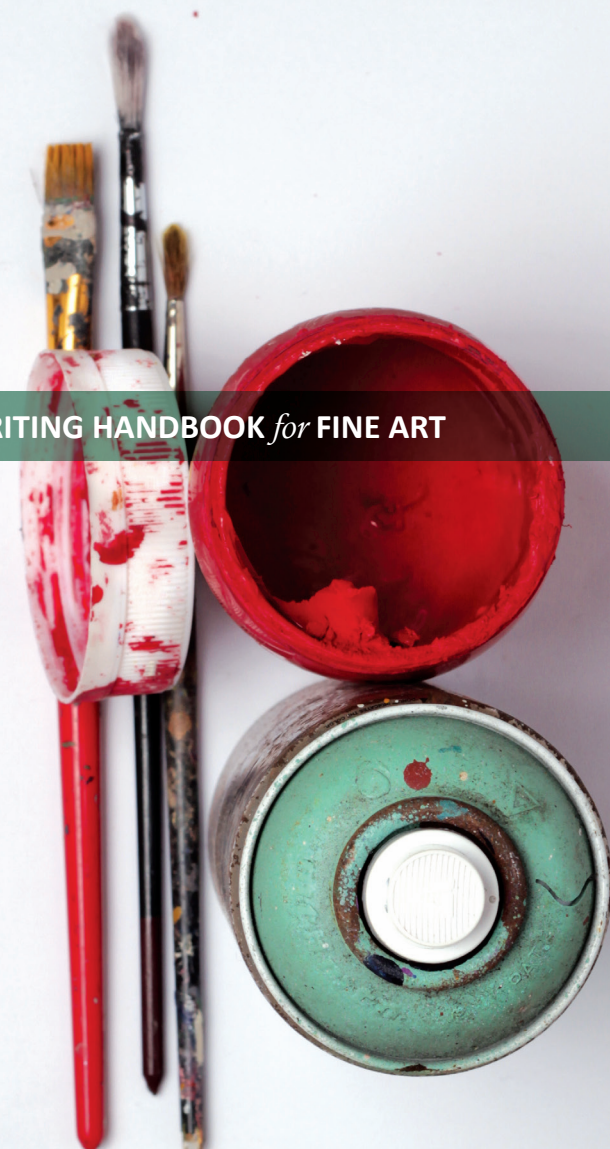




WRITING HANDBOOK *for* FINE ART



## WRITING HANDBOOK *for* FINE ART

*Writing Handbook for Fine Art*

Durban University of Technology  
Fine Art  
City Campus  
Cnr of King Dinizulu & Julius Nyerere & Dr Pixley KaSeme  
Durban

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*Writing Handbook for Fine Art* was written and compiled by Karla Nixon with the Durban University of Technology's Fine Art students in mind. Except for:

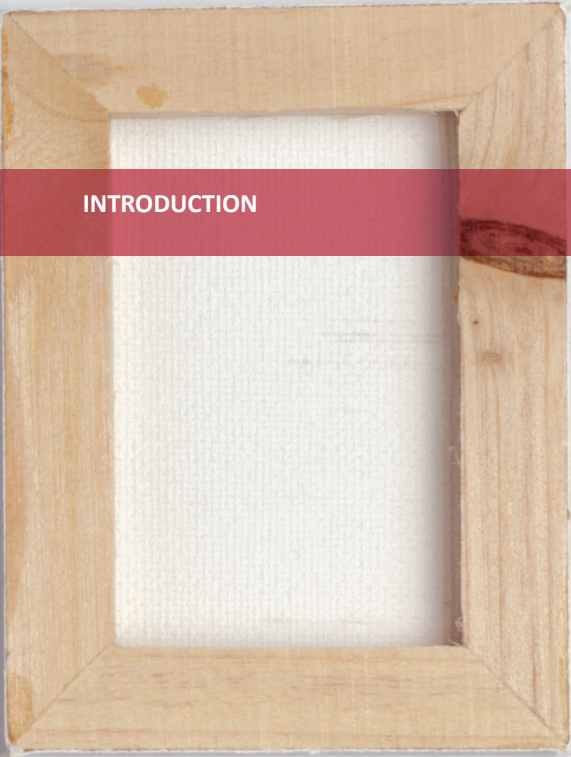
*Referencing as an important tool in research* was written by Nirmig Zigler (page 20)

*Bursaries, funding, artist's residencies & studio programmes* was written by Dikeledi Maponya (pages 83 - 89)

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## INTRODUCTION

**Some of the first comments** that students make are: “I chose to study Fine Art to make art not to write” or, “I don’t need to write or talk about my art, it speaks for itself”. While artworks are considered an extension of texts, writing is a part of everyday life no matter what career you follow. Writing is even more a part of your life while you are at university. In order to achieve your degree or diploma you need to show a certain number of skills, no matter what field you are in. Without learning the discipline specific writing skills found in this handbook you will not have the skills to function as a practicing contemporary artist, to grow as an academic in the arts or to work in an arts related field. Below are some of the kinds of writing you will be exposed to both in and out of university.

## WHY DO WE WRITE IN FINE ART?



### Personal

Reflection as an artist (Reflection is, however, considered higher level thinking and can and may be assessed academically)  
Creative writing

### Academic

Essays  
Artist statements  
Reflective reports  
Exhibition reviews  
Presentations

### Professional

CVs  
Artist statements  
Artist Biography  
Exhibition/ art work proposals  
Application for bursaries, funding, residences and studio programs



## Academic Writing

At a university, academic writing is the most common type of writing we do. Academic writing encourages us to engage with texts written by professionals as we develop our research skills. It makes us critically analyse what academic texts say and do. It requires us to think logically, interpret, form opinions, and argue a point with ample evidence while expressing ourselves, in written form, in a coherent and concise manner. In Fine Art, this writing takes the form of essays, reflective reports, artist statements, presentations and exhibition reviews.

## Critical Thinking

You will be told, both in theory and practical subjects, throughout your tertiary education to “think critically” or to “critically analyse”, but what does this actually mean? On a very basic level all it means is that your lecturer does not want you to take everything you hear or read at face value, nor to accept everything as unquestionable fact. Rather ask yourself, who wrote the text you are reading? Is there any possible bias? Is the evidence they are using to back up their argument relevant? What is the opposing view on this subject? All of this can be applied to your art making process. Most things in life are subjective. In other words question everything, within reason of course, so that you start developing the ability to make considered conclusions. It is therefore important to define the following terms:

*The Oxford South African Concise Dictionary* defines:

**Critical** as “expressing or involving an analysis of the merits and faults of a work” (Pearsall 2010:277). **Analyse** as “examine (something) methodically and in detail, typically in order to explain and interpret it” (Pearsall 2010:38). Brookfield (1987:71) defines **Critical Thinking** as “identifying and challenging assumptions and exploring alternate ways of thinking”.

## How do we critically analyse a text?

- suspend judgment
- question assumptions
- evaluate the evidence
- imagine alternate answers
- enter into the spirit of an opposing view

## Critical Writing must:

- be interesting
- show an engaged mind
- bring something new to the reader
- make an argument

This section is partially adapted from:

Bean, J. 2001. *Engaging Ideas*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (page 7).

Bean, J. 2011. *Engaging Ideas, 2nd ed.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (page 4).

References:

Brookfield, S. D. 1987. *Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (pages 71).


*The Oxford South African Concise Dictionary*. 2010. 2nd ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa (pages 277 and 38).

## Writing process

The writing process is a lot longer than you may expect. It is essential that you give yourself enough time to go through all of the steps below, for each assignment.

1. Understand your brief
2. Mind map & free write
3. Visit the Writing Centre
4. Research
5. Write your first draft
6. Visit the Writing Centre
7. Revise and read some more
8. Rest
9. Re-revise, second draft
10. Visit the Writing Centre
11. Edit
12. Go through Assignment Checklist (pages 43 - 44)
13. Hand in





## STARTING OUT IN ACADEMIC WRITING


**You have been given a brief** and now you have to begin. Where to start is often very intimidating. There are a number of prewriting tools to use for getting you through this initial stage of the writing process. A few examples of these include:

Brain storming or mind mapping  
Free writing

*(See Generating ideas pg. 46)*

What we are going to focus on in this section is *breaking down your brief* and *planning your essay*.

## PREWRITING FOR YOUR ESSAY



## Breaking down your brief

The first step we must take is to analyse and question, “What is the brief asking me to do?”

Underline the most important words in the brief. This will usually include the instructional word or phrase as well as the main topic. Keep an eye out for instructional words like.

**Compare:** This usually means the lecturer will give you two topics from subjects such as art movements/ artists/ ideas and you will need to state similarities and differences.

**Contrast:** Contrast is very similar to “compare”. The lecturer will still give you two topics and you will have to find and explain only the differences between the two.

**Argue:** This means you are expected to form your own opinion on the given topic and argue (debate) that point throughout the essay using quoted and paraphrased research to back up your argument.

**Review:** This is mainly used when you are asked to do an exhibition review. This means you are expected to conduct research about the topic/ exhibition and form an opinion through assessing what you have read and experienced. You can write this as an argument.

## PREWRITING FOR YOUR ESSAY

## Planning your Essay (Essay Structure)

After interrogating your brief you should now do some prewriting exercises. This next step is to familiarize yourself with the topic by researching it very broadly. Once you have a general understanding you are ready to plan your essay. Planning your essay before you start in depth research allows you to stay focused on the topic. Only search for relevant information, not information that is interesting but irrelevant for the brief. Always keep in mind the argument you are making and check that the information is the most suitable for supporting your argument. Interesting, but irrelevant information is more of a distraction than a solution to the brief. Try to map out your essay:

- What is the purpose of the essay/ what is your research question? This is sometimes given to you in your brief as the topic.
- Now try and break down your essay, depending on the required length, into topic sentences (the main idea for each paragraph). These will be the points you want to argue throughout the essay.
- Organise your points from weakest to strongest. This becomes the order of each paragraph.

## PREWRITING FOR YOUR ESSAY



## PREWRITING FOR YOUR ESSAY

- You now have the overall purpose and the points (themes) for each paragraph of your essay. Ensure you always relate your writing back to the purpose.
- You are ready to do more research. Find a quote that you can paraphrase or use as a direct quote to back up each point you are arguing. You can also look for a counter argument. Explain the relevance of the quotes/paraphrase to the point you want to make and your paragraph is complete.

## RESEARCH

**You are expected to do research** for every subject, in every module in the Fine Art course. What does this mean? This means that your lecturers expect you to spend time in the library, on the Internet and in conversation to gather relevant information on a specific topic, whether it is on an artist or artwork for a practical subject or information for an essay.

We are in a university, and there are certain expectations we need to fulfill. There is so much information out there, especially on the Internet. What we need to remember is, just because information is found on the Internet does not mean it's true. Anybody can start a blog or webpage and write about their feelings and views on any given topic; this doesn't mean that they know a lot about it. That is why you are expected to use only credible sources.

## What is a credible source?

A credible source is an author or artist that has authority in their field and knows a lot about the topic. Think of it this way: you would only go to a doctor who has studied and got his/her degree, not a friend who Googled your illness. The same applies to research; we only want information from people who know what they are talking about.

### *Non-academic sources:*

- Wikipedia
- Most blogs

### *Academic sources:*

- All published books
- ebooks
- Journal articles (both online and printed)
- Most Webpages
- Anything from the following online databases that DUT has access to:
  - Google scholar
  - Wilson's web
  - Jstor
  - Proquest
  - Ebsco
  - Art Full Text

(For more please see the DUT library webpage or consult the subject librarian)

## RESEARCH

## Tips and tricks

- You can find most portals to academic sources on the DUT website, in the library section.
- The quick search tool called *Summons* is very helpful and easy to use.
- If the text is found on an established webpage like a university/gallery webpage it is credible.
- If you are using Google, type “.pdf” at the end of the topic you are searching. This will usually show books and journal articles.
- Books are books, whether online or hardcopy. If it has published information it is a credible source.
- Always check for when the text was written. A text written in 1962 may not be [as] valid anymore. Discuss this with your lecturer.

After having done the research you need to write your findings down in the form of quotes or paraphrases and these need to be referenced.

## RESEARCH

## What is a reference?

A reference is the details of the source/s you have used in your written assignment.

## What do we reference?

We have to reference any quoted or paraphrased research we have used from books, journal articles, interviews, newspapers, magazines, websites, movies, online videos, lecture notes and images of artworks. We can use this research as evidence to support our own point of view.

## Why do we reference?

There are a number of reasons we have to reference:

- 1) To acknowledge the sources of the information you have used in your assignment.
- 2) To distinguish your own point of view from that of someone else.
- 3) To show different points of views.
- 4) To prove your point by referring to documented evidence.
- 5) To add credibility to your writing.
- 6) To demonstrate your knowledge of and familiarity with the topic.
- 7) To enable readers to consult the original reading.
- 8) To ensure you are not plagiarising.

## REFERENCING



## Referencing as an important tool in research.

When we talk about references, we think of these little brackets in the text referring to another source (text, image...) and the referencing list at the end of our paper. But what is that good for? We probably think 'plagiarism', to indicate that we didn't steal other's ideas.

The most important function of the reference is to enable research. Each reference leads to a research paper, also called an academic text. These texts try to solve problems in the field, in our case Fine Art. When you find a text to read for your assignment, you can find more references at the end of that text, and they will enable you to find more sources for your topic.

And when you write your text, your references enable other readers to see what you found and they can read further.

At university you are still learning to become a researcher. The idea is that once you are finished here you can become a researcher in your own right. Then your texts will add to the knowledge in your field.

## REFERENCING

## PLAGIARISING



**Plagiarising is taking someone** else's ideas/ writing/artwork and passing it off as your own by not acknowledging or referencing the source. It is taken very seriously at all academic institutions, and therefore DUT may take disciplinary action if you are found guilty. This could mean failing an entire subject or eventually being deregistered. Don't waste your energy finding ways to cheat as lecturers are good at spotting when work has been plagiarised.

### How do we reference?

DUT follows the Harvard referencing style. You can find this guide on the DUT website, as a pdf, or on you can buy one at the library. Every type of academic source gets referenced differently, that is why it is important to follow the guide very carefully. It is expected of you to in-text reference and provide a reference list.

## In-text Referencing

In-text referencing is referencing found within the assignment. Anywhere that you have used information or ideas that are not your own, you are expected to include an in-text reference (see 'Referencing a quote' pg. 37 for more examples). This reference will allow the reader to find the full information of the source in your reference list.

**Example:** *Diane Victor, a renowned South African artist, explores ephemerality in her prints and drawings. Her work deals with issues of "personal and social violence to racial anxiety, corruption, gender inequality, economic exploitation and social commentary - in the new contemporary South African landscape post-apartheid" (Diane Victor 2013).*

As you can see the 1st sentence is the author's own opinion so there is no in-text reference, the second sentence is information taken from a source so it has been referenced, shown in the brackets.

\*Note that the first time you introduce an artist in your writing you must use their full name and thereafter you may refer to them using only their surname.

You will then be able to find the corresponding reference in the reference list:

## PLAGIARISING

## PLAGIARISING

## References

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C. and Tight, M. 2006. *How to Research*. England: Open University Press.

**Diane Victor (online). 2013. Available: <http://www.art.co.za/dianevictor/> (Accessed 12 March 2014).**

Encyclopædia Britannica. Vanitas (online). 2013. Available: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/623056/vanitas> (Accessed 12 March 2014).

## Things to remember in your reference list

\*Note that all the references are in alphabetical order.

\*All sources such as books and internet sources are placed together in the referencing list.

\*The entire URL is included for internet sources, that will take the reader directly to the source (You must never shorten or change the URL as this will make the URL ineffective and therefore your source information would be false).

For more information on referencing both in-text and a reference list please see the DUT referencing guide



**In this course you will use** a lot of images of artworks within your writing, whether that be for your journals, reflective reports or your essays. Someone made these artworks. Like an author writes, an artist makes art, both of these creations are the intellectual property of the creator. This means that if you make an artwork and someone wants to use the image in their assignment they need to credit you as the artist, otherwise it may look like they made it. You also have to credit the source from which you found the image of the artwork, in your reference list. There are six details we need next to/ underneath the image of the artwork:

Name of artist  
Title of artwork  
Date  
Medium  
Size  
Provenance (location)

## REFERENCING ARTWORKS



## Example



Vincent van Gogh, The Starry Night, 1886, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.1 cm, MoMA New York

The reference in the reference list would look something like this:

Van Gogh, V. 1886. The Starry Night (painting). In: The Collection (online) 2014. Available: [http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object\\_id=79802](http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=79802) (Accessed 10 October 2014).

This section is partially adapted from:

Poor Referencing Skills (online). 2013. Available: <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/citation.html> (Accessed 9 October 2014).

Why do we Reference (online). 2013. Available: [http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/index.php?p=why\\_reference](http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/index.php?p=why_reference) (Accessed 21 November 2013).

## ASSIGNMENTS & ESSAYS



## What is an argumentative essay?

An argumentative essay is a piece of academic writing that requires students to investigate a chosen topic, gather and evaluate evidence, and most importantly establish a position (form an opinion) about the topic. This must all be formulated in a concise, well-structured manner in order to persuade the reader.

It is important to note that you will probably be expected to create an argument in almost all academic writing regardless of whether your brief asks for an argumentative essay or not. Most academic texts that we read are arguing a point. If we can find and understand the writer's argument it helps us think about and understand the issue without emotional bias, analyse conflicting claims, and make judgments about the writer's claim and the nature of evidence provided.

We make arguments all the time in everyday life. Think back to when you were younger and you wanted to see a movie with your friends. Your argument (claim), to your parents, was that you should be allowed to go. You then gave reasons why this was true (evidence) such as, you had done all your homework, you had been working hard and needed a break or all the other parents were allowing their kids to go.

We have been preparing for these essays our entire lives.

## ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING



## What makes a good academic essay?

A good essay does not only rely on a good topic but rather an interesting approach to the topic. Once you have an approach and you have narrowed the topic down decide what your point of view on the topic is. Your point of view is vital in creating a good argument. What evidence can you find to back up your point of view? In some instances this evidence can be drawn from personal experiences. But we often need credible sources to validate our point of view. We still have a lot to learn and are by no means experts on any given subject yet. It takes years of experience to become an expert. Experts and credible sources give authority to our point of view, forcing readers to take our opinions more seriously.

### How to start

- If it is not already given to you, find and formulate a problem you want to investigate (this is your topic or research question).
- Create a list of ideas that support your point of view (idea).
- Now pick the best ones.
- Put them in a logical order that will help persuade the reader. E.g. weakest to strongest ideas. These ideas will create separate paragraphs. Write a topic sentence for each paragraph where you tell the reader what the main idea/theme of the paragraph is.
- Now think of any argument that could oppose your main ideas.
- RESEARCH! Find relevant evidence to support your point of view (your idea). Keep reading.

## ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING



## ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

### Now put it into paragraphs

(See *Effective Paragraphs* pg 38)

- 1) Put forward a well-considered point of view.
- 2) Now provide support for this view (evidence to back-up your view). This must be referenced.
- 3) You could also provide some contrasting views. This will show you have done research and are aware of the counter arguments. This must also be referenced.
- 4) Explain, carefully, why your view is more fitting/reasonable.

**Be logical!** Remember that all your paragraphs are arguing one point. Make sure you link them to this point. The most important part of writing an essay is to show your understanding of the topic. This should include all areas and contrasting views. How can you make the reader believe in what you are saying if you don't completely understand the topic? **RESEARCH!**

### Things to avoid

Don't assume anything. Everything must be proven or backed up with evidence.

This section is adapted from:

write a more effective argument (online). 2013. Available: <http://www.englishbiz.co.uk/mainguides/argue.htm> (Accessed 28 November 2013).

Argument (online).2013. Available: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/rgument/> (Accessed 28 November 2013).

Beckman, L. Dube, C. Underhill, J. 2011. Academic Literacy. Cape Town: Juta and Company LTD (pages 40-43).

## Think of introductions as taxi conductors.

## INTRODUCTIONS

They try really hard to get you on their taxi and will tell you where the taxi is going so you can decide if you want to go on the ride. The reader needs to know what's going to be discussed and how the essay is structured to decide if it's relevant to them and if they want to continue reading. A good introduction is short and direct but still draws the reader in. A bad introduction loses the reader before they even start. Before you start ask yourself: What type of person are you writing for (your audience) and what is the purpose of the writing?

An introduction should get the reader's attention, explain why you are writing this essay/report/etc. and provide the direction that your topic has explored.



## INTRODUCTIONS

### What to include in your introduction:

Start off generally about your topic and then narrow it down. (Be careful not to be too broad)

- 1) Grab the reader's attention. You can do this by using:  
An interesting example  
An inviting quote  
Referring to a current event  
A rhetorical question  
Narrative ("imagine you were...") or  
A statement
- 2) Provide some background on the topic: This helps the reader understand the context of your writing.
- 3) If necessary, define the key terms in your writing (quote a dictionary).
- 4) Why are you writing this (essay/report/etc.)? What is the purpose: are you arguing, comparing or discussing a point? What is the topic you are arguing, comparing or discussing?
- 5) State how your information will be organised. What are the subtopics (paragraphs) you will focus on? This is where you tell the reader how your topic will be explored.

This section is partially adapted from:

Writing a Research Paper (online). 2012. Available: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/PlanResearchPaper.html#intro>

(Accessed 14 October 2013).

Topic Sentence and Thesis Statement : The Keystones of Organized Writing (online). 2013. Available: <http://www.rccc.edu/writing/topic-thesis.html> (Accessed 14 October 2013).

## What is paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing is an accurate, simple restatement of a section of text. This means that you change what you have read into entirely new/your own words without changing the meaning of what you have read. It does NOT have to be SHORTER than the section of text you are paraphrasing. It must however ALWAYS be referenced, as it is still someone else's ideas.

### When do we use paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing is used in almost all academic writing. It is used to provide evidence, from a credible source, for our point of view. We do this by paraphrasing or quoting these sources.

### When do you paraphrase and not quote?

- The ideas in the text are more important than the way the author has written it.
- The piece of text is hard to understand because of the language used.
- A quotation is too long or could be simpler.
- A paraphrase might integrate into your writing better than a quote.
- When you want to make sure you understand the concepts you are reading.

## PARAPHRASING



## How to Paraphrase?

- 1) Read/ skim the whole text. (If you don't know what the entire text is about it will be hard to understand the section you need to paraphrase).
- 2) Now read and reread the section you are about to paraphrase. (Make sure you understand what the author is trying to say. What is the main idea?).
- 3) Place the text aside so you can't see it.
- 4) Write down everything you can remember from what you have read in YOUR OWN WORDS.
- 5) Go back and look at the text. Compare what you have written with the original passage. Make sure you haven't left out any important ideas.
- 6) Now check that you have not used the same wording as the author (use a thesaurus if you need to).

## PARAPHRASING

## PARAPHRASING

- 7) If your paraphrase is still too similar, rearrange your sentences, combine ideas (the sentences structure must be different to that of the authors).
- 8) You cannot:
  - Just rearrange words.
  - Keep the same word order and just change the words using a thesaurus.
  - Keep the same sentence structure.
  - Use a direct quote (this defeats the purpose).
- 9) Now this paraphrase needs to be referenced. Use your referencing guide.
- 10) You are not finished yet. Try to incorporate your paraphrase into your essay. Refer to *Effective Paragraphs* (pg 38) to do this successfully.

This section is partially adapted from:

Beekman, L. Dube, C. Underhill, J. 2012. *Academic Literacy*. Cape Town: Juta and Co Ltd.  
Paraphrase and Summary(online)2013. Available: <http://writing.ku.edu/paraphrase-and-summary> (Accessed 21 November 2013) (pages 55-56).  
Paraphrasing (online) 2011. Available: <http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/2005/types-communication/academic-writing/paraphrasing/> (Accessed 21 November 2013).

## What is a quote?

A quote is a section of text that has been copied word for word and placed between open and closed quotation marks (" "). It is always referenced.

## When do we use a quote?

Quoting, like paraphrasing, is used in almost all academic writing. It is used to provide evidence, from a credible figure/piece of writing, for our point of view. We do this by paraphrasing or quoting these sources.

## When do you quote and not paraphrase?

The only time one uses a quote and not a paraphrase is when the section of writing expresses an idea so well you can't say it better or simpler through paraphrasing.

It is vital to reference a quote correctly, to ensure you do not plagiarize. This will also allow the reader to differentiate between your voice and the author you are quoting. **Quotation marks are not enough.** There are three different ways one can reference and incorporate a quote into a paragraph.

## QUOTING



## QUOTING

## Referencing a Quote

1. *You can add the in-text reference at the end of the quote.*

Impressionists recorded ephemerality in "the changing conditions of light and atmosphere as well as their individual sensations before nature" (Hurrell 2001: 8-9).

2. *You can incorporate the in-text reference into the sentence*

According to Hurrell (2001: 8-9) Impressionists recorded ephemerality in "the changing conditions of light and atmosphere as well as their individual sensations before nature".

3. *You can incorporate the in-text reference into the sentence by sandwiching the quote between the in-text reference.*

According to Hurrell Impressionists recorded ephemerality in "the changing conditions of light and atmosphere as well as their individual sensations before nature" (2001: 8-9).

## Lead in words

We use 'lead in' words to incorporate a quote into a paragraph as well as to incorporate the reference or paraphrase fluidly into our writing. I used the phrase "according to" in the above example but there are a number of different words and phrases one can use. It is a good idea to use as many different lead in words as possible throughout your assignment. It is however important that you use the most appropriate word. Please note that they all have different meanings, some show where the writer is very sure (e.g. states) and some show where a writer is tentative (e.g. suggests, feels) in their opinion. Below is a list of a few alternate words one could use for "According to" or "says"

According to	Demands	Remarks
Says	Argues	Believes
States	Suggested	Feels
Explains	Claims	Illustrates

## What is a paragraph?

A paragraph consists of a number of related sentences that deal with a single topic.

A paragraph should: have one main idea, be logical and develop the idea (have evidence to support the idea)

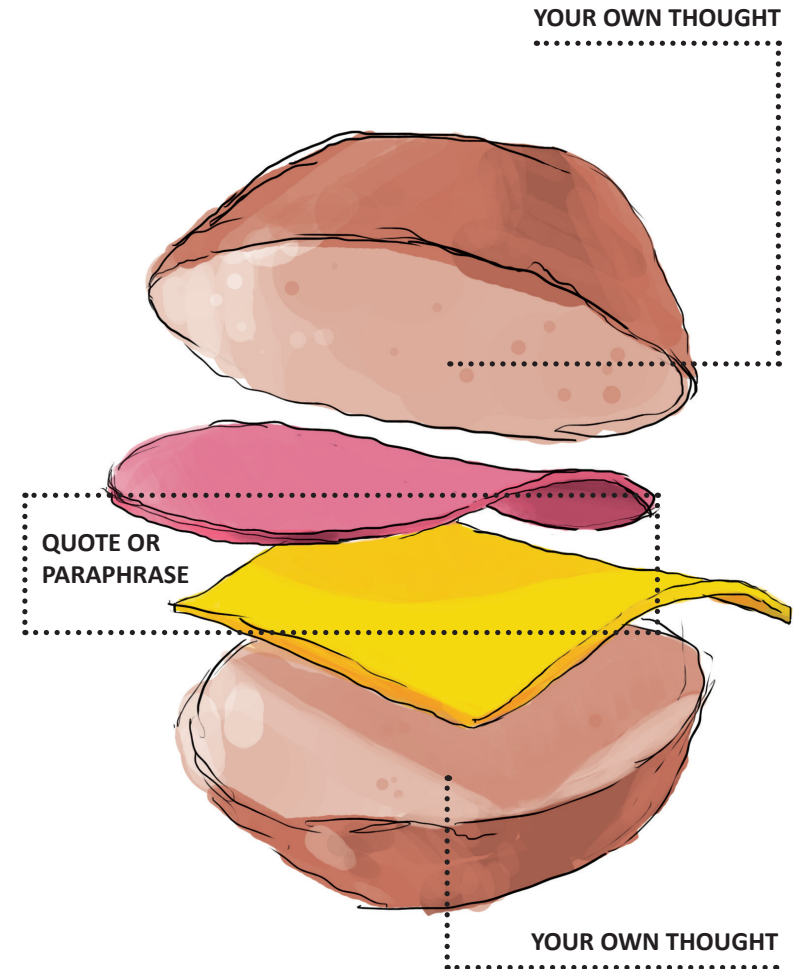
## How to structure a paragraph

Don't start or end a paragraph with a quotation or paraphrased idea. ***Sandwich that idea between your own thoughts.***

## EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPHS



## THE QUOTATION SANDWICH (GWINYA)





## Pie paragraphs

An easy way to sandwich a quote is by using the PIE method to integrate quotes.

- Point: Introduce the point you are making in this paragraph (often referred to as the “topic sentence”)
- **Illustration: Use a quotation or paraphrased idea (or other example or evidence) to illustrate and support the Point – here you are providing examples that give your Point credibility. You’re showing that your Point has merit.**
- Explanation: this is where you explain how your *Illustration* supports your *Point*. Also show the reader how this links back to your argument.

**Example:** Point: Tone is the gradient between light and dark. **Illustration:** “The way light falls on objects and surfaces informs us of their shape and form”(Lower 1997: 4). **Explanation:** Thus the greater the tonal value, the more three-dimensional your artwork will appear.

This section is partially adapted from:

PIE: How to Construct an Effective Paragraph (online). 2012. Available: [facweb.northseattle.edu/jclapp/ONLINE English 102/PIE Paragraph Form.htm](http://facweb.northseattle.edu/jclapp/ONLINE%20English%20102/PIE%20Paragraph%20Form.htm).  
<http://www.iordache.biz/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/sandwich3.jpg> (Accessed 20 November 2012).

### References

- Hurrell, K. 2001. *Essential Impressionists*. Bath: Parragon. (pages 8-9).
- Lower, P. 1997. *The Essential Guide to Art and Design*. London: Hodder and Stroughton.
- Huffington, A. 1988. *Picasso: creator and destroyer*. London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd.

## EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPHS

# POINT ILLUSTRATION EXPLANATION

Now you try

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**According to Huffington (1988:9)“Surprise was the key characteristic of Picasso’s art”.**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusions are the final** paragraph of your assignment. A conclusion is often seen as one of the hardest things to write. You have spent an entire essay constructing your argument and now you need to bring all the points together. See it as your final opportunity to persuade the reader that your argument is the better argument. You will find that the conclusion is closely linked to the introduction.

**What to Include in your Conclusion**

- You start off by confirming the text is coming to the end by using statements or devices such as: “In conclusion” or “Therefore”.
- Remind the reader what the essay was about (Your research question).
- Summarise the essay’s main points (these should be the main ideas in each paragraph).
- Give your final words. This can be something for the reader to think about or a call for an additional investigation on the topic.

**Things to avoid**

- Do not introduce any new ideas in your conclusion (that’s what the body of your essay is for).
- Avoid using new terms/words that would require definition.
- Don’t go off topic. The aim is to restate what you have already said, to drive home the point.
- Avoid long conclusions. Keep it short and to the point.

This section is partially adapted from:  
Beckman, L. Dube, C. Underhill, J. 2011. Academic Literacy. Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd (page 85).

**CONCLUSIONS**



**ASSIGNMENT  
CHECKLIST**

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Have I understood and answered the brief correctly?   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is my name, student number, date, subject and lecturer on the cover page or top of my first page? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do I have a research question/main idea that the assignment explores throughout?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do I have an introduction, body and conclusion?   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do I have a topic sentence/ one main idea per paragraph?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have I used the PIE paragraph format for each paragraph in the body?                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does each main idea have paraphrased or quoted evidence to back it up?                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the evidence I am using the most appropriate to back up my point?                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the evidence quoted or paraphrased correctly?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does each quote or paraphrase have an in-text reference?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Is the divide between my thought/ opinion and the research I have used clear to the reader?
- ☐ Do I have one thought per sentence?
- ☐ Are my sentences as short and clear as they could be?
- ☐ There are no new ideas in my conclusion.
- ☐ Do I have a clear argument throughout my assignment?
- ☐ Do I have a reference list on a new page?
- ☐ Are all my references correct, according to the DUT?
- ☐ Harvard Referencing Guide?
- ☐ Have I written more than one draft of this assignment?
- ☐ Have I used the Writing Centre?



DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC WRITING

**Our practical work requires** us to continuously come up with innovative ideas. This is easier said than done. When stuck, prewriting exercises such as brainstorming, free writing or word association, can be helpful. Changing the format of an idea from 'thought' to 'written' to 'visual' can spark off new ideas. Move out of your comfort zone.

### Brain Storming:

This is a form of listing ideas and sub ideas, often in a spider diagram format.

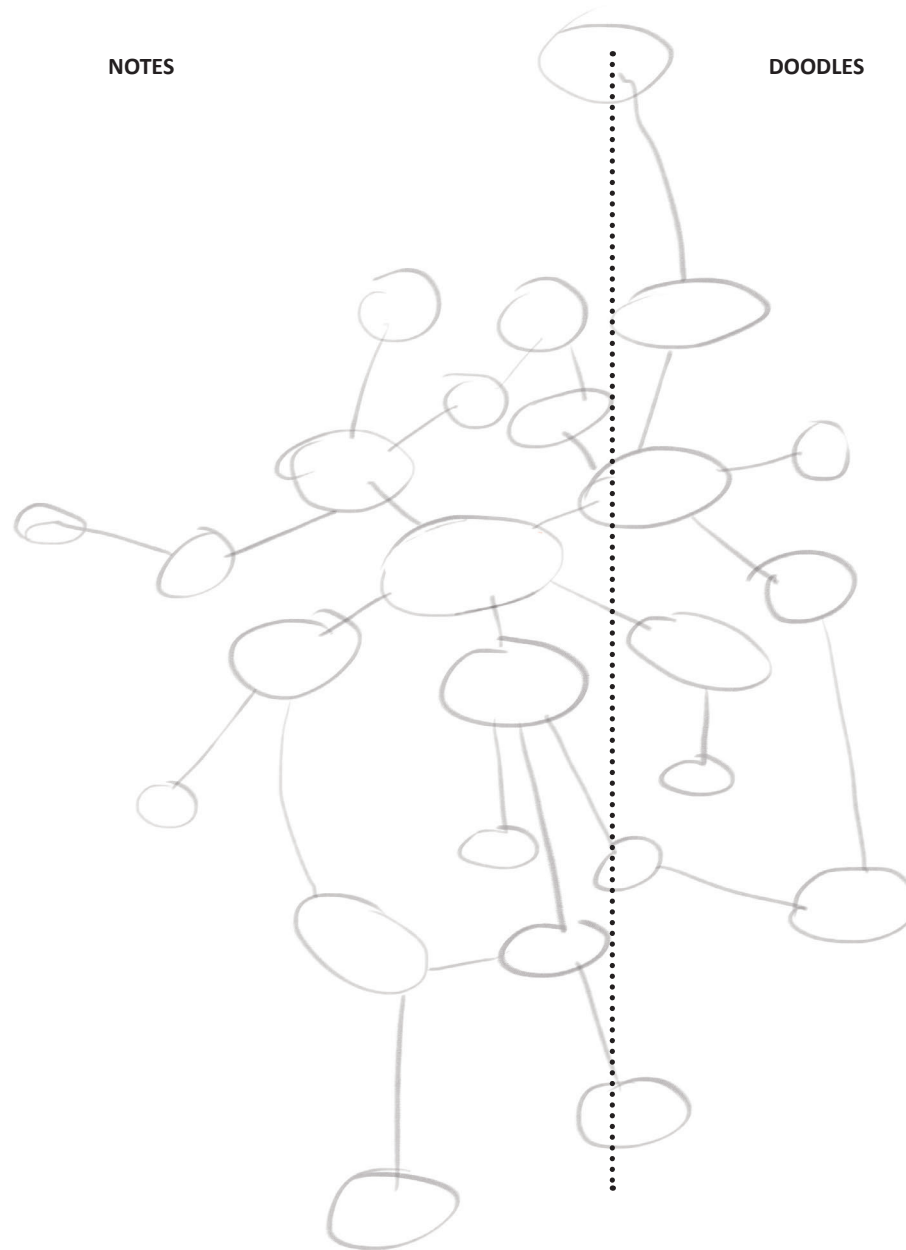
1. Start with one main idea or question (your topic).
2. Think of as many ideas or words that relate to the topic. Don't worry about whether it will be useful or not, write down everything.
3. Each idea should generate a new idea. Write down emotions about the topic as well.
4. Once you feel you cannot think of any more ideas, stop and reread what you have written. Circle the interesting ideas. These could be a great start to new artworks.

### GENERATING IDEAS FOR PRACTICALS



### NOTES

### DOODLES



**Free writing:**

Free writing is a writing exercise that forces you to record ideas that are in your head, without editing, analysis or judgment.

- 1. Think of a topic, phrase or question that you want to explore.
- 2. With a pen and paper, for 3-5 min, without stopping or lifting up your pen, write whatever you know or comes to mind about the topic. If you run out of ideas repeat a phrase like “I don’t know” over and over until another idea comes to mind. Don’t worry about spelling, grammar or clarity.
- 3. When the time is up reread what you have written. A lot of the writing may be unusable but you might find some good ideas you may not have otherwise thought of.

**GENERATING IDEAS  
FOR PRACTICALS**

**NOTES**

**DOODLES**

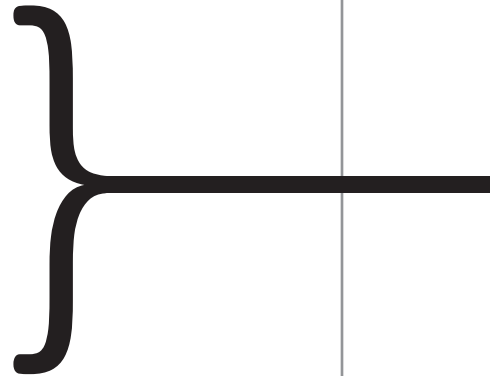


## How to generate ideas for a concept

*Ask yourself the following questions:*

- What was the most amazing artwork you have ever seen in person /in a book/ on the Internet? Describe it.
- What was the work about (conceptually)?
- Why did you love the artwork?
- What is the most interesting non-traditional use of a traditional medium you have seen? Describe the artwork/ object.
- What project/ part of a project have you enjoyed the most during your studies thus far? Why?
- What is your favorite thing to do with any material/ medium?
- If you could make anything you wanted, what would it be and why?

## GENERATING IDEAS FOR PRACTICALS



*"An idea is our visual reaction to something seen - in real life, in our memory, in our imagination, in our dreams." (Audette 1993:42)*

### **Three main ideas**

With the above quote in mind, write down 3 topics/ subjects that you feel passionate about/ interested in that are worth visually reacting to.

### **Word association**

Write down as many words that you can think of/ associate with the above topics.

### **Thesaurus**

Pick three words from your word association that resonate with you.

\*resonate means: "to evoke images, memories, and emotions."

Use a thesaurus to generate new meanings and ideas for the chosen words. Write them down.

### **Free writing**

With your three words in mind 'free write' a passage for three minutes about your chosen topic. Think about:

Anything you know about the topic.

Why it's important to you.

What type of objects you would like to make and why?

\*It does not have to link at this stage. Just keep your pen moving on your page.

## GENERATING IDEAS FOR PRACTICALS



Remember to keep the quote in mind

### THREE MAIN IDEAS

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### WORD ASSOCIATION

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### THESAURUS

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### FREE WRITING

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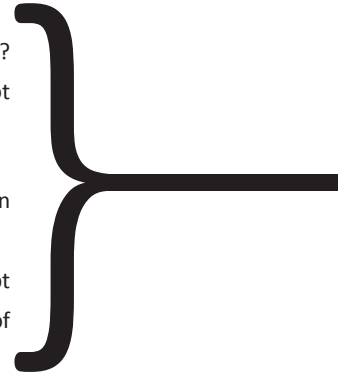
### 4Ws and an H

With everything you have written from the above five points, use the '4Ws and an H', seen below, to write a paragraph about the possible concept you would like to explore in 3rd year.

#### WHAT, WHERE, WHY, WHO & HOW

- **What** is your concept?
- **Where** is it in the context of South Africa?  
Durban? Is it a universal issue? (If this is not relevant leave it out)
- **Why** does it interest you?
- **Who** else has dealt with this issue (find an artist)?
- **How** do you plan on executing this concept in your art making (subject matter/types of artwork etc.)?

### GENERATING IDEAS FOR PRACTICALS



This section is partially adapted from:

Brainstorming(online) 2014. Available at: <http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Handouts-Guides/Handouts-%28Get-It-Written%29/Brainstorming-> (Accessed 20 October 2014)

#### References

Audette, A. H. 1993. *The Blank Canvas*. Boston: Shambhala Publication. (page 42)

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/resonate?searchDictCode=all>

## What is an artist statement for?

An artist statement creates a bridge between the viewer and the artist. It is about the relationship the artist has with their work and process. It helps the viewer establish: What inspired this artist? How did he/she work? It also gives the artist the opportunity to find the common threads through their body of work.

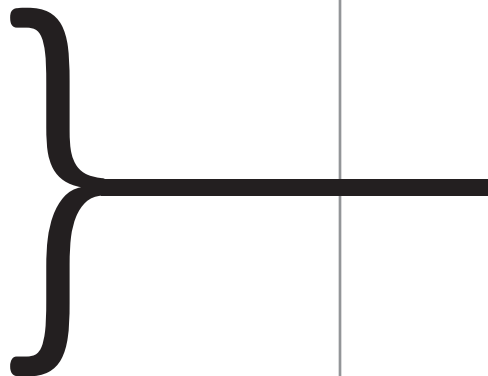
## What can you use an artist statement for?

Galleries (exhibitions you participate in) / Press releases / Media articles / Applying for grants / Applying for some teaching positions / Applying for artist-in-residence.

Ask yourself the following questions to get you started:

1. What is your concept?
  - a) Why do you do what you do?
  - b) Why did you choose the topic / theme?
  - c) How did you get into this topic / theme?
2. Why did you choose this set of images?
3. What techniques did you use? Why?
4. What materials did you use? Why? How?
5. What reoccurring elements emerge in your work? Is there a pattern in the way you select materials? In the way you use color, texture or light?
6. What artists influence you? How?

## ARTIST STATEMENT



## Now let's put it into paragraphs:

Always remember to use the present tense ("I am," not "I was," "I do," not "I did.") Be brave! Select your own order of these paragraphs:

Tell the reader what your concept is, and then include a simple statement of why you do the work you do.

Tell the reader how you make decisions in the course of your work. How and why do you select materials, techniques, themes, images etc.? Keep it simple. Link these to your influences, this creates context.

Tell the reader a little more about your current work. How it grew out of prior work or life experiences. What are you exploring, attempting or challenging by doing this work.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

This section is partially adapted from:

Gordon, M. 2007. Writing your Artist's Statement (online). Available: <http://www.mollygordon.com/resources/marketingresources/artstatemt/> (Accessed 18 November 2013)  
Goodwin, A. 2012. Writing the Artist Statement. USA: Infinity Publishing.

**You will be asked to analyse** artworks continuously throughout your studies, whether it is analysing an artwork you select for an exhibition review, analysing an artwork for an essay, your journals or analysing your own artwork.

### **What is Artwork Analysis?**

Artwork analysis is examining what the artwork looks like and what the artwork says/does. In other words you are looking at both the aesthetics and concept of the artwork.

### **Why do we Analyse Artworks?**

As an artist we put a lot of thought into both, coming up with a concept and every step along the way in the making process. Everything affects the success of an artwork; the decisions made with the marks you make, the subject matter, the concept, that is why these are all carefully considered by the artist. Analysing artworks allows us to interrogate the artist's intentions as well as how successful the artwork is. This shows the lecturer that you have an understanding of art terms and are thinking critically about all aspects of the artwork. The more we analyse other artworks the more we consider and reflect when making our own artworks.

## **ARTWORK ANALYSIS**



There are four things to consider when analysing an artwork:

- 1) Describe the artwork (content)
- 2) Look at the form (formal elements)
- 3) Look at the context of the artwork
- 4) Interpretation

You must always include an image of the artwork you are analysing and all the artwork information.

### **Describing an artwork**

Describing an artwork is stating exactly what you see in the artwork (the content of the artwork). Meaning and emotions are not included in this section. You will include the subject matter you see and where it is positioned in the artwork. Here you will also mention what format the artwork takes i.e. portrait or landscape. Imagine you are describing the artwork to a blind person. You are recreating the artwork in words.

## **ARTWORK ANALYSIS**

## ARTWORK ANALYSIS

### Formal Elements

It is important to describe how the artist has used the formal elements, these include:

- 1) What type of lines does the artist use?  
Jagged/flowing...
- 2) What tone (light) did the artist use?  
Where is the light source? Are mainly dark or light tones used?  
Is there high contrast?  
Is the tone high or low key?
- 3) What colours have the artist used?  
What could these colours symbolise?
- 4) What texture does the artwork have?  
How is the texture created?  
Is it physical texture or is it visual texture created by mark making?
- 5) How has space been used?  
Has the artist created depth, an illusion of or physical space, or is it completely two-dimensional?  
How has the artist created depth?  
Is it created through relational size or detail, has the artist used perspective or are objects overlapping?
- 6) How has the artist used positive and negative shape? Are the shapes geometric or organic?
- 7) How has the artist used composition?  
Is there a focal point?
- 8) What technique and medium has the artist used?
- 9) Is the work abstract, realistic, stylized, simplified or distorted?

### Context

It is important to consider the context of the artwork, in an attempt to truly understand it. This could include:

- When the work was made?
- Where it was made?
- What was happening at that time?
- What the artist was going through when making the work?
- Who the artist is?
- Who commissioned the artist to make the work
- (if applicable)?
- If there is a person featured in the artwork, who is the person?

### Interpretation

You must consider the artist's conceptual intentions, usually found in artist statements, but as art is subjective, your interpretation and emotional response is just as valid.

- What is the artist's conceptual intention?
- What emotional response do you have to this work and why?
- How does the use of each of the formal elements and subject matter make you feel?
- How do you interpret the work?

This section was partially adapted from:  
How to Analyse an Artist's work (online) 2014. Available: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/art/practicalities/analysingartistwork1.shtml> (Accessed 21 October 2014)

John Wagoner. 2013. Art 206: Analysis of an artwork (video online) Available: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckh\\_G0mkdx4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckh_G0mkdx4) (Accessed 22 October 2014)

## EXHIBITION REVIEWS



## What Is an Exhibition Review?

An exhibition review is an academic piece of writing that describes, analyses and interprets a chosen exhibition. A good review should deepen the readers understanding of both the exhibition and art history, as well as enrich their experience of viewing artworks.

## Art Galleries

You find art exhibitions at art galleries. Exhibitions will usually stay up between 1-3 weeks. Visit an exhibition. Viewing images online does not give an accurate reflection. You can choose from one of many galleries in Durban.

Things to take when visiting an exhibition:

- Notebook • Pencil / Pen • Camera • Measuring tape, in case the dimensions aren't provided.

## Gathering Information

Find all the information you can on the exhibition: Reviews online and in newspapers, interview the artist or curator, the artist's web page and the 'walk about'. You will need all of this. Make sure you reference!

## EXHIBITION REVIEWS

## A selection of Durban's art galleries

### African Art Centre

(94 Florida Road, Morningside)

### ArtSpace Durban

(3 Miller Rd, Greyville - off Umgeni Rd)

### Bat Centre

(45 MaritimePlace, Small Craft Harbour, Victoria Embankment)

### Durban Art Gallery

(2nd Floor City Hall, 480 Anton lebede/Smith Street, City Centre)

### DUT Art Gallery

(51 Steve Biko Road, Steve Biko Campus Above the Library)

### KZNSA

(166 Bulwer Road, Glenwood)

## How to Write an Exhibition Review:

### *Title:*

On the top of your page write as a heading: Title of Exhibition by Artist at Name of Gallery and the starting and ending dates of the exhibition.

### *Artist Bio:*

The first paragraph can be about the artist that you are looking at (Write the artist's name in full). A short biography, giving the reader insight into who this artist is. Only use information that is relevant to understanding the exhibition. Use the information you found, and reference.

### *The Exhibition as a whole:*

The second paragraph could be about the exhibition as a whole, start with a broad view. You could use your interviews here to back this up (reference). Here you can include some of the artist's statement (reference your quote or paraphrase), what was the exhibition about. Tell the reader your experience of seeing the exhibition. Ask yourself the following questions:

- How did it make you feel?
- What were your feelings about the way the artworks were laid out?
- How did the public react to the work, if you were at the opening?
- How did the works relate to each other, is there a common thread?

## EXHIBITION REVIEWS

### *An Artwork:*

Narrow your focus. Pick an artwork. You need a good quality image of the artwork and all the artwork information. When taking photos in galleries you must always ask permission first. **Artist, Title, Date, Medium, Size.** Include the image and the artwork information here.

Third paragraph, tell the reader what artwork you are going to discuss and why you chose that specific artwork. Here you will analyse the artwork using the formal elements. Tell the reader exactly what you see in the work. Interpret the work using both your own interpretation and the sources you gathered as a guide. Ask yourself:

- What materials and techniques has the artist used? What effects have these made?
- Why do you think the artist has chosen to use these materials?
- How have the formal elements been used? (Line, shape, colour, tone, texture, composition etc.).
- How have the formal elements influenced your interpretation?
- What qualities do the formal elements have? (E.g. energetic, strong).
- How has the artist used design qualities? (E.g. repetition, focal point, harmony, variety and contrast).
- What artist does this work remind you of? Name the artist and artwork. Provide an image and the artwork information (reference).

## EXHIBITION REVIEWS



## EXHIBITION REVIEWS

- Is the subject matter naturalistic, distorted, stylised, exaggerated etc.?
- What could this suggest conceptually?
- What meaning (concept) does this artwork convey?

Use the sources you have researched to back up the above answers with quotes or paraphrased quotes (reference!).

### *Conclusion:*

Sum up the exhibition. Was it successful or not and why? Do you suggest others see it? How could it have been better? Does it have any impact on the Durban art scene? If so, how?

### *References:*

On a new page, include a reference list, which lists all the references you have used in your review. You also need to reference the photo of the artwork you have taken in your reference list. This is done by following the referencing guide for artworks and then add: 'image by: your surname, initial. (Year you took the photo). Place: gallery'.

### *Appendix:*

Attach any reviews you used and referenced to the back of your review.

This section is partially adapted from:

Feldman, E. 2008. Feldman's method of Judgement (online). Available: <http://zeckdikalajingga.blogspot.com/2008/04/feldmans-meth-od-of-judgement.html> (Accessed 12 June 2012)

Radul, J. 2000. Notes on Writing an Exhibition Review (online). Available: <http://www.sfu.ca/~jaradul/reviews.html> (Accessed 20 November 2013)

Barnet, S. 2005. Writing a Review of an Exhibition, 8th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

## Reflection

Reflective writing is used in both journal writing and reflective reports. As creative people it is vital that we stop and take a step back to look, engage and reflect on our creative process and the artifact we have made. This in written form allows for a learning process that does not always happen during the act of making. This gives us the opportunity to really engage with what we have done. Art making is not a linear experience, there is no real wrong and right way. Reflection allows us time to both fine tune our work conceptually and practically as well as record problems we may have had to ensure we can repeat the process in a more productive way if need be. Recording our emotions during the making process in the form of reflection is also important. Making art is an extremely personal journey, and our emotions are very influential in our art making, whether intended or not. Recording these emotions can make you see your work in a new light or spark off ideas for new work. This allows for personal growth.

### ***The three basics of reflection:***

Describe

Analyse

Reflect

## REFLECTIVE REPORTS & JOURNALS



## Reflective report

(This may vary depending on the lecturer's requirements for the particular module)

### ***1st and 2nd Year***

- Introduction: In one sentence explain what the module was about. Then explain how the report is going to be laid out.
  - 1) The module as a whole
  - 2) research on the topic
  - 3) the artwork you will be reflecting on.(Write this in full sentences)
- Describe the module: (what was expected of you)  
PARAGRAPH 1.
- Include general research on the given topic. Reference.  
PARAGRAPH 2
- Carefully select a few artworks you made during the module.
- Provide an image of the artwork, with the artwork information.  
PARAGRAPH 3
- Describe: the making process of your artwork.  
PARAGRAPH 3
- Analyse: Explain why you made it like that and why you chose that subject matter. Explain your use of the formal elements: line, shape, tone, texture, composition.  
PARAGRAPH 4

## REFLECTIVE REPORTS & JOURNALS

- Was the work you made influenced by another work? Include an image of that work and all artwork information. Compare and contrast your work to the other artist's work.  
PARAGRAPH 5
- Reflect: How do you feel about this artwork? What did you enjoy? What didn't you enjoy? What was said about it in the crit? How can you improve it? Where to from here?  
PARAGRAPH 6
- Repeat paragraph 3-6 for each artwork you wish to discuss.
- Conclusion: Explain how you felt about the module as a whole, and recap the main issues you faced and learnt from. Explain how you plan to apply what you have learnt to the next module.
- Reference list

### ***3rd and 4th Year***

This is exactly the same as 1st and 2nd year reflective reports, except you replace Paragraph 1 with your artist statement.

## Journal Writing

It is expected of you to keep a journal for each subject throughout your studies, but what is an artist's journal? An artist's journal is similar to a journal or diary you may or may not have kept as a child. It is a space to put down a compilation of ideas, sketches, processes, research, visual references (like images, something you picked up off the floor, photos) and most importantly, reflection. This journal allows lecturers to see how engaged you have been with the project. It allows a glimpse into your mind.

This is the most informal type of writing you will do in this course. It is however important to remember that your lecturers will read it so try to leave out slang, or information that isn't relevant to your art making (like your boyfriend/ girlfriend). If research is included you still have to reference it. But how the research/ writing is presented is completely up to you, as long as it can be read. The more creative your journal is the better. You will also need to include explanations about why you have included an image/object/sweet wrapper, so the reader can follow your train of thought. REFLECT. The most important thing to include in your journal is reflection. After/ during every day or module depending on the lecturer, describe, analyse and reflect about what you have made/ are making.

## REFLECTIVE REPORTS & JOURNALS

## Journal Checklist

- Describe (the module/process/artwork in a summarised format. Do not give an hourly or day by day report).
- Brainstorm: create a visually interesting brainstorm.
- Include sketches.
- Include interesting found objects, images, reference & artworks.
- Include a brief explanations for each thing you have included.
- Include paraphrased research with references.
- Reflection.
- Be Creative: Don't be afraid, use different media (pen, ink, collage, paint, print).

(A journal must have as much visual imagery as writing)

Your journal is a space for you to put down ideas and feelings; it's a great starting point for generating ideas for new artworks. Make your journal as exciting and creative as possible.

## REFLECTIVE REPORTS & JOURNALS

A boring  
journal.  
=  
Boring  
ideas.



PROFESSIONAL WRITING



## Unfortunately you can't be a student forever!

Once you leave DUT you need to find a job, whether as a professional artist, a gallery curator or any other form of 'day job'. All kinds of work will require some form of writing. These types of writing include: CVs, proposals to exhibit in a gallery, applying for project funding, artist statements and artist biography etc. All these documents need to be well written and presentable, as your job might well depend on it.

## PROFESSIONAL WRITING



**Most businesses nowadays** want a single page CV when you apply for a job. This can make fitting everything in quite difficult. It is up to you to include the most appropriate information in your CV, what is appropriate depends on the job you are applying for. Imagine who might be reading your CV to help you decide what information will be the most appropriate. For jobs in the arts only include experience from an artistic field. Don't over exaggerate or lie, ever.

For example if you are applying for an admin. post you should include a skills section, which would include things like your ability to work on computer programs such as MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

If you are motivating for holding an exhibition or applying for an academic post in the arts, the Exhibition section and Work experience is vital as they show your artistic output, your areas of interest/specialisation and how much you will bring to the job/how relevant you are to the field.

## CV /CURRICULUM VITAE



## CV /CURRICULUM VITAE

### What to include:

#### *Personal information*

Full Name  
Date of Birth  
ID Number  
Contact Number  
Email address  
Gender  
Nationality  
Driver's license

#### *Education*

This must be a list of your qualifications from newest to oldest; including the years they were obtained.

#### *Awards*

This will include any relevant awards you have received, again with years from newest to oldest.

#### *Exhibitions*

This section, as with the above, must be listed from newest to oldest. It will include the title of the exhibition, where the exhibition was shown, and if it was a solo show, group show or competition.

#### *Work experience*

Again from newest to oldest, state where you worked and what position you were in. You can include your references in this section, listing them alongside the relevant job.

#### *References*

Your list of references will include the name, position and company your reference is from, with up to date contact information.

This section is partially adapted from:

Cox, F. ed. 2008. The Artist's Handbook: A Guide to the Business of the Arts Cape Town: The African Art Centre (page 104)

### What do you need a biography for?

There are a few things for which you will need an artist's biography, these include:

- Exhibitions
- Proposals for exhibitions
- In some cases with CVs
- Press releases
- Competitions

### What is a biography?

A biography is a short paragraph that includes information about your life. It is usually written in the third person. So instead of saying 'my' and 'I' you will write it as if you are speaking about someone else. It is almost as if someone is writing this biography for you. An artist biography focuses mainly on your experience and production in the arts. It is very different to an artist statement (see pg 54).

## ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY





## ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

### What to include:

- (Your full name)\_\_\_\_\_ was born in \_\_\_\_\_(city), \_\_\_\_\_(country) in \_\_\_\_\_(year).
- Then you include a sentence about your qualification(s), mention the qualification(s) you have and the university you got it (them) from.
- If you have had solo shows you include where you have had the shows, name of gallery and place.
- You would also include a sentence with the number of group shows you have been included in; you may list a small selection of the best shows.
- You should also include a bit about what you are currently doing: (Your Surname)\_\_\_\_\_ is currently living and working in \_\_\_\_\_(City).  
You finally could add a bit about the type of art you make e.g. sculptor, abstract painter, or performance artist.

Write the above in full sentences. Include only factual information. Keep it short and to the point.

This section is partially adapted from:  
Cox, F. ed. 2008. The Artist's Handbook: A Guide to the Business of the Arts Cape Town: The African Art Centre (page 105).

If you are writing a **proposal** or application, whether for a bursary, funding, exhibition or artist residency, it is important to read the terms and requirements carefully, as each type of proposal will require very specific information and will be formatted in a particular way. There is however some basic information always needed. This includes:

- Biography
- Motivation Letter
- The proposal (sometimes included in the motivation letter)
- A relevant portfolio, with good quality images
- CV
- Copy of your marks/diploma/degree (if applicable)
- Letters of recommendations (if applicable)
- Copy of your ID (if applicable)

### Motivation letters/cover letters

A motivation letter is approximately one page long and follows a letter format. It motivates why you are the most suitable candidate for the bursary/funding/residencies etc. It is a personalized document that will often accompany your CV or other application documents. A good motivation letter helps you to stand out from the other applicants applying for the same opportunity. You should always check if there are any special requirements that need to be addressed or answered in this letter. There is no universal template so write information that is appropriate and applicable for the fund/ residency/ bursar. Opposite is a guide.

## PROPOSALS & APPLICATIONS



## PROPOSALS & APPLICATIONS

### What to include:

- Your address on the right and the date.  
Skip a line.
- The address of the place you are applying for/to on the left margin.
- It is a letter so start the off with "Dear...", find out who to address the letter to. If you can not then address it to "Sir/Madam" .
- Follow this by a title clearly stating what you are applying for. "Motivation for..."
- This letter should showcase your knowledge, personal abilities and attributes.
- It should explain why you are suitable for the position you are applying for. (Why that residency is the perfect residency for what you want to do/ gallery/ bursary etc.).
- This could include a brief explanation of what you intend to do. Your future plan for a bursary, what you intend to do with the qualification/ the concept of the exhibition/ your intent for art making if awarded the artist residency. (This section will be elaborated on in the proposal if a proposal is required).
- Sign the letter "Sincerely Yours" or "Faithfully" and type your name underneath followed by your signature.

Remember that your CV will usually be attached to this so avoid repeating information you already have in the CV. Make sure it is well written with no errors.

This section is partially adapted from:

How to write motivational letter for scholarship (online). 2012. Available: <http://motivationalletter.com/tag/motivational-letter-bursary/> (Accessed 7 November 2014)

**You may want to include a** separate proposal from your motivational letter when you are applying for residencies, funding etc., especially if you are required to generate a plan or concept that you aim to achieve if awarded the position or grant.

A proposal usually includes:

- Your concept or artist statement that you are proposing. (You must state clearly why it is worth doing/ exploring).
- Aims and objectives (what you plan to achieve).
- A break down of how you plan to achieve your aims and objectives (a basic timeframe).
- A break down of your costs (if applicable).

## PROPOSALS & APPLICATIONS

## Exhibition proposal

As an artist it is important to exhibit. What is the use of making art if you are not going to share it with the public? Exhibiting is how many artists make a living. Nowadays there are a number of ways to do this, especially with access to the Internet, but the tried and tested way of showcasing your work is in an art gallery.

## How a gallery works

Each gallery usually exhibits a certain type of artwork. There are commercial galleries, which exhibit anything that will sell. A contemporary gallery will only exhibit contemporary artworks. There are galleries that may only exhibit sculptures, and some that only do abstract artworks. Some galleries will only exhibit young, up and coming artists and others only the well-known artists. It is therefore important to find out which gallery suits the work you make.

An art gallery, as you may know, exhibits artists work in solo and group shows. These works are usually for sale. What we need to remember is that a gallery is a business and therefore they need to make money. They do this by charging the artist a rental fee for the space as well as adding a fixed commission fee to the given price of each artwork, and in some cases they also charge a hanging fee. Exhibitions usually stay up for two to four weeks, so there are only a certain number of exhibitions that can happen in a year. Well-known galleries are often very hard to get into because of this. It is therefore important to apply and/or book a gallery up to a year or more in advance. But how do you apply? You apply by sending in an exhibition proposal.

## PROPOSALS & APPLICATIONS

## How to write an exhibition proposal

Before you even consider writing a proposal make sure your artwork is of a high standard, in both the craftsmanship and the concept. If you are unsure, even slightly, of what your proposed exhibition is about it will show straight away in the proposal. That is the same for the craftsmanship of your work. If your work is not made really well down to the finest details, or the images of your artworks are not good, you will have no chance and you risk irritating the gallery curator. If all this is in check ask the gallery if they have a specific format they prefer the artist to use for proposals, if not, this is how you write your proposal:

Keep your proposal short. No more than a page if possible. Galleries are busy and receive a lot of proposals. They will appreciate a well-written, short proposal. Find out if the gallery prefers the proposal hand delivered or emailed. If they don't specify do both.

## PROPOSALS & APPLICATIONS

1. A good way to start is by addressing the director or curator by name (spell this correctly). In some cases proposals are considered by a board, in which case address the board.
2. Then thank the gallery/curator/board/director for taking your proposal in for consideration and explain who you are (your credentials).
3. Describe, in as few lines as possible, your proposed exhibition. (This will include a shortened version of your artist statement, if you are applying for a solo show).
4. Briefly explain why their particular gallery is best suited for the type of art you make. This shows the gallery that you have done some homework. If you are applying for a group show explain the number of artists to be included.
5. State the space that will be required for your exhibition. Some galleries have given rooms/ spaces names. Make sure you know the correct name and spelling of the room you are requesting. If there are no particular rooms/ divided spaces, you may ask for meters or squared-meters of space. You must indicate if wall or floor space will be required.
6. An important part of the proposal is your support material. This includes good quality images of all the works or at least a large sample of the works you wish to exhibit, each must include all the artwork information. Also include CV's and Biographies for each artist participating in the show.

This section is partially adapted from:

Stanfield, A. (online) 2008. Draft a Winning Exhibition Proposal. Available: <http://www.artbizblog.com/2008/09/expproposal.html> (Accessed 29 October 2014).

**Before you apply for funding**, a bursary, a residency or a studio program you should research a wide selection of different donors, residencies or programs. Most donors have a list of requirements for approval on their websites. Make sure that you meet their requirements and you have all the necessary documents. This process should benefit both you and the donors/ residency/ programme. There is no set formula for a successful project. The best way to improve your chances of completing a good application is to imagine you are the funder. As you write out motivation letters, highlight some of the information that might not be included in the rest of the documents.

**PROPOSALS  
& APPLICATIONS:  
BURSARIES,  
FUNDING,  
ARTISTS' RESIDENCIES  
AND STUDIO  
PROGRAMMES**



**What to include in an:**

***application for a bursary***

- Motivational letter
- Financial Records to highlight your need for funding
- Academic Records
- Letter of recommendation from your school/department
- Copies of previous achievements.

***application for funding:***

There are many ways to fund a project:

- Self-funding: funding projects from your own pocket
- Raising Money: from friends and family, putting together resources to make the event happen.
- Crowd Funding: websites like *KickStarter* give you a platform for your project campaign to gather funds on the internet from individual donations.
- Community support/ in-kind assistance: involving the community that will benefit from the project. Volunteers can play an important role in planning an event. Be very clear about your intentions and the roles that you want each volunteer to have.
- Grant makers: These usually have requirements that need to be met.
- Corporate or Private Sponsors: These are companies that have a strong inclination to support the arts as part of their ethos.

To help you narrow down your donor options, it is best that you develop a fundraising strategy that is in line with your project's aims and objectives. Most donors or sponsors have an application form and process that they have for applicants. Having this information at hand can help you fill out the application form, before you edit it to suit the fund you are applying to.

**Fundraising Strategy**

**What to include:**

***Aims or Mission Statement:***

These are the overall goals that your project is trying to achieve.

***Objectives:***

These are the goals that will help you to achieve what you are aiming to do.

***Needs of the project:***

This is where a SWOT Analysis would best fit in. SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) of the internal project/organization and of the external environment.

***Resources:***

Consider each objective separately to figure out what you would need to achieve them, list these. It is now easier to create a budget using this list you have just drafted.



***Key Questions should be answered to help you draft a budget:***

- Who will fundraise, and who will be approached (one, two or more)?
- What fundraising activities will you use?
- What will you focus on? (Community, Local, National, International) When will this project happen?
- How much will you ask for from each donor?
- Is this a once-off or ongoing project?
- Do you need a large or small amount of funding for the project?

***Budget:***

Be realistic. Do not over- or underestimate your expenses. Try to be as accurate with your expenses as possible. From your list of needed resources, find out what each item costs and how much of each item you will need. Add these to get a sub-total for each resource. In a separate column add all the subtotals to get a complete total.

***Exit Strategy:***

When you plan anything you should consider what will happen after the project. Will this project run for five years or is it a once-off? What are the final outcomes? Will you be applying for more funding? This is an important aspect that shows funders what you intend to do in the long run. Remember that this should be a win-win situation for you and for the donors.

**Tips**

You should keep written records of previous funders, approval dates, dates of successfully funded projects etc. It is also important to keep a copy of every document or letter that you send.

- Break down your target amounts into smaller amounts. Many successful projects can have multiple sponsors/ donors who will fulfill many needs, rather than one donor that will pay for everything. Sometimes a project may get a sponsorship of gifts, and or services in-kind.
- Consider what you need funding for very carefully. Do not assume that everything and anything should be a cause for applying for funding.
- Research previous grant winners. As you write out your motivational and proposal strategy, focus on what makes you stand out from the previous successful applications.

This section is partially adapted from:

Arts Fundraising Toolkit. 2011. 1st edition. Cape Town: Arterial Network (pages 100 and 94)

## What is a Residency?

An art residency is a platform, often funded, for artists to make artwork. It can be national or international. These residencies often provide studio space, and sometimes living spaces and a living allowance, for the artist to make work inspired by their surroundings. Every residency has a specific set of selection criteria and requirements for applicants. Research each residency's application process and how it meets your interests. Because most residencies will be international, you will most likely apply electronically, through e-mails or the web.

***Some of the common motivations for taking part in a residency include:***

- *Education:* Research based in a specific area or learning specific techniques or skills.
- *Production:* Creating work for an exhibition, performance, or an individual project.
- *Sabbatical:* taking time away from the everyday routine to be immersed in a new idea.
- *Collaboration:* work with people with whom you would not ordinarily have an opportunity to work with, to building new networks, or to create new collectives.

## BURSARIES, FUNDING, ARTISTS' RESIDENCIES AND STUDIO PROGRAMMES

## BURSARIES, FUNDING, ARTISTS' RESIDENCIES AND STUDIO PROGRAMMES

### What to include:

- An application form
- A motivational letter
- Scanned copy of your passport
- Curriculum Vitae
- Up-to date portfolio
- Artist statement
- Letters of recommendation
- Your photograph

This section is partially adapted from:

Artists in Residence Toolkit (online). 2014. Accessed: [http://www.arts.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_](http://www.arts.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_)

