

# Getting What You Came For

ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS

# What Does Your Committee Expect of You

- ▶ Develop Ability to Do Independent Work
- ▶ Keep in Contact
- ▶ Make Constant Progress
- ▶ Be Honest About Your Progress
- ▶ Be Responsive to Their Advice
- ▶ Develop Professionalism, Personal Maturity, and Strong Work ethic



# Academic Writing Skills: Struktur

## Type 1

Front Matter

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Literatur Review

Chapter III: Methodology

Chapter IV: Results

Chapter V: Discussion  
(Including Conclusion)

Back Matter

## Type 2

Academic WFront Matter

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Literatur Review

Chapter III: Experiment 1  
(Methodology, Result, and  
Discussion)

Chapter IV: : Experiment 2  
(Methodology, Result, and  
Discussion)

Chapter V: : Experiment 3  
(Methodology, Result, and  
Discussion)

Chapter VI: General Conclusions

Back Matter

## Type 3

Academic WFront Matter

Chapter I: Introduction  
(Including Literature Review  
and Methodology)

Chapter II: Theme 1

Chapter III: Theme 2

Chapter IV: Theme 3

Chapter V: Theme 4

Chapter VI: Conclusions

Back Matter

# Start Writing

Why Ist Scary: The Myth of Perfect Thesis

Original and Significant Contribution Vs Good Enough Contribution

Get Perspective By Reading Theses/Dissertations, Articles, and Other Academic Sources

Start Writing: Shitty Draft Is Fine for Both Dissertation and Articles

Academic  
Writing Skills:  
Challenges

Procrastination Vs  
Constant Writing

Perfection Vs  
Good Enough

# Academic Writing Skills: Modal



Read...Read...Read...Interactively: Ask the right question



Think...Think...Think...Critically and Creatively



Menawarkan ide dan/atau bukti baru, pemahaman alternatif atau mempersoalkan asumsi yang secara umum diterima luas



Write...Write...Write...Consistently: Get The Darn Things Written



Commitment and Focus



*Avoid a recycle of ideas*

# Berinteraksi Dengan Sumber Secara Aktif

## ▶ Persetujuan Kreatif

1. Tawarkan bukti dukungan tambahan
2. Konfirmasi klaim yang tidak didukung dengan bukti
3. Aplikasikan klaim dalam konteks yang lebih luas

## ▶ Ketidaksetujuan Kreatif

1. Kontradiksi
2. Kontradiksi Bagian-Keseluruhan
3. Kontradiksi Historis atau Perkembangan
4. Kontradiksi Sebab-Akibat
5. Kontradiksi Sudut Pandang

# Teks Primer Vs Teks Sekunder

## Teks Primer

- ▶ Teks primer merupakan sumber langsung (first-hand) tentang sebuah peristiwa, hal, atau waktu tertentu dan dianggap otoritatif. Sumber-sumber tekstual tersebut dianggap asli, terpercaya menggambarkan peristiwa yang sebenarnya, atau menyajikan informasi baru.

## Teks Sekunder

- ▶ Teks atau sumber sekunder berisi analisis, sintesis, penafsiran, atau evaluasi atas sumber-sumber atau teks-teks primer. Teks-teks jenis ini biasanya berusaha untuk mendeskripsikan, menjelaskan, atau memberikan penyajian kritis atas teks-teks primer.



# Teks Primer

Buku Harian,  
Korespondensi,  
Buku Catatan

Dokumen Asli:  
Akta Kelahiran,  
Rekaman Pengadilan,  
dsb

Manuskrip, Biografi,  
Otobiografi

Dokumen  
Pemerintah, Data  
Statistik, Laporan  
Riset,

Wawancara,  
Pidato, Sejarah  
Lisan

Karya Seni dan Sastra

Data-Data Digital:  
Video, Obrolan di  
Sosmed, dst.

# Teks Sekunder

Artikel Jurnal:

Nasional, Internasional, dan Bahasa  
Apapun

Buku Teks (Ajar)

Kamus dan Ensiklopedia

Disertasi/Karya Ilmiah

Opini di Media  
Massa

Artikel di Media  
Sosial

Buku Ilmiah

Kadang Overlapping



# Kesalahan Umum

1. Secondary Teks dijadikan sebagai Sumber Utama (Primary Text)
2. Hanya Deskripsi Isi Teks: Tidak Ada Interaksi, Keterlibatan, Diskusi, dan Pergulatan Obyektif-Kritis baik dengan Teks Sekunder Maupun Primer
3. Mengutip Bagian Kecil dari Secondary Text untuk Dipuji atau Dikritik dengan mengacuhkan konteks argumen text secara keseluruhan.
4. Mengutip Hanya Untuk Kepentingan Asesoris tanpa makna, hanya agar terlihat banyak membaca dan banyak referensi.



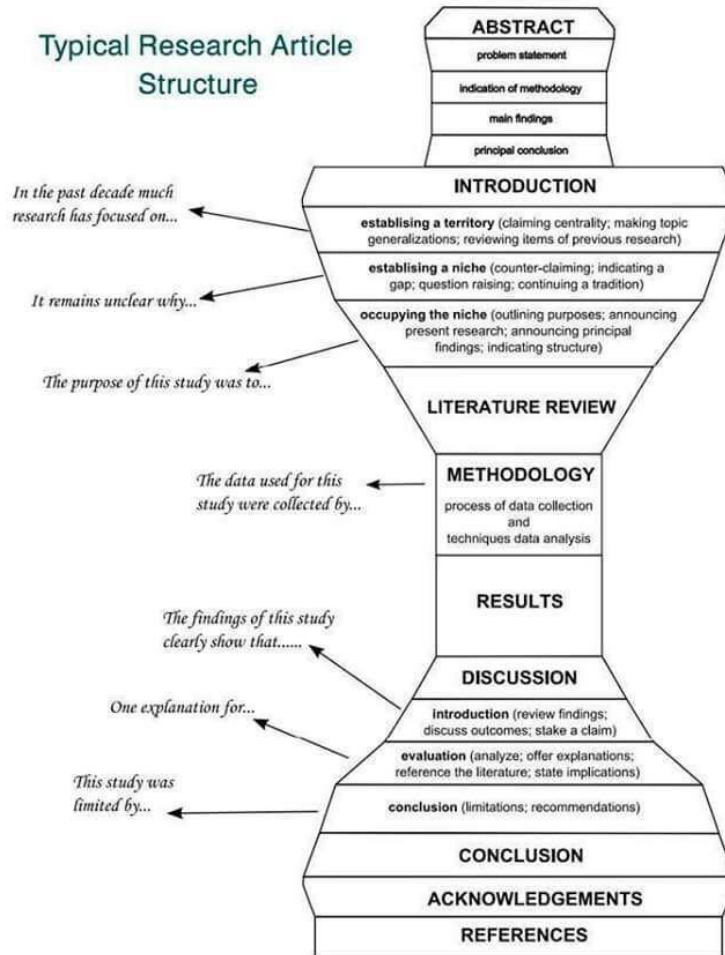
# Kesalahan Umum

 Recycling Ideas: Daur Ulang Ide

 Anggapan Bahwa Tidak ada yang pernah membahas sebelumnya

 Menerima Klaim/Argumen Teks Sebelumnya Sebagai Fakta tanpa Diskusi

## Typical Research Article Structure



# Drafting Academic Writing Skills

Title, Author, Abstract, Keywords

- Descriptive information that lets readers search for an article.

Introduction

- What is the context for this project?
- How does it fit in with other research on the topic?
- *What is the research question?*

Methods

- What did the author(s) do to answer the research question?

Results

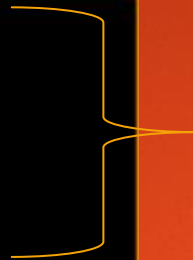
- What was the answer to the question?
- This is often shown in tables and figures.

Discussion/Conclusion

- What is the significance of this project?
- How does it fit in with what else is known about the topic?

References

- Materials the author(s) cited when writing this paper.





# What makes a good thesis or question?


A very good thesis/question is one with which you “insert yourself into a conversation”

Questions to ask yourself:

- ▶ Who are my conversation partners?
- ▶ What are they talking about at the moment?
- ▶ What can my work contribute to ongoing theoretical or conceptual debates or problems?
- ▶ Before writing your paper, familiarize yourself with current scholarship; often the same data can be used for different theses



# The Introduction: The Diamond Style

A yellow diamond shape is positioned to the right of the title, and a yellow rectangle is in the top right corner of the slide.

## 3 Steps:

- ▶ Narrow start, begins with a concrete example, e.g. citation, anecdote, etc.
- ▶ Then becomes wide to contextualize and provide further background on the example
- ▶ Then becomes narrow again to articulate question or thesis to be pursued in the paper

## Introduction

My first encounter as a Southeast Asian Muslim with Jewish community and its scriptural tradition was when I attended Noah's Ark Interfaith Meeting between Muslim and Jewish Community in Bloomington, Indiana, USA, in 2012. I was invited to present about Muslim's holy scripture, al-Qur'an, while my Jewish colleague, Jeremy Shere, was speaking about Jewish's canonical scripture, The Hebrew Bible or Tanakh (Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim). The meeting was fruitful because each community could learn commonalities and differences of both religious traditions.

However, the challenge was when each community returned to their respective fellow Muslim and Jewish congregation. A few members of Muslim congregation criticized the Muslim interfaith participants by invoking Jewish's deviation from the teachings of Prophet and their rejection and treason of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina. The similar situation also happened in Jewish congregation when the Jewish interfaith participants were criticized for their willingness to meet Muslims whose religion distorted Jewish sources and contained 'Judaizing heresy.'<sup>1</sup>

This challenge of interfaith conversation also occurred in a scholarly setting. Some studies comparing the notion of prophecy in Muslim and Jewish tradition are unable to provide an objective portrayal and opinion of each tradition. Scholars who try to do so tend to establish the supremacy of one tradition over another.<sup>2</sup> In the

Narrow Beginning, Concrete Example.

Further Background and Wider Context: Research Problem

1. Muslim and Jewish Community
2. Scholarly Community

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<sup>1</sup> Islam is viewed as the religion that diluted and twisted the authentic materials from Israelite tradition. See Bernard W. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 70.



context of the discussion of the prophecy, for example, Fred Miller provides 'Islamic perspective' arguing that Muḥammad's prophecy is a culmination of the historical development patterns found in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, Jeffry Macy presents 'Jewish view' of prophecy by showing the supreme virtuousness of Judaic prophecy compared to the Islamic one.<sup>4</sup> However, there are several scholarships that have been devoted to cultivate respectful dialog between these two religious communities.<sup>5</sup> They emphasize generally on common

## Narrowing the context:

1. Engaging current Scholarship
2. Presenting their arguments and merits  
or
3. Showing the gaps

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successors) who depicted Islam as inauthentic religion in his book *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?* (1833). See Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, 68.

<sup>3</sup> Fred Miller, "Prophecy in Judaism and Islam," *Islamic Studies*, 17(1) (1978): 27-44. A similar position appears in recent scholarship that criticizes a certain aspect within Judaism or defends Islamic prophetic practices such as Zohaib Ahmad, "Aspects of Maryam Jameelah's Post-Conversion Understanding of Islam," *Islamic Studies*, 58(1) (2019); Rafia Riyaz, "Comparative Analysis of Gulzar Ahmed and Richard Gabriel on the Military History of the Prophet (Peace Be on Him)," *Islamic Studies*, 55(1-2) (2016).

<sup>4</sup> Jeffry Macy, "Prophecy in Al-Farabi and Maimonides: The Imaginative and Rational Faculty," *Journal Jerusalem Philosophical Encounter* 6 (1985):185-201. Some analogous superiority complex occurred in recent criticism from Jewish perspective towards the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, and his 'violent' legacies or historical authenticity. See Paul Lawrence Rose, "Muhammad, The Jews and the Constitution of Medina: Retrieving the Historical Kernel," *Der Islam*, 86(1) (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1515/islam.2011.012>; Reuven Firestone, "Muhammad, the Jews, and the Composition of the Qur'an: Sacred History and Counter History," *Religions*, 10(1) (2019); Jacob Lassner, *Jews, Christians, and the Abode of Islam Modern Scholarship, Medieval Realities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> ...

aspects, shared aspirations (e.g. peacemaking), or historical precedence of polemics and collaborations (e.g. in Medieval Spain) of these two religions to foster such the intended fruitful dialog.

In this regard, this article aims to add a specific precedence literary study that could enrich and strengthen the existing and future initiatives of religious and civilizational dialog. This study examines the notion of prophecy in Muslim and Jewish context by comparing the idea of prophethood of Abu Hāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111) and Maimonides (1135-1204).

Although al-Ghazālī favors the Islamic prophecy of Muḥammad when using scriptural and other religious forms of reasoning and Maimonides argues for the superiority of Judaic prophecy, Moses, with the same line of reasoning, their view on the adequacy of the philosophical justification of prophecy is analogous. They have a shared opinion on the importance of using ideas of the peripatetic philosophers such as al-Fārābī (870-950) and Ibn Sīnā (980-1037). If al-Ghazālī inherits the intellectual legacy of Ibn Sīnā,<sup>6</sup> Maimonides acquires the philosophical inheritance of al-Fārābī.<sup>7</sup>

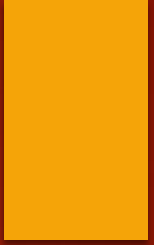

Narrow:

Research's solution to the problem, research's aim, novelty, intervention or contribution.

Narrow:

Articulating Thesis Statement

# The Introduction: The Diamond Style



## Advantages

- ▶ Begins with something interesting, grasps the audience's attention
- ▶ Concrete example can help anchor the paper

## Risks

- Can make the paper confusing if
- ▶ The example is too unfamiliar
  - ▶ It is not well connected to research question or thesis



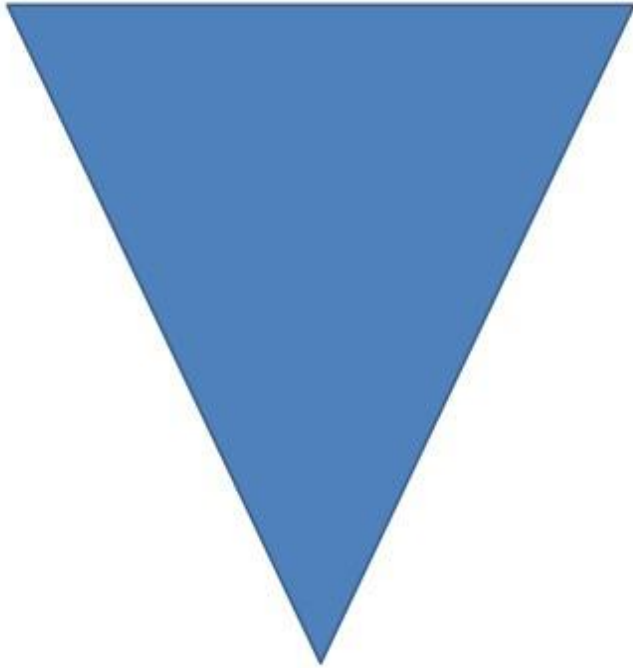
# The Introduction: The Top of the Hourglass Style



Gradual progression:

- ▶ Starts with the “big picture”, e.g. larger historical context, typically something you can assume people to know
- ▶ Gradually zooms in on the specific context of the problem/question that will be discussed
- ▶ It is narrowest at the end, where it formulates specific thesis or question

# Funnel Structure



Start with a broad statement to set the context

State what is known. Include only the most important and relevant studies that describe the research to date.

Identify the problem: the limitations of previous studies; what has not yet been studied; what needs to be clarified.

State how your study aimed to address the problem.

State your hypotheses/research questions.

# Introduction

## Context

The problem you are addressing

*Broad question or issue with some context*

Your position / thesis statement

*Your answer to the problem*


Main points

*Overview of argument*

Note: Thesis statement may come at end of the introduction

Article

# The Traces of the Bhagavad Gita in the Perennial Philosophy—A Critical Study of the Gita’s Reception Among the Perennialists

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Received: 14 April 2020; Accepted: 28 April 2020; Published: 6 May 2020



**Abstract:** This article studies the reception of the Bhagavad Gita within circles of Perennial Philosophy scholars and examines how the Gita is interpreted to the extent that it influenced their thoughts. Within the Hindu tradition, the Gita is often read from a dualist and/or non-dualist perspective in the context of observing religious teachings and practices. In the hands of Perennial Philosophy scholars, the Gita is read from a different angle. Through a critical examination of the original works of the Perennialists, this article shows that the majority of the Perennial traditionalists read the Gita from a dualist background but that, eventually, they were convinced that the Gita’s paradigm is essentially non-dualist. In turn, this non-dualist paradigm of the Gita influences and transforms their ontological thought, from the dualist to the non-dualist view of the reality. Meanwhile, the non-traditionalist group of Perennial Philosophy scholars are not interested in this ontological discussion. They are more concerned with the question of how the Gita provides certain ways of attaining human liberation and salvation. Interestingly, both traditionalist and non-traditionalist camps are influenced by the Gita, at the same time, inserting an external understanding and interpretation into the Gita.

**Keywords:** Bhagavad Gita; Perennial Philosophy; Atman; Maya; non-dualist; dualist; Advaita; Dvaita; Samkhya

## 1. Introduction

The Bhagavad Gita, as “the sacred book of the east”<sup>1</sup>, has been not only revered within Hindu tradition but also received, read, and interpreted by philosophers, clerics, and scholars beyond the Hindu community and religion. In Hindu tradition, the Gita is mainly read to understand the foundational concepts of religion, to observe religious teachings and practices, or to attain human liberation (Dhiman 2013; Stroud 2005; Patil 1960; Shideler 1960; McLain 2019; Theodor 2017). Some scholars would employ a dualistic perspective of Gita’s interpretation to achieve these religious objectives. From this perspective, Krishna is traditionally viewed as the avatar of Vishnu (Gonda 1969, p. 157; Bhaskarananda 2002). Krishna is the divine incarnation and the human form of the formless God, Vishnu, who comes to the world to liberate humans and help them attain perfection (Bhaskarananda 2002). However, some other Hindu scholars hold the opposite view. They use a non-dualistic perspective, arguing that the Reality is beyond both the formless Vishnu and Krishna’s countless forms (Easwaran 2011, p. 48; Kriyananda and Yogananda 2006). A form of divinity is

<sup>1</sup> The term has been introduced by ... edited volumes of the sacred book of the east, which included the Bhag...

Big Picture,  
Big Statement,  
General Context, or  
Context Known by targeted audience



deemed the outer layer of reality that is accessible to humans through sensory perception. However, if an observer goes beyond his sensory perception, practices spiritual exercises, and attains spiritual disclosure, he will be overwhelmed to find the timeless, unchangeable, infinite, and formless divinity beyond various forms of Krishna or formless Vishnu.

Meanwhile, outside the Hindu community, the reception of the Gita spreads across religious, philosophical, and scholarly tradition (Davis 2015; Sinha 2010; Eder 1988; Ashton 2014). However, the study of the reception of the Gita among Perennial Philosophy circles is lacking, although the study of the Perennialist's reception is valuable in terms of gaining a new perspective and understanding from scholars and philosophers from different religious backgrounds. Perennial scholars and philosophers are those who focus their study primarily on the divine Reality (Huxley 1945) and on the Perennial wisdom among religions (i.e., *sophia perennis* and *religio perennis*).<sup>2</sup> These scholars present the Gita from an ambiguous but interesting perspective, reflecting a dualist and non-dualist interpretation of the Gita.

On the one hand, they understand the peculiar teachings of the Gita, especially its non-dualist concept of reality (although the Gita can be read from the dualist angle as well). On the other hand, they have to bring such a non-dualist perspective in the context in which the dualist paradigm is prevalent.<sup>3</sup> In this regard, this article aims to trace and analyze how some peculiar teachings of the Gita are interpreted and presented by those Perennial Philosophy scholars to their audience. There are two main groups of Perennial Philosophy writers whose ideas will be discussed here. First, those who consider themselves as Perennial-traditionalists<sup>4</sup> such as Rene Guenon (1886–1952), Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1877–1947), Frithjof Schuon (1907–1998), and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1933–Present). Second, those who do not belong to the first group but have the same interests as them, and are even spiritually or intellectually influenced by them, such as Aldous Huxley (1894–1963) and Huston Smith (1919–2016).

Zoom In, Framing the Issue, Narrow the discussion:

1. Stating the research question or problem
2. Showing the lacuna, the gap, or the niche
3. Aims of the study

Narrower:

1. Thesis Statement
2. Hypotheses
3. Central Argument/Claim

Optional:

Outlining the structure of the article

# The Introduction: The Top of the Hourglass Style



## Advantages

- ▶ Begins with something familiar
  - helps anchor the paper
  - provides point of reference for audience
- ▶ General context helps to bring paper in conversation with other papers

## Risks

- Can make the paper boring if
- ▶ It is too general (“In the world there are many things.”)
  - ▶ It takes too long to get to the point

# ... but the introduction is not done yet!

## Recommendation:

- ▶ At the very end of your introduction, provide a short outline of the paper. It helps both the reader/audience and forces you to be quite clear in your structure
- ▶ Example:  
In this paper, I will argue that x.  
I will proceed in three parts.  
In the first part, I will provide an overview of...  
Then, in the second part, I will argue that...  
Finally, in the third part, I will show that...

# Data Commentary



It is not easy to predict precisely what you might need to do in a data commentary, but some of the more common purposes are to

- highlight the results of research
- use the data to support a point or make an argument in your paper
- assess theory, common beliefs, or general practice in light of the given data
  
- compare and evaluate different data sets
- assess the reliability of the data in terms of the methodology that produced it
- discuss the implications of the data
- make recommendations

Typically, of course, a data commentary will include several of these elements.

## Strength of Claim

Like many other aspects of academic writing, data commentaries are exercises in positioning yourself. There are, as a result, both dangers and opportunities. One danger is to simply repeat in words what the data has expressed in non-verbal form—in other words, to offer description rather than actual commentary or interpretation. An opposite danger is to read too much into the data and draw conclusions that are not well supported. The art of the commentary is for you to find the right strength of claim in discussing the data and then to order your statements in some appropriate way (perhaps in order of interest or relevance). This may involve moving in a general-specific direction (see Unit Two). To illustrate what we mean by finding the right strength of claim, we offer Task One.

Work with a partner and decide whether the verb phrase choice results in a strong (S), weak (W), or neutral (N) statement. Some disagreement is reasonable. Can you think of other verbs or verb phrases that could complete the sentence? How would you evaluate the strength of claim for your alternatives?

Many studies have concluded that excessive credit growth \_\_\_\_\_ the global financial crisis.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. contributed to
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. caused
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. may have contributed to
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. was probably a major cause of
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. was one of the causes of
  - \_\_\_\_\_ f. might have been a factor in
-

# Structure of Data Commentary

Data commentaries usually have these elements in the following order.

1. location elements and/or summary statements
2. highlighting statements
3. discussions of implications, problems, exceptions, recommendations, or other interesting aspects of the data



## Highlighting Statements

The central sections of data commentaries consist of highlighting statements. Highlighting statements are points that can be supported by the details of the data. We have already seen some examples in the text that accompanies Task Two. Highlighting statements need good judgment. They are an opportunity to show your intelligence. In particular, they are an opportunity for you to demonstrate that

- you can spot trends or regularities in the data.
- you can separate more important findings from less important ones.
- you can make claims of appropriate strength.

Try to avoid

- simply repeating all the details in words.
- attempting to cover all the information.
- claiming more than is reasonable or defensible.

## Likelihood

There are many ways of expressing your degree of commitment to your claims in written academic English. One simple way is to use a modal auxiliary (e.g., *may*, *might*, or *could*) as you saw in Task One of this unit. Notice how the claim changes in these sentences. Which one is the strongest? Which is the most cautious?

- A. Word-of-mouth advertising influences a consumer's incentive to purchase a product.
- B. Word-of-mouth advertising can influence a consumer's incentive to purchase a product.
- C. Word-of-mouth advertising could influence a consumer's incentive to purchase a product.
- D. Word-of-mouth advertising may influence a consumer's incentive to purchase a product.
- E. Word-of-mouth advertising might influence a consumer's incentive to purchase a product.

### Distance

Distance is another way of indicating your stance. This involves removing yourself from a strong—and possibly unjustified—claim. Notice how Sentence A leaves no room for doubt, which may be too strong.

- A. Health education has a positive impact on a patient's quality of life.
- B. Health education seems to have a positive impact on a patient's quality of life.
- C. It seems that health education has a positive impact on a patient's quality of life.
- D. It would appear that health education has a positive impact on a patient's quality of life.

An alternative strategy to distance yourself from the data is to attribute your point to someone else or to other studies, which can indicate that it is “soft.”

Here are a few examples.

Based on the limited data available, . . .

According to this preliminary study, . . .

Based on previous surveys, . . .

According to some earlier studies, . . .

In the view of many scholars, . . .



the African  
continent has  
relatively strong  
wind power  
potential in parts  
of the west,  
south, and east.

## Softening Generalizations

Writers sometimes want to make generalizations. These can be effectively used either to start developing a point for which support is later provided or drawing a conclusion from different pieces of information. Importantly, generalizations should be grounded in some reasonable evidence and stated cautiously so that they will be accepted by readers.

Three classic verbs for carefully stating a generalization are the verbs *appear (to)*, *seem (to)*, and *tend (to)*.

Children living in poverty *appear to* do poorly in school.

Children living in poverty *seem to* do poorly in school.

Children living in poverty *tend to* do poorly in school.

If you remove *appear to*, *seem to*, or *tend to*, the result is a very strong claim that suggests all poor children will be unsuccessful.

Children living in poverty do poorly in school.

By using *seem* or *tend*, you can avoid criticism from readers who may be aware of some poor children who are doing well.

Another way to make a generalization more acceptable is to qualify (limit) the subject.

*Many* children living in poverty do poorly in school.

*A majority of* children living in poverty do poorly in school.

*Some* children living in poverty do poorly in school.

*In most parts of the world* children living in poverty do poorly in school.

## Combined Qualifications

Sometimes several types of qualifications are combined in order to construct a defensible claim, as shown in this example. We start with a strong claim.

When people have too many choices, they choose the safest one.

Now see what happens when the following qualifications are added.

- + *according to some recent research* (adding distance)
- + *in some cases* (weakening the generalization)
- + *tend to* (indicating likelihood)

## Concluding a Commentary

Concluding a commentary requires some original thinking. In fact, you may recall that the conclusion of the commentary on internet misbehavior did not merely stop, but offered the author's view that misbehavior will persist.

- ⑩ This problem will likely continue until reasons that students engage in this behavior are clearly identified.

The discussion of time to degree also concluded with some speculation about the reasons for differences in time to PhD completion.

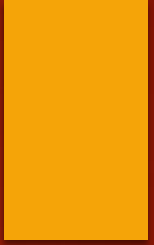

- ⑪ Expectations that are “unmet, unclear, or unarticulated” (Barnes, 2010) could influence the length of time it takes to earn a doctorate.

One of the challenges in writing the conclusion is believing that you have something that is worth saying and that it reasonably follows from the data. In this regard, research has shown that strong writers engage in some reasonable speculation about the meaning of their findings, while weak writers avoid doing so, often due to concerns about being wrong (Wolfe, 2011). Thus, to position yourself as knowledgeable and capable, you may want to consider including some of these elements in your conclusion.

- explanations and/or implications of the data (usually required)
- explanation of the reasoning process that led to the conclusions (if appropriate)
- unexpected results or unsatisfactory data (if necessary)
- possible further research or possible future predictions (if appropriate)



# The Conclusion: The Bottom of the Hourglass Style



Conclusions begin with a narrow focus and then zoom out.

- ▶ Beginning: Brief reiteration of the thesis or question and of how the thesis was substantiated/the question was answered
- ▶ Then zoom out, talking about how your question speaks to a broader debate  
→ think about your conversation partners, their debates, and the intervention you wish to make
- ▶ Ring structure: return to topics raised in the beginning of the introduction



▶ Get It Done