Write shorter sentences

Sometimes, phrasal constructions can be reduced to adjectives:

The employee with talent
The talented employee

The economy with the best performance
The best performing economy

Relative clauses can also sometimes be reworded:

The prisoner who had been recently released
The recently-released prisoner

The IT system that met most of our requirements
The most compatible IT system

Other clauses can be worded more simply as in the following example, in which two clauses are put together as one:

If citing a shortish extract, you can do this by just reproducing it within the article
A short extract can be reproduced within the article

Try and avoid phrases like "It was", and "There is":

There is a tendency amongst managers of X company ...
Managers of X company tend to ...
It was Kotler who said ...
Kotler said ...

Some infinitive phrases (those that use verbs with "to") can be turned into sentences with active verbs:

The responsibility of a leader is to motivate and inspire
A leader should motivate and inspire

The product is considered to be sound
The product is considered sound

Sometimes verbal phrases with gerunds (-ing words) can be turned into adjectives:

Because of the ground being rough
Because of the rough ground