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Academic Writing for Graduate Students

ESSENTIAL TASKS AND SKILLS

3RD
EDITION

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SWALES & FEAKE

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MICHIGAN SERIES IN ENGLISH FOR
ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES

The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor

TASK ELEVEN

Choose a verb from the list to replace each verb in italics to reduce the informality of the sentence. Note that you may need to add tense to the verb from the list. Write down any other single verbs that you think could also work in the sentences.

consider decrease develop investigate reach
constitute determine eliminate maintain tolerate

- Many software manufacturers in developed countries *put up with* widespread copyright violations in less developed countries and often even offer local versions of their products.

- Scientists are *looking into* innovative drug delivery systems that can transport and deliver a drug precisely and safely to its site of action.

- The purpose of this paper is to try to *figure out* what is lacking in our current understanding of corrosion and corrosion protection in concrete.

- Researchers have *come up with* plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEV) that can draw from two sources of energy: stored electrical energy from the grid and stored chemical energy in the form of fuel such as gasoline.

- Rice and aquatic products *make up* a major part of the diet of the people in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam.

- The use of touch screen voting systems could *get rid of* many problems associated with traditional paper-based ballots.

- Worldwide consumption of pesticides has *gone up to* 2.6 million metric tons.

- Although labor unions in the U.S. have been able to *keep up* their membership numbers over the last two decades, they have been losing their political strength.
- The number of mature female green turtles that return to their primary nesting beach has *gone down* from 1,280 ten years ago to 145 today.
- Many funding agencies worldwide are *thinking about* ways to give new researchers greater opportunities to receive grant money.

TASK TWELVE

In the space provided, write a few single verbs that could be used in place of the one in italics. In each case, try to find two or three possibilities and be prepared to discuss them.

- Researchers have *come up with* a number of models to describe the effect of certain cola drinks on dental enamel erosion.
- AIDS researchers have *run into* a variety of unexpected problems in their efforts to develop an effective vaccine.
- Recent studies on car scrapping have *brought up* the important question as to whether CO₂ emissions can be significantly reduced by taking old cars out of service.
- Problems with the new data management software *showed up* soon after it was launched.
- In the past five years, many studies have *looked at* the effect of different grassland management practices.

TASK FIFTEEN

Now that you have become more familiar with some of the possible stylistic features of academic writing, write a one-page problem-solution text about a problem in a country that you are familiar with. Try to choose a problem unique to that country. Refer, if you like, to the text in Task Eight. Your audience is a group of professors and students interested in your selected country. Consider the style points on pages 16–25 as you write.

To conclude this extensive discussion on vocabulary and style, we now turn our attention to the use of the internet and online tools that may help you become more familiar with commonly used expressions or standard phraseology. Standard phraseology consists of expressions that are typical of academic writing across many disciplines. Many authors new to academic writing want to have some knowledge of these expressions as well as an understanding of what can be borrowed.

Using Google Scholar to Identify Potentially Useful Words and Phrases

1. Go to <http://scholar.google.com/>.
2. In the search box, place quotation marks around a phrase that you want to learn to use. For instance, you might want to find ways to use “In recent years there has been interest in . . .” You might want to know what kind of modifiers can be used before *interest*. Place an asterisk * before *interest*. This search will yield the phrase along with words that come before *interest*. To narrow your search, you can add another topic. For instance, your area may be electric vehicles. Your search would then look something like this.

“In recent years, there has been * interest in” “electric vehicle”

A search in 2011 produced one screen that included this information.

FIGURE 2. Sample Google Scholar Results

The screenshot shows a list of search results from Google Scholar. The first result is titled "A novel design of a heat exchanger for a metal-hydrogen reactor" by S. Mellouli, F. Askri, H. Daou, and A. Jemni, published in the International Journal of ... in 2007. The snippet mentions that such a hydrogen which is especially attractive for electric vehicle use. The second result is titled "A hybrid controller design for parallel hybrid electric vehicle" by W. Li, G. Xu, Z. Wang, and others, published in ICIT in 2007. The snippet states that in recent years there has been considerable interest in using hybrid system theory to develop a systematic framework for the analysis and design of ... The third result is titled "Design of interior PM machines for field-weakening applications" by W. L. Song, S. Han, and others, published in Electrical Machines and ... in 2007. The snippet mentions that in recent years there has been increasing interest in the use of concentrated winding stators for both interior (10) and surface PM rotors. The fourth result is titled "Adaptive proportional-integral-derivative tuning sliding mode control for a shape memory alloy actuator" by N. T. Tal, published in Smart Materials and Structures in 2011. The snippet mentions that robustness has gained more and more attention. The fifth result is titled "Design and test of a high-power high-efficiency loosely coupled planar wireless power transfer system" by Z. N. Low, R. A. Ching, and R. Tseng, published in IEEE Transactions on ... in 2009. The snippet mentions the introduction of wireless power technology. Each result includes a link to the full text or related articles.

A novel design of a heat exchanger for a metal-hydrogen reactor
S Mellouli, F Askri, H Daou, A Jemni... - International Journal of ... 2007 - Elsevier
... such as hydrogen which is especially attractive for electric vehicle use. Over the last decade, world wide interest in the use of hydrogen has led to much research interest on its storage and usage [1], [2] and [3]. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in using metal ...
Cited by 39 - Related articles - All 3 versions

A hybrid controller design for parallel hybrid electric vehicle
W Li, G Xu, Z Wang... - Integration Technology, 2007. ICIT ... 2007 - IEEE Xplore. Ieee.org
... In recent years there has been considerable interest in using hybrid system theory to develop a systematic framework for the analysis and design of ... The hybrid electric vehicle systems contain interacting dis- create and continuous dynamics, and exhibit simultaneously several ...
Cited by 7 - Related articles - Availability at UMichigan - All 3 versions

Design of interior PM machines for field-weakening applications
WL Song, S Han... - Electrical Machines and ..., 2007 - IEEE Xplore. Ieee.org
... In recent years there has been increasing interest in the use of concentrated winding stators for both interior (10) and surface PM rotors [8]. Surface PM machines using distributed winding ... The first application is for an electric vehicle traction motor. ...
Cited by 5 - Related articles - Availability at UMichigan - All 4 versions

Adaptive proportional-integral-derivative tuning sliding mode control for a shape memory alloy actuator
NT Tal... - Smart Materials and Structures, 2011 - Iopscience. Iop.org
... Robustness has gained more and more attention. In recent years, there has been extensive interest in self-tuning these three controller gains. For example, the PID self-tuning method based on the relay feedback technique was presented for a class of systems [32, 33]. ...
Related articles - Availability at UMichigan - All 4 versions

Design and test of a high-power high-efficiency loosely coupled planar wireless power transfer system
ZN Low, RA Ching, R Tseng... - IEEE Transactions on, 2009 - IEEE Xplore. Ieee.org
... transfer. 1. INTRODUCTION IN RECENT years, there has been increasing interest in research and development of wireless power technology [1] to eliminate the "last cable" after Wi-Fi becomes widely accepted. Wireless power ...
Cited by 13 - Related articles - Availability at UMichigan - All 2 versions

As you can see in Figure 2, adjectives that can modify *interest* are *increasing*, *considerable*, and *extensive*. To determine how common these adjectives are, you can then search for the complete expressions (e.g., “in recent years there has been increasing interest in”).

Other ways to use the internet to search for specific language examples include WebCorp LSE (www.webcorp.org.uk/index.html), which searches all of the internet. You can also search online corpora with a specific focus such as MICUSP, the British National Corpus, the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus, or the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). New corpora are being developed with great frequency, and you may want to periodically search the internet to see what is available. You can even create your own corpus of texts in your chosen field (or even

_____ it is recognized that OCB is important for an organization to effectively function, there is debate among researchers as to how OCB can be encouraged and rewarded. This debate is further complicated when considering the role of OCB in multinational corporations pursuing global diversity. Most OCB research has focused on Western cultures; _____, whether these research findings can be extended to other cultures is not clear, _____ suggesting a need to investigate OCB as it exists in other cultures, particularly those described as “collectivist.”

B. Shape Memory Alloys (SMA) are a group of metallic materials that can return to some previously defined shape or size when subjected to the appropriate temperature. When some SMA are cold they can be deformed at a low temperature; _____, when the material is heated above this temperature it undergoes a change in crystal structure, _____ causing it to return to its original shape. Some materials exhibit shape memory only when heated; others can undergo a shape change both when heated and when cooled. _____ many alloys are known to have the ability to “remember” their shape, only some may actually find widespread commercial use. Of particular interest are those that can recover substantial amounts of strain or that generate significant force upon changing shape. _____, one common nickel and titanium SMA, Nitinol, has this ability and is being used in surgical implants, clamps, miniature valves and switches, and other devices.

***This* and Summary Phrases**

As indicated earlier, *this/these* + a noun can be used to establish a good old-to-new flow of information. Consider the following sentences.

Writing instructors know that students need to understand the differences between formal and informal language. *This understanding* can help students make strategic choices in their writing.

What does *this understanding* refer to? Consider the following sentences.

In recent years, the number of students applying to PhD programs has increased steadily, while the number of places available has remained fairly constant. *This situation* has resulted in intense competition for admission.

What does *this situation* refer to? What is the effect of using *this* instead of *that*?

The phrases in italics contain a summary noun or word that refers back to the idea in the previous sentence. They summarize what has already been said and pick up where the previous sentence has ended. You may have noticed in your academic reading that *this* is not always followed by a noun—that is, *this* is unsupported or unattended. Keep in mind, however, that if there is a possibility your reader will not understand what *this* is referring to, your best strategy is to follow *this* with a noun so that your meaning is clear.

TASK TWENTY

Choose a noun to complete the second sentence of each set of sentences. More than one answer may be possible.

1. According to a recent survey, 26% of all American adults, down from 38% 30 years ago, now smoke. This _____ can be partly attributed to the mounting evidence linking smoking and fatal diseases, such as cancer.

a. decline b. decrease c. drop d. improvement e. reduction

Can you think of any other nouns that could complete the sentence?

2. Early in September each year, the population of Ann Arbor, Michigan, suddenly increases by about 25,000 as students arrive for the new academic year. This _____ changes the character of the town in a number of ways.

a. increase b. influx c. invasion d. jump e. rise

Can you think of any other nouns that could complete the sentence?

3. Nowadays, laptop computers are lighter, more powerful, and easier to use than they were five years ago. These _____ have led to an increase in the sales of these machines.

a. advances b. changes c. developments d. improvements

Can you think of any other nouns that could complete the sentence?

As the task indicates, the noun that you choose to follow *this/these* can provide a strong interpretive signal that reveals your stance (see Unit Six). By revealing your stance you communicate not only what you know, but also what you think.

TASK TWENTY-ONE

Choose a summary word from the list to complete each sentence. Can you think of other possible summary words in addition to those on the list?

difficulty	estimation	problem	situation
disruption	finding	process	view

- The traditional economic and consumer behavior models assume a rational, thoughtful consumer who gathers information about a good and then carefully makes a purchase. This _____ has recently been challenged, particularly because of the growing number of consumer choices.
- Our pilot study has shown that wind turbines used to generate electricity can pose a threat to flying birds. This _____ suggests a need for further research on improving the safety of these mechanisms.
- In soccer, goalkeepers routinely wear gloves that may restrict heat loss from the hands and cause discomfort. In order to alleviate this _____, special materials, called phase control materials (PCMs), have been incorporated into gloves to reduce the amount of heat inside the glove, thus maintaining a comfortable temperature.
- Normal average human skin temperature is 37°C. At any lower environmental temperature, heat will be lost from the skin to the environment as the body attempts to heat up the air in direct contact with the body. This _____ is known as conduction.
- Until adjustment of the body clock has occurred, individuals suffering from "jet lag" feel tired during the new daytime, yet are unable to sleep properly during the new night. For athletes in particular this _____ of sleep can affect mood and powers of concentration and might result in poorer training performances and competition results (Reilly et al., 1997b).
- Until recently, the support needs of frail older people in Sweden have been met primarily by the state, with there being little expectation that the family would provide care. This _____ is now changing as increasing emphasis is being placed on the role of the family.

TASK TWENTY-TWO

Now try to find your own summary words that can complete these sentences.

1. Irrigation in sub-Saharan Africa is in most cases performed using a rope and bucket to raise and distribute water from a shallow open well. While this _____ has the advantage of being inexpensive, its low capacity and labor-intensive nature is decidedly a disadvantage.
2. Motor vehicle deaths in the U.S. declined from nearly 60,000 in 1966 to just over 40,000 in 2011, even though Americans drive millions more miles now and millions more vehicles are on the road. The death rate, which was 7.6 deaths per 100 million miles in 1950, declined from 5.5 in 1966 to 1.6 in 2011. This _____ can be attributed to the manufacture of safer vehicles with features such as airbags and antilock brakes.

3. Haigney concludes from his study that driving performance decreases when drivers use their cell phones. This _____ is consistent with recent reviews of the literature on driving distractions.

4. Although it seems that the construction of new roads and widening of existing roads should reduce traffic congestion, recent research has shown that these activities actually lead to increases in traffic. This _____ is known as the "induced traffic" effect.

5. In 1900, average life expectancy at birth was 47 years for individuals born in developed countries. In 1950, life expectancy was nearly 68. For newborns today, life expectancy is about 77 years. This _____, however, does not mean that humans are undergoing some physiological change. Rather, it is a result of advances in medicine and technology.

Summary expressions may be expanded into longer phrases to add clarity or interpretation. However, you should weigh the benefits of expanding the summary phrase. A long and possibly complicated summary phrase may actually be less effective.

Consider the opening sentences and Options a–d. Which of the options would you choose as the fourth sentence?

6. In Sub-Saharan Africa, only 20% of all households have access to financial services. In 2010, nearly 70 percent of Kenyan households either had no bank accounts or relied on informal sources of finance. In 2011, 13 commercial banks were operating in Benin, a country with a population of 10 million.
 - a. This limits market exchanges, increases risk, and limits opportunities to save.
 - b. This lack limits market exchanges, increases risk, and limits opportunities to save.
 - c. This lack of formal financial services limits market exchanges, increases risk, and limits opportunities to save.
 - d. This lack of formal financial services in parts of Africa limits market exchanges, increases risk, and limits opportunities to save.

Finally, we need to say something about whether it is better to use *it* or *this* to refer back to something stated earlier in the text.

TASK TWENTY-THREE

Which sentence in each set makes better sense following the main sentence? While all of the choices are grammatically correct, which one seems to better capture the connection?

1. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) has been rapidly expanding over the past decade, growing at a rate of nearly 200%.
 - a. It can be partially attributed to local telephone service providers, who were not specialized telecommunications operators, entering the VoIP market.
 - b. This can be partially attributed to local telephone service providers, who were not specialized telecommunications operators, entering the VoIP market.

The verb *solve* is a fairly common choice for introducing a solution, but a number of other verbs can be used as well. Indeed our own examples demonstrate variety in verb choice. We would like to further add that the examples are what we have referred to as skeletal phrases. In other words, these are phrases that you can adapt for your own writing, taking care that you add your own original content. For instance, in a text on fog harvesting, it is possible to write this sentence based on a skeletal phrase to introduce the solution.

Recently, researchers have made significant progress in overcoming this difficulty by *introducing a simple fog harvesting system*.

One way to find skeletal phrases is to use Google Scholar to search for them. Rather than looking for journal articles, you can search for strings of language. For instance, you could do this search: “approach to * this problem” (note quotation marks are needed to search for the exact phrase; the * is a wild card that will reveal the language that appears between *approach* and *to this problem*). The results of this search would reveal these verbs that can complete the phrase: *overcome*, *solve*, *tackle*, and *address*, to name a few. You will also see possible grammar choices. In the example search, for instance, you will see both *approach to solving this problem* and *approach to solve this problem*. To determine which is most common in your field, you can also narrow your search by adding your area of study. If you are interested in robots, you can search for “approach to * this problem” robots.

We suggest that you exercise caution when searching for and using skeletal phrases. While skeletal phrases will help you with your academic phraseology, you do not want to borrow complete expressions of ideas, which could be considered plagiarism (see Unit Five).

TASK TWENTY

Write your own problem-solution text that includes both a process description and a definition, or write a review of the current state of knowledge in your field that raises a question about it and offers a possible or partial answer. Be sure to include the kind of detail that can convince readers of your claims.

Unit Four

Data Commentary

In many academic writing tasks, there comes a place where you need to discuss data. In fact, research has shown that in some fields such as Engineering, the ability to make a point or build an argument based on data is essential to successful writing (Wolfe, 2011). In many disciplines, the data is displayed in a table, graph, figure, or some other kind of non-verbal illustration. The data may come from a source, or it may be the outcome of your own work—that is, your results. (For more on writing up your results, see Unit Seven.) This data is likely incorporated in the main text, although in some cases it may be provided in an appendix. We have called data-focused writing subtasks *data commentaries*. The amount and level of specificity of commentary provided for a data set can vary considerably depending on the type of text being written (the genre). For instance, in published journal articles, some data commentaries may be as short as a single sentence and be very general. In a technical report, the commentary may be much longer.

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.

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

As you can see, each of the options “fits” grammatically and each makes sense; however, only one may actually be the “right” choice in terms of what you know and think. Thus, your choice of verb can convey your stance or perspective and the extent to which you believe the explanation to be correct.

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

4: DATA COMMENTARY

- 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.

TASK TWO

For this task, discuss these questions about students’ internet activities with a partner and then look at some data.

1. What kinds of illegal or inappropriate activities do students engage in via the internet?
2. How common do you think these activities are among college students?
3. Which, if any, of the activities you identified should be tolerated or ignored?
4. Look at the data presented in Table 4 on page 142. What is your reaction? Is the data consistent with what you discussed in Questions 1 and 2? Does anything surprise you? After reviewing the data commentary on page 143, answer the questions on pages 143–144.

TABLE 4. University Student Respondents' Self-Reported Instances of Online Misbehavior during the Previous 12 Months (Data are the percentage of all student respondents, N = 1,222.)

	Once or Twice	A Few Times	More Than a Few Times	Overall Percentage
Misrepresentation of self				
• Given false information about yourself to another person on the internet	34.0	12.0	5.0	51.0
• Provided false information about your personal details on an online form	33.0	13.0	5.0	51.0
Unauthorized use of another's account				
• Accessed someone else's email account without his or her knowledge	18.0	6.0	2.0	26.0
• Used someone's credit details online without his or her knowledge	4.0	1.0	1.0	6.0
Plagiarism of an essay or assignment				
• Copied a few sentences from a website into an essay or assignment without citing the source	39.0	16.0	5.0	60.0
• Copied a few paragraphs from a website into an essay or assignment without citing the source	21.0	7.0	2.0	20.0
• Copied a few pages from a website into an essay or assignment without citing the source	8.0	3.0	1.0	11.0
• Copied a whole essay or assignment from a website without citing the source	2.0	1.0	0.6	4.0
• Paid for an essay or assignment from a website	2.0	0.7	0.7	3.0
Unauthorized downloading of music or film				
• Unauthorized downloading of music from the internet	18.0	22.0	36.0	76.0
• Unauthorized downloading of film or video from the internet	18.0	16.0	19.0	53.0
Pornography use				
• Viewed online pornography or pornographic pictures or films	17.0	12.0	11.0	40.0
• Paid for online pornography or pornographic pictures or films	3.0	1.0	1.0	5.0

From Selwyn, Neil, 2008, *A Safe Haven for Misbehaving? An Investigation of Online Misbehavior Among University Students*, *Social Science Computer Review*, 26, 446–465. Copyright Sage Publications. Used with permission.

The commentary was written by a student enrolled in an academic writing course.

❶ Table 4 shows survey respondents' self-reported involvement in online misbehavior during the previous 12 months. ❷ According to the table, the most common online misbehavior is "unauthorized downloading of film and music." ❸ As can be seen, just over three out of four students in the study have downloaded music or film more than once a year. ❹ This very high percentage of misbehavior is especially alarming, since protection of intellectual property is a basic element for enriching the film and music industries. ❺ Another notable result is that viewing pornographic materials on the internet was reported by 40% of the respondents, although purchasing pornography was reported by only a small minority of these respondents. ❻ The least frequently reported misbehaviors were illegally using another person's email account or credit information, along with either completely copying homework from a website or buying an assignment from a source on the internet. ❼ It is worthwhile to note that these different forms of online misbehavior seem to be patterned according to the degree of the perceived seriousness of the bad behavior. ❽ Activities that are generally believed to be criminal (e.g., using someone's credit information) were less frequent than activities that, although unlawful, many do not view as criminal, such as downloading movies and music. ❾ Illegal downloading may have an economic cause, but other reasons might be important, as well. ❿ This problem will likely continue until reasons that students engage in this behavior are clearly identified.

5. What are the purposes of Sentences 1–3?

6. How is the commentary organized overall?

7. Which sentence contains the author's key point?

8. On pages 140–141 we listed seven common purposes for data commentaries. In which category (or categories) does this one fall?

9. To what aspect of the data does the author pay most attention? Why? Do you think this is enough? If not, what else should be discussed?
10. Where, if at all, do we get a sense of what the author thinks about the data and how committed the author is to the interpretations? How important is it that we know this? How important is the comment in Sentence 4, for instance?
11. Illegal downloading of music, film, and video was reported by 76% of the students. In Sentence 3, this is expressed as *just over three out of four*. What do you think about that reformulation and about these alternatives?
 - a. about 75%
 - b. as much as 76% of all
 - c. most
 - d. slightly more than 75%
12. Sentence 7 begins with *It is worthwhile to note that*. . . . Go to Google Scholar and search for “It is * to note that” to find other adjectives that could be used. (Be sure to use the quotation marks.) If you do not have access to the internet, try to list some possibilities on your own.
13. Which is more common: *it is worthwhile to note that* or *it is worth noting that*? How common is *it is worthwhile noting that*? If you have internet access, go to Google Scholar to compare the frequencies of each of the three expressions.
14. What are some of the features of this text that make it an example of written academic English? Look back to Unit One if you need help.

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

Here is the data commentary from Task Two again, with these elements marked.

Location statement + indicative summary

- 1 Table 4 shows survey respondents' self-reported involvement in online misbehavior during the previous 12 months. 2 According to the table, the most common online misbehavior is “unauthorized downloading of film and music.” 3 As can be seen, just over three out of four students in the study have downloaded music or film more than once a year. 4 This very high percentage of misbehavior is especially alarming, since protection of intellectual property is a basic element for enriching the film and music industries. 5 Another notable result is that viewing pornographic materials on the internet was reported by 40% of the respondents, although purchasing pornography was reported by only a small minority of these respondents. 6 The least frequently reported misbehaviors were illegally using another person's email account or credit information, along with either completely copying homework from a website or buying an assignment from a source on the internet. 7 It is worthwhile to note that these different forms of online misbehavior seem to be patterned according to the degree of the perceived seriousness of the bad behavior. 8 Activities that are generally believed to be criminal (e.g., using someone's credit information) were less frequent than activities that, although unlawful, many do not view as criminal, such as downloading movies and music. 9 Illegal downloading may have an economic cause, but other reasons might be important, as well. 10 This problem will likely continue until reasons that students engage in this behavior are clearly identified.

Highlighting statement terms connecting clauses

Interpretation and implication

TASK THREE

Table 5 provides some additional data on internet misbehavior. Work with your partner and consider what data you might highlight in a written commentary and why. How can you account for some of the differences in the groups?

TABLE 5. Respondent's Self-Reported Instances of Online Misbehavior during the Past 12 Months according to Background (Data are percentages.)

		Misrepresentation of Self	Unauthorized Use of Another's Account	Plagiarism of an Essay or Assignment	Unauthorized Downloading of Music or Film	Pornography Use
Gender	Male	66	24	65	85	79
	Female	59	29	59	72	14
Age	18	63	26	65	79	38
	19	61	28	60	75	38
	20	69	31	61	84	55
	>21	61	24	64	74	54
Perceived internet competence	Expert	70	30	65	85	48
	Non-expert	54	24	58	65	28
Access to internet	Private personal computer	63	27	62	79	40
	Shared public computer	66	29	64	70	40

From Selwyn, Neil, 2008. A Safe Haven for Misbehaving? An Investigation of Online Misbehavior Among University Students, *Social Science Computer Review*, 26, 446–465. Copyright Sage Publications. Used with permission.

We will now look at location elements and summaries in more detail.

Location Elements and Summaries

Many data commentary sections begin with a sentence containing a location element and a brief summary of what can be found in a visual display of information, as shown in these examples.

- Table 5 shows the types of internet misbehavior common among university students.*
- Table 6 provides summary statistics for the variables used in the analysis.*
- Figure 2 shows a honeycomb solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC) unit with air cooling paths.*
- Figure 1 plots wealth as a function of age.*

As you can see, location statements direct readers to view important information in a table, chart, graph, or other figure. Even though research indicates that readers often look at the visual information before reading location statements are expected. They are considered to be a form of metadiscourse—sentences or phrases that help readers make their way through a text by revealing such things as organization, referring readers to relevant parts of a text, or establishing logical connections. Metadiscourse is a noticeable feature of academic writing, although its value and frequency use varies from one writing culture to another.

While grammar checking tools may influence you to largely use active voice in your writing, the passive can also be used, as demonstrated here. In fact, in some published texts, the percentage of passive verbs has been found to be as high as 25 percent.

Summary + Location Element with Passive Voice

- The types of internet misbehavior common among university students are shown in Table 4.
- Summary statistics for the variables used in the analysis are provided in Table 5.
- A honeycomb solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC) unit with air cooling paths is shown in Figure 2.
- Wealth as a function of age is plotted in Figure 1.

We bring two points to your attention. First, note the consistent use of the present tense. This occurs because the author is talking about his or her