Pathways to Academic English

Pathways to Academic English

Tohoku University

Pathways to Academic English 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

English A2: Integrated Academic Reading and Writing

I. Understand the mechanics of introduction-body-conclusion essay format

II. Acquire the ability to read various academic texts

III. Acquire the ability to read and write academic texts

English B2: Integrated Academic Listening and Speaking

I. Develop the ability to listen for pragmatic language usage

II. Acquire practical speaking skills

III. Acquire the ability to discuss and present academic topics

序　文

　研究大学である東北大学では、学部を問わず、working language（共通言語）として英語が使われている。したがって、学生諸君は専門領域の知識や教養を身に付ける際、英語を通じて知識を取り入れ、英語を使って考察・発表・執筆する機会を持つこととなる。このような学術目的の英語の土台を作るために提供されるのが、全学教育科目としての英語科目（1・2年次）である。

　本書は2020年度入学生の1年次向け英語カリキュラムに準拠した共通副教材として、学術目的英語の土台として必要な Core Skills を解説したものである。1年次では4つの英語科目（「英語 A1」「英語 B1」「英語 A2」「英語 B2」）を履修することになるが、各科目には Core Skills が6つずつ配置されている。各科目で担当教員は、配置された6つの Core Skills を全て取り入れた授業を行う。つまり、1年を通して24の Core Skills を学ぶことになる。

　これらの Core Skills が、学部高年次における専門科目や大学院での本格的な研究に従事する際の一般的基礎となるので、手を抜くことなく英語力の一層の向上に取り組んでもらいたい。また、本書に収められた24の Core Skills は学術目的ではあるが、将来の活躍の場所を官公庁や企業、あるいは起業に求める学生にとっても有益なスキルとなるであろう。なぜなら、どのような進路を選ぶにしても、それぞれの分野における専門性を身に付けることが求められるからである。

　本書はこの「序文」を除き、すべて英語で書かれているが、これには理由がある。すでに述べたとおり、英語を通じて専門分野の知識や幅広い教養を身に付けていくことが、これから諸君が行うべき英語との付き合い方である。したがって、学術目的の英語力を身に付けるのも英語を通じて行ってほしいと願うからである。実際、本学では多くの英語科目が英語で実施されることになるであろう。

　英語は履修科目の1つというよりは、研究・学習のための道具であり環境である。諸君がすでに身に付けている英語力を活性化させ、英語を working language として使えるようになるよう、本書がその一助となることを願ってやまない。

English A1:
Academic Reading and Vocabulary

I. Improve reading and vocabulary-building skills

A1.1 Word Parts

Learning English word parts is a very effective way to build vocabulary. There are three basic components of many English words: prefixes, roots, and suffixes. An English word may contain any combination or number of each of these three parts—or none at all; however, the prefix-root-suffix pattern is common. About 60% of English words have prefixes, roots, and suffixes that are borrowed from the Latin and Greek languages. In addition, 90% of English technical, academic, scientific, and medical vocabulary words are constructed using Latin and Greek. Recognizing word parts helps Tohoku University students when reading, writing, or being examined on academic, scientific or medical subjects because it provides clues to the meanings of words. In addition, it helps you remember difficult vocabulary more easily.

How to Master Word Parts

For many complex historical and linguistic reasons, English adopted word parts from Latin and Greek. For example, when a certain electrical communication device was invented in the mid-19th century that allowed people to talk to one another at a distance, the Greek words *tele* (distant) and *phone* (sound) were combined to create the new English word "telephone." The first step to mastering word parts is to know how English vocabulary words are built using Latin and Greek. Therefore, it is important to develop the ability to recognize the function of each word part.

1. Prefixes

Prefixes come at the beginning of a word. Two common English prefixes are *multi*, from Latin, and *poly*, from Greek. Both mean "many," but they are used for different functions. Some meanings can be very straightforward, while others are not. For example, the adjective "multicultural" simply means "relating to many cultures." On the other hand, the adjective "polytypic" does not mean "many types," but "more than one type." Knowing the meaning of prefixes like these is a powerful vocabulary tool.

2. Roots

To illustrate how roots work in the English language, we can examine the Greek root *nêsos*, meaning "island." From this root come several commonplace English place names, namely, "Polynesia" (many-island-place), "Micronesia" (small-island-place), and Melanesia (black-island-place). Interestingly, these words also occur in Japanese as *porineshia, mikuroneshia*, and *meraneshia*. This example demonstrates that Japanese university students can not only improve their English vocabulary, but also better understand Japanese foreign loan words if they familiarize themselves with Latin and Greek word parts. It also demonstrates that words such as these are not just random sounds but have distinctive meanings and therefore can be more easily retained.

3. Suffixes

Often suffixes do not have actual meanings but instead indicate grammatical functions. They can determine parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.), grammatical tenses, plurals, and the comparative and superlative word forms. For example, the English adjective "polytheistic"—constructed by using the Greek prefix *poly*, the Greek root *theos* (god), and the hybrid suffix *ic* (forms adjectives)—means "relating to the belief in many gods." Changing the suffix alters the grammatical function of the word. For example, "polytheism" is a noun that means "the belief in many gods." "Polytheist," also a noun, means "a person who believes in many gods."

Examples of Word Parts

For each <u>underlined</u> word, choose the best replacement word. Please refer to the Latin and Greek prefix, root, and suffix charts found at the end of this chapter.

1) <u>Periscope</u>
   a) a device used in medicine
   b) a device for a mobile telephone
   c) a device that enables the surroundings to be seen in 360 degrees
   d) a device that enables the surroundings to be seen periodically

2) <u>Android</u>
   a) a type of mobile telephone
   b) a kind of software
   c) a general communication device
   d) a human-like robot

3) <u>Phonology</u>
   a) a device that plays recorded sounds
   b) the study of language sounds
   c) the study of light
   d) a type of pathology

4) <u>Phonograph</u>
   a) a device that plays recorded sounds
   b) the study of language sounds
   c) the study of light
   d) a device that measures graphite

5) <u>Subterranean</u>
   a) underground
   b) underwater
   c) through ground
   d) through water

The answer to question 1 is "c." *peri* = around, *scope* = see
The answer to question 2 is "d." *andro* = human, *oid* = shape
The answer to question 3 is "b." *phono* = sounds, *logy* = study
The answer to question 4 is "a." *phono* = sounds, *graph* = record
The answer to question 5 is "a." *sub* = under, *terr* = ground

Additional Information

You should commit many of the Latin and Greek prefixes, roots, and suffixes to memory. Though these charts are not complete, they represent word parts that most commonly occur.

Prefix Chart

Greek	Latin	Meanings	Example Vocabulary
anti-	contra-	oppose	antifreeze, contradiction
	at-	towards	attract, attempt
auto-		self	automatic, autograph
dis-	in-/im-/il-/ir-	not, non	disagree, injustice
syn-	co-	with	cooperate, synchronize
	de-	remove	deforest, defrost
eco-	dom-	home	domestic, ecosystem
	en-/em-	add, enter	entrap, empower
	ex-	out, of, former	exit, extract
hyper-	over-	excess	hypertension, overeat
	inter-	between	international, intercept
macro-	max-	large	macroeconomics, maximum
micro-	min-	small	microscope, minimum
mis-	mal-	wrong, bad, sick	misunderstand, malfunction
mono-	uni-	one	monopoly, uniform
poly-	multi-	many	polyglot, multimedia
	non-	without	nontoxic, nonsense
	pre-	before	predict, preview
	post-	after	postscript, postmodern
	pro-	agree, give	promote, provide
	re-	go back, again	reuse, retreat
	semi-	half, partial	semicircle, semipro
	sub-	under	subway, subconscious
acro-	super-	over	superior, acrobat
	un-	without	unclean, unthinkable
	out-	do better	outgrow, outrun

Root Chart

Greek	Latin	Meanings	Example Vocabulary
du	bi	two	duet, bicycle
tri		three	trinity, triangle
tetra	qua(r)t	four	tetrapod, quarter
pent	quin	five	pentagon, quintuplet
agri		field	agriculture, agribusiness
amb(u)l	gress	walk	ambulance, progress
anthrop/andro	homin	human	anthropology, hominoid
	astro	star	astronaut, asterisk
bio	anim	living	biological, animal
botan	herb	plant	botany, herbicide
	capt/cept	catch	intercept, capture
chron	tempor	time	chronological, temporal
cogn	sci	knowledge	cognition, science, conscious
	cred	believe	credit card, incredible
	dict	say	predict, dictionary
	duc(t)	guide, gather	conduct, produce
	dur	continue, endure	duration, durable
	flect/flex	bend	flexible, reflect
gen		birth, type	generate, genre
geo	terr	ground, earth	geography, territory
graph	scribe/script	record, write	graphic, prescribe
hemo		blood	hemoglobin, hemorrhage
hetero		different	heterogeneous, heterosexual
homo	equ	same	homogeneous, equal
hydro	aqua	water	hydrogen, aquatic
	ject	throw	object, eject
	lact	milk	lactate, lactic acid
	ling/lang	tongue, language	bilingual, language
	loc	place, position	location, local
log(y)		study, reasoning	logic, biology
meter		measure	metric, kilometer
meta	trans	change, across	translate, metaphor
morph	form	shape	metamorphosis, uniform
nat		birth	natal, natural
neo	nov	new	neoliberal, novel, innovate
necr	mort	death	necrophobia, mortal
pan	omni	all	panorama, omnibus
path		suffering, feeling	pathology, sympathy, pathetic
p(a)ed		child	pediatrician, pedagogy
ped/pod		foot	pedal, tripod

Greek	Latin	Meanings	Example Vocabulary
	pel	pull	repel, expel
	pend	hang	depend, suspend
peri	circum	around	circumstance, perimeter
pharm		drug	pharmacy, pharmaceutical
phon	son	sound	phonology, sonar
phot	lum(in)	light	photosynthesis, illumination
phys	corp	body	physical, physician, corpse
	port	carry	portable, export
psycho	ment	mind, soul	psychology, mental
pyr	ign-	fire	pyrophoric, ignite
	rupt	break	rupture, erupt
scope	vis	see	scope, visual
heli	sol	sun	solar, parasol, helium
	sol	alone	solo, desolate
	spec	look, characteristic	inspect, special
	struct	build	construct, structure
tele		afar	telescope, telephone
therm		heat	thermometer, thermal
	tox	poison	toxic, detoxify
	tract	pull	distract, tractor
	vac	empty	vacant, evacuate
	vert	turn, change	convert, invert
	vo(u)r	eat	herbivore, devour

Suffix Chart

Suffix	Attached to a/an	Forming a/an	Function	Examples
-ate	noun	verb	to do	facilitate, accentuate
-en	adjective		make	sweeten, brighten
-(i)fy	adjective		make	purify, solidify
-ize	noun/adjective		to do	prioritize, summarize, finalize
-ance	verb	noun	the action of	performance, allowance
-(m)ent	verb		the effect of doing	entertainment, government
-(t)ion	verb		the result of doing	imagination, succession
-ant	verb		person doing	assistant, immigrant
-er/-or	verb		person doing	teacher, operator
-ist	noun		person doing	guitarist, specialist
-oid	noun		the shape of	humanoid, android
-ness	adjective		the degree of	darkness, sweetness
-ity	various		the degree of	acidity, ability
-hood	various		time/place of	neighborhood, childhood

Suffix	Attached to a/an	Forming a/an	Function	Examples
-ism	various	noun	theory of	pacifism, optimism
-phile	various		person loving	anglophile, xenophile
-phobe	various		person fearing	xenophobe, homophobe
-phobia	various		condition of fearing	acrophobia, hydrophobia
-able	verb	adjective	can do	enjoyable, readable
-al	noun		characteristic of	judgmental, local
-ic	noun			historic, heroic
-y	noun			windy, dirty
-ous	noun			poisonous, famous
-ive	noun		function/tendency of	expensive, supportive
-ese/-an	noun		originated from	Japanese, Mexican
-ful	noun		characterized by	eventful, forgetful
-less	noun		without	careless, sugarless
-ish	noun		like / belonging to	childish, boyish
-ly	adjective	adverb	the way of / do like	wisely, colorfully, hopelessly

I. Improve reading and vocabulary-building skills

A1.2 Synonym Vocabulary

A synonym is a word or phrase that has exactly or nearly the same meaning as another word or phrase. A wider knowledge of synonyms can help you understand and use English more fluently. In academic writing, synonyms enable writers to express similar ideas in a more nuanced, varied, and powerful manner. Additionally, a strong synonym vocabulary enables academic writers to convey their analyses clearly and precisely in the proper context. At some point in your university career, you will be expected to write English abstracts (**See A2.6 Understanding Academic Abstracts**) of your research that meet global publishing standards. Learning synonym vocabulary will not only help you reach this level sooner, but also increase your proficiency in all four language skills.

How to Master Synonym Vocabulary

In order to expand and enhance your synonym vocabulary, you will find the following 6 techniques and approaches particularly beneficial.

1. Illustrative phrases

Illustrative phrases are phrases that introduce the same ideas for simplicity, contrast, or emphasis. Examples of these phrases include: "for example," "such as," "that is to say," "in other words," etc. One technique to learn synonym vocabulary through context is to skim and scan text (**See A1.3 Skimming and Scanning**) for illustrative phrases that surround unknown words. Below are of three synonym vocabulary questions using illustrative phrases:

1) The company's whole delivery system was *corrupt*. **For example**, management instituted the *fraudulent* policy of not allowing customers to return goods, even if they were damaged.

Choose the best synonym that means both *corrupt* and *fraudulent:*
   a) petulant
   b) embarrassing
   c) ethical
   d) dishonest

2) Sadly, the community was terribly *impoverished* without even basic services, **that is to say**, the people were *destitute.*

Choose the best synonym that means both *impoverished* and *destitute.*
   a) ruptured
   b) important
   c) poor
   d) flush

3) The students were *flummoxed* by the examination, unable to even answer one question—**in other words**, they were very *perplexed.*

Choose the best synonym that means both *flummoxed* and *perplexed.*
   a) scared
   b) confused
   c) surprised
   d) inspired

The answer to question 1 is "d." The sentence illustrates an example of *corrupt* as not allowing customers to return goods "even if they were damaged" and describes this practice as *fraudulent*. Therefore, the best synonym is *dishonest*. The answer to question 2 is "c." The sentence illustrates that the community is *impoverished* and the people *destitute* because they have no basic services. Therefore, the best synonym is *poor.* The answer to question 3 is "b." The sentence illustrates that the students were *flummoxed by* the examination, meaning they were *perplexed* by it because they could answer no questions. Therefore, the best synonym is *confused*.

2. Word families
If the meaning of a word is unknown, determine whether the word is a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb. This can help you discover that an unknown word is a synonym of a known word. For example, solve the following two vocabulary questions:

1) It was *resolved* yesterday that the experiment should start next week.

Choose the best synonym for *resolved:*
   a) settle
   b) decided
   c) determination
   d) concludes

2) The experiment did not provide us with any *resolution* regarding the research question.

Choose the best synonym for *resolution:*
   a) settlement
   b) decided
   c) determine
   d) concludes

The answer to question 1 is "b." It is clear that *resolved* is a past tense verb. Therefore, the best synonym would also be a past tense verb. All choices would be correct if they were in the past tense form. The answer to question 2 is "a." *Resolution* is a noun. Therefore, the best synonym would also be a noun, *settlement.*

3. Word parts

In order to help determine the meanings of words and identify proper synonyms for them, you can break them down into word parts **(See A1.1 Word Parts)**. You can then use these word parts to find prefixes, roots, and suffixes that can clarify the definitions of words. Some examples of each are as follows:

Sentence and unknown word	Root	Root meaning	Known synonym
Our holiday was ruined by *torrential* rain.	torrent	large flow of water	heavy
The *inflammatory* speech caused the crowd to riot.	flame	flame	angry

4. Connotative/Denotative meanings

Synonyms often communicate different nuances of meaning (**See A1.5 Determining Connotative and Denotative Meanings**). Despite having essentially the same meaning, different synonyms are used to fit the context of the writing. For example, take the words "group," "club," "clique," and "faction." All of these words have virtually the same dictionary (denotative) meaning. Yet they have very different emotional (connotative) meanings. The word "group" is neutral, with no particular negative or positive emotions connected to the meaning. When "club" is used, however, the meaning takes on a more positive feeling, referring to a group of people who are friendly and share similar interests. If "clique" is used, the meaning changes more negatively because, while "clique" still means "group," it refers to a group with narrow, unfriendly, and selfish interests. Finally, when a "clique" becomes a "faction," it can take on an even more negative feeling. "Faction" is often used to describe a group of people that aggressively advances its own interests.

5. Collocations

In different contexts "get," for example, is a synonym of "obtain," "become," and "receive," among others. One can "get (obtain) a job," "get (become) angry," and "get (receive) a message" (**See A2.3 Collocations**).

6. Context

The exact same word can take on very different meanings depending on the context. Below is a chart illustrating how the word "quiet" can have four distinct meanings.

	"Quiet" in different contexts	Synonym	Connotation
1	The professor told the students to be *quiet* during the exam.	silent	Neutral — suggests the dictionary meaning
2	She usually has a *quiet* cup of tea in the afternoon.	relaxed	Positive—suggests enjoyment
3	The criminal was *quiet* about the burglary to the police	tightlipped	Negative—suggests something to hide
4	The cashier *quietly* took money out of the register.	secretly	Negative—suggests something done sneakily

Examples of Synonym Vocabulary

This following passage is adapted from George Orwell's 1945 novella *Animal Farm*. Please read the passage and answer the synonym vocabulary questions.

"...Remember always your duty of enmity towards Man and all his ways. Moreover, remember that in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him. Even when you have conquered him, do not adopt his <u>vices</u>. No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money, or engage in trade. All the habits of Man are evil... Above all, no animal must ever <u>tyrannize</u> over his own kind...Old Major cleared his throat and began to sing. As he had said, his voice was hoarse, but he sang well enough, and it was a <u>stirring</u> tune. The words ran: 'Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland...' The singing of this song threw the animals into the wildest excitement..."

1) In the passage, the word <u>vices</u> has the closest meaning to:
   a) households
   b) bad habits
   c) victories
   d) fights

2) In the passage, the word <u>tyrannize</u> has the closest meaning to:
   a) bullying
   b) controller
   c) oppress
   d) imitation

3) In the passage, the word <u>stirring</u> has the closest meaning to:
   a) uplifting
   b) pleading
   c) angering
   d) mixing

The answer to question 1 is "b." The clues are the list of bad habits. The answer to question 2 is "c." The suffix "ize" makes this word a present tense verb. Only "c" is a verb. The answer to question 3 is "a." "To stir" means "to mix," but "stirring" in this context has the connation of "inspiring."

II. Acquire the ability to quickly recognize the text's main idea and key information

A1.3 Skimming and Scanning

Skimming is a technique that allows readers to discover the main idea of a long text efficiently and rapidly. Scanning allows readers to quickly find specific keywords and phrases in order to identify and understand key information in the surrounding text. Some upper-division (3rd and 4th year) and graduate courses taught at Tohoku University require time-consuming English reading assignments. Additionally, standardized English testing is mandatory for all students at the end of the first year. In these contexts, skimming and scanning can be particularly useful.

How to Master Skimming and Scanning

Skimming text involves rapidly moving the eyes over the pages and paying close attention to any prominent features, such as tables, charts, headings, numbered lists, bold text, italic text, parenthetical text, nouns, dates, names, and numbers. It is also important to read the first and the last sentences of each paragraph. By doing so, you will be able to determine the general topic of the piece of writing without having to read every word. While skimming, the reader must take notes, identify keywords, and highlight any potentially important information.

Scanning assumes the reader is looking for facts, information, keywords, or answers to particular questions. When scanning, you should physically point out and highlight (circle, underline, take notes) keywords that you have already established through skimming or those that you already have in hand from any questions, worksheets, or additional materials already assigned. While scanning, you usually can ignore all other words until coming across a keyword. At this point, you must stop and carefully read the text surrounding the keyword or phrase. Read the text surrounding the key information as thoroughly as possible. Take notes, look up unknown words, and highlight sentences that contain information related to the purpose of the reading. Do this carefully and attentively, as it is very easy to overlook important sentences in dense text.

The idea of not reading every word in a text may make you feel uncomfortable at first—especially during examinations. The key to mastering the techniques of skimming and scanning is to practice regularly. In time, both reading speed and comprehension will significantly improve.

Example of Skimming and Scanning

Below is a reading passage with several comprehension questions similar to a standardized English test. Please do the following 4 steps:

1. Skim the passage, identifying keywords and phrases

The Transition Period

In the 18th century, before close contact with the conquering Europeans, there were seven tribes

of Sioux-Nation Indians in North America, each of which boasted notable men at their helm. Chiefs such as Redwing, Little Six, Hump and Conquering Bear famously led their respective tribes. However, these chiefs were the last of an old, earlier type of Indian chief. During the mid-19th century—in a time known as the transition period—a coterie of new leaders emerged. They were products of the changed conditions brought about by the new realities of having to coexist with the colonists. This distinction must be borne in mind—the early chiefs were merely spokespersons, advisors and elders for and to their tribe. They possessed no absolute authority over their people.

Red Cloud

However, those who headed their tribes once the transition period began can be described as true rulers, leaders and politicians. Chief Red Cloud was one such transition period chief. He was born in 1822 near the forks of the Platte River in what is now the US State of Nebraska. He was one of nine children whose father, an able and respected warrior, reared his son under the old Spartan regime. The young Red Cloud was a fine equestrian, able to swim strongly across rivers, had a respectful personality and unquestionable courage. Yet, he was invariably gentle and courteous to everyone in his daily life. This last trait, together with a singularly musical and agreeable voice, has always been his most recognized characteristic.

Youth

When he was about six years old, his father gave him a spirited colt. With the gift he said to him: "My son, when you are able to sit quietly upon the back of this horse without saddle or bridle, I shall be glad, for the boy who can tame a wild creature and learn to use it will, as a grown man, be able to win over and rule men." The little fellow, instead of going to his grandfather for advice and help on exactly how to do this—as was the custom of his tribe—began to practice throwing a lariat quietly on his own. In time, he was able to lasso the horse. He was dragged off his feet more than once, but learned to hang on, finally managing to picket horses with ease.

In time, the boy was able to ride bareback; he was thrown many times, but persisted until he could ride without a lariat, sitting with arms folded and guiding the animal by the movements of his body. From that time on, he broke all his own ponies, and his father's as well. His contemporaries often related how Red Cloud was always successful in the hunt because his horses were so well broken.

Lessons Learned

At age nine, he began to ride along in the buffalo hunts. By twelve, he was permitted to take part in in his first buffalo chase. In a watershed incident, as he tried to bag his first buffalo, he found to his great mortification that his arrows had not penetrated the beast more than a few inches. Excited to recklessness, he whipped his horse nearer the fleeing buffalo, and before his father knew what he was doing, he seized one of the protruding arrows and tried to push it in deeper with his hand. The furious animal tossed his massive head sidewise, and boy and horse were whirled into the air. Fortunately, the boy was thrown on the farther side of his pony, which received the full force of the attack. The thundering hoofs of the stampeding herd soon passed

him by, but the wounded and maddened buffalo refused to move, snorting angrily at the lad. Some critical moments passed before Red Cloud's father succeeded in attracting the animal's attention away so that the boy could spring to his feet and run to safety.

Legacy

This experience at such a young age taught Red Cloud a meaningful lesson about respecting adversaries. This incident served him very well for he grew up to became one of the most effective, revered and respected Indian chiefs, leaders, warriors, and diplomats in American history.

(Adapted from Charles Eastman, *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains* (1918))

Below are some examples from the passage of potential skimmed keywords and phrases (underlined) that may help you understand the overall passage.

In the 18th century, before close contact with the conquering Europeans, there were seven tribes of Sioux-Nation Indians in North America, each of which boasted notable men at their helm.

This distinction must be borne in mind—the early chiefs were merely spokespersons, advisors and elders for their tribe.

However, those who headed their tribes once the transition period began can be described as true rulers, leaders and politicians.

This last trait, together with a singularly musical and agreeable voice, has always been his most recognized characteristic.

When he was about six years old, his father gave him a spirited colt.

He was dragged off his feet more than once, but learned to hang on, finally managing to picket horses with ease.

In time, the boy was able to ride bareback; he was thrown many times, but persisted until he could ride without a lariat, sitting with arms folded and guiding the animal by the movements of his body.

His contemporaries often related how Red Cloud was always successful in the hunt because his horses were so well broken.

At age nine, he began to ride along in the buffalo hunts.

Some critical moments passed before Red Cloud's father succeeded in attracting the animal's attention so that the boy could spring to his feet and run to safety.

This experience at such a young age taught Red Cloud a meaningful lesson about <u>respecting adversaries</u>.

<u>This incident</u> served him very well for he grew up to became one of the most effective, revered and respected Indian chiefs, leaders, warriors, and diplomats in American history.

2. Read the comprehension questions and highlight keywords and phrases

Note the potential keywords and phrases in the comprehension questions. Examples of some potential keywords and phrases are <u>underlined</u>.

1) What is this passage mainly about?
   a) Sioux Indian Chiefs
   b) Red Cloud's training as a youth
   c) Indian Buffalo hunts
   d) Red Cloud's horse-riding abilities

2) In paragraph one, the word "<u>coterie</u>" can best be replaced by
   a) courage
   b) corsage
   c) group
   d) colonial

3) In paragraph five, the phrase "<u>watershed incident</u>" is closest in meaning to
   a) marine episode
   b) hydro event
   c) accident
   d) defining moment

4) What <u>trait</u> is Red Cloud most recognized for?
   a) courteousness
   b) bravery
   c) agreeable voice
   d) recklessness

5) What lesson did Red Cloud learn at a young age that enabled him to grow up to become one of the most <u>revered</u> leaders in American history?
   a) riding a spirited colt
   b) throwing a lariat
   c) buffalo hunting
   d) having esteem for his opponents

3. Scan the passage, looking for keywords and phrases found in #2

Highlight the key words and phrases selected from both the passage and the comprehension questions and then read the text surrounding the keywords carefully. Below are examples of some potential scanned keywords and phrases from both the text and the comprehension questions:

buffalo hunts	colt	trait
coterie	watershed incident	adversaries
gentle	courteous	learned
American history	recklessness	so well broken
mortification	revered leader	persisted
distinction	Red Cloud	youth

4. Answer the comprehension questions

The answer to question 1 is "b." By skimming and scanning, it is clear the passage is about Red Cloud's youth. The answer to question 2 is "c." It is clear the sentences surrounding the word "coterie" refer to "new leaders." Leaders are people, and people are classified into "groups." The answer to question 3 is "d." The sentences surrounding the phrase "watershed incident" refer to an event. In this case, the event caused Red Cloud to learn, change, grow up, and *define* him as a man. The answer to question 4 is "a" The sentences surrounding the word "trait" list several of his characteristics. "This last trait" refers to his courtesy as being the "most recognized." The answer to question 5 is "d." Red Cloud learned all these lessons. However, scanning around the word "revered" reveals that it was learning "respect for his adversaries" that enabled him to become "revered."

Additional Information

Skimming serves two purposes. One is to save comprehension time, and the other is to prepare for scanning. Likewise, scanning serves two primary functions. The first is to assist in academic research when large amounts of material must be absorbed, and the other is to answer particular questions. Once again, the key is practice.

Four practice tips

1. Scan the passage exclusively for verbs, then for adjectives, and finally for nouns. This will help you to identify words quickly, increase your vocabulary, and solidify your ability to determine parts of speech.

2. Work in pairs or in groups and compare lists of keywords and phrases.

3. Individually, in pairs, or in groups, use stopwatches to time skimming and scanning practice sessions.

4. In pairs or in groups, create original comprehension questions and test each other for the answers.

II. Acquire the ability to quickly recognize the text's main idea and key information

A1.4 Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Summarizing means writing a condensed description of the major points of what you read or listen to. Be careful as summarizing doesn't mean just making a text shorter. A good summary should : (1) include the major points, (2) not focus on the details, and (3) include the author's opinion or main ideas of the text. Paraphrasing means restating what you've read or heard in your own words in roughly the same number of words as the original source. A well-written paraphrase should: (1) be written by using different sentence structures from those in the original source, (2) include all major information from the source, and (3) avoid using the same words as those used in the source.

Both summarizing and paraphrasing are essential to survive in academic settings. You have to paraphrase information from textbooks and articles in both oral and written forms. You also have to give summaries of scholarly works when writing papers and delivering presentations. Summarizing and paraphrasing are not just components of writing skills. They also require good reading comprehension because you have to recognize a text's main ideas, the author's opinion, supporting details, and so forth.

How to Master Summarizing and Paraphrasing

The most important principle for both summarizing and paraphrasing is to avoid plagiarism. In other words, you have to use your own words when summarizing and paraphrasing.

Paraphrasing
As a basic rule, follow the 2-step approach as shown below.

1. Change the structure
Begin by changing the structure of the original passage or sentence(s).

Original: The Cuban Missile Crisis deserves recognition as one of the Cold War's critical turning points.
Structure changed: One of the Cold War's critical turning points is the Cuban Missile Crisis, which deserves recognition.

Here we have changed the structure of the sentence by starting it at a different place ("One of the..."). But the sentence still contains many of the same words.

2. Use synonyms
Next, use synonyms (**See A1.2 Synonym Vocabulary**).

Synonym used: One of the <u>significant</u> turning points in the Cold War was the Cuban Missile Crisis, which should be <u>given serious consideration</u>.

To successfully paraphrase, you also need to master two more skills as shown below.

a) Change the part of speech

Original: In August 1963, French President de Gaulle publicly *called* [verb] for a neutralized Vietnam, *offering* [verb] the United States a face-saving salve.
Part of speech changed: The *call* [noun] for a neutralized Vietnam was issued publicly by French President de Gaulle in August 1963 was a face-saving *offer* [noun] for the United States.

b) Reduce a clause to a phrase
A clause means a group of words, consisting of a subject and a finite form of a verb, which might or might not be a sentence. In the example below, *that they could force the Soviets to back down in any confrontation* is a clause in that it has a subject (*"they"*) and verb (*"could force"*). Another clause is *their nation's overwhelming nuclear superiority served* in that it has a subject (*"their nation's overwhelming nuclear superiority"*) and a verb (*"served"*).

Original: US-decision-makers felt supremely confident *that they could force the Soviets to back down in any confrontation* [clause]; *their nation's overwhelming nuclear superiority served* [clause] as the ultimate trump card.
Clauses reduced to phrases: US decision makers had supreme confidence *in forcing the Soviets to back down in any confrontation* [phrase] *because of their overwhelming nuclear superiority* [phrase], which was the ultimate trump card.

Again, when you paraphrase, (1) change the structure of sentence(s), and (2) replace words with their synonyms. In doing so, you may need to (a) change the part of speech and/or (b) reduce a clause to a phrase. Keep in mind that just simply replacing some of the words in a text with synonyms is rarely sufficient; it might be considered plagiarism. Although you may not use all of these techniques in a single paraphrase, you will likely use them all at one time or another.[1]

Summarizing
For summarizing, you will need to first identify the main point(s) of the text, and then determine what the most important supporting information is. Then, only these points should be written, using a number of the above skills.

1. Read the passage carefully and take notes
When reading, focus on the main points and relevant details (supporting details) directly related to the main points. Take notes about the main ideas and supporting details.

2. Use your notes when writing a summary
Use only your notes; don't rely on the original passage. In your summary, include only the main ideas and supporting details. Omit minor details and specific examples. Don't

write your personal opinions in the summary.

3. Check the summary

After finishing summarizing, check your summary with the original passage. Make sure (1) your summary is written in your own words; (2) you don't misunderstand or write the wrong information (names, place, number, technical terms, etc.); and (3) the summary is written with proper grammar and spelling.

Examples of Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing

Original: Many studies have tried to determine whether Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is affected by the foods children eat. The goal is to test claims that ADHD symptoms, like poor concentration and impulsive behavior, are triggered by something in food.[2]

A bad example of paraphrasing (plagiarism): *Many studies have tried to find out if Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is affected by what children eat. Their purpose is to examine claims that ADHD symptoms, including bad concentration and impulsive behavior, are caused by something in food.*

The problem with this example is that it doesn't change the structure of the sentence at all, only replacing some words with synonyms. This is regarded as plagiarism.

An example of acceptable paraphrasing: *There have been many studies trying to find out the relationship between Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and children's diet in order to examine if ADHD symptoms, such as lack of concentration and impulsive behavior, are affected by the foods children eat.*

Notice that this example changes the sentence structure, in addition to changing parts of speech, reducing a clause to a phrase, and using synonyms.

Original: The automotive industry has not shown good judgment in designing automotive features that distract drivers. A classic example is the use of a touch-sensitive screen to replace all the controls for radios, tape/CD players, and heating/cooling. Although an interesting technology, such devices require that the driver take his eyes off the road.[3]

A bad example of paraphrasing (plagiarism): *The automotive industry has not demonstrated good judgment in designing car features that distract drivers. One such example is a touch-sensitive screen that replaces controls for radios, tape/CD players, and heating/cooling. Although it's an interesting technology, such devices require that a driver look away from the road.*

An example of acceptable paraphrasing: *Motor vehicle manufactures do not always design features with safety in mind. For example, when designers replaced radio, CD players, and temperature control knobs with touch-sensitive panels, they were forgetting one thing: to use the panels, drivers would need to take their eyes off the road.*

Summarizing

Original: In 1957, Warwick E. Kerr was a biologist in Southern Brazil with a vision. He planned to mate the European honey bee with the more aggressive African bee and produce a breed that would be better adapted to the tropical climates of South America. Another beekeeper, however, accidentally allowed 26 of the African queen bees to escape before Kerr could create the perfect hybrid. These bees came in contact with local hives, mated with local bees, and produced their own hybrid. This accidental hybrid has been labeled the *Africanized honey bee*, or more commonly, the *killer bee*, because of its aggressive nature.

To some beekeepers, the Africanized bees are actually superior. They produce more honey in tropical regions than European bees. As opposed to the rather docile European honey bee, the Africanized bee is much more defensive of its hive. If these bees perceive a threat, they will defend the hive in greater numbers than non-Africanized breeds. This characteristic is particularly useful in Africa, where other insects and rodents continuously threaten hives. Their sting is no more dangerous than any other bee sting, but they seem to sting in greater numbers and pursue their enemies for greater distances and with greater determination.

Africanized honey bees are migrating north and continuing to interbreed. The traits that make them preferable in Africa and South America, however, are less desirable in Central and North America. This invasion of the new hybrid bee could have a significant effect on agriculture in the region. Every government in North America is searching for a chemical or biological solution that would have a neutral or minimal environmental impact.[4]

An example of summary: *The Africanized honey bee, or the killer bee, was created by accident in Brazil as a hybrid between African bees and local bees, and they have both a positive and negative influence, depending on the region. On the positive side, in Africa and South America, Africanized honey bees are braver against their enemies. What's more, they produce more honey. On the negative side, however, Africanized honey bees have been causing problems in North and Central America. They migrate north and interbreed with local bees. That has had a terrible influence on agriculture in these regions.*

In the sample summary above, the main idea is put in the first sentence. Notice that the first sentence contains all the important information. Then, the rest of the summary provides the details that are relevant to, or support, the main idea.

---

[1] Adapted from Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War* (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), 10, 94-95, 96.

[2] *Inside Reading 2* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 86.

[3] Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual* [fourth edition] (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2004), 117-118.

[4] From a reproducible material of *Inside Reading 2* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012)

III. Attain the ability to quickly identify the text's organization and logic

A1.5 Determining Connotative and Denotative Meanings

Words have two types of meaning: denotative and connotative. The denotative meaning is the explicit or direct meaning. The connotative meaning is the feeling, implication or extra meaning that is often associated with the word. For example, *house* and *home* both have a denotative meaning of "a place where people live," but while *house* only has denotative meanings related to the building, *home* has connotative meanings related to belonging and comfort. Understanding both the connotation and denotation of words is important for identifying the organization and logic of a text because it will help you to recognize the author's opinion and central argument. It is also important for making inferences (**See A1.6 Making Inferences**). When you read research papers and textbooks for your classes at Tohoku University, noticing connotative and denotative meanings will help you to understand what side of an argument the author is taking and how trustworthy or biased the text is.

How to Master Connotative and Denotative Meanings

Dictionaries are excellent places to find the denotative meaning of a word. However, finding the connotative meaning can be more difficult. In order to recognize connotations, you should first know that there are three aspects that can contribute to connotation: the **degree of meaning, positive or negative** association, and **context**.

Often, the connotation of a word has to do with the degree of meaning. For example, the following words all have a denotative meaning of "bad": *poor, horrible, awful, terrible, lousy, unacceptable, atrocious*. If your teacher used one of these words to describe a homework assignment, how bad should you understand it to have been? The words *unacceptable* or *poor* would probably indicate that they recognize the effort or work, but it was simply not good enough. In contrast, *lousy* or *awful* would indicate that the work was very bad, words such as *terrible* or *horrible* would be even stronger, and *atrocious* is perhaps the worst word they could use to describe it. Adjectives, adverbs, and descriptive verbs (e.g. verbs of movement such as *run*, *jog*, *dash,* and *sprint* and verbs of emotion such as *surprise*, *shock*, and *awe*) often have degree connotations.

Another common type of connotative meaning is the positive or negative feeling connected to a word. For example, both the words *youthful* and *childish* have a denotative meaning of "young" or "in childhood," but *youthful* feels positive and is generally a compliment, whereas *childish* has a negative connotation and is usually used to point out that someone is being foolish or acting inappropriately due to a lack of experience. There are several words that have very different connotations in Japanese and English, so be careful of this. For example, *jealousy* is considered a very negative emotion in English and to *challenge* someone is usually considered a very serious or disrespectful act.

Finally, the connotative meaning of some words can be affected by the context, either how it is used in the sentence or who is reading or hearing it. For example, the

color "white" can be associated with many different feelings or meanings such as *clean*, *pure*, *soft*, *bland*, *sick*, or *fear*. Therefore, the correct way to interpret the connotative meaning of "white" can change based on the surrounding words. Consider the following sentences and notice the connotation of "white" in each:

He saw the ghost and went <u>white</u>. (fear)

He wore a mask and washed his hands, but, at the end of the day, his face was <u>white</u> [or pale]. (sick)

The freshly washed towels were as <u>white</u> as they could be. (clean)

Every day at work, the plain <u>white</u> walls made him crazy. (bland/boring)

Example of Connotative and Denotative Meanings

In order to understand an author's or speaker's opinion, main point or, sometimes, their reason for writing or saying something, you need to be able to understand the connotation of their words. For example, consider the following short passage and the questions that follow it. Notice how knowing the connotative meanings helps you to understand the passage more accurately.

The story of the lost city of Atlantis is a famous one. However, it is just that—a story. In recent times, I have been shocked at a number of scholars who have begun the naïve quest to attempt to prove that Atlantis was a real place. Some of them even provide flashy evidence, such as the fact that the famous philosopher, Plato, often talked about it. While I sympathize with the desire to discover that a mythical land was once real, it is a travesty that so many otherwise shrewd scholars take this ridiculous notion seriously.

What does the author think about Atlantis?
a) It is a shocking discovery.
b) There is plenty of evidence both for and against the idea that it was real.
c) She is sympathetic towards the citizens.
d) It wasn't a real place.

What is the author's opinion of scholars who study Atlantis?
a) They are all shrewd scholars.
b) She thinks they are foolish.
c) They are youthful and full of hope.
d) She feels sorry that they cannot convince others.

In the example above, the author uses many words with negative connotations to talk about the idea that Atlantis was a real place: "<u>naïve</u> quest," "<u>flashy</u> evidence," "<u>travesty</u>," and "<u>ridiculous</u> notion." She states at the beginning of the passage that she thinks it is "just a story" and then is highly critical of the idea that it was real and also of the people who think so. Therefore, she does not think that Atlantis is a shocking discovery, that there is plenty of evidence for both sides (she calls the evidence for it "flashy" which has

a connotation of nice looking, but lacking substance), or that the citizens should be sympathized with (because she doesn't believe it existed). Instead, we should know that she thinks that (d) it wasn't a real place. Furthermore, though she sympathizes (understands, but doesn't agree) with wanting to make a shocking discovery, she clearly doesn't believe it and isn't trying to convince others that it is real. She calls these scholars' goal "naïve," and this word has a negative connotation of being stupid or inexperienced, not youthful or hopeful. She does mention many (not all) of the scholars are "otherwise shrewd," but this means that she thinks they are shrewd about other things, and not about Atlantis, so not all of them are shrewd, and they are not shrewd regarding Atlantis. Her consistent use of words with negative connotations such as "travesty" and "ridiculous" signal that she thinks that (b) the study of Atlantis is foolish.

III. Attain the ability to quickly identify the text's organization and logic

A1.6 Making Inferences

An inference is a logical conclusion that we can make based on information given to us, even though it is not directly said. For example, if you make dinner for your friends and they ask for seconds, you can infer that the meal was delicious, even if your friends don't specifically say so. This skill is important for understanding the logic of a text because it will help you to understand the author's true message, what they are implying, and what information you should get from the text. Making inferences will be important for you when reading academic texts at Tohoku University for your classes, especially when trying to understand them more deeply.

How to Master Making Inferences

There are three main skills that will help you to make inferences: (1) understanding the author's certainty towards a statement, (2) comprehending the logical connection between pieces of information, and (3) figuring out why the author included certain information.

As discussed in **A1.5 Determining Connotative and Denotative Meanings**, words can have both denotations and connotations, which can change the feeling of a text. However, the author can also use words to show how sure they are of a statement or how likely they think it is. One way to do this is with adverbs such as "probably," "unlikely," or "possibly." However, the author can also show this through their choice of a modal verb. Though modal verbs often take one of their primary meanings, they also often help to imply how likely or sure the author is about something.

Modal Verb	Standard Meaning	Implication
Will	Future tense	100% sure
Would	Imaginary situation / past future	About 90% sure
Must	Need	80% and there is evidence
Shall	Suggestion / decision	X
Should	Better to do	About 70% sure
May	Permission	About 50% sure
Might	X	A little less than 50% sure
Can	Ability	(rarely used here)
Could	Past ability / imaginary situation	Low possibility

MAN: Will your brother come to the party tonight?

WOMAN: -He *will* come. (100% planning on coming)

-He *should* be coming. (probably, but there is a small chance he won't come)

-He *may* come. (there is about a 50% chance of him coming)

-He *might* come. (the chances are slightly higher that he won't)

-He *could* come. (he probably won't come)

Understanding the connection between different sentences, details, or pieces of information is also important for making correct inferences. The major types of logical connections are: chronological (one happened before/after another), conjunction (both happened), disjunction (only one happened), implication (happens conditionally), and cause/effect (one happens because of another). Study the chart of common ways to mark these logical connections and make sure that you understand both the meaning and inference marked by each.

Connection	Words	Meaning / Inference
chronological	next, after, later, and then, subsequently, followed by	one thing happened, after another (not caused)
	before, preceded by	one thing happened before another (not caused)
conjunction	and, and then, moreover, furthermore	both are happening
	but, however, although, even though, in spite of, nevertheless, yet	both are happening (one is not expected from the circumstances)
disjunction	either, or, either but not both, instead, rather	only one is happening (but not both, and not 0)
implication	if, then,	one thing can only happen if some condition is fulfilled
	no...without	one thing cannot happen if some condition is not fulfilled
	implies, suggests, points to	one thing MIGHT mean another (but we cannot be 100% sure)
cause/effect	because, since, therefore, so, due to, on account of, seeing that, causes, leads to, brings about, yields	one thing happened as a result of the other (the second can't happen without the first thing)
	in order to, so as to, so that, to, for the purpose of	one thing happened for the purpose of causing the second

Finally, understanding why the author included certain information will help you to make inferences about what the main points and supporting details are. As pointed out in **A2.1 Essay Structure** and **A2.2 Paragraph Writing**, there are certain patterns to English writing. One of the basic ideas is that there are main ideas in a text, usually found in the first sentence of most paragraphs, which are then supported by many kinds of details. These details may also be supported by even smaller details. Some of the common ways to provide these details are: (1) illustrating with examples, (2) explaining or describing, (3) supporting with evidence or giving reasons, and (4) contrasting or refuting opposing ideas. If you can identify the main idea in a paragraph, you can then try to figure out how the other sentences in it are connected. This will help you to find the author's viewpoint and what they are arguing for or against. Study the chart of words and phrases above that are often used with each of these purposes so that you can recognize them if you see them in a text. However, please be careful, sentences are not always marked so clearly with these types of words, so you might have to use your

other skills and knowledge of writing organization (**See A1.4 Summarizing and Paraphrasing**, **A2.1 Essay Structure**, **A2.2 Paragraph Writing**, etc.) to help you know the relationship between two sentences.

Examples	**Explaining/describing**
illustrates/depicts/exemplifies...	This means that...
For example, ... / such as...	In other words...
...including X, Y, Z.	Because/so/therefore/...
...from X to Z	Specifically/ i.e.

Evidence	**Contrasting/refuting**
For one...	...misses/ takes for granted/
...provides/gives support for...	misinterprets...
...shows that...	...doesn't take <something> into account
...is clear from the fact that...	However/but/though/while/contrary to

Example of Making Inferences

In order to understand a passage more deeply, you will need to make assumptions based on the various information given. Consider the following passage and the questions that follow it. The answers are not given directly, but we can infer them.

Compounds, substances that are made when two or more elements are chemically bonded together, are important for both our bodies and for the devices that we use to make life easier. However, different compounds are important for different reasons. While there are many different categories of compounds, one of the most important distinctions is based on whether or not they are organic.

The first and most important difference between organic and inorganic compounds has to do with the presence or absence of a carbon atom. In general, if a compound has a carbon atom, then it is organic. If it does not have a carbon atom, it is instead classified as an inorganic compound. For example, sucrose, better known as sugar, contains carbon, which causes it to be classified as an organic compound. However, there are some slight exceptions to this, such as carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide could be classified as organic because it contains a carbon atom, but this doesn't take into account the fact that the amount of carbon in this compound is not large enough to form strong bonds with the oxygen in the molecule.

Another important distinction is that organic compounds are associated with living things, while inorganic compounds are not. This means that organic compounds will usually be found in plants, animals and even bacteria, whereas, though some living things might contain some inorganic compounds, the amount is usually very small and whether or not they are present will vary wildly from organism to organism.

What does the author think about carbon dioxide?
a) It is a better example of an organic compound than sucrose.
b) It is a clear guideline for deciding inorganic and organic compounds.
c) It shouldn't be considered an organic compound.
d) It doesn't take into account the weak bonds with oxygen in the molecule.

Why did the author include the last sentence?
a) To describe the association between living things and organic compounds.
b) To refute the idea that inorganic compounds are found in living things.
c) To explain why carbon is necessary in living things.
d) To give an example of living things.

In the example above, the author says that "carbon dioxide <u>could</u> be classified as organic," indicating that he isn't very sure of this claim. Then, he gives reasons why it shouldn't be considered organic, which allows us to understand that (c) [he doesn't think it should be considered an organic compound]. He is also clearly showing that carbon is an exception to the carbon-atom rule, so it does not have to do with being a clear guideline, nor is it a better example. Furthermore, (d) repeats words from the lecture, but has the subject "it" (=carbon dioxide), which is not a human and therefore cannot take anything into account. The reason the speaker includes the last sentence is to (a) [describe the association between living things and organic compounds]. If we follow the logical order of ideas presented, we can know that this information is no longer related to "carbon" (c), and is instead talking about whether or not these compounds are found in living things (a). His words do not refute the idea that inorganic compounds are found in living things (b), and in fact show that it is sometimes possible. Furthermore, the words "This means that" are often associated with explaining, describing, or possibly providing evidence, but are not for giving examples (d) or contrasting (b).

English B1:
Academic Listening and Speaking

I. Acquire the ability to take notes about main points while listening

B1.1 Note Taking While Listening

Note-taking is a critical skill in academic settings. It makes you feel at ease when you listen to a lecture and answer questions about the lecture, and enables you to recall the information more easily. Note-taking also makes you an attentive listener. Good note-taking skills are essential to sort, organize, and remember information, so it will be important for lectures and laboratory activities that you will participate in.

How to Master Note Taking While Listening

Listening to a class lecture is different from listening to news stories or casual conversations because you have to catch specific information that is important to remember and that you must use later usually for exams or essays. There are numerous ways to take notes effectively. The best way depends on the type of lecture as well as your personal preference. However, there are a number of basic skills as follows that you should develop if you want to improve your note-taking ability.

1. Listen for signal words and phrases when you listen

In spoken English lectures, the speaker will use signal words to guide listeners through the information he or she is discussing. Signal words and phrases are a trigger that important information, which you should take notes about, is coming. So, when you hear signal words and phrases, get ready to take notes on the surrounding information. Below are some signal words and phrases that you should remember. However, please note that you might hear them slightly differently than how they are printed below. For example, a speaker might say "Let's discuss..." or "Why don't we discuss..." instead of "We're going to discuss..." Also if you hear information repeated, or with emphasis (**See B2.2 Tone of Voice**), you should know it is important information.

For topics/main ideas
We're going to discuss ...
Why it is so important is that ...
What I would like to emphasize is that ...
It's important to note that ...
Let's consider the three factors ...

For introducing facts/statistics, expert opinions, etc.
The fact is that ...
One important statistic relating to this issue is that ...
According to experts, ...
Many researchers claim that ...
Everyone knows that ....

For supporting opinions
Let me elaborate ...
Let me explain why ...
The reason for this is that ...

For results
as a result, ...
consequently, ...
... cause ...
... lead to ...
... resulted in ...
due to ...

For introducing technical terms

... called ...

... known as ...

... so-called ...

what we call ...

... meaning ...

..., which means ...

... refers to ...

For comparison

in contrast, ...

on the contrary, ...

on the other hand ...

compared to ...

although ...

... however, ...

unlike ...

... similar to ...

in a similar fashion, ...

same as ...

the difference is ...

For additional information

above all

additionally, ...

... as well ...

most of all, ...

in addition, ...

most importantly, ...

on top of that, ...

That's not all ...

Also ...

Further ...

Furthermore, ...

For transition

First ... Second ... Third ...

Now, let me turn to the previous point about ...

Let's move to the second issue ...

Another important thing to consider is that ...

For explanations and examples

For example ...

For instance ...

a couple of examples are ...

As an example....

... including ...

... , which includes ...

... like ...

... such as ...

For classification

categorize

classify

fall into

fit into

put into

For paraphrase

In other words, ...

To put it simply, ...

For summary/conclusion

To sum up ...

Before we finish, let me repeat the major points I've discussed...

2. Write phrases, not full sentences

Don't write full sentences. Just write down key information—usually nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and numbers because these words give you important information— who, where, when, which, what, and how. Please look at the following example.

WWII: 1939-1945 among US, GB, FR, USSR, DE, IT, JPN

(Instead of writing a full sentence like "World War II took place between 1939 and 1945 among America, Britain, France, Soviets, Germany, Italy, Japan.")

3. Use abbreviations and symbols

Writing quickly is important. You can take more detailed notes while saving time. Using abbreviation and symbols such as the following can help you to do this:

w/, w/o	with, without
b/c	because
∵	because
intl, govt	international, government
19C	the nineteenth century
ch.	chapter
&	and
e.g.	for example
i.e.	that means
NB	important (NB means *nota bene* in Latin, which means "mark well")
+	in addition to
>	greater than/more than/better than
<	smaller/less than
→	this leads to, this causes
=	means
∴	therefore
↗	increase
↘	decrease

4. Organize your notes

Use headings for topics. Under each heading, write the main ideas below them, indented (with the text moved about 2 cm to the right). Listen for supporting details and evidence, and put these even further to the right, or try numbering them. This will make the information more specific and easier to find later.

5. Paraphrase

Paraphrase what the speaker says (**See A1. 4 Summarizing and Paraphrasing**). This way, you can understand the lecture better than writing the exact words or phrases that were said. When paraphrasing, use plain words that you are familiar with.

6. Leave blank space

If you miss important information while listening, make sure to leave blank space. Then, after the lecture you can ask the speaker or others (such as your classmates) to help you fill in the information that you missed.

7. Be prepared

Prepare before classes by doing reading assignments and looking at the materials provided by the professor in advance. When the material is new, try to guess what sorts of words and phrases will come before you hear them based on your previous knowledge.

Example of Note Taking While Listening

Look at the text of a spoken lecture and then the sample notes taken about this topic. The signal words are highlighted in **bold** and the important information is underlined.

Okay, uh, so **last time we were talking about** the expansion of the railroad in the nineteenth century and **why it was so important** in the development of the southwestern United States. Uh, we talked about a couple of things: The railroad **brought about** land speculation, and development of lands for timber and farming and—well, and this is **what I want to talk about today**—the railroads brought tourists. They traveled by train, viewing the landscape, and uh, came to get a taste of what the "Wild West" was like. In the past 100 years, a whole tourism industry has grown up around this idea. And uh, **just like** .... ranching, or gold mining, **it caused** the integration of the Southwest into the economy of the rest of the country... uh, tourism helped integrate the "culture" or life in the Southwest into ... well ... well, kind of into the minds of the rest of the country. And large-scale tourism couldn't have happened without the expansion of the railroad...

Example of notes based on the above lecture

Expansion of railroad 19c
      = development S/W US
        ➔ *Land speculation (timber, farming)*
Railroads = tourists
      1. landscape / wild west = tourism
      2. S/W economy → US
      3. integrate culture of S/W → US

Additional Information

There are different styles of note-taking (such as the mapping method, charting method, and Cornell method), and you should experiment with all of them. You can try searching "note-taking skills" in Google. You can also find more examples of abbreviations and symbols that might make note-taking easier for you. There are also digital note-taking applications available such as Microsoft OneNote.

There is no one-size-fits-all method of note-taking, but there are, as introduced above, some basic skills you need to master. So, first learn the basic skills, and then develop your own effective note-taking method.

I. Acquire the ability to take notes about main points while listening

B1.2 Orally Summarizing from Notes

Orally summarizing from notes involves looking at the information that you have written in your notes, selecting the most important information, and then paraphrasing it in spoken English. This skill is very important because once you have taken notes, you will often then need to check if your information is correct by discussing it with other students or the teacher. It will be important to become able to give a spoken summary of your notes very quickly in order to compare your notes from lectures and experiments at Tohoku University to check their accuracy, explain your viewpoints based on previous information, and discuss the information that you have.

How to Master Orally Summarizing from Notes

There are three important parts to successfully summarize your notes orally: (1) choose the important points and supporting evidence, (2) organize the information clearly, and (3) communicate the information through speech. Details about how to do this are provided below.

Choosing the correct information to give is the first and most important step. You should not repeat exactly what another person said or wrote. Rather, it is important to express each of the main ideas that you took notes about and elaborate on them. You should elaborate by giving important details such as examples, descriptions, reasons, or explanations from the source material (i.e. lecture or reading). There are usually between one and three, so you should try to catch and repeat all of them. If you organized your notes well (**See B1.1 Note Taking While Listening**), then this step should be relatively easy.

The next important step is to organize the information that you will talk about before speaking. Consider creating a short outline of what you will say. Clearly mark the topic, each of the major points, and the supporting details for each major point. Your outline does not need to be detailed—it should simply help you to know what to talk about and in what order. When organizing your summary, make sure to give the topic first. Then give the first major point and all of the supporting details for that point before continuing to the next major point. Consider using some of the words and phrases below to help you mark what the topic, major points, and details are, and to transition from one main point to the next. Adding transition vocabulary helps clarify when you are changing from one point to the next, making it easier for the listener to understand.

Introducing a main point	Elaborating on points	Transitioning
The first (second/third) point brought up by the speaker/author is...	One (Another) reason the speaker/author thinks so is that...	This brings up another major point/reason/issue...
One (Another) reason why the speaker/author thinks so is...	One (Another) example that shows this is...	Moving on to the next (second/third) point/issue/ etc...

One (Another) important issue the speaker/author talked about is...	Also/furthermore/in addition, the speaker/author said that...	However, the speaker/author also had another important issue/point/etc.
One (Another) major topic was...	Specifically, he/she/it said that...	

Finally, you must communicate the ideas clearly. First, you should remember to paraphrase and use good summary vocabulary (**See A1.4 Summarizing and Paraphrasing**). With oral summaries, there is no need to use very difficult vocabulary, but you should try to use various grammar patterns and different words so that you are not overly repetitive. For example, you can try using synonym vocabulary (**See A1.2 Synonym Vocabulary**) or use some of the signal words and phrases (**See B1.1 Note Taking While Listening**). Though you should be careful with your pronunciation and intonation (**See B2.5 Pronunciation and Intonation**), the most important point here will be to get your ideas across. This means that you must use complete sentences with proper connecting words. Be especially careful not to leave out the subject or premise of the sentence or use conjunctions or connecting vocabulary that shows a cause-effect relationship when there is no cause-effect relationship.

	Mistake	Corrected
Missing subject or premise	Talks about climate change	The passage talks about climate change.
	Causing changes in DNA	Viruses cause changes in DNA.
Unrelated information/ improperly connected	Many people are worried...so the problem is serious.	Many people are worried because the problem is serious.
	DNA can change in viruses...so scientists study DNA in many animals and plants.	(these are not related; delete "so" and/or use a different transition)
	Recycling is important...because it will hurt the earth.	You should recycle because if you don't, it will hurt the earth.

Example of Orally Summarizing from Notes

Look at the sample notes from the example in the last chapter (**B1.1 Note Taking While Listening**). Here is one way that you could orally summarize them. Words and phrases from this chapter are in bold.

Sample Notes

Expansion of railroad 19c

  = development S/W US

   ➔ *Land speculation (timber, farming)*

Railroads = tourists

  1. landscape / wild west = tourism

  2. S/W economy → US

  3. integrate culture of S/W → US

Sample Oral Summary

The speaker talked about the expansion of railroads in the 19th century. **Specifically**, he said that it developed the Southwestern United States, for example through land speculation such as for timber and farming. This **brought up** the **first main point of the lecture**, that the railroads made tourists come. **One reason the lecturer said** they came is to see the landscape and the "Wild West." **Furthermore**, he said that this integrated the economy and culture of the Southwest into the rest of America.

Now check this oral summary against the original passage (See the previous chapter). It is shorter than what the speaker said, and though it uses some of the same words (i.e. the key words such as "land speculation," "timber," and "Wild West"), many of the words used in the summary are changed and are in quite easy English. Many of the words and phrases introduced in this chapter were used, as well as some of the signal words from the previous chapter. Notice that every sentence has a clear subject and the transition and connecting words are used correctly. For example, it would have been incorrect to say things such as "land speculation caused the railroads to be built" (the railroads caused the speculation), or "land speculation caused tourists to come" (both were caused by the railroads).

II. Acquire a series of skills and strategies to become a successful listener

B1.3 Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs are expressions that use a verb and a particle (such as a preposition) together to create a new meaning (e.g. "break up," "fall down," "come off"). They are important to know because they appear very commonly, especially in spoken English, so being able to understand or guess the meaning of several different phrasal verbs is important for English listening. Though you can communicate without using phrasal verbs, they are often used by English speakers. So you will surely hear them in lectures and discussions at Tohoku University, especially when working with foreign teachers, students, or researchers.

How to Master Phrasal Verbs

There are many different phrasal verbs, and each phrasal verb can take as many as four different meanings. Instead of trying to memorize every single phrasal verb, it is a good idea to learn two things: (1) how the meanings of the verb and the particle combine to make the meaning of the phrasal verb, and (2) the possible different meanings of the particles. If you can develop a good sense for these two things, you can correctly guess the meaning of most phrasal verbs.

First, there are many kinds of phrasal verbs with many meanings. Sometimes one phrasal verb can have more than one meaning. This is usually because the particle can have up to four different meanings: location, motion (moving), change, or "other." Most students know the location meanings, but miss the other three types of meanings. If a verb of existing (e.g. "be") is used, the particle will usually take a location (or time) meaning, but for example, if a verb of moving (e.g. "run," "fly") is used, the particle will usually take a motion meaning. In most phrasal verbs, both the verb and particle keep most of their individual meaning. For example, the particle *in* can take the meaning of "enter." If the word *in* is combined with any kind of verb that describes motion, the meaning will become "enter by doing the verb." Therefore, "run in" means "to enter by running," "jump in" means "to enter by jumping," and "come in" means "to enter by coming (closer to the speaker)." Similarly, *away* can take the meaning of "to disappear," so if it is combined with a verb that describes any kind of change, the meaning will become "disappear by doing the verb." Therefore, "fade away" means "to disappear by fading," "burn away" means "to disappear by burning," and "wash {something} away" means "to {make something} disappear by washing." Therefore, if you know the meanings of the particles and the context, you can usually guess which meaning of the particle is being used, and what the relationship between the verb and particle is.

Second, you should remember the particles, and the various meanings that they can take:

Particle	Motion Meaning	Change Meaning	Other Meanings
up	to move from a lower position to a higher one	to become more / better / higher (in status, etc.)	to do completely, properly or 100% (usually positive)
down	to move from a higher position to a lower one	to become less / worse / lower (in status, etc.)	to finish or achieve a goal (usually negative)
in[to]	to enter		
out (of)	to exit	to disappear (or appear)	to do completely (and something is gone)
on[to]	to move to a position of touching (usually atop)	to become attached	to continue
off (of)	to move to a position of not touching	to become unattached	
back	1. to return to original position 2. to move backwards	to return to original state	
away (from)	to move to a far(ther) location	to disappear	
after	to follow or chase		
under / below	to move to a lower position than something else		
over	to move to a higher position than something else or traverse it	1. to reverse 180 degrees vertically 2. to become not standing	
across	to move from one side of something to the other (without penetrating)		
along	to move on a set path or the same path as something else		to do something at the same time or together
around / about	1. to move in a circle 2. to move various places within		
through	to move in one side and then out of the other (penetrating)		
apart		for a whole to become many parts or pieces	
together		for many pieces or parts to become a whole	

You should also make sure that you know the meanings of the following phrasal verbs because they are the most common. When studying them, see if you can understand where the meaning comes from based on the particle.

work on	come out	carry out	get up
take on	go out	set out	pick up
get on/off	get out	get in[to]	take up
go on	turn out	go in	set up
carry on	point out	come back	end up
come on	find out	go back	follow up
go off	work out	get back	take over
go through	sort out	look after	go away

Example of Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs are often used in spoken English, but the same information may be written differently or spoken about in different ways. Consider the following conversation and the questions. Notice how you need to be able to understand or guess the meaning of the phrasal verbs in order to correctly comprehend the conversation.

WOMAN: If you don't lower your prices, I'm not sure that we can **go on** with your service any more.

MAN: Our prices might be high, but our service is surely better than our competitors.

WOMAN: Maybe that's true, but we can't **carry on** with these huge monthly payments.

MAN: Unfortunately, I don't think we can **bring them down**.

What will the woman probably do?
a) Get a reduction in price
b) Discontinue the service
c) Continue with the price
d) Look for the truth

In the example above, the man says "we" (his company) can't "bring down" the prices, meaning that he cannot lower the prices. The woman says that she might not "go on" (continue) the service, and stresses this with another phrasal verb, saying that "we" (her company) cannot "carry on" (continue with difficulty) the high monthly payments. Since the man will not reduce the prices, and her company does not want to continue with the high costs, she will probably discontinue the service (b). If you know the meanings of "on" and "down," and can match them to words such as "reduce" and "continue," you can understand the meaning of the conversation, even if you don't know the phrasal verbs exactly.

MAN: I spilled coffee on my shirt, and I'm worried that the stain won't **come out**.

WOMAN: It probably won't in a normal washing machine. You have to **steam it out**.

MAN: Can I do it at home?

WOMAN: You'd better leave it to professionals. Why don't you **drop it off** at the dry cleaner's later?

What does the woman suggest the man do?
a) Try steaming his shirt
b) Let her try to clean the stain
c) Leave their house for coffee
d) Take the shirt to be steamed by a cleaning service

In this example, "out" is not referring to leaving or exiting. Instead, it is taking the *change meaning* of disappearing. The man is worried that the coffee stain cannot be removed from his shirt, and the woman tells him that it must be "steamed out" (removed by using steam). The man asks if he can do it himself, but the woman suggests "dropping it off" (taking and leaving the shirt) at a cleaning service (dry cleaner's). Therefore, the woman's suggestion is (d).

II. Acquire a series of skills and strategies to become a successful listener

B1.4 Idiomatic Expressions

Idiomatic expressions are sets of words that are used together, often to have a very different meaning from any of the individual words. For example, if someone tells you "break a leg," he or she is wishing you good luck. Idiomatic expressions are important to know because they appear very commonly in conversation and many times their meaning cannot be guessed from the individual words alone. You are likely to hear them in lectures, classroom discussions, and in everyday English at Tohoku University, and if you don't know the meanings, you will fail to catch the speaker's intention.

How to Master Idiomatic Expressions

There are many different idiomatic expressions in English. You can guess some of them if you have some knowledge of English-speaking culture, common beliefs, or metaphors in English. However, some of idiomatic expressions cannot be easily guessed, so even most English native speakers don't know where the expressions come from. But they certainly know the meanings and use the expressions. To understand idiomatic expressions better, try memorizing some of the ones in the list below that are not easily guessed, remembering them in groups, and learning about common metaphors in English. Start by memorizing the following list of very common idiomatic expressions that are difficult to guess.

1. Common idiomatic expressions

Time Related

Expression	Meaning	Example Sentence
at some point	Occurring at some time (in the past or future), but we don't know when exactly	I want you to check my paper at some point. When are you free?
at the time	Occurring at the time period being discussed	I didn't know you were unhappy at the time. I wish you had told me then, not now.
so far	Up to the current point in time; to a limited amount	Reading about baseball will only help you so far. You also have to practice to be good.
at the moment	Right now	I can't help you at the moment. Please come back later.
put time into	Make effort / spend time doing	I put a lot of time into my project, so I got a good grade.

Opinion / Mind

Expression	Meaning	Example Sentence
slip <one's> mind	To forget	I didn't go to the meeting because it slipped my mind!

point of view	One's opinion or feelings	He has a common point of view, so many people agree.
(give the) benefit of the doubt	To make a judgement despite uncertainty	I don't know if he was really sick or not, but I will give him the benefit of the doubt.
see what <one> is saying	Understand someone's opinion or idea	I see what you are saying about my paper. I will fix it soon.
shake <one's> head	Disagree or refuse	She asked if I would help, but I just shook my head.
beats me	I don't know	It beats me where she is.
no doubt	It is certain	There is no doubt that the earth is round.
(could) go for	Want / desire	I could go for a break. I've been studying for 4 hours straight!

Cause and Effect

Expression	Meaning	Example Sentence
lead to	To cause	Exercise and healthy eating lead to weight loss.
bound to	Will probably happen	If you study hard, you are bound to do well on the test.
in the event (of/that)	Will happen in some special case or situation	There will be no classes in the event of heavy snow.

Work / Effort

Expression	Meaning	Example Sentence
deal with	Manage, handle, or treat in some way; focusing on or including something	She dealt with her work by doing a little bit every day until she was finished.
take advantage of	Do or use something as much as possible; to exploit for one's own gain	You should take advantage of the library when studying.
take <something/ someone> for granted	To consider something to be unfailingly true or available; To underestimate or undervalue	He took it for granted that school would be open on Monday.
for the sake of [something/ someone]	The purpose or motivation for doing something; in respect or consideration of someone	My essay was not easy to understand, so I rewrote it for the sake of clarity.
cut <someone> some slack	Allow leeway in someone's conduct	The teacher cut the sick student some slack and allowed him to turn in his homework late.
find <oneself> [doing something]	To do something without thinking about it or planning to	I tried to focus on studying, but I found myself thinking about my club activities.

| no matter what it takes | Anything necessary to complete a task or goal (usually reckless) | I want a 100 on my test, no matter what it takes, so I will stay up all night studying. |

Interpersonal / Feelings

Expression	Meaning	Example Sentence
read between the lines	Look for a meaning that is implied, not clearly stated	He said he was fine, but I read between the lines, so I knew that he was actually upset.
add insult to injury	To make a bad situation worse	I overslept and had to hurry. To add insult to injury, it was raining.
hit it off	To form a positive connection with someone very quickly	I really hit it off with the students in my new laboratory. Now we're best friends.
be in <someone's> shoes	To be in the same situation or have the same experience	Before studying abroad, you should talk to returnee students, because they were in your shoes before they went abroad.
pull <oneself> together	Recover self-control; calm down	Bob was shocked after the car accident, but he pulled himself together and called the police.
on <one's> own	One won't receive any help	When Jessica studied abroad, she didn't have friends or family at first—she was on her own.
in touch with	Contacting	Please keep in touch with your parents, otherwise they will worry.
take it easy	Relax; proceed at a comfortable pace	After a hard semester, Hana took it easy over the spring vacation.
hang in there	Don't give up	Maya didn't want to keep studying, but she hung in there and finished.

Amounts or Comparisons

Expression	Meaning	Example Sentence
a good/great deal	Much/many	There are a great deal of students at Tohoku University.
something like...	About... (amount)	There were something like 500 guests at the festival.
by no means	Not at all; absolutely not	Even though some people are late for class, it is by no means acceptable.
as opposed to	Instead of; in contrast to	Students here learn two foreign languages as opposed to other universities where they only learn English.

In the idiomatic expressions above, these words must appear together in this basic pattern in order to have such a meaning. However, the pronouns in the expressions can, and should, change depending on the subject or object of the sentence. Please remember to change words such as <someone> or <oneself> to the proper pronoun if you want to use these expressions. If you do not, your words will become nonsense.

◯ John! You should pull yourself together!
✕ John! You should pull oneself together!
◯ Sarah shook her head.
✕ Sarah shook one's head.

2. Metaphoric expressions

Knowledge of metaphors can also be helpful in understanding idiomatic expressions. Metaphoric expressions are also words or phrases that don't take their standard meaning, but are used based on an idea or image. Metaphoric expressions are not as strict as idioms, so the words can be changed to words of similar meanings and the meaning will remain the same. Try learning the common metaphors in English in the chart below. If you understand the idea, you should be able to guess the meanings of many similar expressions. Notice that several different words can be used in the examples in the chart.

Metaphor	Example	Meaning
UP = Happy/healthy	He {got over / overcame} the flu.	He is healed from the flu.
DOWN = Sad/sick	He's {fallen ill / gone downhill }.	He's become sick.
TIME = Money	He spent 10 hours fixing the mistake / The mistake cost him 10 hours.	It took 10 hours for him to correct the mistake.
WEALTH = Hidden	He's {seeking / looking for / trying to find} his fortune.	He is trying to become rich.
ARGUMENT = War	He {attacked / shot down / destroyed} the ideas in my research paper.	He pointed out that the ideas in my research paper were bad or wrong.
SPORTS = War	Our team {beat / killed / slaughtered} their team!	Our team won the game.
EXPERIENCE = Journey	We're {at a crossroads / must go separate ways / on different paths}.	Our relationship is changing or ending.
IDEAS = Goods	Nobody will buy your story / You can't sell that anywhere.	No one will believe what you are saying.
IDEAS/WORK = Plants	His efforts have {born fruit / blossomed / come to fruition / sprouted}.	He was successful in his efforts (there was a result).
Personification	English {has / allows / has taken on} many metaphors.	There are many metaphors in English.
Exaggeration	I'm freezing / I'm so cold that I could die.	I'm very cold.

Example of Idiomatic Expressions

Idioms are often used in spoken English, and metaphors are used in both spoken and written English. You will often need to be able to understand or guess the meaning if you want to understand what someone means, what they are trying to do, and what their feelings towards something are. Consider the following conversation and the questions.

MAN: What do you think about this part-time job advertisement? I could go for some extra money.

WOMAN: I think applying would be <u>a waste of time</u>. You're always <u>searching for easy ways to make money</u>, but you should focus on something more practical. Look, this job doesn't pay an hourly wage. It's all based on commission.

MAN: But it says there are plenty of opportunities for the business to <u>grow and branch out</u> in the future.

WOMAN: I think they will <u>take advantage of you</u> and <u>you'll find yourself working</u> for no pay at all!

MAN: Well I think that I should <u>give</u> them <u>the benefit of the doubt</u>.

WOMAN: Fine, but you should quit if you don't see <u>the fruits of your labor</u> after a month.

What does the woman think will happen if the man applies for the job?
a) He won't have an advantage over the employer.
b) He will search for easier jobs.
c) He won't make much money.
d) He will have to do farm work.

What will the man probably do?
a) List the advantages and disadvantages of the job
b) Explain to the woman why he doubts her
c) Think about what to do longer
d) Apply for the job

In the example above, <u>metaphors</u> and <u>idiomatic expressions</u> are underlined. The man mentions that he wants extra money, but the woman doesn't think it is a good job and says that the employer will "take advantage" of him and that he will "find himself working for no pay at all." This means she thinks the employer won't think of him, and without him realizing it, he will have done lots of work for little or no pay, so she thinks that if he applies, (c) he won't make much money. The man says that he will "give them the benefit of the doubt," which means he will trust them, despite the woman's doubts, so he will probably (d) apply for the job.

III. Acquire the ability of verbal expression in academic settings

B1.5 Giving Opinions and Conjecturing

An opinion is a belief that a person has formed on a topic or issue. A conjecture is a guess, speculation, or hypothesis which is thought to be true, but based on incomplete information. Giving opinions and conjecturing in English in writing and speaking are useful skills to help clearly state and defend your positions in independent writing tasks, or to make your case and simply keep the conversation going in oral debate and discussions. Arguing and discussing are essential aspects of critical thinking and critical writing. As a Tohoku University student, these skills will be required both during group work and discussion activities in English lessons and when collaborating with international students and faculty on research projects.

How to Master Giving Opinions and Conjecturing

Opinion giving and conjecturing are requirements in various contexts, such as independent speaking or writing tasks that challenge the speaker or writer to support or defend a position, agree or disagree with a statement, choose one side or another of an issue, or state a preference. It is common to use any number of phrases, such as "in my opinion," "from my point of view," "as far as I'm concerned," and so on. Not only will these phrases and expressions be helpful when you are collaborating with researchers at Tohoku University, they will also be expected when sitting through the independent writing and speaking portions of English proficiency tests. First and foremost, you should memorize some phrases and expressions which can be used in written and oral arguments to boost your ability to give opinions. While most of the phrases below can be used for both written and oral arguments, there are certain phrases that are more often used in written arguments, which are marked (**w**). Similarly, there are other phrases which are preferable in oral arguments, which are marked (**o**).

1. Phrases for expressing opinions

I think...	It goes without saying that...
I believe...	I'd like to point out that...
I feel...	The way I see it is...
I suppose...	I strongly believe that...
In my opinion...	In my experience...
It seems to me that...	It appears to me that...
Personally, I think...	(**o**) Personally speaking...
(**o**) If you ask me...	(**w**) I'm of the opinion that...
From what I gather...	(**w**) I'm inclined to believe that...
To be honest...	I would argue that...
From my point of view...	I hold the view that...
As far as I'm concerned...	My impression is that...

I am confident that...   I have come to the conclusion that...
From my perspective...   (**w**) I tend towards the opinion that...

2. Phrases for implicitly expressing opinions

It is reasonable to assume...   From the evidence, it would seem that...
It is generally accepted that...   Generally it is thought that...
The evidence suggests...   It is often considered that...
It could be argued that...   A case could be made that...
With due consideration I feel...
When taking all into consideration I believe...

3. Phrases for expressing agreement

I agree...   I see your point.
(**o**) I totally agree that...   That's a good point.
I agree with you entirely that...   I see where you're coming from.
I couldn't agree more.   I'd go along with that.
(**o**) I see what you're getting at.   Absolutely / Definitely / Exactly / Precisely

4. Phrases for expressing disagreement

I see your point, but...   I'm afraid I would have to disagree.
I couldn't disagree more that...   You could say that. However...
(**w**) I'd be inclined to disagree.   That's one way of looking at it. However...
That's not the way I see it.   I must take issue with you on that.
On the contrary, I feel...   (**o**) Well, as a matter of fact, I feel...

5. Phrases for asking opinions

Do you agree with me that...?   Would you go along with that?
Wouldn't you say that...?   Would I be right in assuming...?
If I were to ask you...?   How do you feel about...?
Do you think it would be right to say that...?
Would it be logical for me to say...?
Would you agree with me when I say...?

6. Using adverbs to qualify opinions
Generally, opinions and conjectures should be based on facts. After stating an opinion, you should support your opinion with facts and evidence. It is helpful to use adverbs as a way to qualify your opinions to keep them from being too strong or aggressive.

From my point of view, manufacturers have been up to the task of lowering their carbon footprints. **Significantly**, leading automakers have invested billions in improvements to emissions

The evidence suggests that a lot more research is urgently needed on this public health issue. **Unfortunately**, the government currently doesn't have the necessary funding.

If you ask me, homelessness should be the number one cause of concern of all Americans. **Shockingly**, on any given night in America there are more than 600,000 people sleeping on the streets.

It seems to me that we still haven't done enough to resolve the situation. **Surprisingly**, only 37% of respondents mentioned any concern about the issue.

It could be argued that agriculture is the single largest employer in the world accounting for about 40% of the global population. **Interestingly**, the concept of sustainable agriculture is slow to catch on.

Example of Giving Opinions and Conjecturing

The following is an example of a 300-word independent writing task in which a test taker was asked to write a short essay that states, explains, and supports their opinion. The key opinion-related phrases are highlighted in **bold**.

Writing Task: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *The Internet causes people to interact with each other less than they did in the past.* Use specific reasons to support your opinion.

Model Answer

Internet technology has revolutionized the way we live. Now, more than ever, we have so much information and media at our fingertips. While the ability to access information instantly and watch TV shows and listen to music with the click of a mouse is appealing, **I'm of the opinion that** the Internet actually has some disadvantages. Thus, **I agree with** the idea that the Internet is causing people to be less social.

One of the reasons the Internet causes us to interact with others less is that it makes many public gathering places obsolete. Libraries used to be popular places for community events. But if people in a community can find entire books online, they are less likely to interact with each other at libraries. Schools and workplaces are moving onto the Internet too. More and more, people get online degrees or use the Internet to work from home. **It seems to me that** if people take this Internet route to work and school, they miss out on the friendship and human interaction they'd normally get in class or at their jobs.

A case could be made that the Internet allows people to meet and interact electronically. But this is still less social than non-Internet meetings. If people stay at home and use the Internet to try to find a date for instance, they no longer look for love in a truly social environment, such

as a coffee shop. **From my point of view**, if most of our interactions with our friends are online, so **essentially**, we are missing out on the true essence of quality social interaction.

Ultimately, the Internet leads people to isolate themselves from others, staying at home instead of going out. Moreover, human interaction on the Internet is not as personal as face-to-face meetings between people. The Internet has some benefits, but it really does cause us to be less social.[1]

Additional Information

Giving opinions and conjecturing are life skills which can help you state and defend your positions in speaking and writing. These skills are also expected in the independent speaking portions of various proficiency tests. The following is a list of tips to help you become more confident in giving your opinions and conjecturing:

· Try to memorize as many phrases and expressions as possible, including the ones written above.
· Use the Internet to find other lists of expressions and phrases relating to "giving opinions," "asking opinions," "expressing agreement or disagreement," and so on.
· When giving opinions and conjecturing, it is important to avoid overuse of certain expressions such as "I think" and "I believe." It is important to use a variety of expressions.
· When stating or writing opinions and conjectures, it is important to use specific reasons and details to support your answers.
· When giving opinions and conjecturing, it is important to acknowledge the previous arguments and opinions that have been made.
· Check out the chapters **B2.3 Hedging** and **B2.6 Oral Reporting**, which are closely related to "giving opinions and conjecturing."

---

[1] Adapted from: https://magoosh.com/toefl/2016/toefl-writing-task-2-model-answer/

III. Acquire the ability of verbal expression in academic settings

B1.6 Interrogatives

Interrogative is an English grammatical term meaning a word or sentence used to ask a question. Forming grammatically correct questions is a fundamental English speaking skill because question-response is a major form of all spoken communication—both academically and in everyday speech. Word order is highly important when forming questions. Incorrect word order, or using the wrong question word, often leads the listener to misunderstand the question. Additionally, in academics, learning through the question-response method is a common teaching technique; therefore, mastering interrogatives is essential to achieve academic English proficiency.

How to Master Interrogatives
1. Closed questions (Yes/No questions)
The most common way to ask questions in English is by using the inversion method. Inversion simply means putting the verb before the subject. Inversion questions, which can be answered simply by "yes" or "no," are also called closed questions.

Sentence form: He is a university student.
Question form: Is he a university student?
Sentence form: She does ski.
Question form: Does she ski?

2. Open questions (Wh-question words)
Another way to ask questions is by using interrogative words, or wh-question words. When using a wh-question word, it infers that the reply requires more detail than just a simple "yes" or "no." Therefore, the responder has a range of replies from which to choose. These questions are called open questions. Below is a list of the wh-question words and the response expected.

Wh-question word	Response expected
1) who	people as the *subject* or the *object* of a verb
2) whom	people as the *object* of a verb or of the prepositions *to*, *with*, *for* and *by*
3) whose	people as *possessors*
4) which	objects, ideas or actions from several choices
5) what	specific objects, ideas, or actions
6) when	general times and time periods
7) where	locations
8) why	reasons
9) how	manners, methods and techniques

Open questions are often used with auxiliary verbs and modal verbs. Auxiliary verbs, or "helping verbs," are used with the main verb in a sentence to make questions, negative statements, passive sentences, and show tenses. Modal verbs modify the main verb to express the intent or the "grammar mood" of the speaker. Auxiliary verbs include "be," "do," "can," and "have." Modal verbs include "could," "will," "would," "shall," "should," "may," "might," "must," and "ought." Auxiliary and modal verbs come after the wh-question word as shown below.

> How *can* we get to the station?
> Why *should* we go to the station now?

Examples of Interrogatives

Wh-question words have several grammatical functions. They function as determiners, adverbs, and pronouns. They also can serve as relative adverbs and relative pronouns.

1. Wh-question words as determiners

Wh-question words used as determiners are placed before a noun to clarify, or "determine," the noun. They include "what," "which," and "whose."

What   Questions about **nouns**

What *sport* do you like?   What *instrument* can you play?

Which   Questions about the pronouns **one or ones**

Which *one* can we chose?   Which *ones* did you buy?

Which   Questions about **choice** (sometimes used with the preposition *of* if plural)

Which sushi shall we eat first?   Which *of* these cars can we rent?

Whose   Questions about a **possessor** (a person)

Whose *novels* does he like?   Whose *bicycle* was stolen?

2. Wh-question words as adverbs

Wh-question words used as adverbs refer to times, locations, methods, purposes, and reasons. They include "when," "where," "how," and "why."

When   Questions about **times**

When will you leave?   When shall we meet again?

Where Questions about **locations**

Where do your parents live?   Where have the children gone?

How   Questions about **methods**

How did you get to school?   How can we get this computer to work?

Why Questions about **reasons** (usually answered with *because*)
  Why are you driving so fast? - *Because we are late.*
  Why would want to study now? - *Because my parents told me to.*

Why Questions about **purposes** (usually answered with *to* + *infinitive*)
  Why are you going upstairs now? - *To study for the test.*
  Why are you studying? - *To pass the test.*

How much Questions about an **uncountable quantity**
  How much *rice* can you eat?
  How much *time* do we have before the train departs?

How many Questions about a **countable quantity**
  How many *bowls* of rice can you eat?
  How many *times* have you been to Kyoto?

How far Questions about **distances**
  How far is it from your house to school?
  How far is it from the Earth to the Moon?

How old Questions about **ages** of anything
  How old is that house?   How old is your dog?

How often Questions about **frequencies**
  How often do you exercise? How often do you eat ramen?

How come Questions about **reasons and purposes** (Informal - Compare with *why* above)
  How come you're driving so fast? - *Because we are late.*
  How come you're going upstairs now? - *To study for the test.*

How+adjective Questions about **degree**
  How tall is he?   How loud was the music?

How+adverb Questions about **timing, rating and requests**
  How quickly can you get here? (timing)
  How well can you ski? (rating)
  How about your new job? (rating)
  How about having dinner with me tonight? (requests)

Note: Though technically "how about" for requests is considered a closed question, in informal usage the expected answer is "yes" or "no," but with a reason or further information. A simple "yes" or "no" answer to this question form would be impolite.

How about having dinner with me tonight? - *No, thank you. I have already made other plans.*

3. Wh-question words as pronouns

Wh-question words used as pronouns are used to refer to a noun that they replace in a statement. They include "who," "which," "whose," "whom," and "what" and can either be the subject or object, of a verb.

Who shall we hire? - *We shall hire Ken.*
Which is the season you enjoy most? - *The season I enjoy most is winter.*

"Whose," as a pronoun, is used to refer to a person as the possessor of something.

Whose blue bicycle is this?

"Whom," as a pronoun, is used as the object of the prepositions "to," "with," "for," and "by." "Whom" comes after the preposition.

With whom do you usually eat lunch?
For whom are you preparing lunch today?
By whom was this book written?
I'm getting married! - *Congratulations! To whom?*

Additionally, "whom" can be used as the object of the verb, but is considered very formal or old fashioned. In informal conversation, "whom" is usually replaced with "who."

Whom will you go to lunch with? (formal)
Whom would you prefer to see today? (formal)

4. More on closed questions using auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, negatives and tags

As mentioned, closed questions are answered by "yes" or "no." They can also be answered by a single piece of information such as, "I don't know," "perhaps," or "sometimes." To form questions using auxiliary and modal verbs, use the inversion method.

modal/auxiliary verb + subject + main verb
Were the children playing?
Are you playing a game now?

Closed questions can also be constructed in the negative form. Negative questions are almost always contracted with "n't" in normal speech; not contracting is very formal or provides emphasis. They are constructed by putting the auxiliary or modal verb in the

negative form.

> Doesn't she look like her sister?
> Can't we attend the party too?
> Aren't you always late for school? (contracted—casual and conversational)
> Are you not always late for school? (not contracted—formal and lateness is emphasized)
> Wouldn't you like to have tea with me?

5. Tags

Tags are another way of turning statements into closed questions. To form a tag question, the statement part is separated from the question part by a comma. The statement part of tag question can be either positive or negative.
· A positive statement requires a negative tag.
· A negative statement requires a positive tag.
· Tags only use auxiliary and modal verbs.
· If the statement is positive, the auxiliary or modal verb must be in the negative contracted form.
· Tags require a question mark.

Emiko is an excellent student, isn't she?   (positive statement + negative tag question)
We'll go to lunch after the concert, won't we? (positive statement + negative tag question)
It is not going to rain tonight, is it?   (negative statement + positive tag question)
You've never been to the UK, have you?   (negative statement + positive tag question)

English A2:
Integrated Academic
Reading and Writing

I. Understand the mechanics of introduction-body-conclusion essay format

A2.1 Essay Structure

At Tohoku University, you are required to write essays in various situations, such as for classes and research (the word *essay* in English refers to a formal and academic writing, exploring serious topics such as philosophy, history, and literature.). Furthermore, given that English is today viewed as a globalized language to communicate with other people all over the world, knowing how to write essays well is imperative to express and discuss your ideas in English. Since English has a set pattern for writing in general and essays follow it closely, learning the essay structure can help you write in various academic situations. This chapter provides you with useful information for understanding the essay structure, an essential element to be mastered in order to write effectively in English.

How to Master Essay Structure

Although essays have different topics and purposes, they all share a similar structure. That is, they are basically organized with three parts: **introduction**, **body**, and **conclusion**.

The Basic Structure of Essays:

Introduction

Body paragraph 1
Body paragraph 2
Body paragraph 3

Conclusion
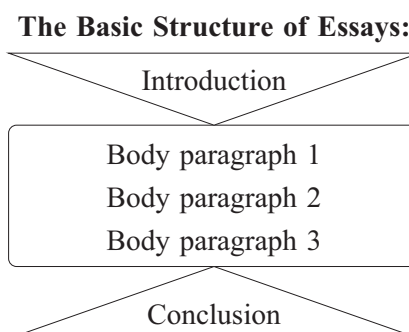
A good essay introduces its thesis at the end of the opening paragraph, and the following paragraphs are well developed to prove the validity of the thesis. The paragraphs should also follow a proper logical order so that they build on each other and reach a strong conclusion (**See A2.2 Paragraph Writing**).

1. Introduction
The introductory paragraph is the first part of an essay. Its main purpose is to introduce a reader to the topic of the essay and to present a **thesis statement**. More specifically, the introduction should:
1) Begin with the most general information, such as background and definitions.
2) The middle part of the introduction shows the overall topic, the purpose, your point of view, or research questions, and connects the background information to the thesis.
3) It ends with the most specific information, describing the scope and structure of your paper in a well-structured thesis.
(Note: The introductory part should be written after both the overall point of view and the

whole structure of essay are determined. Alternatively, you should revise the introduction when you have completed the body.)

2. Body

Body paragraphs are what make up most of the essay. Each body paragraph should focus on one main idea, and they can be seen as the pieces of the overall essay. That is, they must work to develop the thesis statement of the essay. More specifically, the body paragraphs should:

1) present supporting **evidence** and relevant details,

2) mention where the evidence came from,

3) mention why the evidence is necessary for your argument.

In addition, each body paragraph should be organized in a logical way (e.g., in chronological order, logical division, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, etc.).

What is evidence?

Evidence in body paragraphs comes from your ideas or research. It could be:

1) quotations or citations from a trustworthy source (e.g., a book or academic journal),

2) numbers, such as data from an experiment,

3) observations such as images or examples,

4) counterpoints to well-known or established arguments.

In the process of choosing evidence and details to use, the following two points should be carefully considered in order to prove that your conclusions can be trusted:

1) Whether the information is relevant in supporting the thesis statement

2) Whether the information is from a reliable source (Note that just because something has been published does not guarantee its reliability).

3. Conclusion

The conclusion paragraph is the last part of the essay and closely related to the introduction. The conclusion generally:

1) begins by briefly summarizing the main scope or structure of the paper or restating the thesis,

2) confirms the topic that was given in the introduction (e.g., the aims of the paper, the thesis statement, the research question, etc.),

3) ends with a more general statement about the relationship of the topic with its context and some implications, such as how the conclusion relates to the world or ideas for future research.

Example of Essay

Here is an example of an essay with the typical three-part structure. Read the following passage carefully and try to understand how it relates to the essay structure:

Global Warming: Its Causes and Solutions

Scientists have observed that the earth's average temperature has risen substantially over the past

centuries. Humans can be blamed for this as they have augmented greenhouse emissions, which is the leading cause of increasing temperatures. Although global warming is caused by modern life, this paper suggests that we can lower the risk associated with this alarming problem through simple, individual efforts.

Modernization, urbanization, and industrialization remain the strongest causes of the rise in the overall temperature on the earth's surface. Industries and vehicles emit a lot of harmful gases which lead to air pollution as well as the greenhouse effect—which causes global warming. Furthermore, burning fossil fuels exacerbates global warming, but this is the primary way that we generate electricity .... (etc.)

We can curb global warming by taking small steps individually like switching off lights and electrical appliances when not in use, using solar energy to heat water, switching to electric cars, and growing plants. For example, turning the lights off when we are not in the room reduces the amount of wasted electricity. As explained above, the generation of electricity is the primary reason that we burn fossil fuels, so if we reduce energy waste, we can reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the air, which will in turn help combat global warming .... (etc.)

To conclude, although global warming is a serious issue in modern times, there are steps that governments and individuals can take to reduce its effects. Since we only have one planet, we must collectively come forward to save it.

Planning an essay's structure should be done before starting to write to keep you from wasting a lot of time thinking of ideas and re-writing. The best way to start planning is to **brainstorm** several ideas for the topic and for the information that you will include. Then you can think of a few different ways of structuring the essay once a rough idea of the main issues has been decided. Tree diagrams, mind-maps, and flowcharts showing which ideas, facts, and references to include can be very helpful to organize your ideas and turn it into a well-structured essay.

Additional Information

Peer review is useful for developing your writing skills. This technique, often used in English composition classes, requires students to read and review other students' essays. It also provides you with an opportunity to read objectively, enhances your critical thinking ability, and helps you become a better editor. If you become good at catching mistakes and editing essays, you can apply this to your own writing in the future.

Furthermore, listening to well-structured oral presentations is also useful for the development of your writing skill because the format of an oral presentation is very similar to that of an essay in that it consists of an introduction, body, and conclusion (**See B2.6 Oral Reporting**).

However, while the above methods are all helpful, the most important step to be a good writer is to practice writing essays. Just like any other academic skills, mastering English writing takes time—usually years. Therefore, you should repeatedly practice writing essays in the format provided in this chapter, as much as possible.

I. Understand the mechanics of introduction-body-conclusion essay format

A2.2 Paragraph Writing

Paragraphs are groups of sentences that form a unit, and are the building blocks of an essay. Therefore, the first step to becoming a good writer of essays is to learn to write good paragraphs. This skill will enhance your skimming and scanning skills (**See A1.3 Skimming and Scanning**), which is imperative in conducting research at Tohoku University.
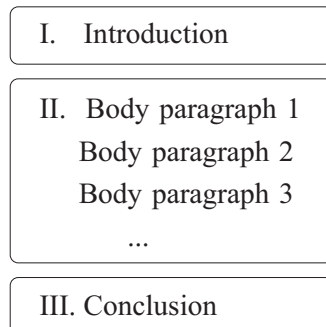
How to Master Paragraph Writing

1. Effective paragraph structure

The most important point is mastering effective paragraph structure. As shown in **A2.1 Essay Structure**, almost all essays have a basic introduction-body-conclusion structure. It is helpful to think about each paragraph as a mini essay with a similar three-part structure consisting of: a topic sentence (introductory sentence), supporting sentences, and a concluding or transition sentence. Compare the similarity in structure between essays and paragraphs below:

The Similarity between the Structures of Essays and Paragraphs:

Essay:

| I. Introduction |
| II. Body paragraph 1
Body paragraph 2
Body paragraph 3
... |
| III. Conclusion |

Paragraph:

| I. Topic sentence |
| II. Supporting sentence 1
Supporting sentence 2
Supporting sentence 3
... |
| III. Concluding sentence |
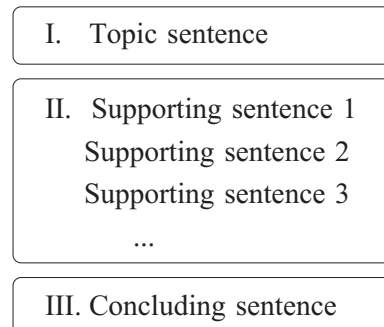
A well-organized paragraph introduces its topic sentence first, which tells what the paragraph will be written about. The following sentences should then support the statement or idea of the topic sentence. The paragraph should be coherent and unified in that the sentences support or develop a single, controlling idea, as presented in your topic sentence. In a coherent paragraph, each sentence flows smoothly into the next without obvious shifts or jumps, and such a paragraph also successfully shows the ties between old information and new information to make the structure of ideas or arguments clear to readers. More specifically, each part of a paragraph plays a different, important role to achieve the overall purpose of the paragraphs.

Topic sentence

A topic sentence functions to introduce a general overview of the topic or the purpose of the paragraph. It is usually placed at the beginning of the paragraph and should connect

the paragraph to the thesis statement of the essay (**See A 2.1 Essay Structure** for an explanation of the thesis).

How to write a good topic sentence

Perfecting the skill of writing a topic sentence is essential to successful essay writing. When writing a topic sentence, you should:

1) state your main idea clearly, and

2) balance the topic sentence between specifics and general ideas.

> 2-1) Don't write too vague or general idea.
>> →You will never be able to discuss it in a single paragraph.
> 2-2) Don't write too narrow of a statement.
>> →You will then have nothing more to write.

Compare the following examples of a topic sentence

> a) Fairness is one of the benefits associated with school uniforms in the Japanese education system.
> b) School uniforms reflect aspects of Japanese culture.
> c) The Japanese school uniform goes back to the Meiji era and wearing a school uniform is a breach of a child's right to individuality and self-expression.
> d) The school uniform of my high school is very cute.

(a) is a good topic sentence. It expresses a clear topic (fairness being a benefit of school uniforms) which is clearly connected to the thesis ("one of the" indicates that there are other benefits—likely discussed in other paragraphs), and is neither too vague nor too narrow. (b) is too vague. What aspects? Furthermore, this is likely too large of a topic to be dealt with in a single paragraph. (c) has two main ideas "goes back to the Meiji era" and "breach of a child's right," which should therefore be separated into two different paragraphs. (d) only expresses a sentiment, and is probably far too specific to be able to write much more about.

Supporting sentences

Supporting sentences develop the main idea presented in the topic sentence. The discussion is usually started by providing common words. The supporting part can come in the form of definitions, classifications, explanations, contrasts, examples and evidence, etc., depending on the purpose of your paragraph. When you write supporting sentences, it is very important that your sentences stay on topic and clearly relate to the main idea of the topic sentence. If the sentences are irrelevant, your paragraph will not be strong and may be unclear. If you find that many of your sentences don't seem to match the topic sentence clearly, you may need to create a new paragraph for those sentences.

Concluding or transition sentence

The final part of the paragraph is the concluding or transition sentence. It does not

present new information, but often either summarizes or comments on the paragraph content. It can also provide a link by showing how the paragraph links to the topic sentence of the next paragraph.

2. The effective use of transition words

Transition words are very useful to show the structure of relationships between ideas. With these tools, the beginning of each sentence (or paragraph) should link back to the main idea of the paragraph or a previous sentence (or paragraph). For example, the transition word "for example" is used to give examples, while the word "likewise" is used to connect similar ideas. Broadly, transition words can be grammatically divided into three types: sentence connectors (adverbials), clause connectors (conjunctions), and other connectors. Sentence connectors are used to connect two sentences together; clause connectors are used to connect two clauses together to form one sentence. Other connectors are based on different grammar patterns: Many are followed by noun phrases, but some are used as verbs in a sentence. The following are examples of the three types, which are all used to show the contrast:

> Transition words are very useful. **However**, they should not be used to begin every sentence.
>
> **Although** transition words are very useful, they should not be used to begin every sentence.
>
> **Despite** their importance in clarifying the relationships between ideas, transition words should not be used to begin every sentence.

	Sentence Connectors	Clause Connectors	Other Connectors
To introduce an additional idea	also besides furthermore in addition moreover	and	another (+noun (N)) an additional (+N)
To compare	likewise similarly equally in the same way	and both... and not only... but also neither... nor just as	as... as just like to be similar to
To contrast	however in contrast instead in/by contrast nevertheless nonetheless on the other hand on the contrary	but yet although even though though whereas while	despite (+N) in spite of (+N) compared to/with to differ (from)
To introduce a cause/reason	for this reason	for because since as	due to because of

	Sentence Connectors	Clause Connectors	Other Connectors
To introduce an effect/result	hence thus therefore as a result as a consequence consequently	so	to result in to cause to have an effect on to affect
To give an example	for example for instance in this case		such as (+N) like an example of (+N) to demonstrate
To show chronological order	first, second, etc. first of all then next now then soon last finally meanwhile previously	after as as soon as before since until when while	the first, the second the next, the last, the final before (+N) after (+N) since (+N)
To show an alternative	alternatively otherwise	or if unless	
To identify or clarify	that is in other words specifically		namely i.e.
To conclude	all in all in brief in conclusion in short in summary		to summarize to conclude It is clear that... We can see that...

Using these transition words can help you to create longer and more complex sentences, which will improve your writing and will likely be necessary to effectively communicate difficult ideas (such as those that you will find in your academic field or major).

3. Variation

In English writing, it is important not to overuse the same words or phrases too many times in a single paragraph or sentence. Although this cannot be avoided for grammatical words such as "a" or "the," pronouns (e.g., "I," "he," "it"), or some specialized words (e.g., "plasma transfusion," "hydraulic press"), you should work to use many different words and sentence styles. **A1.2 Synonym Vocabulary** can help you achieve this, as well as **A1.1 Word Parts**. Word parts can help you find different words, or use the same idea in different ways, such as in the following sentences that have the same meaning (notice how the "fame" and "invent" vary in each sentence):

Thomas Edison is famous for inventing the light bulb.
Thomas Edison's fame comes from the invention of the light bulb.
Thomas Edison famously invented the light bulb.

4. The importance of proofreading

It is imperative to use correct grammar, spelling, and proper technical vocabulary in your essay to enhance the evaluation of your essay. Careless mistakes may leave readers with a negative impression. Although writing error-free sentences may seem unrealistic, it is easy to avoid such simple mistakes. Prior to submitting your essay, you should always proofread it at least twice: once to check the flow of the whole paragraph (or essay) to make sure that your arguments are clear and logically organized; and again time to check for spelling and grammar mistakes and the choice of words.

Example of Paragraph Writing

Look at the paragraph below. Notice how it follows the general paragraph structure, makes good use of transition words (in **bold**), and contains a variety of vocabulary and sentences.

I do not wish to deny that hydraulic fracturing in search of underground natural gas deposits is beneficial to the local economics, but the downsides of fracking outweigh any potential benefits. When highly pressurized water, sand, ceramic beads, and a mixture of chemicals are injected deep into the ground, it causes the rock formations to crack, **thus** releasing the natural gas found within. The benefits of an increased supply of natural gas **notwithstanding**, this process does more harm than good. **To illustrate**, let's take a quick look at the list of environmental hazards posed by this process. **First**, there is a highly publicized issue of earthquakes and tremors associated with the wastewater from the fracking process being reinserted into the ground. **Consequently**, man-made seismic events have been recorded in virtually every location where hydrocracking has taken place. **Furthermore**, contamination of the soil is resulting from the fracking fluid remaining in the ground once the well has run dry. **Specifically**, more than two dozen chemicals which are known carcinogens are used in this process. **In the same manner**, fracking causes airborne pollutants to be released into the atmosphere, which compromises the air quality in the region. **For instance**, dangerous amounts of methane, sulfur oxide and benzene have been recorded in fracking locations. **So**, it is my opinion that more rules and regulations need to be put into place before hydraulic fracturing can be considered beneficial.

In this example, the first sentence contains a clear topic (the demerits to fracking outweigh any merits) and all of the supporting sentences clearly relate to this idea. The paragraph also makes good use of transition words and shows a high level of variation in sentence complexity, evidence type, and vocabulary. Though there are not many different words for "fracking," notice that when talking about the water used in fracking a number of different words and phrases are used (e.g., "fluid," "wastewater," "hydrocracking," and "hydraulic fracturing") which make good use of both word parts and synonyms. Finally, the last sentence concludes the paragraph, and potentially transitions to the next one (for example, this would be very transitional if the next paragraph discusses the specific rules and regulations needed).

Additional Information

In order to develop your paragraph writing, you should use the same basic methods used for improving your writing in general (given in **A2.1 Essay Structure**)—namely reading well-structured paragraphs. The Tohoku University Library has many academic books and journals where you can find good examples. When reading academic books (including introductory books) and journals, you should pick out keywords and phrases that you think are very useful in paragraph writing, as well as understanding the content. Although building your technical vocabulary specific to your academic fields takes time, it is very important to increase your stock. When you write a paragraph, you can make use of the words and phrases. Furthermore, when trying to expand your written vocabulary, consider using a thesaurus as it is a helpful way to find other ways to express your ideas.

II. Acquire the ability to read various academic texts

A2.3 Collocations

A collocation is a particular combination of words in which two or more words are often used together in a way that sounds natural. For example, in "commit a crime," "commit" and "crime" are generally used together, so "do a crime" or "make a crime" sounds unnatural. Learning collocations is important because using accepted collocations helps you speak and write English in a natural and accurate way, and if you use them wrong (i.e., "make a crime"), you might confuse your listeners and readers. Learning collocations also enables you to read more quickly because you can process chunks instead of individual words. For example, skilled readers who see the following sentence part can anticipate what comes after the verb "pose" because they know that "pose" often goes with nouns such as "threat," "problem," and "question."

These results **pose a** challenging **question** about ...

How to Master Collocations
1. Types of collocations
There are different types of collocations in terms of which part of speech combines with which part of speech. Below are some of the most common collocations in English, divided by type. Please make sure to remember them. Also, be aware that since collocations are usually made based on habit, some are very idiomatic. Please check **B1.4 Idiomatic Expressions** and notice that some of the idiomatic expressions are similar to collocations.

adjective + noun
severe weather (~~serious weather~~)
high temperature (~~tall temperature~~)
small chance (~~low chance~~)
strong evidence (~~powerful evidence~~)
a large number of students (~~a big number of students~~)

verb + noun (+ preposition)
face problems/difficulties/challenges
develop skills (~~grow skills~~)
take advantage of (~~have advantage of~~)
pay attention to (~~give attention to~~)
conduct/do a research (~~make a research~~)

adverb + past participle
(be) greatly influenced
(be) highly valued

(be) largely ignored

(be) previously discussed

(be) widely documented

adverb + adjective

stunningly attractive

fully aware

particularly relevant

absolutely exhausted (~~very exhausted~~)

noun + noun

government statistics (~~governmental statistics~~)

language ability (~~linguistic ability~~)

safety instructions (~~safe instructions~~)

verb + adjective

become blurred

consider relevant

make aware

prove successful

remain unclear

verb + adverb (or adverb + verb)

rely heavily (on)

increase significantly

2. Use a learner's dictionary

Learner's dictionaries give you useful information about collocations. For example, when you look up a noun (e.g., "survey"), see which verbs and adjectives go with "survey." When you look up an adverb (e.g., "commonly"), see which verbs (or past participles) go with "commonly." For more details, see the section "Additional Information."

3. Read, Read, Read

When you're reading, pay attention to which words go together. As you read more and more, you'll notice that the same combinations appear repeatedly.

Examples of Collocation

The followings are collocation exercises. Feel free to consult a dictionary.

Question 1: Choose the correct word.

1. She (   ) attention to what the presenter told and started taking notes.

a) gave

b) had

c) paid

d) took

2. The professor said that all the students have (   ) the final exam.

a) got

b) passed

c) made

d) done

3. Recent research (   ) that Smith's theory is flawed.

a) hints

b) explains

c) defines

d) suggests

4. The author of the article (   ) his opinion clearly.

a) states

b) explains

c) announces

d) declares

5. The book (   ) some critical questions about the national security.

a) rises

b) rises up

c) raises

d) raises up

6. We need to (   ) the economic aspect (   ).

a) take ... into consideration

b) take ... into a consideration

c) take ... into the consideration

d) take ... into considerations

(Answer: 1. c   2. b   3. d   4. a   5. c   6. a)

Question 2: Choose the WRONG collocation (<u>underlined</u>).

1.

a) This book is <u>strongly recommended</u>.

b) Smoking <u>strongly influences</u> your health.

c) She <u>strongly loved</u> her children.

d) The professor <u>strongly dislikes</u> students' absence from class without notice.

2.

a) He was probably the most <u>highly educated</u> prime minister of this century.

b) Our marketing manager has developed a <u>highly profitable</u> line of products.

c) He used a lot of <u>highly unusual</u> expressions in the speaking test, so he failed.

d) The <u>highly exhausted</u> runners were rescued during the race.

The adverb "strongly" collocates with verbs that particularly relate to having an opinion such as "oppose," "influence," "believe," "deny," "recommend," "condemn," and "object." The adjective "highly" is used with the words that connote probability ("likely," "successful," "competitive," "profitable," "effective," "controversial," and so forth).

(Answer: 1. c 2. d)

Additional Information

Learner's English dictionaries provide collocation information. When you look up a new word—even a familiar word—, notice words that are used together with the word you are looking up. Look up, for example, "benefit" in *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

benefit /beˈnəfɪˌt/ noun [C or U]

1. a helpful or good effect, or something intended to help: *The discovery of oil brought many benefits to the town.*

*One of the many benefits **of** foreign travel is learning how to cope with the unexpected.*

*He's had **the** benefit **of** an expensive education and yet he continues to work as a waiter.*

*I didn't **get/derive (much)** benefit **from** school.*

*With the benefit **of hindsight** (=Helped by the knowledge since learned), it is easy for us to see where we went wrong.*

SLIGHTLY FORMAL *She drinks a lot less now, **to the** benefit **of** her health as a whole.*

2. the money given by the government to people who need financial help, for example because they cannot find a job

MAINLY UK **unemployment** benefit

I'm **on** benefit at the moment.

Collocations with *benefit* are shown in **bold**. You can learn several collocations with "benefit"—"benefits of," "the benefit of," "get/derive (much) benefit from," "benefit of hindsight," "to the benefit of," "unemployment benefit," and "on benefit."

II. Acquire the ability to read various academic texts

A2.4 Data Reporting

Academic writing frequently contains data, numbers, and statistics. Such information is often accompanied with graphics—such as tables, pie charts, bar graphs, and line graphs—with which the writer shows complex information and relationships visually. Understanding graphic materials and how they are discussed helps you read and write such texts more easily. Data reporting is especially important in such academic fields as sciences, medicine, engineering, and economics, just to name some. In addition to your ability to understand graphical information, you will be required to create data in your research and to deliver presentations using them.

How to Master Reading and Writing Data Reporting

You should first become familiar with commonly used words and phrases in order to be able to read, write, and present data reporting. These phrases will be useful not only for understanding, but also when you have to make oral or written reports of your own data. When looking at the list, refer to **A1.1 Word Parts**, **A1.2 Synonym Vocabulary**, and **B1.3 Phrasal Verbs** to help you remember the words and phrases more easily. Furthermore, refer to **A1.5 Determining Connotative and Denotative Meanings**, as many of these words have similar denotative meanings, but can have different connotations, especially regarding the strength of the word.

1. Indicating change

Movement up [verb and noun]

increase	*Japan's industrial output **increased by** 2%. / ...a sharp **increase in** productivity*
rise	*Tourist trips of all kinds in Britain **rose by** 10.5% between 1977 and 1987. / August has seen **a large rise** in the number of unemployed.*
surge	*Specialists see various reasons for the recent **surge in** inflation. / **Surging** imports will add to the demand for hard currency.*
gain	*Some people do **gain** weight after they stop smoking. / The party **made considerable gains** at local elections.*
hike	*The President wants to **hike** spending for foreign aid. / There is growing public concern over price **hikes** and joblessness.*

Movement up [verb]

skyrocket (informal)	*The trade deficit has **skyrocketed**.*
mushroom	*New housing developments **mushroomed** on the edge of town.*
soar	*Her temperature **soared**.*
escalate	*Land costs are **escalating**, causing concern among local builders.*
grow	*Skiing has really **grown in** popularity.*

double/triple/quadruple

> The church has ***doubled/tripled/quadruped*** *its membership in the last five years.*

Movement up [phrasal verb]

go up/move up/jump up/shoot up/come up

> *Blood-sugar levels **go up** as you digest food.*

Movement up [noun]

increment	*...a salary of £18,000, with annual **increments** of 2.5%*
growth	*...the recent **growth** of interest in African music*

Movement up [others]

-times	*She earns **five times** as much as I do.*
-fold	*The value of the house has increased **four-fold** in the last ten years.*

Movement down [verb and noun]

decline	*Car sales have **declined by** a quarter. / There has been **a decline in** the size of families.*
decrease	*The number of people who have the disease has **decreased significantly** in recent years. / The government announced **a 25% decrease in** the price of fuel.*
drop	*The number of deaths on the roads has **dropped sharply**. / ...**a sharp drop in** profits*
fall	*The number of subscribers had **fallen to** 1,000. / ...the **sharp fall in** the birth rate in European countries*
cut	*The welfare budget has been **cut by** $56 billion. / The decision to **make cuts** in health care provision has been widely criticized.*

Movement down [verb]

dwindle	*The elephant population is **dwindling**.*
plummet	*Profits **plummeted** from £49 million to £11 million.*
plunge	*The unemployment rate **plunged** sharply.*
shrink	*The firm's staff had **shrunk** to only four people.*
sink	*The population of the village **sank** to just a few families.*
reduce	*The governor announced a new plan to **reduce** crime.*

Movement down [phrasal verb]

go down/move down

> *Spending has **gone down by** 2%.*

Movement down [noun]

reduction	*...**a slight reduction in** the price of oil*

No change [verb]

> **stabilize**   *...an attempt to **stabilize** the economy*

No change [adjective]

> **(remain/hold) steady**
>
> > *Employment is **holding steady** at 96%.*
>
> **constant**   *There was a **constant stream of** visitors to the house.*
>
> **stable**   *Fuel prices have become more **stable** after several increases last year.*
>
> **unchanged**   *The basic rate of income tax will **remain unchanged** at 20%.*
>
> **equal to**   *The rent was **equal to** half his monthly income.*

Variable change [verb]

> **fluctuate**   *The number of children in the school **fluctuates** around 100.*
>
> **seesaw**   *Before the election, the president **seesawed** in the polls.*

Reaching the highest point or lowest point [verb]

> **peak**   *Wind speeds **peaked** at 105 mph yesterday.*
>
> **reach the top/highest level**
>
> > ***...reach the highest level** of GDP per capita*
>
> **fall to a low** (of <number>)
>
> > *The level of Lake Michigan **fell to a low of** about 61 m.*
>
> **bottom out** (at <number>)
>
> > *The altimeter **bottomed out at** 1,500 feet and his speed climbed to 280 knots.*

Indicating huge change

> dramatic/dramatically   astronomical/astronomically
>
> rapid/rapidly   steep/steeply
>
> sharp/sharply   sudden/suddenly
>
> significant/significantly

Small change

> slight/slightly   gradual/gradually
>
> slow/slowly   gentle/gently
>
> steady/steadily

2. Comparing and contrasting

Showing differences

> compared to/with X, Y...
>
> In comparison/contrast, X...
>
> In contrast to X, Y...
>
> In comparison to/with X, Y...
>
> On the other hand, Y...

X is more/less ... than Y

X is not as much as Y

X is *-er (higher, smaller, fewer, etc.) than Y

X is different from Y in that...

X differs from Y in that...

The difference between X and Y is that ...

Whereas/While X is ..., Y is ...

Showing similarities

X is similar to Y

X is comparable to/with Y in that...

There are similarities between X and Y

In the same way/manner/fashion/vein, Y...

Equally, Y...

Similarly, Y...

X and Y have the same...

Likewise,

3. Showing relationships

X correlates with Y. / X and Y are correlated.

X goes/moves/changes/rises/etc. along with Y.

With respect to X, Y ....

X <verb> in conjunction with Y

X <verb> in the same way as Y

Respectively,

4. Describing significance

a large number/amount/quantity of ...

a small number/amount/quantity/ of ...

little or no ...

at least...

to a certain degree

in terms of

5. Other important vocabulary

account for

rank

trend

frequency

percent(age)

rate

it is clear that

it can be seen

it appears/seems

2 Graphic materials

There are several types of graphics used in academic texts. You should become familiar with them so that you can recognize the important information in them quickly and make good decisions about which to use in your own studies. Though graphics are easy to look at, please remember that you still must explain them in papers, especially what they mean and their significance or importance.

Bar Graph

(Jan, Feb, Mar bar chart with values ranging 0 to 5)

Pie Chart

- Happy
- So-So
- Unhappy

Line Chart

- Control
- Experiment

(First, Second, Third, Fourth)

Radar Chart

Con...
Per...   Po...
Cost   Mai...

- Engine A
- Engine B

Area Chart

(Jan Feb Mar Apr May)

- Videos
- Comments
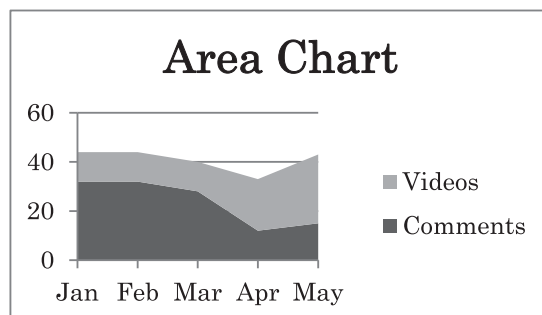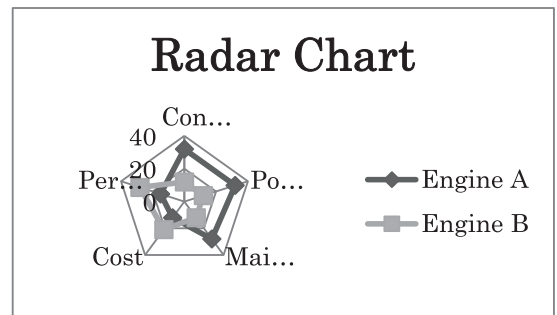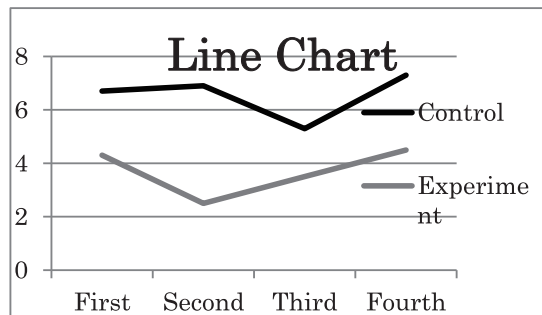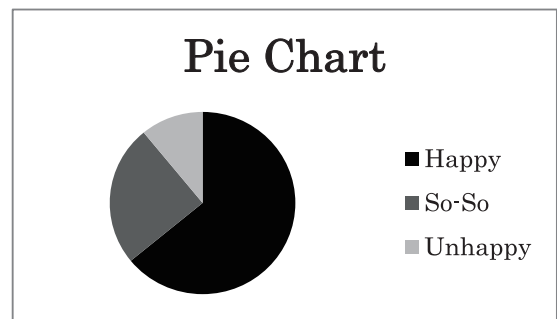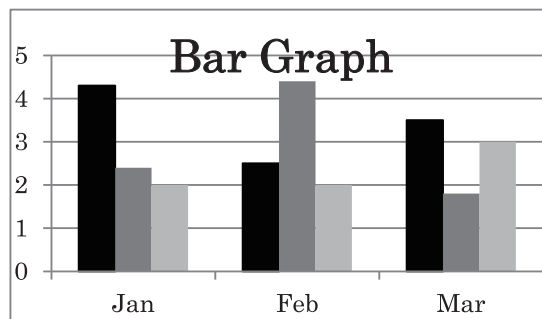
Table

Disease	Under 5	Over 5	Total
Meningitis AC*	10,000	16,000	26,000
Rotavirus*	402,000	47,000	449,000
Pneumococcal Disease*	716,000	897,000	1,612,000
TOTAL	1,128,000	960,000	2,087,000

Examples of Data Reporting

Look at the following figures and how they are reported. Notice that the explanatory paragraphs utilize much of the vocabulary in this chapter.

U.S. primary energy consumption by major sources, 1950-2018

quadrillion British thermal units

renewables   nuclear   petroleum   natural gas   coal
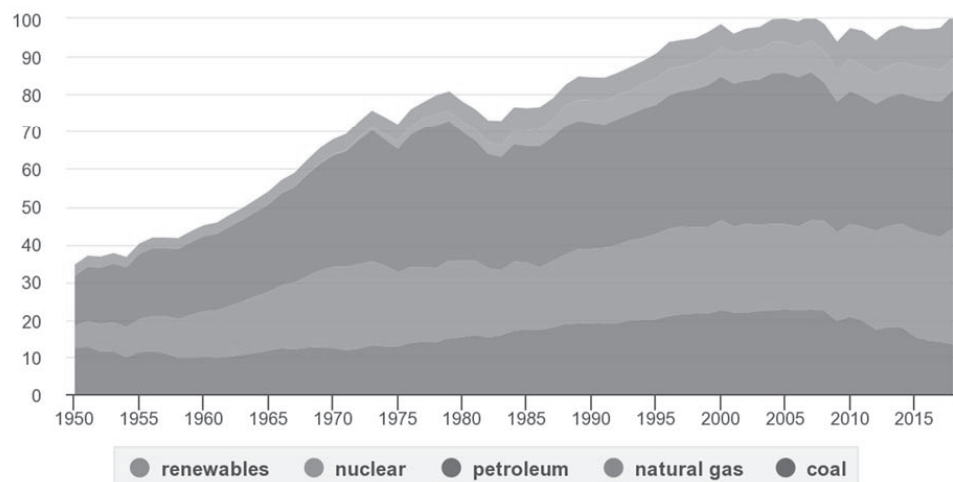
Note: Petroleum is petroleum products excluding biofuels, which are included in renewables.
Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Monthly Energy Review*, Table 1.3, April 2019

Figure 1. US Primary Energy Consumption by Major Sources, 1950-2018

This area chart illustrates the major sources of energy consumption—renewable gas, nuclear power, petroleum, natural gas, and coal—between 1950 and 2018. Overall energy use has increased since 1950, and most energy sources grew along with this trend. In 1950, the two major sources were coal and petroleum, which account for more than half of the all energy consumption. In 2018, the two major sources were petroleum and natural gas, accounting for two thirds of all energy consumption. Generally, since 1950 petroleum has been the most used. Around 1970, nuclear power usage rose, and its recent share is about 10%. The most striking transformation in the past 70 years is the decline of coal. Its share has dropped from about 33% in 1950 to 12 % in 2018.

NOTES: CLRD is Chronic lower respiratory diseases. Values show percentage of total deaths. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality.
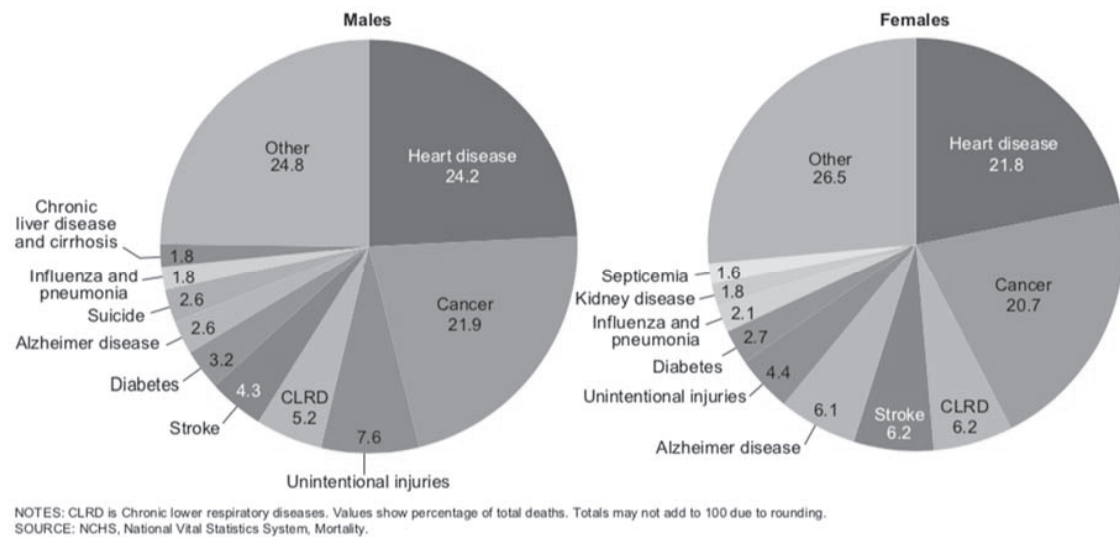
Figure 2. Ten Leading Causes of Death (%), by Sex: United States, 2017

The two pie charts in Figure 2 show the 10 leading causes of death by sex in the United States in 2017. For both males and females, heart disease and cancer ranked as the first and second leading causes of death, respectively. But, in other causes of death, males and females show differences. For males, unintentional injuries is the third highest leading cause, accounting for 7.6% of deaths, whereas it is 6th, accounting for 4.4%, for women. Suicide ranked 8th in males, but it is not amongst the top 10 causes for females. Likewise, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis ranked 10th for males, but is not included for females. On the other hand, kidney disease and septicemia only had high percentages for females—ranking 9th and 10th respectively. The cause that shows the widest gap between the sexes is Alzheimer's disease, which accounts for 2.6% for males but 6.1% for females.

III. Acquire the ability to read and write academic texts

A2.5 Reading Academic Articles

Most students at Tohoku University will have to read academic papers in English. Since most academic articles and research papers are written in English, you need to know how to read English research articles efficiently and quickly in order to have an educated and up-to-date opinion in your major or research field. Studying how to read research articles efficiently will help you to understand various academic texts and papers within your major. It will also provide you with the foundation needed to understand and summarize academic articles as well as give you the skills required to understand how research papers are written. These skills will be of great benefit to you in your university career.

How to Master Reading Academic Articles

Most scientific articles follow the basic structure referred to as IMRAD. This stands for Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. Depending on the academic discipline, the acronym may be different or there may be different sections. Some papers have a separate literature review section and a discussion of the results that come after the results section. A literature review paper will not have a methods or results section. However, this is a basic outline that most research papers follow. Notice the similarities between this structure and the IBC essay format explained in **A2.1 Essay Structure**.

Reading a research paper is very different from reading a novel or a book. When reading a research paper, it is necessary to understand how they are structured. Once you have this knowledge, you can devise reading strategies, such as skimming and scanning (**See A1.3 Skimming and Scanning**), to help you get the important information quickly and efficiently. The table below shows the basic parts of a research paper and what information is given in each section. Notice this outline includes the IMRAD structure.

The structure of academic papers

Structure	Purpose of the section and what you should look for
Title	This should give you an idea of the overall content of the paper.
Abstract	This tells what the article is all about.
Introduction	This tells you about the author's intention, the goals, and significance of the research.
Literature review (Previous studies / background)	This tells you what others have said about this research topic.
Methodology	This section tells you how the research theme was analyzed and investigated. And who or what was used in the data sample.
Results	The main findings are found here.
Discussion	This section examines and interprets the findings.
Conclusion	The final section wraps everything up and may state how the research is significant and make suggestions for future studies.

Reading strategies

Knowing and remembering how research papers are constructed will help you devise reading strategies. When reading research papers, it is recommended that you organize the way you read. Below illustrates a three-step process that you should try to use when reading research papers.

1. Read for the gist

In this first step, the goal is to understand the author's main goals and objectives and to have an idea of the results that were achieved. This can also help you decide if this paper is relevant or not for you to use in your studies. Specifically:

Read the title: This will give you an idea of the paper subject matter.

Read the abstract: This will give you an idea of what the research paper is about and how it will be written. Reading the abstract will also let you know whether the paper is relevant to what you need to know.

Read the introduction: This is usually where the author will state their goals and objectives of the article and may include a research question or hypothesis.

Skim through the section titles / tables and graphs: Just by skimming through the titles and tables and graphs, you will get a basic idea of how the research was done. This is fine at this stage.

Read the conclusion: This is where the author repeats all their ideas and main findings. Through the conclusion you will get an idea of the main research objectives and the results as well as a general overview of what was done in the study.

As you go through this first step, take notes of any keywords / key points and vocabulary you are unaware of. You can look these up later. Furthermore, look out for word parts (**See A1.1 Word Parts**) and synonyms (**See A1.2 Synonym Vocabulary**) and try to guess the meanings. The information about note taking in **B1.1 Note Taking While Listening** will also help you to organize the information. Once you have looked up these words, try to write a summary in 100 words or less of what the paper is about, using the information in **A1.4 Summarizing and Paraphrasing**. This will help your memory retention of what the paper is about.

2. Scan for keywords and phrases

Now that you have read the abstract, introduction, and conclusion, and skimmed the rest, you should have a gist or a general idea of the paper's objectives and results. Now scan the literature, data and methods section, and the discussion section if one is included for specific keywords and phrases. Use the tips for skimming and scanning in **A1.3 Skimming and Scanning**, but also try reading the first sentence of every paragraph. Remember that topic sentences come at the beginning of body paragraphs (**See A2.2 Paragraph Writing**), so the first sentence will usually introduce the idea for the paragraph that follows. You can then scan the rest of the paragraph to see if it has information relevant to what you need and to help your understanding of specific

keywords and phrases so that you can sufficiently understand the text surrounding them. Again, take notes and highlight passages, keywords, and expressions to remind you where the main points of the paper are. This is also good for quoting or referencing the paper later.

3. Read the paper in full

Now that you have a good idea of the article through the completion of steps 1 and 2, you can read the research paper in full, taking notes of any further vocabulary or expressions you do not recognize and of the main points outlined in the paper.

Example of Research Paper Reading

Find a research paper on an area or field you are familiar with or one which is related to your major. Don't read the research paper straight through from beginning to the end. This may demotivate you. The paper may also be very difficult and you may face many words you have not encountered before. Therefore, the steps as outlined in this chapter may be helpful in giving you the skills to read and comprehend an academic paper successfully.

III. Acquire the ability to read and write academic texts

A2.6 Understanding Academic Abstracts

An abstract is a synthesis of a research paper's content usually between 200 and 300 words. Its function is to give the reader an understanding of the main points of the paper, specifically the research purpose, the data and methods used, and, most importantly, the results. Most of you will have to write academic papers at Tohoku University, and whatever language you use, an English abstract is needed for most journals and academic societies. Studying how to write abstracts will help you read various academic texts and papers within your major. It will also provide you with the skills needed to understand and summarize academic papers as well as give you the skills required to write abstracts for your own research throughout your university career.

How to Master Understanding an Abstract

Below are the 8 basic steps that describe the structure of an abstract for an academic paper. However, what steps are used may vary according to:

1. Your academic field
2. Whether your paper is
   a) based on empirical research data
   b) a theoretical paper or;
   c) a review paper
3. The requirements of journals (length, emphasis, etc.)
4. The writing style of the author / what the author feels are the most important things they want to stress

Therefore, not all abstracts you read will necessarily adhere to the 8 steps. But these steps can act as an initial guide to writing a good academic abstract.

Step 1 Keywords

These are the main words that best describe the content of the research paper. You are usually limited to five keywords.

Step 2 Research background

This may contain up to two sentences and can include things such as an explanation of the research problem.

> There has been a great discussion about ...
> Concern over ... has arisen / has gained attention
> Within the field of ... many researchers have shown an interest in ...

Step 3 Literature review

This step explains what people have said in the current research literature.

Some studies have claimed that...
Several studies have been conducted on...
Previous studies (have) focused on ...

Step 4 What is missing or hasn't been done yet

Here an appeal is made to the significance of doing the research.

However, there has been little study done concerning ...
However, ... has received little attention in the literature.

Step 5 Purpose of the research

Here a brief explanation of research goals is mentioned.

The present study discusses ...
This paper will examine (discuss, analyze) the problem of ...
In this research, we will investigate research question 1 and research question 2.

Step 6 Data and methods section

This is a brief explanation or outline of the data used and how it was analyzed.

Data was collected from ... using...
The participants in (this study) ... were...
(participants) ... were interviewed about...

Step 7 Results

This is a very important part of the abstract and needs to be clear but concise.

Results reveal/make it clear/imply/signify/suggest that ...

These words have different connotations in that the strength of the results or claims varies depending on the word. **See A1.5 Determining Connotative and Denotative Meanings**

... indicate that ...
Results show/explain ...

Step 8 Conclusion, the significance of your study, its contribution to the field

This is a good way to end the abstract as it illustrates the validity and significance of the research done.

It is hoped that the outcome of the present study will be of some use to ...
This study makes a contribution to ...
This study makes an impact on ...

Example of an Academic Abstract

Below is an example of an academic abstract taken from an engineering journal.

Academic field: Engineering
Journal title: Research in Engineering Design (October 2018)
Paper title: A method to evaluate direct and indirect design dependencies between components in product architecture
Authors: Sangjin Jung, Oyku Asikoglu, Timothy William Simpson
Published: 2018

Step 1 Keywords
Product architecture, design dependencies, redesign, interface

Step 2 Research background / Step 3 Literature review / Step 4 What is missing or hasn't been done yet
Methods for evaluating the strength of design dependencies in product architecture have been widely studied in the literature; however, evaluating the effects of direct and indirect interactions between components/modules remains a challenge. In fact, indirect connections between components/modules are often overlooked in many cases when evaluating design dependencies. Having a more consistent way of defining a product architecture that considers both its direct and indirect connections is important, especially when analyzing redesign complexity and change propagation.

Step 5 Purpose of the research
In this study, we propose a systematic method to evaluate direct and indirect design dependencies between components in product architectures. Interfaces are classified into six different types based on a thorough review of the literature, and a method for evaluating design dependencies is introduced to estimate the relative importance of interfaces directly from a set of comparable products.

Step 6 Data and methods section
Using an electrical circuit analogy, the proposed method can quantify both direct and indirect design dependencies between components within a product architecture. We compare design dependency results for different wireless computer mice to validate the effectiveness of the proposed method.

Step 7 Results / Step 8 Conclusion, the significance of your study, its contribution to the field
The results show that using the proposed design dependency measure including direct and indirect effects provides more reliable design dependency results.

English B2:
Integrated Academic
Listening and Speaking

I. Develop the ability to listen for pragmatic language usage

B2.1 Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence is the ability to interpret the speaker's intended meaning, their assumptions, their purposes, and the kinds of actions (e.g., making a request, apologizing) that they are performing when they speak or write. (**See B2.4 Speech Acts**). Pragmatic meaning depends on the context of a situation. People change how they speak and what they want to say according to the person they are speaking to. To be pragmatically competent, you have to make sense of what the speaker says or doesn't say and then interpret their meaning. Having good grammar is of course essential, but being pragmatically competent is equally important. Improving pragmatic competence will be especially helpful for academic listening and speaking skills, the two important aspects of your careers at Tohoku University.

How to Master Pragmatic Competence
1. How to improve your pragmatic competence
Sometimes people imply ideas when speaking rather than expressing their purpose directly. To get the true meaning of a statement, it's important to understand not just *what* the speaker said, but *how* and *why* it was said. This is especially important for listening for pragmatic understanding. Take a look at the table below for some advice on how to master pragmatic competency as a speaker and learner.

Table 1. How to improve your pragmatic competence

How to master pragmatic competence as a speaker	How to master pragmatic competence as a listener
When the speaker speaks, consider the person with whom the speaker is speaking. What does the speaker want to accomplish? How does the speaker want to sound? (**See B2.5 Pronunciation and Intonation**)	Think about what the speaker wants to achieve. What is the purpose of their utterance, speech or conversation? (**See B2.5 Pronunciation and Intonation**).
Consider the speaker's tone of voice, intonation, and whether the speaker uses formal or casual language. All of these will be determined by the person with whom the speaker is speaking (**See B2.2 Tone of Voice**).	It is important to pay attention to the speaker's tone of voice. Is the language used formal or casual? What is the relationship between the speaker and the listener? Is this influencing how the speaker is talking? (**See B2.2 Tone of Voice**).
How sure is the speaker about the topic/information the speaker is talking about? Speaker's intonation and tone of voice will give clues to the listener about the speaker's degree of certainty.	Learn to pay attention to the speaker's degree of certainty. How sure is the speaker about the information they are talking about? Does the speaker's tone of voice give the listener clues about speaker's degree of certainty?
The way the speaker talks is sometimes more important than the words the speaker uses. Stress and intonation can create shades of meaning, attitude, and the speaker's point of view (**See B2.2 Tone of Voice**).	Think about the way stress and intonation patterns are used to convey meaning or different shades of meaning. This will help the listener understand a speaker's point of view. (**See B2.2 Tone of Voice**).

2. Function questions

Function questions aim to test your understanding of what someone is saying even if they are not being direct or explicit. Such questions may also be termed inference questions (**See A1.6 Making Inferences**). These questions may use words like "imply" or "infer" in their construction. Below are some examples of these "function" questions.

- What does the teacher imply when she says _____?
- What can be inferred from the student's response?
- What is the purpose of the woman's response?

3. Attitude questions

Attitude questions check if you understand how speakers may feel about a topic or issue. This can also be related to politeness level. Below are two typical examples of "attitude" questions.

- How does the student feel about _____?
- What is the teacher's opinion of _____?

Examples of Pragmatic Competence

Questions that try to test your pragmatic understanding and comprehension of politeness level usually come in two forms. They are "function" and "attitude." Below are some questions for you to try.

Question 1

Student A: Do you mind if I put some music on?
Student B: Well, I'm in the middle of studying for a test.

What does Student B imply?
a) Not to put music on
b) Student B will be finished soon, then Student A can put music on.
c) They should study for the test together.
d) Student B will listen to music later.

Question 2

A professor tells his student, "Before submitting your next paper, have a look at this grammar and writing assignments book. It is very helpful."

What does the professor think about the student's writing ability?
a) The professor wants the student to buy a grammar book.
b) The paper should be given to a native speaker to have the grammar checked.
c) The student needs to help the professor with his grammar book.
d) The professor wants the student to further improve his or her grammar.

Question 3

A man is in the bath and hears the phone ring. He calls to his wife who is in the other room.

Man: Is that the phone ringing?

What does the man want his wife to do?
a) To confirm what he has heard
b) To answer the phone
c) To get him a towel so he can get out and answer the phone
d) To ignore the phone

All these examples have one thing in common: they all have the subtle uses of language that imply something that was not said directly but rather implied either to be indirect or polite. The answer to question 1 is (a). Student B is still studying so she would rather student A didn't put music on as she needs to concentrate. Her request, however, is very indirect. The answer to question 2 is (d). The professor thinks the student needs to work on their grammar before writing their next paper but is very indirect and recommends a book for the student. Question 3 is even more indirect. The answer is (b). The man wants his wife to answer the phone as he is in the bath. The way the man speaks would also tell us more about his attitude and pragmatic intention. Intonation (**See B2.5 Pronunciation and Intonation**) and tone of voice (**See B2.2 Tone of Voice**) are therefore things that you need to be careful about when achieving pragmatic understanding. To illustrate this point, try the questions below.

Practice

With a partner, practice saying each phrase or question below in several ways.

1. "Are we having pizza for dinner?"
   Ask this question as if:
   1) You love pizza
   2) You've had it 7 nights in a row and are disappointed
   3) You thought you were going to have pasta

2. "What is that smell?"
   Ask this question as if you smell:
   1) a rose
   2) your favorite food
   3) garbage

3. "It's cold in here."
   Say this sentence to express that:
   1) It feels great
   2) You are very uncomfortable
   3) You are surprised

I. Develop the ability to listen for pragmatic language usage

B2.2 Tone of Voice

Tone of voice is *how* someone says their words. Tone of voice can be an important clue to a speaker's attitude, including how certain they are about their statement. Specialized tone of voice can signal idiomatic speech such as exaggeration and sarcasm. Finally, a speaker's tone of voice can also signal where important information is in a sentence or how the listener should understand that information. In summary, tone of voice can cause the same words to have very different meanings, so it is highly important to be aware of this when listening to English because you must be aware when the tone of voice is signaling a change in meaning in order to understand correctly. This skill will be important when discussing research in your laboratory at Tohoku University and when listening to lectures and presentations.

How to Master Tone of Voice

Tone of voice is usually signaled by adding extra stress (loudness or power) to a word, extending the vowel sound (stretching), or increasing/decreasing pitch (**See B2.5 Pronunciation and Intonation**). A good example of tone of voice is when a speaker is asking a question. Consider the simple sentence, "You went." If this is a statement, both words are usually pronounced with a similar tone of voice, but if the pitch increases and stress is added to the word "went," we recognize the phrase as a question: "You went?"

However, tone of voice is not only used to signal that the speaker is making a question. If a single word is stressed or stretched, this often means that we should understand that word is taking a second, less common meaning, such as a metaphorical meaning. For example, remember from **A1.6 Making Inferences** (also in **B2.4 Speech Acts**) that *could* can take the meaning of "was able to" or "not very sure." If you invite someone to a party and he says, "I *could* go," he is probably trying to signal you to take the metaphorical meaning (i.e. probably not), so you should understand that he is trying to politely refuse. Similarly, "I don't know" can mean that someone does not have information, but if stretch is applied to the word "know" and the pitch decreases, this indicates that someone is politely saying no. Consider this difference in the woman's two responses to the man's question below:

> MAN: Will you help Professor Tanaka with his research project?

WOMAN (1): I don't know. (she is not sure, perhaps she has not been asked or is considering whether she will)

WOMAN (2): I don't *knooow*. (she is trying to say she probably will not or does not want to)

Two common metaphorical meanings that stress and intonation are often used to mark are exaggeration (describing something as being bigger than in reality) and sarcasm (when your words should be understood to have the opposite meaning). These techniques are not usually used in writing because without tone of voice to mark them,

they are unclear and can cause confusion. However, they are often found in spoken English, such as in the following examples:

"He drank *100 liters* of water after the race!" (He drank a lot of water)
"That's a *greeeaaat* idea." (The speaker thinks it is a bad idea)

Tone of voice can also be used to create implied meaning, i.e. that we should understand some extra meaning from the statement without being directly told it. The extra meaning depends on which word in the sentence is stressed, stretched, or given special pitch. The basic idea is that you should understand that the stressed word is important, and that some implied meaning relating to that word is added. Consider the following sentences:

Sentence	Implied meaning
Why don't you help me?	(none)
Why don't *you* help me?	Others help me, but only you do not.
Why don't you help *me*?	You help others, but not me.
Why don't *you* help *me*?	I often help you, but you never help me.
Why don't you *help* me?	You do other things, but never help.

Finally, whether the pitch in someone's voice rises or falls can help reveal their attitude toward the situation or word. For example, in the sentence, "We're having *pizza*?," if the word "pizza" is spoken with rising intonation, this means that the speaker is excited or happy about having pizza. On the other hand, if it is said with falling intonation, this means that the speaker is unhappy or displeased with the fact that they are having pizza.

Example of Tone of Voice

Recognizing the speaker's tone of voice is very important for understanding (1) their implied meaning, (2) their attitude and certainty, and (3) the real meaning or intent of what they are saying. Consider the following conversations and questions. Notice how understanding the tone of voice is necessary to comprehend the conversation correctly.

WOMAN: Do you want to work on the homework assignment together?
MAN: *Again!?* You shouldn't ask me all the time. You will never pass the test if *you* don't do your homework sometimes.
WOMAN: I don't ask *all of the time*.

Why does the man not want to help the woman?
a) He thinks she should study harder
b) He thinks she should try doing the homework by herself
c) He is tired of always being asked
d) He does not have time

What can be inferred about the woman?
a) She does not work very hard
b) She never does her homework
c) She often studies together with others
d) She will never pass the test

In the example above, the man changes his tone of voice with "again," implying that the woman asks him often, and again with "you," implying that she should do the homework by herself (i.e. not with someone else). The woman changes her tone of voice with the words "all of the time," which means that she admits that she often asks, but denies that it is 100% of the time. Therefore, we know that the man thinks (b) that the woman should try doing the homework by herself, and that (c) the woman often (but not always) studies together with others. However, we cannot know whether the man has time, nor whether the woman works hard because these things are never mentioned. Furthermore, we do not know whether she will pass the test because this is in the future and we do not know what actions she will take.

MAN: ... I don't *knooowww*... I'd still call it a *planet*. It may be small, but it's got an atmosphere and a moon, and orbits the Sun, *so*...

WOMAN: *What!?* Come *on*! I mean, it's in the Kuiper belt, it's not made of the same materials, and it's not just a *little* smaller, it's *way* smaller than any other planet. I think it's clear.

What can be inferred about the man and the woman?
a) They both disagree with what they have read about Pluto
b) The woman thinks that Pluto should be called a planet
c) The man easily convinced the woman to change her mind
d) They have come to different conclusions about Pluto

In this example, the man is politely disagreeing with someone else's opinion (probably the woman's) about whether something is a planet. Also, he stresses the word "planet," meaning that he thinks it should be qualified as a planet and not something else. The woman then emphasizes her first statements to express that she very much disagrees with the man's thinking. Then, she changes her tone of voice with the words "little" and "way" to argue that the amount of smallness is what should be noticed and that this is one of the reasons she disagrees with the man. Since the man thinks Pluto should be called a planet and the woman disagrees with him, we know that answers (a), (b), and (c) cannot be correct, which means that (d) is the only acceptable answer.

II. Acquire practical speaking skills

B2.3 Hedging

In academic writing and speaking, it is important not to overstate something, especially if you have a doubt about its certainty. This is commonly known as "hedging." Hedging is the use of language to express hesitation or uncertainty as well as to demonstrate politeness and indirectness. At Tohoku University, you are expected to write academic English reports, papers, and abstracts, as well as to report on your research findings orally (**See B2.6 Oral Reporting**). A better understanding of hedging enhances your ability to express yourself when reporting on academic topics and your knowledge of pragmatic language usage (**See B2.1 Pragmatic Competence**).

How to Master Hedging

People hedge their language for several different reasons but perhaps the most important are the following:

1) To conform to the currently accepted style in academic writing / speaking
2) To express doubt, caution, or uncertainty in what is said or written especially in academic papers
3) To express politeness by being indirect
4) To soften what you are saying, that is, to hedge
5) To express modesty in what you are saying or writing
6) To separate the idea from the speaker / writer in academic writing (e.g. The data suggests that...NOT: I suggest that...)

Although hedging can be used in conversation, it is also used in academic contexts such as when giving presentations. In your academic career you will encounter academic texts in English and having a knowledge of how hedging is used for writing and presenting will be hugely beneficial to you.

Hedging is achieved in different ways, including modal verbs, modal adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and lexical verbs as illustrated in the tables below. Each table gives a hedged example that can be found in an academic setting. Please note how they are different from the non-hedged examples which imply that something is 100% proven or true. This way of writing does not conform to academic writing and presentation conventions and you should not copy this. Hedging as in the examples below helps the author express that something is not 100% accurate or proven but rather that it is indicated and subsequently assumed.

Modal verbs

Can	Could	May
Might	Should	Would
Hedged example	**It could be that** human activity is primarily responsible for global climate change.	

Non-hedged example	Human activity is primarily responsible for global climate change.

(**See A1.6 Making Inferences** for an explanation of how the modal verbs have different strengths.)

Modal adjectives

Possible	Probable
Likely	Unlikely
Hedged example	The results are **likely** inaccurate due to bad data.
Non-hedged example	The results are inaccurate due to bad data.

Adverbs

Conceivably	Possibly	Usually
Perhaps	Probably	Hopefully
Hedged example	This finding could have **conceivably** happened due to a lack of revision.	
Non-hedged example	This finding happened due to a lack of revision.	

Nouns

Assumption	Likelihood
Possibility	Probability
Hedged example	There is a strong **possibility** that these results were obtained because of the parent's ethnic background.
Non-hedged example	These results were obtained because of the parent's ethnic background.

Lexical verbs

Believe	Indicate	Seem
Interpret	Assume	Suggest
Hedged example	Scientists **interpret** the findings as helping to find a cure for cancer.	
Non-hedged example	Scientists are 100% sure the findings are a cure for cancer.	

Below are some "that-clauses" that you can use when discussing data, an argument, or point of view. Notice how these hedges keep what you are saying as "possibilities."

That-clauses

It can be concluded that	It can be assumed that	It is probable that
It is likely to be the case that	It can be argued that	It is conceivable that
Hedged Example	Based on our observations, **it can be concluded** that the universe has been expanding since the Big Bang.	
Non-hedged example	Based on our observations, the universe has been expanding since the Big Bang.	

Words such as "about," "kind of," "sort of," "feel," and "seems like" can also make what you say seem vague and less direct. For example,

It seems like the data does show that our previous theory was correct.

Examples of Hedging

Read the passage and answer the following three hedging questions.

There have been numerous studies on how gun violence is depicted in Hollywood movies and how such depictions may affect young males. A recent review of 34 psychology studies and 21 anthropology studies taken from distinguished academic journals revealed that 77% of all such studies found that, among moderately sized sample populations of North American males between the ages of 20 and 35, the increased frequency of viewing films that portray violence involving firearms and the increased rate of real-world gun violence are positively correlated. Therefore, some researchers have _(A)____ that filmmakers should reconsider how gun violence is represented in cinema to curtail the frequency of gun violence in North America.

However, critics of this notion have called attention to the sample sizes of these studies, claiming that they are, perhaps, too small to determine any accurate associations between gun violence in movies and gun violence in society. In fact, some of these detractors say that _(B)____ there is zero correlation between movies and crime. Either way, it is a fact that violent movies remain extremely popular with many moviegoers. Moreover, Hollywood movies are a 50 billion-dollar industry that generates millions of jobs and delivers entertainment and enjoyment to countless millions more. Nevertheless, because of the prevalence of violent films in the world, and increasing gun violence in North America, many leading sociologists _(C)____ there is a strong parallel between these two aspects of society.

1. Which word best hedges statement (A)?
a) concluded
b) suggested
c) proven
d) established

2. Which phrase best hedges statement (B)?
a) it must be that
b) it is known that
c) it is true that
d) it is possible that

3) Which phrase best hedges statement (C)?
a) assume
b) certify
c) know
d) confirm

The best answer to the Question 1 is (b). (c) and (d) are too strong for the facts presented. "Some researchers" may have "concluded" this idea but some others have not, so it may be inappropriate in an academic paper to write that the idea has been "concluded." However, "concluded" is more hedged than "proven" or "established," but not as hedged as "suggested." The best answer to the Question 2 is (d). Small sample sizes in research may or may not affect the conclusions of a study. Nevertheless, sample size differences could skew any correlation to "zero," but probably not. Therefore, "it is possible that" properly hedges the statement and is more accurate. The best answer to the Question 3 is (a). All the other choices are good examples of overstatement. "Assume" is a common hedging verb that matches this context.

II. Acquire practical speaking skills

B2.4 Speech Acts

A speech act is often described as the act of uttering words of intention in communication. In other words, it functions to help you give meaning to what is said. You use them throughout the day, when you greet people and complement your friends, for instance. Recognizing speech acts is important to understand the nuances of conversations, situations, speaker's intent, and even relationships between people.

How to Master Speech Acts
1. Five categories of speech acts
Speech acts are often classified into five general categories.

Table 1. Speech act types

Type of speech act	Verbal action	Examples
1. Representatives (when the speaker believes what they are saying to be true or not)	Assertions, statements, descriptions and conclusions	**Assertion** I am a great teacher. **Conclusion** Chomsky was a big influence in the world of linguistics.
2. Commissives (speakers show they are going to do something in the future)	Promises, refusals, pledges and threats	**Refusal** I will not help him with his essay. **Promise** I'm never going to be late for class again.
3. Directives (to get someone to do something)	commands, requests, challenges, invitations, orders (These can be positive or negative).	**Command** This paper must be finished by Friday! **Request** Can you take me to the station?
4. Declarations (as a kind of an "official" announcement)	official announcements	I declare the official opening of the Kawauchi Research Center.
5. Expressives (to express the speaker's emotion)	greetings, apologies, congratulations	**Apologies** I am so sorry. **Congratulations** Congrats on passing the test.

2. Levels of directness in speech acts
Speech acts can be direct, indirect, or hedged. What influences your choice will depend on the context, who you are talking to, and how you want to present yourself. Indirectness is a widely used conversational strategy. Indirect speech acts help to reduce the unpleasant message in the speech act, for example, in requests. Saying to a friend "Give me some money" is too direct and impolite. Here, you could hedge your

request and say "Could you lend me some money, please?" You might even indirectly make a request for some money as in "I don't get paid until Friday. Would you mind helping me out and lending me some money?"

Table 2 below shows some examples of how the speech act of giving advice can be used directly, hedged, or indirectly. Which ones would you say to a friend, to your teacher, or to a parent?

Table 2 Strategies for giving advice

Strategy for giving advice	Linguistic forms	Examples
Being direct	Should / must / had better	You must tell him the truth.
Hedging*	Perhaps, maybe, probably, possibly, Why don't you, I think	Perhaps, it might be better to tell him the truth.
Being indirect	I would... If it were me, I would... Why don't you...?	If I were you I would tell him the truth / Why don't you tell him the truth?

*See B2.3 Hedging

It is usually best to hedge or be indirect when expressing requests and in most situations it is probably better to avoid "should," "must," and "had better" when giving advice. "Had better," for example, can imply that there will be negative consequences if the listener does not do what the speaker says. Take, for example, this sentence, "You had better not be late for class again." This can be seen as a threat. The negative consequence here could be that if you are late for class again, you might get into some kind of trouble.

Take a look at the following sentences which help to illustrate these ideas.

Which sentence would you use to an international student who wants to make Japanese friends, and you want to say that learning basic Japanese would be the best way?
a) You had better learn Japanese.
b) I think you might want to study a bit of Japanese.
c) You must study Japanese.

It depends on the situation and who you are talking to, but to a friend, (b) is a polite way to hedge a piece of advice. (a) and (c) may sound like giving orders and may make the conversation very awkward. (a) also suggests that there may be a negative consequence if the friend doesn't study Japanese. For example, the friend might not be able to make Japanese friends.

Which sentence would you use to your teacher?
a) I want you to read my paper.
b) Would you mind reading my paper, please?
c) Read my paper.

The answer is (b). If you used sentence (a) or (c), you would be rude, considering you are a student talking to a teacher. Therefore, avoiding this pragmatic failure when addressing friends, colleagues, and superiors is very important if you want to avoid awkwardness or be accused of being rude.

3. Recognizing speech acts

Below are some examples of indirect speech acts. Can you detect what speech act the people are trying to convey in the 3 dialogues below?

Question 1

   MAN: Oh no! Did I spill tea on you?
WOMAN: It's hot! Is that all you have to say?

What does the woman imply?
a) The man should apologize.
b) The man should complement her on her dress.
c) The man should offer to wipe the tea away.
d) The man should offer to buy her a cup.

Here the woman wants the man to apologize, so the answer is (a). This would be the best thing to do in this situation.

Question 2

WOMAN: Do you want the windows open or closed?
   MAN: It's stuffy in here and I do like the fresh air.

What does the man imply?
a) He's requesting to have the windows shut.
b) He's requesting to have the windows open.
c) He's not requesting anything in particular.
d) He prefers the cold.

The answer is (b). Here, the man is requesting to have the windows open very indirectly. He suggests that the room is stuffy and he likes the fresh air. The nuance here is, please open the window to let in some fresh air.

Question 3

Student A: My boyfriend and I would like to invite you over for dinner on Friday.
Student B: That is sweet of you but I'm afraid I have concert tickets on that day. Let's do it
            another time!

What does Student B mean?
a) She is accepting the invitation.

b) She is inviting Student A to go with her to the concert.

c) She is declining the invitation.

d) She hasn't decided yet if she can go.

The answer is (c). Student B is indirectly saying she can't go for dinner on Friday. Student B does this by showing gratitude ("That is sweet of you"), giving a reason and showing regret ("but I'm afraid I have concert tickets on that day"), and showing a desire to do it on another occasion ("Let's do it another time!").

III. Acquire the ability to discuss and present academic topics

B2.5 Pronunciation and Intonation

Good English pronunciation involves reproducing words and speech with the proper articulation and stress. Good English intonation is the skill of using the proper pitch patterns in sentences and pitch changes in connected speech. Improper pronunciation and unnatural intonation reduce the likelihood of the speaker being understood. Phonetic errors in speech (errors in single sounds) and prosodic errors (errors in stress, intonation, and rhythm) affect intelligibility and create a barrier between the speaker and listener. It is important for Tohoku University students to be able to showcase their research and deliver their message accurately when collaborating with students, teachers, and researchers from around the world.

How to Master Pronunciation and Intonation

1. Stress

Pronunciation can be challenging, but understanding the stress- and syllable-timing of languages, combined with proper training, can greatly improve the speaker's pronunciation and intonation skills.

English is a stress-based language. It is important for the English-language learner to be able to differentiate between stressed and unstressed syllables. This means that the amount of time a speaker takes to say something depends on the number of stressed syllables in the sentence, rather than the overall number of syllables. For example, if there are two or three unstressed syllables between the stressed syllables, the unstressed syllables will be spoken more quickly for the speaker to maintain the rhythm. Generally, content words (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) receive the most stress in spoken English. Unstressed syllables in a spoken sentence are often function words, such as auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, and prepositions. Consider the following sentence and note that the content words in **bold** are stressed more (spoken stronger or longer) than the other words.

> **Help Mike carry** all of those **boxes** into the **house**.

In the above example, the first three words (content: Help, Mike, carry) are stressed and stretched out, while the following three words (function: all of those) are spoken more quickly and are unstressed.

If the speaker places the same emphasis on every word of the sentence, or stresses the wrong words, the speaker is less likely to be understood. The following sentences help to illustrate the concept:

> **Dogs hate cats.**
> My **dogs hate cats.**
> My **dogs hate** your **cats.**

My **dogs** will **hate** your **cats.**
My **dogs** are gonna **hate** your **cats.**

In each sentence, the number of syllables increases, yet the number of stress points remains the same. In other words, although the sentences become progressively longer, the amount of time needed to recite the sentences remains basically the same. The content words (**dogs, hate, cats**) remain the same in the five sentences, but the number of function words increases. The content words provide us with the most important information; whereas the function words are used to link those words together and are often reduced and unstressed.

Another way to illustrate the point is to consider a conductor raising a baton and directing musicians by saying one of the following:

One, two, three, four.
One and two and three and four.
A one and a two and a three and a four.

The number of syllables in each of the above phrases differs, but the number of beats needed to recite the phrases remains the same. If an English learner can understand the stress points in a phrase and maintain the rhythm of the language, that learner is more likely to sound natural and fluent. English spoken with the wrong rhythm, with too much stress on the function words or too little stress on the content words, sounds unnatural.

2. Individual sounds

Sometimes, individual sounds (such as R and L) are important because a change in one sound changes the word. Such words are called minimal pairs. Below is a list of examples of minimal pairs.

play - pray	light - right	belt - built.	climb - crime
arrive - alive	elect - erect	glass - grass	rice - lice
boat - vote	thick - sick	sea - she	mouth - mouse
berry - very	sing - thing	desk - disk	force - fourth
delete - delight	thumb - sum	meal - mill	fender - vendor
collect - correct	vowel - foul	grow - glow	refuse - reviews
royal - loyal	sheet - seat	ramp - lamp	vest - best
bowling - boring	thin - sin	rock - lock	root - loot

3. Linking

Linking is moving from one word to the next during pronunciation when words are blended. Below are examples of linking.

Consonants linked with vowels
So, what's_up?

I bought_it yesterday.

Here it_is.

The plane just took_off.

Linking identical or similar consonants

It's my first_time.

It's_so difficult.

I love black_coffee.

Please join my music_class.

Linking consonant with "of"

That's lot_of money.

I was out_of town for a few days.

I'm in charge_of the class.

Try some_of these cookies.

Look at my list_of chores.

4. Reduction

Reductions are lost sounds in spoken English. Below are some examples of reduction.

I am ~~going to~~ *gonna* visit Australia next month.

Do you ~~want to~~ *wanna* go to the movies tonight?

I ~~have to~~ *hafta* get going.

She ~~has to~~ *hasta* get a job.

I ~~had to~~ *hadta* go to work early.

Would you like ~~cream and sugar~~ *cream-n-sugar* with that?

I love ~~fish and chips~~ *fish-n-chips*.

Either ~~coffee or tea~~ *coffee-uh-tea* is fine with me.

I ~~saw him~~ *I saw im* in the library.

I ~~met her~~ *I met er* at the station.

He's ~~out of~~ *outta* money.

Can I ~~get you~~ *getcha* a drink?

~~Give me~~ *Gimme* a break!

5. Tonic stress

Tonic stress is the syllable in a word that receives the most stress. Below are some examples of tonic stress.

He's **waiti**ng for his **friend** at the **sta**tion.

I **bought** her some **flow**ers to **make** her feel **bet**ter.

She **chased** the **dog** all **over** the **gar**den.

6. Emphatic stress

Emphatic stress is used to emphasize something by changing the stress from the principal noun to another content word. Below are some examples of emphatic stress.

> That was a **difficult** test.
> Her mom was **extremely** angry.
> That was the **longest** movie ever!

7. Contrastive stress

Contrastive stress is used to point out the difference between one thing and another or to highlight a given word in a sentence, which slightly changes the meaning. Below are three examples of contrastive stress.

> **Mike** went to a bar last night?

The emphasis is on "Mike." Was it really MIKE who went to a bar last night? The speaker may be expressing doubt or shock that it was actually Mike. Perhaps it was someone else.

> Mike went to a **bar** last night?

The emphasis is on the "bar." Did Mike really go to a BAR last night? The speaker may be expressing doubt or shock that Mike actually went to a bar.

> Mike went to a bar **last night**?

The emphasis is on the words "last night." Did Mike really go to a bar LAST NIGHT? The speaker may be expressing doubt or shock that Mike actually went last night.

8. New information stress

New information stress is often used in response to questions. When asked a question, the requested information is often stressed. Below are a few examples.

> Where are you from? ➜ I'm from **Chicago**.
> What do want to do tomorrow? ➜ I want to go **golfing**.
> What time does class start? ➜ It starts at **nine**.

III. Acquire the ability to discuss and present academic topics

B2.6 Oral Reporting

At Tohoku University, you are expected to express your ideas, opinions, research data, and conclusions in English. There will be times when you are required to report orally on these aspects of your studies in an academic, formal, and organized manner with supporting details and evidence. The process of oral reporting follows two basic steps: **planning** (research, speechwriting, organization, visual aids, and so on) and **practice** (intonation, pronunciation, memorization, anxiety reduction, timing, and so forth). Both steps involve specific skills. When combined successfully, these skills will enable you to communicate efficiently. Thus, English oral reporting is a vital skill that allows you to present your research to an academic audience. With proper **planning** and **practice**, not only will the stress of the oral report be reduced, but the chances of success will increase.

How to Master Oral Reporting

The two steps of oral reporting—**planning** and **practice**—involve specific skills and techniques. To maximize success with oral reporting, it is important to plan and practice efficiently. Examples of oral reporting **planning** skills include clearly identifying the message's main points and selecting good data, such as quotations and statistics, from strong sources. Furthermore, making clear transitions from point to point, building reinforcing repetition, adding analogies, targeting the audience, and using visual aids are other necessary skills for the oral reporting **planning** process. Examples of oral reporting **practice** skills include rehearsing proper intonation, pronunciation, difficult phrases, memorizing, reducing nervousness, lots of peer- and self-evaluation, and recreating the setting of your report to be comfortable when in the actual venue.

1. Short oral reports

There are times, however, when you will be asked to give a short oral presentation with little time to prepare. These speaking situations may occur in the classroom, among group research discussions, at laboratory meetings, or during the speaking section of an English proficiency test. A common format for oral reporting involves being asked to offer your opinion about a familiar topic by describing research data, conclusions, and preferences regarding events and activities. Preparation time is often limited in such situations; therefore, your response will be usually limited to less than one minute. In these situations, it is important to do the following:

1) State your opinion clearly
2) Back up your opinion with examples
3) Clarify the relationship between your position and the examples
4) Provide sufficient details for each example
5) Ensure your report is intelligible, demonstrating proper vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation

2. Long oral reports

The format of this type of oral report is very similar to that of an essay (**See A2.1 Essay Structure**), in that it follows the same structure of introduction, body, and conclusion. When giving a long or formal oral report, planning and practice are essential. Part of the planning includes creating the proper format of introduction, body, and conclusion. Please consider the following when planning your long oral report:

Introduction

It is important to begin an oral report with an effective opening that grabs the listener's attention. There are several techniques used to open a report, such as posing a thought-provoking question, relating an interesting story, using humor, making a bold statement, or using a quotation. The speaker must find a way to connect to the audience early. The introduction must include a brief outline of the main points of the research or information the speaker wishes to convey.

Body

Explaining the key points effectively includes the ability to be clear and concise in the report. It is important to organize the sequence of information logically and persuasively while clearly highlighting the major points and using effective examples. Using analogies or stories to convey the message is a useful technique in the body of an oral report. Additionally, using transitional phrases to move from one point to the next is vital.

Conclusion

Similar to the way the report's introduction secures the audience's attention and interest, the conclusion is meant to recap the important information while leaving a lasting impression. Conclusions often contain a call to action and end on a strong note, with techniques such as the use of a quotation, a surprising fact, or a statistic. Finally, the conclusion must include a mention of thanks to the audience.

Examples of Oral Reporting

1. Short oral report

Question: These days, many people enjoy reading digital books. However, some people still enjoy reading books the old-fashioned way: from a physical, paper book. Which method do you prefer, and why?

Oral Response

Paper books versus digital books is a topic that is often debated because there are good points for both cases. However, I prefer reading digital books because they are convenient. I love to read, especially on buses and trains. If I had to carry paper books with me everywhere I went, I imagine it would be burdensome and inconvenient. Not only are e-books easier to carry around, they're easier to buy; all I have to do is click and pay on the internet, and the books are delivered straight to my device. I suppose an even stronger argument in favor of e-books is that they are better for the environment since they leave a smaller carbon footprint. I'm sure that this point is

true, but for me, it just comes down to convenience. Digital books make more sense to me.

Note: this is a 45-second oral response.

Practice

Below are six practice topics and some tips for improving short oral reporting skills.

1) Do you prefer indoor activities or outdoor activities? Use details and examples to support your explanation.
2) Do you prefer eating at home or eating out? Use details and examples to support your explanation.
3) Do you prefer to learn one-on-one with a teacher or in a group? Use details and examples to support your explanation.
4) Would you rather live in a place with a warm climate or somewhere with four distinct seasons? Use details and examples to support your answer.
5) Think of someone in your life who has been inspirational. Describe this person and explain how he or she has inspired you. Use details and examples to support your response.
6) Do you agree or disagree that it is important for young people to learn a musical instrument? Use details and examples to support your position.

Tips

1) Time yourself trying to keep your response to less than one minute.
2) Record your responses and play back the recording to self-evaluate.
3) Practice pronunciation and intonation, which will help you to make your point clearly.
4) Connect your ideas by using transition words, for example, "firstly," "secondly," "although," "furthermore," "additionally," "in conclusion," "on the other hand," and so forth.
5) Find opportunities to speak with native speakers for conversation and debate.

Furthermore, read **B1.5 Giving Opinions and Conjecturing** as it contains many aspects that are helpful for oral reporting.

2. Long oral report

Sample introduction from a report about global warming

"That so many of us are here today is a recognition that the threat from climate change is serious, it is urgent, and it is growing. Our generation's response to this challenge will be judged by history, for if we fail to meet it—boldly, swiftly, and together—we risk consigning future generations to an irreversible catastrophe." These are the words that President Obama used to begin his global warming speech before the United Nations Summit in 2009. Search the internet for global warming and you will find almost 65 million pages of results. The subject has certainly drawn much attention. Good morning, everyone. It's an honor to have the opportunity today to talk to you about a topic I'm passionate about, that is, global warming. But just what is

global warming? What is causing it? What effects does it have on the earth and its inhabitants? And, most importantly, what are some possible solutions? These are the questions that I will be addressing in this short, informative speech today.[1]

Sample conclusion from a report about pollution

I'd like to bring this report to a close with this startling fact: Pollution is one of the biggest global killers, affecting over 100 million people. That number is comparable to global diseases such as malaria and HIV. I fear that, at the rate pollution is rising, there will not be enough time for us to take corrective measures to salvage the situation. We need to act quickly and to act now. Certainly, there will be a few compromises in our path: we may have to leave earlier to catch the bus or train, or we may need to drive farther on our carpool day, but look at the bigger picture. It is these small initiatives that will go a long way toward helping our planet. We are the change, and it is time we embrace it. I can't thank you enough for taking the time to join me this afternoon and, if you have any questions or comments, I'll be happy to meet with you at the reception that follows. Thank you.[2]

When planning your long or formal oral report, consider using some of the following key phrases in the introduction, body, and conclusion of your speech:

Examples of oral report introduction phrases

Thank you very much for coming out today ...

Let me start by saying ...

Good morning everyone and welcome. First, let me thank you all for coming here today ...

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It's an honor to have the opportunity today to talk to you about ...

Today I'd like to present an overview of ...

This morning I'm going to be talking to you about ...

Examples of oral report transitional phrases

That brings me to my next point ...

The next point I'd like to make is ...

Moving right along ...

As you can see from these examples ...

Now that I've established ..., I'd like to talk to you about ...

Now that we've established ..., I'd like you to consider ...

Keeping these points in mind, allow me to introduce to you ...

Examples of oral report conclusion phrases

To summarize ...

In conclusion ...

I'd like to bring this report to a close with ...

I'd like to close this talk by saying ...

This brings me to the end of my report. In summary ...

I have now come to the end of my report. In summary ...

To conclude, I would like to say ...

To summarize, as the evidence shows ...

Examples of oral report expressions of thanks:

Thank you for taking the time to come out and listen to me today.

I sincerely appreciate your attention this morning.

I'd like to thank you for your time and attention this evening.

Thank you for your interest and attention.

I'll finish up by saying thank you for your attention.

I can see that our time is just about up, so to finish I'd like to say thank you.

I sincerely appreciate this opportunity to present my thoughts to you today.

Finally, when practicing and presenting your long oral report, consider how you appear and move on the stage. Be mindful of your body language, your movements on the stage, your gestures, your posture, your eye contact, your vocal projection, and your energy levels. Paying attention to such aspects will improve your oral report.

---

[1] Adapted from: https://www.best-speech-topics.com/global-warming-speech.html

[2] Adapted from: https://penlighten.com/examples-of-good-conclusion-starters-for-essays-speeches

Additional Resources

For extra practice with the skills taught in this book, consider using the following resources which can be used to improve your English skills.

1. Tohoku University Library

The university library is an excellent place to find a number of different English language books and academic papers. This can be useful when practicing skimming and scanning (A1.3) and paraphrasing (A1.4), as well as when learning how to read academic articles (A2.5) and understand abstracts (A2.6). Furthermore, you can use the books and articles you find to practice the majority of the reading and writing skills from English A1 and A2 classes.

2. TED Talks

TED Talks can be found for free online. They generally feature an expert in a specific filed giving a short presentation about their subject. Listening to these talks can be great practice for notetaking while listening (B1.1), orally summarizing from notes (B1.2), and can serve as good models for giving opinions and conjecturing (B1.5), pronunciation and intonation (B2.5) and oral reporting (B2.6).

3. YouTube

YouTube has a wide variety of content in a number of different languages. Specifically, you can find university lectures on your major in English, as well as natural conversations from television shows. Watching and listening to such programs can be a great way to review phrasal verbs (B1.3) and idiomatic expressions (B1.4), and can also be helpful to develop pragmatic competence (B2.1) and learn to recognize tone of voice (B2.2) and speech acts (B2.4).

4. Automatic Speech Recognition Software

Google Docs and Microsoft Word both have free to use voice dictation tools. You can practice your pronunciation and intonation (B2.5) by setting the voice dictation tool to English (there are several varieties; Japanese students generally learn American English, but please set this to the one that is best for you). Any differences between what you said and what was written will help you to find points to work on in the future. Although the tool is not perfect, if your pronunciation is good, it should be close to what you are saying. This can also be useful when practicing oral reporting (B2.6) or giving opinions (B1.5).

5. List of Common Academic Expressions

The following lists are well-respected as good representations of the most common words and phrases in academic English. Although many of them can be found in this book and you may already know some of them, you should be sure that you know them all and the various ways that they can be used.

(Left: The PHRASE List in the British National Corpus. It contains the 505 most common phrases. The list has three categories with frequency information ("spoken general," "written general," and "written academic") to help the learner discern the appropriateness and usefulness of each phrase.)

(Right: The Academic Formulas List. It consists of three separate lists: "core" (written and spoken) with 207 phrases, "spoken" with 200 phrases, and "written" with 200 phrases, making 607 in total.)

6. Learner's Dictionaries

A learner's dictionary contains various words and phrases that are important for learners at different stages. The following link gives lists of words to know for various English settings (including academic English) and provides pronunciations in both British and American English.

(This is Oxford Learner's Word Lists. There are four useful lists: "Oxford 3000," "Oxford 5000," "Oxford Phrase List," and "Oxford Phrasal Academic Lexicon.")

7. Etymology Dictionary and Thesauruses

An etymology dictionary will tell you what the origin of a word is and if there are any word parts in it that might help you to remember it. This can help when learning new words and practicing with word parts (A1.1). A thesaurus will give you many words with similar meanings, which can help with synonym vocabulary (A1.2), finding the differences in connotation (A1.5) and also when trying to think of new words for essays (A2.1). Good online resources include etymonline.com and thesaurus.com

8. Internet Search Engines

A lot of information can be found simply by searching for it online. If you are confused about information in this book and cannot ask your teacher, you can also try finding extra explanation online. Furthermore, a number of excellent resources such as free online dictionaries, thesauruses and writing checkers can be found, as well as a number of articles and videos to help you practice reading, listening, and using the English skills outlined in this book.

Pathways to Academic English 2020