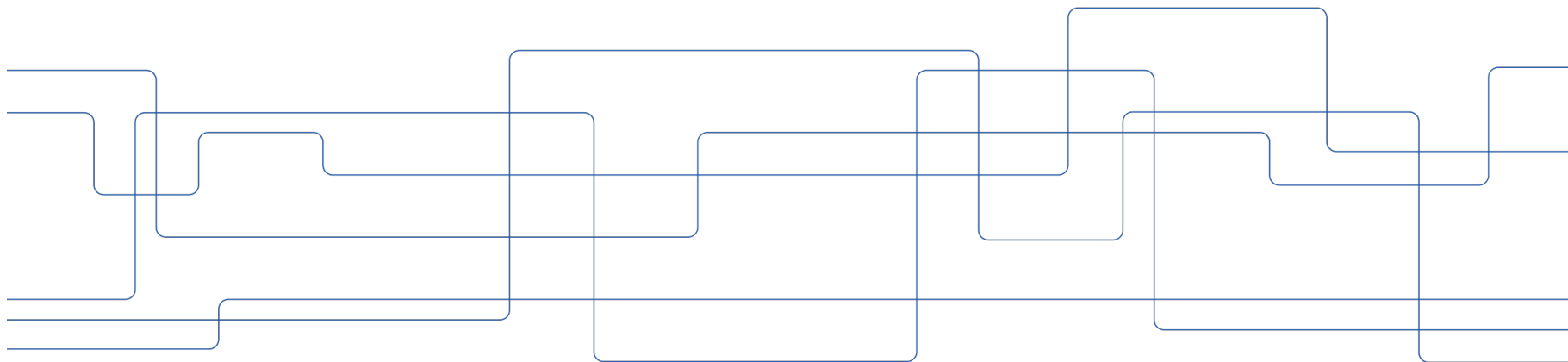# Part 2
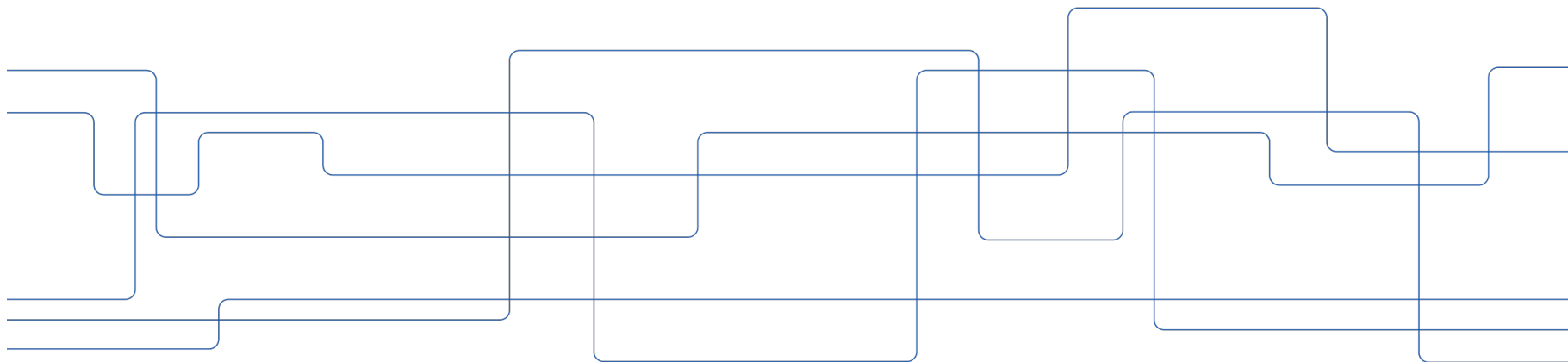# Academic language: concise, clear and correct

Writing your project report for DA150X

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- We write to communicate

- We write because we have something to say

- We write because we need to display our knowledge

Therefore, academic writing needs to be concise, precise and stylistically appropriate
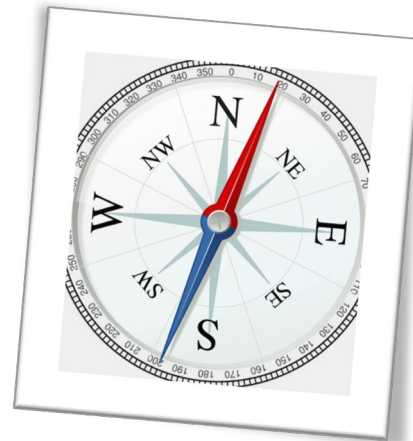
New!
A Guide to Scientific Writing in English

https://www.kth.se/en/larande/sprak/kurser/eng/writing-guide/style-and-register

(Link in Canvas published soon)

- Pages under construction

- academic style, sentence structure and principles for text flow

- Common errors and FAQs

Four important features of good academic *style*

Conciseness

Clarity and precision

Register – correct level of formality

Correctness

Academic texts are *concise*

- They express complex ideas in as few words as possible

- The author must carefully decide *which information to include* and what parts to leave out.

- The words chosen carry as much meaning as possible (this ties in with *style* and *clarity* as well)

Conciseness: say what you need to say in as few words as possible

❌ The website **has made available many of the things you can use for making a decision on** the best dentist.

✔ The website **presents** a list of **criteria for determining** the best dentist.

De-personalise!

Same principle in Swedish

✖ *Undersökningens syfte är först och främst att undersöka <u>hur barn och ungdomar talar till vardags</u> och om de i så fall brukar använda slang.*

✔ *Denna rapport undersöker barns och ungdomars <u>vardagliga användning </u>av slang.*

Breakouts 5 mins: Worksheet Task A

Conciseness and style: Avoid writing *you*

? When **you** use the phone **you** may find that the connection is slower than it should be.

✓ In most cases, <u>the user</u> will *experience* that the connection is slower than usual.

✓ In most cases, <u>*the user experience*</u> might be inferior.

Here, there is no person "present" in the sentence, but the *user experience* (an abstract, technical key word) is in focus.

Same principle in Swedish

? När **man** använder telefonen kan det hända att **man** upptäcker att uppkopplingen inte är så snabb som den borde vara.

✔ I de flesta fall upptäcker <u>användaren / uppringaren</u> att uppkopplingen är långsammare än vanligt.

...männa <u>användarupplevelsen</u> kan påverkas

Concise sentences are often more *precise*!

Here, there is no person "present" in the sentence, but the *user experience* (an abstract, technical key word) is in focus.

Academic text is *precise*: details are important

Quite a small portion of the…

→ Only 10.5 % of the…

School pupils

→ fifth- to eighth-grade pupils

Some municipalities in Sweden

→ Four municipalities in Sweden: Kiruna, Hudiksvall, Laxå and Varberg.

A *mobile device* -- a *smartphone* -- a *Samsung Galaxy S4?*

Find a more precise word

do make	Tests were done We did experiments Calculations were made	Tests were performed We conducted a set of experiments *X was calculated*
get	We got good results	We *obtained (achieved) significant/clear results*
give	We gave the participants a headset each.	We *provided (equipped) each participant* with a headset

…and some Swedish equivalents

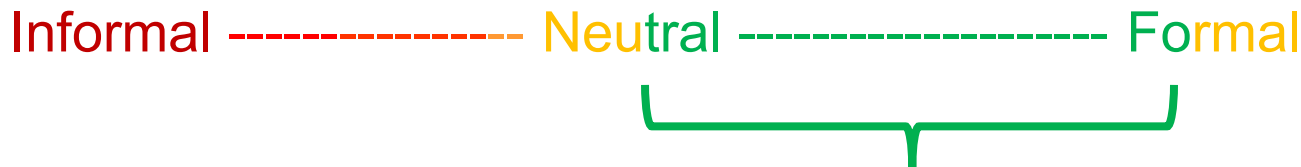|		
göra	Experiment gjordes	*genomfördes, utfördes*
få	Vi fick bra resultat	Testerna genererade tydliga resultat
Ta (ta fram, ta upp)	Materialet som togs fram har… Det som tas upp i det här avsnittet är…	Det utvalda materialet har… De *problem* som *behandlas*

Academic style

Write to inform, not to impress!

Informal --------------- Neutral ------------------ Formal

Style: Phrasal verbs → single verbs

What could be improved in this sentence?

According to some biologists, coming up with clear proof of the decreasing number of frogs has been difficult.

⬇

According to some biologists, **offering** clear proof of the decreasing number of frogs has been difficult. (more formal)

Style: Can you replace the phrasal verb with a more formal synonym in these sentences?

Scientists are **investigating** innovative ways to comba...

The purpose of this paper is to **determine** what is la... current understanding of corrosion.

Rice and aquatic products **constitute** major part of the diet of the people in Vietnam.

Suppliers want to **remove** of this time-consuming process
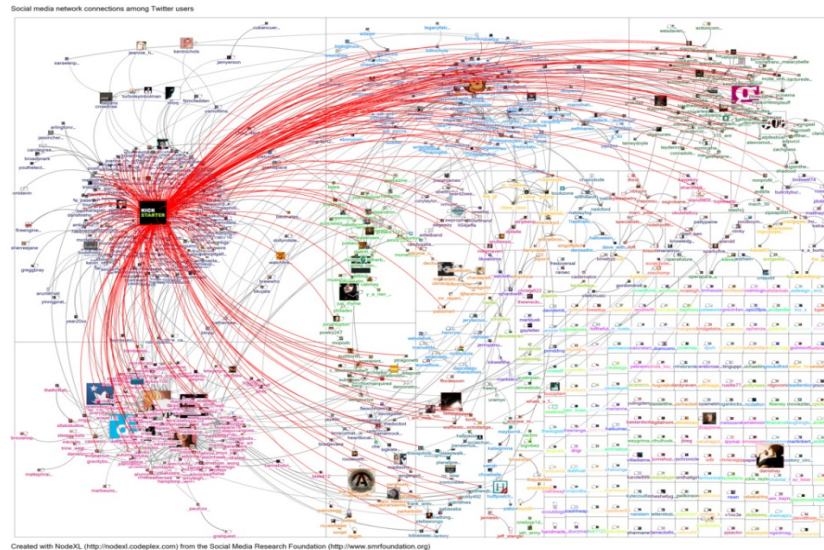
6 minutes in Breakouts. → Worksheet Task B

Style/precision: expressing "a lot of"

"This application displays *a lot of* *data"*

A lot of →

Large amounts of data

A great number of projects

A ~~huge~~ amount of

~~Enormous~~ amount of

Several tests

Many studies

~~Many researches~~

Much research

Style/precision:
mycket, massor av, många

Social media network connections among Twitter users

Created with NodeXL (http://nodexl.codeplex.com) from the Social Media Research Foundation (http://www.smrfoundation.org)
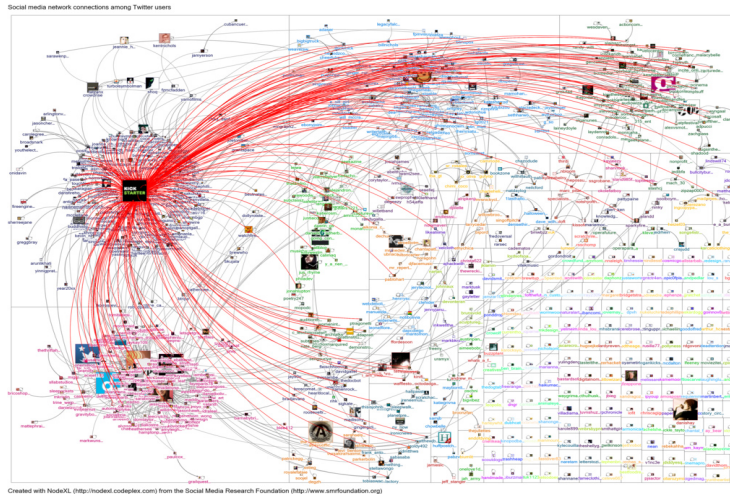
"Denna applikation genererar massor av data"

Massor av →
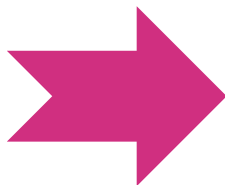
Mycket stora mängder data

~~Väldigt~~ stora mängder data

Fler än 200 körningar

En stor del av den befintliga forskningen

Ett flertal experiment

Style: Write out contracted forms as two words

- *don't* →*do not*
- *haven't* →*have not*
- *wasn't* →*was not*
- *it's* → it is

What is the difference between its and it's?

Some common errors - getting it correct

- Word order

- Subject-verb agreement

- Possessives – where does the apostrophe go?

- Numbers in English and Swedish

Flickr.com / creative commons Image by Tim Lumley

Word order is often more flexible in Swedish

a. För att få en inblick i ämnet och kunna dra slutsatser om vad som kan tänkas ske rent mikrobiologiskt **har** en litteraturstudie **utförts**.

b. **En litteraturstudie har utförts** för att få en inblick i ämnet.

In English, word order is more fixed.

Word order 1: *which sentence is best?*

a. Jones has, in a joint project with three European universities, reported interesting results… ✖

b. In a joint project with three European universities, Jones has reported interesting results… ✔

Word order 2: *which sentence is best?*

a. The conclusion was drawn that X was the most suitable method for testing Y's binding abilities to different Zs. ✔

b. The conclusion that X was the most suitable method for testing Y's binding abilities to different Zs was drawn. ✘

A fixed word order = *clearer sentence structure agreement* made easier!

Doubts about the feasibility of the solution **has/have been** raised.

Avoid the problem by moving the verb

Doubts **have been raised** about the feasibility of the solution.

Get the *apostrophe* right

- A dataset
- Two datasets (plural form, no apostrophe)

- *The experiment's outcome (= the outcome of one experiment)*
- *The experiments' outcome (= the outcome of two or more experiments)*

Get it correct: quotation marks

" ninety-nine ninety-nine "

" sixty-six ninety-nine "

Get it correct: Writing numerals

135 400,5

135,400.5

In sum…

Readers want texts that are logical and readable.

Your text needs to be

Concise: Say it in as few words as possible

Precise: Choose words that convey as much information as possible

Correct: Choose the appropriate *style*

Get spelling, punctuation, and grammar right

See you in the seminars!

https://cdn.pixabay.com/photo/2017/02/27/08/28/crocus-2102369_960_720.jpg