Do you want to improve your writing?

✧ How can I improve my writing skills?
✧ How can I enjoy the process of writing?
✧ What strategies will help me improve my writing?
✧ How can I write winning job application letters and glowing resumes?
✧ What materials can I find in the Language Commons to help me improve my writing?
✧ What on-line materials are there to help me improve my writing?

Want to know the answers to the above questions? Please read on.

The aim of this leaflet

This introductory leaflet is a guide to our Writing Advice Sheets W2-W7 for improving your writing skills.

Why write?

All university students need to write — to clarify ideas, to assemble and organize data, to submit project reports, and to answer examination questions. You may also need to organize your lecture notes and send e-mails to course-mates and teachers.

There are of course other reasons for writing. One common reason is for enjoyment: that’s why many people write diaries and keep journals. Another reason is that writing can help us organize our ideas, and very often during the organization process new ideas emerge.

Getting started

The fact that you are reading this leaflet indicates that you are interested in knowing more about writing. We suggest you read the Advice Sheet Developing your own Writing Program (W2) to think about your writing needs and see if you want to focus on a particular writing skill. Below is the brief description of the other Writing Advice Sheets:

Developing your own Writing Program (W2)

This advice sheet helps you analyze your needs and provide you with tips on planning your self-learning program.

After you have identified the writing skills that you want to improve, we suggest you have a quick look at the other Writing Advice Sheets. You should be able to find the Writing Advice Sheet which is the most useful for you.

The other Writing Advice Sheets:

Academic Writing (W3)
Business Writing (W4)
Technical Writing (W5)
Cover Letters and Résumés (W6)
Learning tips

- **You will be able to write better if you have ideas.** So read widely before you write. For more information about reading skills, read the Advice Sheets on Reading: R1-R9.

- **Set yourself a regular ‘reading time’ just to enjoy reading in English.** Don’t force yourself to read academic materials if they are not your cup of tea. Come to our Language Commons and enjoy our readers (located near the reception in the Language Commons, Room 3018). Just relax and do some reading. And why read regularly? The answer is simple – your writing skills will naturally improve if you keep reading because you are constantly feeding yourself with English input.

- **Writing is not a one-off activity.** You need to allow yourself time to think, write, and rewrite. You will enjoy writing more if you allow yourself ample time to do the thinking, writing and editing. Like any other skills you can think of, writing skills won’t be improved over a few days. Be patient and keep practicing.

- **Make writing a habit.** Apart from course assignments, there are other kinds of writing you may enjoy — diaries, learning journals, emails, letters to friends and so on. If you want to know more about using learning journals to record your learning experiences, make an appointment with our Writing Advisers. They will be happy to discuss this with you.

- **What is stopping you from writing effectively?** Grammar? Sentence Structures? Vocabulary? Simply make an appointment with a Writing Adviser and s/he will discuss with you in what areas of writing you can improve.

- **Read the Advice Sheet entitled Developing your own Writing Program (W2) for information on writing strategies and tips for creating writing opportunities.**

- **Apart from getting help from the Writing Advisers, different academic departments do offer additional support to students to improve their English skills.** Science and Engineering students, for instance, can seek advice from their department’s communication tutors.

- **Do a diagnostic test** for grammar and/or vocabulary level (please read Grammar Advice Sheet G3 and/or Vocabulary Advice Sheet V5 for more information on online tests), find out your weaknesses in writing and then decide what practice you need to improve your writing skills. You need to identify the areas that need improvement — simply writing more won’t necessarily make your writing better.

**And now…**
If you would like any help or advice, or just a chat about your progress, please get in touch - we are here to support your independent learning! To contact us:
• make an appointment to see an adviser. For details of advisers and their availability, please go to http://ilang.cle.ust.hk/writing-adviser-timetables/.
• e-mail your questions to iLANG (lcilang@ust.hk).
• ask at the reception counter of the Language Commons — if the receptionist cannot help you directly, s/he will pass your query on to one of the advisers.

What else can you do?
• browse the many physical and online materials for Writing.
• join a Writing activity or short course.

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