

Style – simplicity and economy

If you struggle to write your ideas clearly and you worry about having a good style, you are not alone. Even the greatest thinkers have struggled to convey their ideas clearly and logically.

The solution lies in learning to write what you want to say in the fewest possible words: in other words, cultivating simplicity and economy in the way you use language. This is what is meant by style.

Sentences

- 1 Avoid losing your reader in long sentences
- 2 Wherever possible use short sentences with clear structures
- 3 Use your punctuation and sentence length to create the rhythm of speech in print
- 4 Use logical indicators to help the reader follow your train of thought
- 5 If the logical structure is not clear, move them to a more prominent position

Like adverbs and adjectives, too many prepositional phrases can also clutter up your prose and obscure your meaning. Your readers will struggle to sift through it all to get a good grasp of your ideas. Instead, give your readers a clear image by stripping out the clutter, replacing prepositional phrases with simple prepositions.

Replace

'with regard to'	<i>with</i>	'about'
'for the simple reason'	<i>with</i>	'because'
'on the part of'	<i>with</i>	'by'

This is not to say that such phrases should always be avoided, but you should ask yourself, 'Can I replace these with a simpler preposition without any loss of meaning?'

For more information, see *How to Write Your Literature Review*, Chapter 23.