

# MADRID CHECKLIST

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Use the texts you read as input.

Informal English cannot convey precise meaning.

You don't need to learn much English 😊.

Your familiarity with the content may blind you to ambiguities.

Do not plagiarise.

Good organisation helps to compensate for language errors.

Writing is much easier than it looks!

## 1. INFORMAL LANGUAGE AND BABY LANGUAGE



- **AVOID SIMPLE VERBS**

*make/go/get/put/thing/interesting/proper/big/special/lots/spread/pick*

*get* = obtain, achieve, reach

*spread* = diffused, distributed

*pick* = select, choose

*bring* = communicate, express, provide, yield

*keep* = retain, maintain

- **AVOID EMPTY PHRASES**

*many people in the world/most people in the world 😊 .... where else?*

*special, interesting..... in what way?*

*people's language issues/people's androids.....rather than animals'?*

- **AVOID SPOKEN ENGLISH**

*Loads of information can be found on the internet. (A great deal of information...)*

- **AVOID EMOTIONAL/DRAMATIC LANGUAGE AND JOURNALESE**

*ERRORS:...there is still a spark of faith.../What is ICT? ICT stands for....It is not*

*necessary to go from rags to riches to purchase a tablet./everything comes as it comes.*

- **AVOID IRRELEVANT PADDING**

*ERROR: .....people do need technology education due to the fact a lot of people have access to this world and a lot of people take advantage to get people's personal information and steal from them to gain money and with money comes power.*

## 2. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY ISSUES



- **THESAURUS USE: the thesaurus is NOT YOUR FRIEND!**

*noticeable* is not the same as *conspicuous* and *notorious* is not the same as *well-known*.

Grammatical and lexical collocations are important; you can say that something *becomes useful*, but not that it *turns into useful*

ERROR: *...in fields such as tourism and also in more professional **grounds** such as law, medicine... (grounds does not mean the same as areas or fields.)*

ERROR: *Technology has become a basic tool that human beings **hinge on**.*

*(hinge on does not mean the same as depend on; it means that one is contingent upon the other, i.e. the success of one depends on the success of the other.)*

ERROR: *"... machines doing the labour that cannot be done with men's endeavour..."*

Google found 2 instances of 'with men's endeavour' in the whole of the internet.

- **Keep terminology consistent.** A *tool* should not become a *strategy* and then a *device* and then an *approach* and then a *technique*!

- **Watch out for L1 transfer.**

ERROR: **extorting** the meaning ... (*extorting* does not mean the same as *extract*. *Not in English, anyway...*)

ERROR: **from a time to this part** is meaningless in English

- **Extend your range of literature review verbs.**

achieve	conclude [that]	establish	maintain [that]	recognise
address	confirm	estimate	modify	recommend
adopt	consider	evaluate	note	record
analyse	contradict	examine	observe obtain	report
apply	deal with	explore	offer	reveal
argue [that]	debate	extend	overcome	revise
assume	define	find	perform	review
attempt [to]	demonstrate	focus on	point out	show
carry out	describe	generate	predict	solve
challenge	design detect	identify	present	state [that]
choose	determine	imply	produce	study
claim [that]	develop	improve	propose	support
classify	discover	indicate [that]	prove	suggest [that]
collect	discuss	interpret	provide	test
compare	distinguish [between]	introduce	put forward	use
concentrate (on)	enhance	investigate	realise	verify

### 3. ORGANISING INFORMATION



- **CONNECTING SIGNALS**

You can connect information using *overlapping repeats*, *pro-forms* or *signalling connectors* but use signalling connectors correctly; *moreover* and *therefore* are not simply a form of glue to join different ideas together; they have specific meanings:

ERROR: *Not only adults are brainwashed, easily convinced with inventions such as: iPhone, tablets, computers, etc., but also children are pursuing their parents' technology rage habits ever since they are babies. However, it is important to mention that people, in general terms, spend their time using these types of technologies for non-important matters, at least most of the times.*

When you begin a sentence or clause with **therefore**, ask yourself: is the second item of information/sentence really a consequence or result of the first? Would it be better to have a more explicit link between the two items of information?

When you begin a sentence or clause with **for example**, is it really an example of a generalisation in the previous sentence?

When you begin a sentence or clause with **in other words**, is it really the same thing in other words?

- **PARAGRAPHING**

Avoid clusters of single-sentence paragraphs and whole-page paragraphs. Plan essays and reports by setting out the function of each paragraph before you start writing.

- **STRONG SENTENCE STARTUP**

- Don't start a sentence with AND, BUT or SO
- Try to avoid beginning sentences or clauses with -ing forms or prepositional adverb phrases (especially *for* and *with*). The way you start a sentence provides a 'frame' that helps the reader to understand the content.

- **ORDER OF INFORMATION**

Don't put the background needed to understand a statement AFTER the statement. Organise the information in a reader-friendly way and make sure that the order of components inside the sentence is also organised appropriately.

## 4. GRAMMAR



### • DETERMINERS ('articles')

- Check for singular countable nouns: *I am English teacher*
- Check for so-called 'uncountable' nouns that you are using 'countably', e.g., *food, environment, technology*
- Watch out for errors that are invisible (i.e. the sentence is grammatically correct but logically wrong) but have a significant impact on meaning:  
*This effect may hide a/the connection between X and Y.*  
*X should be linked to Ø/the two adjacent nodes.*

### SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT, grammatical and logical.

- Check singular/plural agreement, particularly if the subject is not next to the verb
- Check whether the subject can actually perform the action of the verb.  
ERRORS: *The nature of the problem **decides** that it has to express the mechanism...*  
*The 21<sup>st</sup> century **observes** an increasing level of...*  
*The focus of this paper could be applied to CALL*

### PARTS OF SPEECH

- Check whether the word you are using is an adjective, adverb or noun.  
ERRORS: *...due to the **bore** curriculum [in Spanish schools]/E-learning is becoming a very **demanding** and popular tool these days.*

### • REFERENCE AND SYNONYMY

- Add a noun to *This/These* (e.g. *This system/model/theory*) so that the reader knows what you are referring to.
- Replace *it/they* with a noun if there is more than one possible referent.
- Check for ambiguity: Does your sentence have more than one *it/this*? Where does the referent of your 'which' begin and end?
- Check that the referent of 'This' or 'It' at the start of a sentence is unambiguous.  
ERROR: *This result was statistically significant and is in line with results in previous studies. **This** suggests that swearing has a beneficial effect on pain tolerance.*

### VERB TENSE

- Verb tense is not simply a marker of time, it identifies the **function** of the information in the sentence. *We found that x occurred* is simply a report of your findings, whereas *We found that x occurs* implies that your findings can be considered as facts; the Present Simple tense is higher risk, but has more power.
- Check tense switches; if you change tense make sure that you know why

### • MODAL VERBS especially the different meanings of *could* and *should*.

- **PASSIVE USE**

Agentless passives (*was done, was studied*) may cause confusion about who actually 'did' the verb; identify the agent by using words or phrases like *Here/in that study/in our model/in their approach*.

If you are uncomfortable with the passive, be aware that using *you/one/we* may also cause ambiguity. Consider using the impersonal 'it' form: *This technique gives you/us the possibility to improve the design of the app.* = This technique **makes it possible** to improve the design of the app.

- **PREPOSITIONS**

- Note the difference a preposition makes *evidence of vs. evidence for; improved it up to 3 times vs. improved it by up to 3 times*
- Check that a preposition is needed (*investigate+ø/discuss+ø*)
- Check your preposition on websites *There are no restrictions **about** this substance.*  
= There are no restrictions on the use of this substance.
- Improve your pronunciation
- Don't send a tiny baby preposition (e.g *with/for/from*) to do the work of an adult; **consider replacing it with real words!** Instead of ***From*** *this estimation we will do x*, try *On the basis of this estimation we will do x*.
- *With* has a range of meanings. To ensure that the reader can understand your meaning, consider replacing it with *using, having, in combination with, together with, as a result of*

## 5. GENERAL



- **IDENTIFY IMPORTANT INFORMATION/THE VALUE OF YOUR CONTRIBUTION**

Make sure that you clearly identify information that is highly relevant or important: *It is important to remember that/It should be emphasized that/Interestingly,/It is noteworthy that/striking/dramatic/extremely/powerful/remarkable/ unusual*

- **PUNCTUATION**

- Note the difference between ; and :
- Don't use a comma before adding a new thought; consider a full stop plus an explicit link at the start of the next sentence.
- Don't overuse parentheses; if something is important enough to include, parentheses may not be appropriate.

- **SENTENCE LENGTH AND DENSITY**

Over-long sentences are hard for you to control and hard to read, as are sentences that are too dense. Unpack concentrations of information.

- **STRENGTH OF CLAIM**

- Make sure that your statements are an accurate reflection of their 'truth'. Do they *prove/provide evidence of/demonstrate/confirm/ indicate/suggest/ corroborate/support or show* something?  
*ERRORS: My paper will try, determine and solve the everlasting issues with languages./*
- Would your claim/statement have more legitimacy if you supported it with a citation reference?
- Watch out for hyperbole (*the most dangerous problem for human beings in the world nowadays is... (Is it really the most dangerous problem? Really?)/currently, WhatsApp has become essential and people cannot even think of their lives without this application./ Everything and everybody is on a database and everybody can access whatever, whoever and whenever and get a fast and immediate response.*

**MAP THE ORGANISATIONAL PATTERNS OF THE REPORTS/RESEARCH PAPERS/TEXTS YOU ARE READING AND USE THOSE AS MODELS.**

**IDENTIFY THE PARAGRAPH FUNCTIONS OF THE REPORTS/RESEARCH PAPERS/TEXTS YOU ARE READING AND USE THOSE AS MODELS.**

**LOOK AT THE VOCABULARY IN THE REPORTS/RESEARCH PAPERS/TEXTS YOU ARE READING AND USE THAT VOCABULARY.**

**LOOK AT THE SENTENCE STRUCTURES IN THE REPORTS/RESEARCH PAPERS/TEXTS YOU ARE READING AND USE THOSE AS MODELS.**

<p>There is [a] lack of <u>sources</u></p> <p>for</p> <p>professionals to <u>profess</u></p> <p>efficiently in teaching, but there is still <u>a spark of faith</u></p> <p><u>to improve to get</u></p> <p>students</p> <p>attention <u>within and out</u></p> <p>the school premises. The use of technology is spreading at a <u>face-pace</u></p> <p>and it seems quite efficient if the professional and user use technology in a responsible and educated manner. <u>For instance</u></p> <p>mobile application learning is quite fashionable nowadays.</p> <p>The English language is <u>the heart of our body</u></p> <p><u>in other words,</u></p> <p>if students in the near future do not possess a <u>decent</u> level of English</p> <p>these young professionals will not <u>encounter</u></p> <p>work in <u>the local place</u></p> <p>not finding work <u>involving</u> migrating and that is not the solution.</p>	<p><b>vocabulary:</b> <i>perhaps the writer means 'resources'?</i></p> <p><b>preposition:</b> <i>to enable</i></p> <p><b>vocabulary –</b> <i>perhaps 'progress'?</i></p> <p><b>vocabulary:</b> <i>emotional language - possibly L1 transfer? Definitely not academic English. Perhaps the writer means something like 'a strong determination'?</i></p> <p><b>grammar:</b> <i>double infinitive – meaning is lost</i></p> <p><b>punctuation:</b> <i>should be students', but no big deal</i></p> <p><b>preposition:</b> <i>should be within and out of</i></p> <p><b>vocabulary:</b> <i>face-pace doesn't exist. Perhaps the writer means 'fast pace'?</i></p> <p><b>organisation:</b> <i>what follows isn't an example of the information in the previous sentence</i></p> <p><b>academic context:</b> <i>perhaps consider using citation references to support this?</i></p> <p><b>vocabulary:</b> <i>emotional language</i></p> <p><b>organising information:</b> <i>what follows is not the same thing 'in other words'</i></p> <p><b>vocabulary:</b> <i>'decent' meaning what? It's too vague.</i></p> <p><b>vocabulary</b> <i>encounter' is not the same as find; it is closer to 'meet' – and you don't 'meet' work.</i></p> <p><i>what local place is the writer talking about?</i></p> <p><b>grammar and logic;</b> <i>should be 'may involve'</i></p>
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