

ACADEMIC WRITING BY CHRIS LIMA

Age: Young adults / Adults

Author: Chris Lima

Level: Upper intermediate–Advanced

Time: Approx. 90 minutes

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student; computer, projector and internet access

Aims: In this lesson, the students will:

- ▶ read extracts from academic papers about film adaptations of Shakespeare's *Henry V*;
- ▶ learn about using direct quotes;
- ▶ learn about using cautious language in academic writing;
- ▶ learn about summarizing and paraphrasing;
- ▶ practise writing an academic paper.

Summary: This lesson is designed to introduce students to the practice of writing academic essays. It has a strong focus on the importance of using references and quotes to support an argument, as well as the use of cautious language when presenting facts and opinions. It also gives students the opportunity to practise summarizing and paraphrasing. The homework focuses on doing online research and it can be used as a lead-in to the next and final lesson in this series.



TEACHING TIP: Although the lessons in this series were designed with EAP learners at foundation programmes and undergraduate level in mind, they can also be used with advanced language learners and in English language teacher training and CPD programmes to prepare staff to teach Shakespeare themselves in the future.

ACTIVITY 1 – SPEAKING

Aims: contextualization; to prepare for the lesson activities

Approximate time: 15 mins

PROCEDURE:

1. Hand out the worksheets. The first part of activity 1 asks students to compare their notes on the homework set in Lesson 4 in this series, which focuses on academic reading. The homework task was to write a summary of an article about two film adaptations of *Henry V*. If you have not used Lesson 4, ignore this first part.
2. Students discuss the remaining questions.
3. Have a whole-class discussion, especially if you have students from different academic backgrounds. It can help to raise their awareness of the similarities

and differences between writing an academic paper in their own context and in English.

ACTIVITY 2 – LISTENING

Aims: to present students with some basic principles and steps to follow when writing an academic paper; to prepare for the reading activity; to practise listening and taking notes

Approximate time: 15 mins

PROCEDURE:

1. Set the context for the listening. This is an educator giving some general tips for writing essays in the field of literary studies.
2. Play the recording once. Ask students to take notes.
3. Ask students to compare their notes.
4. Play the video again so students can check the accuracy of their notes and take down some extra information from the second listening.
5. Ask students to share with the whole group their views on the content of the video and whether they think the tips are useful or not.

Link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=8adKfLwIrVk

ACTIVITY 3 – READING

Aims: to practise reading academic papers; to review/introduce the concepts of using quotes and references; to critically analyse the texts

Approximate time: 20 mins

PROCEDURE:

1. If you have used Lesson 4 in this series, ask students to briefly tell you what was the focus of the article that was assigned for reading as homework. (The text on the film adaptations of *Henry V*.)
2. If you have not used Lesson 4, introduce the topic of Shakespearean film adaptations to your students.
3. You may want to elicit and briefly review the concepts of using quotes and references in academic writing before doing this activity. There are some useful links at the end of the teacher's notes.
4. Give instructions according to the rubric on the worksheet. Clarify if needed.

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5. Ask students to read the extracts silently and do the activity individually.
6. Ask students to compare their answers in pairs or small groups.
7. Discuss the answers with the whole group.



Answer key:

1. (Other answers are possible, too.) imaginative participation; subtly evoking; therefore; depiction; on the contrary; one would expect; for (used to mean *because*); effect transitions; incorporates and modifies some of Olivier's devices; the RAF-style nonchalance so evident in Olivier's portrayal

2. 'O, for a muse of fire' [Act I, prologue]; 'To ascend the brightest heavens of invention'

3. through the use of music, close-ups and slow motion the movie seems to maintain a strange ambiguity about this subject (Crowl, 2007, p.232)

THINK CRITICALLY

Each lesson in this series has one or two Think critically boxes to give students some food for thought. Teachers don't need to 'do' anything with the content in the box. However, if you have time or think that your students need to improve their understanding of the concept of academic honesty and the importance of avoiding plagiarism, this may be a good place to do that. There are further links at the end of the teacher's notes.

ACTIVITY 4 – WRITING

Aims: to raise students' awareness of the features of a piece of academic writing; to practise summarizing, quoting and citing; to give students the opportunity to get some individual feedback on their writing

Approximate time: 40 mins

PROCEDURE:

1. Discuss with your students the concept of academic caution in academic writing. Refer to the box on academic style.
2. If your students are still not familiar with it, discuss the concept and give some examples on the board of how to make statements more 'cautious'. Check the links at the end of the teacher's notes for more information and examples.

3. Introduce activity 4 by going through the rubric with the students.
4. Ask students to re-read the extracts in activity 3. They may want to search for unknown words – give them time to use their dictionaries, if necessary.
5. Ask students to copy sentences from the extracts that they may want to use as direct quotes. Remind them that these should be very short as their summary has a limited word count.
6. Ask students to compare and contrast the authors' ideas and think critically about them.
7. Circulate to monitor and help students with their individual pieces.

HOMework & INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Aims: to prepare for the next lesson; to foster independent learning; to do online research; to help students develop their critical thinking skills when selecting material online

Approximate independent study time: 120 mins

PROCEDURE:

1. Set the activity according to the rubric. Point out that it is very important to do the homework because it is an opportunity to gather material for their future assignments.
2. Highlight the importance of copying the URL accurately.
3. Point out that there is a lot of material online but students need to judge for themselves which ones are reliable, useful and can be used as academic references. Point out that their findings will serve as the basis for next lesson.
4. Ask students to bring their notes to class and/or post them to your discussion group or class blog if you have one.

USEFUL LINKS FOR TEACHERS

Academic style:

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wdc/learning/language/library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.20.htm

Summarizing, paraphrasing and quoting:

<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>

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Academic caution (follow the link under the section entitled 'Hedging'):

www.uefap.com/writing/feature/featfram.htm

Using references and citing:

www.uefap.com/writing/citation/citefram.htm

Avoiding plagiarism:

www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/study/avoiding-plagiarism

sites.harvard.edu/icb/icb

do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page342057

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ACTIVITY 1 – SPEAKING

- Compare your notes on the homework you did for Lesson 4.
- How easy is it for you to read academic papers about literature?
- Have you ever written an academic essay in your own language? Would you be able to identify the most important things people need to remember when they write an academic paper in your language?
- Have you ever written an academic essay in English? Would you be able to identify the most important things people need to remember when they write an academic paper in English?

ACTIVITY 2 – LISTENING

Watch a short video where the speaker gives three pieces of advice on writing a literary essay. Take notes below about the things you should and should not do.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8adKfLwIrVk

First

Second

Third

ACTIVITY 3 – READING

The extracts below come from academic papers where the authors discuss film adaptations of Shakespeare's *Henry V*.

Read them and ...

1. circle words that can be considered to be quite formal;
2. underline direct quotes and/or citations from the text of the play;
3. highlight instances of paraphrasing followed by a citation of another academic paper.

Extract A

[Branagh's] bravura quality is apparent from the opening frames of *Henry V*, where he first introduces Derek Jacobi's Chorus striking a match ('O, for a muse of fire') [Act I, prologue] on a darkened sound stage and then throwing on the full lamps ('To ascend the brightest heavens of invention') as he manages to suggest that film requires the same imaginative participation by the audience as does the theatre. Here Branagh also is subtly evoking and revising Olivier's famous opening of his *Henry V* in a replica of Shakespeare's Globe.

Crowl, S., 2000. Flamboyant realist: Kenneth Branagh. In: R. Jackson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.222–238

Extract B

Kenneth Branagh's (1989) movie was made under decidedly different circumstances than his great predecessor. Placed at the end of the 20th century and after the Vietnam War an idealised depiction of war is no longer viable. Therefore, Branagh's depiction of the Battle of Agincourt (IV, iv) has no bright Technicolor or idyllic backgrounds without any blood; on the contrary, his is a mud sodden, fog ridden battlefield filled with soldiers brutally maiming their enemies, who squirm and seem to cry out for their lives as they join the countless unidentifiable dead. From this, one would expect the movie to have a very clear anti-war message. That, however, is not the case for through the use of music, close-ups and slow motion the movie seems to maintain a strange ambiguity about this subject (Crowl, 2007, p.232).

Lima, E., 2009. Shakespeare's, Olivier's and Branagh's *Henry V*. [online] Available at edessays.wordpress.com/other-essays/. Accessed 30 Apr. 2016.

Extract C

Olivier's film, despite its rigorous wartime patriotism, remains a classic, exploring with imaginative brilliance cinema's ability to embrace a range of visual styles and to effect transitions in time and place, and between theatre and cinema. (...) Branagh's *Henry V*, made for an audience far more suspicious of the glamorization of war, has been seen as a reaction to Olivier's film. Yet, Branagh incorporates and modifies some of Olivier's devices. His, [however,] is a profoundly searching Henry, with none of the RAF-style nonchalance so evident in Olivier's portrayal.

Wells, S.W. and Dobson, M. eds., 2009. *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.199.

THINK CRITICALLY

Scholars in the humanities tend to summarize, paraphrase and quote texts. When you summarize, you provide your readers with a condensed version of an author's key points. A summary can be as short as a few sentences or much longer, depending on the complexity of the text and the level of detail you wish to provide to your readers. When you include a summary of a paper in your essay, you must cite the source. Short quotes from the literary text and references to specific scenes and lines in the text are also essential.

- Why do we need to refer to other authors?
- Why do we need to add references to the literary text?

Academic style

Written academic English is:

- **objective** – The language is measured, fair and accurate. It avoids exaggeration and bias, and shows respect for the views of others.
- **formal** – It avoids colloquialisms and slang, which may be ephemeral and subject to local and social variations. Formal language is more precise and stable.
- **cautious** – The language reflects the strength of evidence available to support an idea or claim. The less certain you are about your claims, the more tentative the language should be.

A wide range of words and phrases can be used in hedging:

- **modal auxiliary verbs:** can, could, may, might, should, would
- **other verbs:** appear, look, seem, tend
- **probability adjectives:** likely, possible, probable, unlikely
- **probability adverbs:** perhaps, possibly, probably, presumably
- **frequency adverbs:** generally, usually, often, occasionally, seldom

Adapted from: Newcastle University, 2014. *Academic Language & Style*. [online] Writing Development Centre. Available at www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wdc/learning/language/. Accessed 30 Apr. 2016.

ACTIVITY 4 – WRITING

Summarize the extracts in activity 3 in one paragraph (approximately 150 words). Compare and contrast the authors' ideas.

Don't forget to ...

- use formal vocabulary;
- refer to the authors of the extracts (use in-text citations);
- insert references to particular scenes in the play;
- insert (very) short quotes from the extracts;
- use cautious language.

EAP Shakespeare

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HOMEWORK & INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Do some online research. Look for information about Shakespeare's plays. You can research the topic in general or focus on a particular play or plays.

You can look for different types of material, such as online editions of the plays, online academic books, online articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, quizzes, etc.

Take notes on the sources you found in the table below.

type of source	title & URL	main topic	my notes
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			