



Book Writing & Self Publishing Course

MODULE 1: THE ART OF WRITING

Topic 4: Notes on How to Write a Paper

-How to create focus, structure and transitions

Nothing worthwhile is ever achieved in real life without a plan. In the same way, a writer does not just jumble ideas and present to readers. The ideas have to be organized and presented logically to make sense.

Every paper has four parts

- The title
- The Introduction
- The body
- The Conclusion

Title: Give your paper a captivating title. This is very important to draw attention.

Introduction: The opening sentence must be punchy. The introductory sentence should get attention to make strong impression. A good introduction puts the reader in a receptive frame of mind and takes her into the heart of the subject.

To write a striking introduction, the following techniques could be employed.

- a. Link the subject to the reader's own problems or interests

Eg.

Does speaking in public frighten you? Do you lose your composure when asked to address an audience? Relax!...

- b.

Tie a specific story to a familiar general situation.

Eg.

"Young people of today are confronted by numerous challenges and it is understandable. The TV and the social media have taken their attention off from what should matter. When I was growing up, things were a bit different..."

- c. Use a striking or revealing quotation.

Eg.

"You cannot faithfully serve the public and be stranded in public" says Joseph Ibekwe.

- d. Set out to correct a common mistake or misunderstanding.

Eg.

"Did you ever think that writing is a 'talent' that a few 'lucky people' are born with? How wrong! The truth is that you can write as effectively as any renounced author you can think of..."

The Body

The Body of a Paper is where you explain, you validate, you illustrate, and discuss what your Paper is all about. You achieve this through effective use of paragraphs.

Using Paragraphs in Writing a Paper

Paragraphs are very useful in writing. It serves as a rung in a ladder, which takes to climb from one level to the next. The rungs have to align;

otherwise the person climbing will fall off. In the same way, the paragraphs have to align and be synchronized.

Features of a good paragraph

- It deals with one key point
- It deals with one stage in a process
- It deals with one important step in an argument
- It does justice to what it takes up to discuss
- It fills in the necessary details, reasons, operations, examples, etc

Uses of Paragraphs

1. A paragraph may be devoted to explaining something that is new or unfamiliar by comparing it to something that the reader knows or can identify with.
2. A paragraph can also be used to show contrast between two or more things.
3. A good writer uses a paragraph to explain a new word, a concept or an important idea. Usually, the writer gives a definition of the word and then gives examples so that reader can see what the word or idea means in practice.
4. Sometimes, a paragraph gives reason for a statement the writer has made. For instance, you could say, "Elections in Nigeria is like going to war". Then you proceed to give reasons why you made the statement.

Before writing your paper, it's advisable that you jot down some major ideas as they come to you. Later you group similar ideas into one place and use them to create a paragraph. But you don't have to follow this process if you already know what to write about.

Book Writing Intrigues

Book writing is a bit more in-depth than writing a paper. A paper may exist for its topic, but a

book could have a wider implication and therefore requires you to connect with your reader in specific ways. This is why we talk about the **4 I's of effective communication**. These are.

Interest

This is about showing interest in your reader. It is demonstrated by your choice of words that sound welcoming.

Identification

If you are interested in your reader, you will not find it difficult to identify yourself with them. Never forget that your readers are people. Put yourself in their shoes. They want to be comforted, encouraged, directed, consoled, informed, entertained, etc. Not threatened and put in fear.

Intimacy

This is revealed by a natural, easy style of writing.

Your personality is carried through your writing. As you write with a sense of warmth, your readers will begin to feel that they know you and like you. Then they will be influenced by what you write.

Immediacy

This is the ability to bring your reader right into what you are writing. It's closely related to intimacy, but different.

You achieve immediacy in three ways.

- a. *Through bodily senses.* Let your writing help the reader to make use of their give senses.

Eg.

"The stadium was crowded with brightly dressed audience and was very noisy"

- b. *By specific rather than general terms*

Eg.

"An elderly blind beggar woman in rags". This brings the person much closer to your reader rather than just saying, "A beggar".

- c. Through writing about familiar things with which the reader can identify themselves.

Eg.

If you describe a home in Abuja to a rural dweller, mention things the reader is familiar with to enable him understand what you are saying.

Whether you are writing a paper or a book, three more things are important: *Focus, structure and transitions*.

1. A good writing has **Focus**.

Effective writers know that if an idea is worth stating, it is worth supporting. Focus is about deciding on a direction and staying on it.

2. Good Writing has **Structure**.

No one builds a house and attach a staircase that leads to nowhere. Effective writers put the parts of their composition where they are needed and where they will do the most good.

3. Good Writing provides **Transition**.

Transitions words are very powerful in taking your reader from one stage of your writing to another.

There is what we call, transitional phrases. These show the connection between one group of sentence and another.

Examples

1. Chronological transition words and phrases:

at first, then, after a short interval, years later, soon, at an early stage.

2. Enumeration words and phrases:

in the first place, also, furthermore, secondly, the third major point, finally, in conclusion.

3. Logical words and phrases:

on the one hand, on the other hand, therefore, but, nevertheless, it is true that, however, as a result..

When you are writing a paper, you will need some of these transitional phrases to move from one paragraph to another.

Conclusion

Your conclusion should leave the reader with strong unified understanding or impression. You could conclude by re-stating the central idea in your paper. You could also conclude by drawing logical inference.

Eg: "Nigerians admire people with chains of paper qualifications, but some of the most productive people do not always have outstanding certificates, they have practical skills and are mostly self-educated".

In writing a paper, you have to give it a good title. This is important to attract attention.

Again, you have to create a strong and compelling introduction. This is very important because the introduction will determine if the reader will drop your work or would like to dig deeper.

Of course you have to conclude with a touch of finesse. Leave your reader with a good taste and hunger for more. You may conclude with a quotation or with a call to action, that is, asking your reader to do something following what have read.