

10. General advice on writing

In order to produce a text of good quality you have to go through various stages of writing. Here are the most important points you should keep in mind. They will also help you in a "Klausur" :

Preparation

Plan your written work thoroughly by

- 1) brainstorming: collecting ideas and materials and/or noting down keywords,
- 2) narrowing the scope: selecting the points you would like to use in your writing and abandoning those which are inappropriate or not sufficiently significant,
- 3) structuring: arranging your main points/ideas/arguments in a clear and logical order. Use e.g. a mind map (with numbers) or an outline. Make sure all your aspects are laid out very clearly (i. e. in a few words, using a clear structure).

Writing stage

- Write a **first draft** following your plan.
 - Do not spend too much time on finding the right wording/choice of words yet.
 - Leave plenty of space for your own additions and corrections.
 - Read your finished first draft and make first improvements.
 - Use a dictionary to help you with wording/choice of words you were not sure or happy about earlier.
- Thoroughly **revise** your text with regard to
 - content
 - structure/logical order
 - style
 - grammar/sentence structure
 - vocabulary/idiomatic expressions
 - spelling and punctuation(see details in Self-assessment grid: "Revising written texts")
- **Rewrite** your text: Make a fair copy of your work.
- Always allow enough time to **re-read and proofread** your text.

10.1 Self-assessment grid: Revising written texts

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done

☹ - OK, needs some improvement

☹ - No, needs improvement

<i>Criteria</i>	Date: <input type="text"/>			Date: <input type="text"/>			Date: <input type="text"/>		
	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺
I have thoroughly revised my text with regard to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have stuck to the task/dealt with all the aspects of the task.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have said what I intended to say.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have avoided repetition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have avoided unnecessary aspects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
structure, logical order, style	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My text has an introduction, a main part and a conclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My ideas, arguments, examples are in the right order.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My text has a visible structure, i.e. clear paragraphs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every paragraph contains a topic sentence which states what aspect I am dealing with.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My ideas develop from paragraph to paragraph.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have used linking words which connect my ideas and sentences and make my text coherent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have put facts into a logical and/or chronological order using appropriate linking words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I have concluded my argument using linking words like
in conclusion, to sum up, finally, all in all ... (see supplementary page: "Linking words").

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I have avoided contractions (~~isn't~~ → is not, ~~doesn't~~ → does not, ~~won't~~ → will not, ~~there's~~ → there is) as they are not appropriate in formal writing.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I have eliminated any wordiness, i.e. excluded all unnecessary words.

grammar, sentence structure

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I have written grammatically correct sentences by using

- the right relative pronouns,
- the correct prepositions after verbs and nouns,
- the correct grammatical constructions which go with certain verbs,
- the correct tense(s),
- clear references, e.g. made sure it is clear who or what the pronouns in my text refer to.

(See supplementary page: "How to improve my writing")

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I have used correctly and clearly structured sentences, which are

- complete,
- not long and complicated,
- of varied length and structure.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

vocabulary, idiomatic expressions

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I have

- varied my vocabulary by using synonyms (with the help of a monolingual dictionary),
- taken into consideration that English speakers often prefer verbs rather than nouns to express an idea, e.g. *The point of view allows the reader to identify with the protagonist* rather than: *The point of view allows the reader an identification with the protagonist.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

spelling

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I have checked my spelling/proofread my text with the help of a dictionary.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------