

# Clear Scientific Writing: Tools for the Writing Process

## PART 2

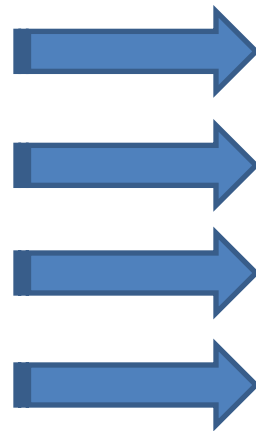
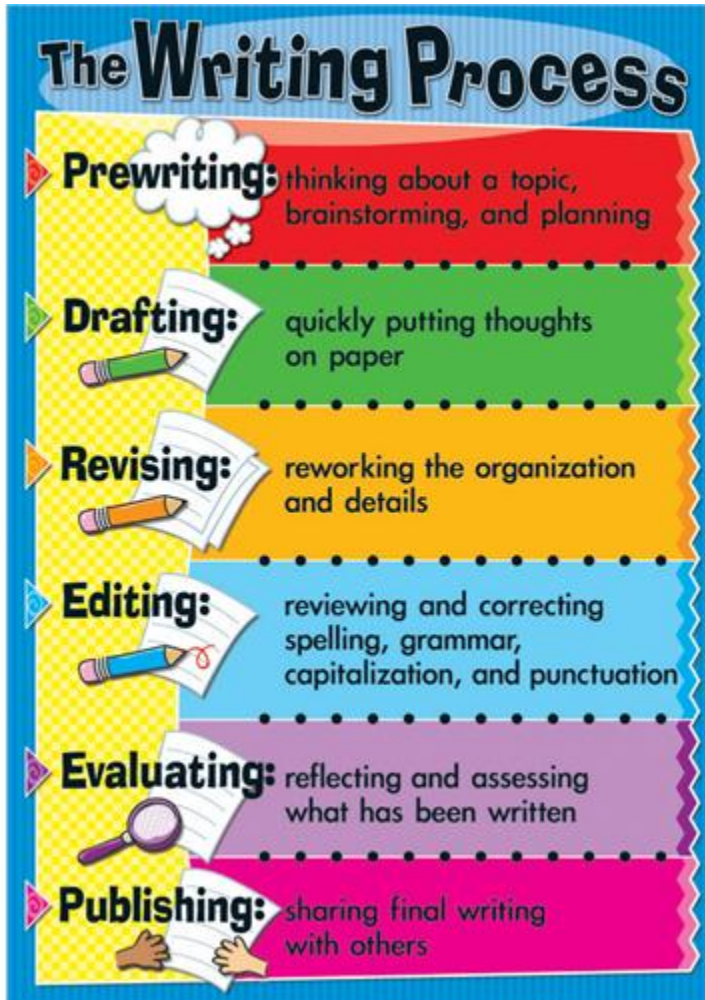
Holly Prevost

Associate Director, UH Writing Center

[hbprevost@uh.edu](mailto:hbprevost@uh.edu)

Writingcenter.uh.edu

# Writing is a Process

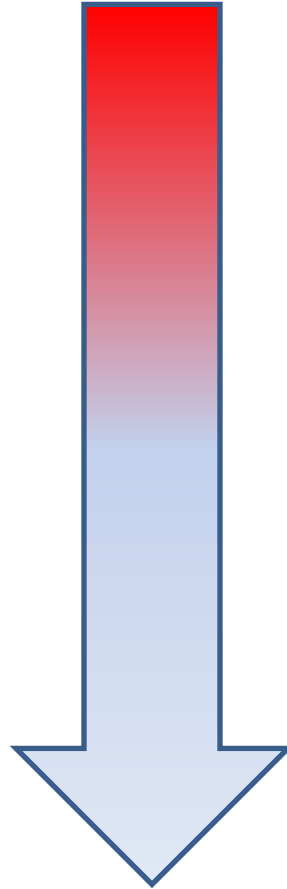


**Editing & Proofreading** are important parts of the process

# Game Plan: Two Lectures

Last Time:  
Higher order  
writing  
concerns

Today:  
Lower order  
writing  
concerns



- Audience/Purpose
- Thesis
- Paragraph Development
- Organization
- **Transitions**
- Clarity
- Conciseness
- Editing

# Transitions

## Transitions

- signal relationships between paragraphs, sentences, and words; showing the connection between the different parts.

## Explicit Transitions

- Tell you “go this way” through specific words and phrases; allowing the reader to navigate your writing.





# What Transitions Can Do

**To show addition:** again, and, also, besides, equally important, first (second, etc.), further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, moreover, next, too

**To give examples:** for example, for instance, in fact, specifically, that is, to illustrate, even, namely, specifically,

**To compare:** also, in the same manner, likewise, similarly

**To contrast:** although, and yet, at the same time, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, still, though, yet

**To concede:** granted, naturally, of course

**To generalize:** as a rule, as usual, for the most part, generally, generally speaking, ordinarily, usually

**To emphasize:** certainly, indeed, in fact, of course

**To summarize or conclude:** all in all, in conclusion, in other words, in short, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to sum up

**To show time:** after, afterward, as, as long as, as soon as, at last, before, during, earlier, finally, formerly, immediately, later, meanwhile, next, since, shortly, subsequently, then, thereafter, until, when, while, once

**To show place or direction:** above, below, beyond, close, elsewhere, farther on, here, nearby, opposite, to the left (north, etc.)

**To indicate logical relationship (cause and effect, etc.):** accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this reason, hence, if, otherwise, since, so, then, therefore, thus

[Transition Word Chart](#)

# Paragraph 1 Without Transitions

## **Paragraph 1 - WITHOUT transition words**

The concept of fairness is central to understanding plagiarism. Fairness means being fair both to yourself and others. Everybody both gives and receives their proper due, and nobody has anything to complain about. An incident involving unfairness could be taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own. The person whose work has been taken receives no recognition or acknowledgment for their research and thinking. Writers who plagiarise are not being fair to themselves either because they are not developing their own independent academic skills. Students who do their own work with due acknowledgement of the work of others should develop their own academic skills and self-confidence far more than those who merely misuse the work of others.

*(Adapted from UNE, 2010 *Avoiding coursework plagiarism and academic misconduct: Advice for students.*)*

# Paragraph 2 With Transitions

Additional ideas are following

An example will be given

## Paragraph 2 - WITH transition words

The concept of fairness is central to understanding plagiarism. Fairness means being fair both to yourself and others. **Moreover**, everybody both gives and receives their proper due, and nobody has anything to complain about. **For example**, an incident involving unfairness could be taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own. **As a result**, the person whose work has been taken receives no recognition or acknowledgment for their research and thinking. **Furthermore**, writers who plagiarise are not being fair to themselves either because they are not developing their own independent academic skills. **Therefore**, students who do their own work with due acknowledgement of the work of others should develop their own academic skills and self-confidence far more than those who merely misuse the work of others.

(Adapted from UNE , 2010 *Avoiding coursework plagiarism and academic misconduct: Advice for students.*)

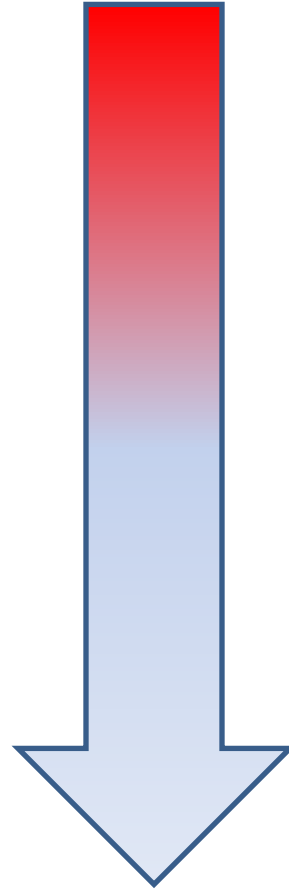
A consequence or result  
will be discussed

*Note the use  
of commas  
to separate  
transition  
signals from  
the rest of  
the sentence*

# Game Plan: Two Lectures

Last time:  
Higher order  
writing  
concerns

Today:  
Lower order  
writing  
concerns



- Audience/Purpose
- Thesis
- Paragraph Development
- Organization
  
- Transitions
- **Clarity**
- Conciseness
- Editing

# Clarity

## Active vs. Passive Voice

- In an **active voice sentence**, the subject performs the action of the main verb. In a passive **voice sentence**, the action of the main verb is done to the subject. It is important to use active voice when possible to make your sentences more clear.

Active: Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted from industries and vehicle exhausts can induce a series of environmental problems, including photochemical smog, broken ozoneosphere, and environmental pollution.

Passive: A series of environmental problems, including photochemical smog, broken ozoneosphere, and environmental pollution, can be induced by volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted from industries and vehicle exhausts.

## Active vs. Passive Voice

# Example of Passive Voice

Make the second sentence active

- Smartphone probes are in the spotlight recently. Comparing with traditional methods which are using fixed-location sensing infrastructures, for instances, inductive loop detectors, radars or video cameras, it has lower cost, higher scalability



# Example of Passive Voice

- Smartphone probes are in the spotlight recently.

Comparing with traditional methods which are using fixed-location sensing infrastructures, for instances, inductive loop detectors, radars or video cameras, it has lower cost, higher scalability.



# Example with Active Voice

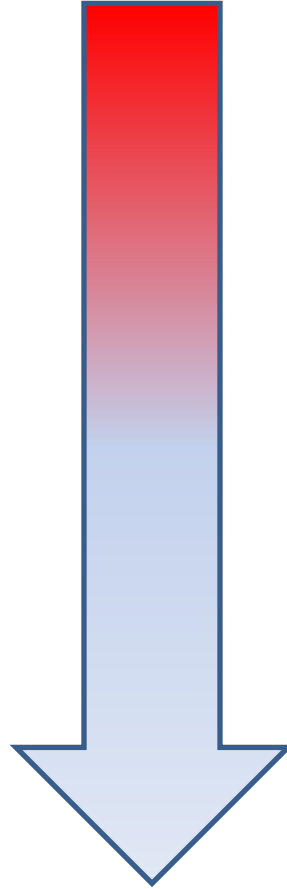
- Smartphone probes have been in the spotlight recently. They cost less and scale better than traditional methods that use fixed location sensing infrastructures such as inductive loop detectors, radars, or video cameras.



# Game Plan: Two Lectures

Last time:  
Higher order  
writing  
concerns

Today:  
Lower order  
writing  
concerns



- Audience/Purpose
- Thesis
- Paragraph Development
- Organization
  
- Transitions
- Clarity
- **Conciseness**
- Editing

# Concision



- *Eliminate vague words*, replace with specific ones
  - Wordy: The politician talked **about several of the merits of** afterschool programs in his speech (14 words)
  - Concise: The politician **touted** after-school programs in his speech. (11 words)
- *Change phrases* into single-words and adjectives
  - Wordy: The employee **with ambition**... (4 words)
  - Concise: The **ambitious** employee... (3 words)
- *Change unnecessary that, who, and which clauses* into phrases
  - Wordy: The report, **which was released recently**... (6 words)
  - Concise: The **recently released** report... (4 words)
- *Change Passive Verbs* into Active Verbs
  - Wordy: An account **was opened by** Mrs. Simms. (7 words)
  - Concise: **Mrs. Simms opened** an account. (5 words)

# CONCISION

- Edit for efficiency
- Learn **CPR**:
  - C**oncision
  - P**recision
  - R**evision



# CONCISION

**C**oncision - begin by cutting the needless and virtually meaningless words

Examples: 'in a variety of ways' 'in terms of'



**P**recision - the key to making a paragraph's meaning more precise is to choose clear, meaningful, representative nouns place them at the head of each sentence, and follow them with verbs that describe each noun's meaning in the sentence.

**R**evision- once you have made the writing more concise and precise, revise the work



# Example Without Concision (CPR)

Read this paragraph and use CPR to make it more concise

Increasing foreign competition and technological change, in a variety of forms, are now, as they always have been, disrupting various well-established patterns in terms of industrial organization. An apparent growing quality in the upward movement of economic change is also causing geographers' interest in regional adjustment problems to grow as well: problems that often focus concern on regional economic decline in a context of low rates of national productivity improvement, on loss of international competitiveness in sectors such as automobiles and primary metals.

# Example with Concision (CPR) applied

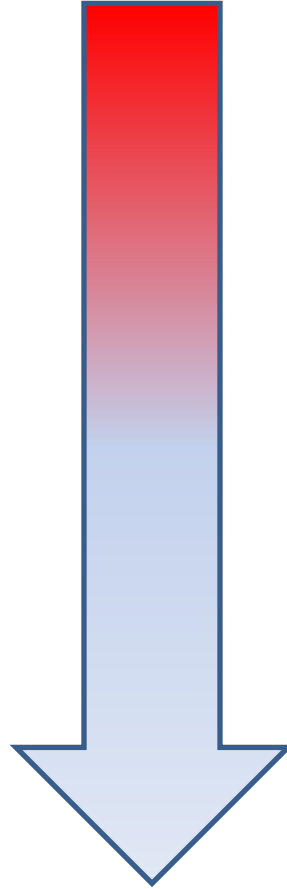
## Paragraph with CPR applied

Recently, increasing foreign competition and technological change have disrupted well-established patterns of industrial organization. This acceleration in economic change has heightened geographers' interest in regional adjustment problems, drawing attention to regional economic decline in such sectors as automobiles and primary metals. Regional economic decline often manifests itself through low rates of national productivity improvement and a loss of international competitiveness.

# Game Plan: Two Lectures

Last time:  
Higher order  
writing  
concerns

Today:  
Lower order  
writing  
concerns



- Audience/Purpose
- Thesis
- Paragraph Development
- Organization
  
- Transitions
- Clarity
- Conciseness
- **Editing**

# Editing

- Take a break before reading
- Read out loud slowly
- Print it out (or expand on screen)
- Read it backwards sentence-by-sentence
- Ask someone to read out loud for you while you read silently
- Use Grammarly
- Make a writing consultation

# Recognize Patterns of Errors

1. Avoid Nominalized Verbs – use of a verb, adjective, or adverb as a noun makes the sentence more wordy

Nominalized sentence: *The **experience** of children with respect to being at school for the first time is common.*

Non-nominalized sentence with subject and verb at front of sentence:  
*Many **children experience** worries when they go to school for the first time.*

2. Avoid the misuse of colons – colons connect two independent clauses (where you could replace the colon with the word because); or they connect an independent clause with a list

**Example:** *He got what he worked for: he really earned that promotion*

**Example:** *You may be required to bring many things: sleeping bags, pans, utensils, and warm clothing.*

# Use Resources

There are several great grammar resources available to students who are native and non-native English speakers.

The OWL at Purdue has lots of mini-lessons and quizzes once you have identified your pattern of error



<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/>



# Conclusion

- Incorporate these 5 tools into your writing process
  - Transitions
  - Clarity: Active vs. Passive Voice
  - Concision: Learn CPR
  - Editing (punctuation, spelling, grammar)
    - identify patterns of error, practice with resources
- Learn how to self-assess a piece of writing
- Examine your writing process

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

## WRITING CENTER

### Additional Assistance

Sign up for a writing consultation at <http://writingcenter.uh.edu/>

## University of Houston Writing Center

SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS

ONLINE WRITING SERVICES

WRITING CENTER SERVICES

ABOUT US

RESOURCES



The University of Houston Writing Center is currently offering our services to students, faculty, and staff in a fully online format. Please select "Schedule Now" to sign up for an online, individual consultation, or contact us at (713) 743-3016 or at [writingcenter@uh.edu](mailto:writingcenter@uh.edu) if you need assistance.

**Schedule Now**