

## Brief Notes on Writing Skills...

Keith Cheverst  
kc@comp.lancs.ac.uk

C.Sc. 110: Computer Systems

## Plagiarism...

# Just Say NO!

C.Sc. 110: Computer Systems

## Essay vs. Paper/Report

- Essay...
  - More personal viewpoint or standpoint
  - 'I' – first person, colloquial style more acceptable
- Paper/Report...
  - Third person – distancing / impersonal / less committing...
    - 'it is interesting to note...'
    - 'it is generally accepted that...'
    - 'the current opinion regarding...'
  - Occasionally use 'I/we' – usually followed by believe – when argument is more subjective.

C.Sc. 110: Computer Systems

## The 'References' Section

- Usually given a format for presenting references, e.g.
  - [1] Norman, D.A. The Invisible Computer. MIT Press. ISBN 0-262-14065-9 (1999).
  - [2] Schilit, B., Adams, N., and Want, R. Context-Aware Computing Applications, in Proc. of the Workshop on Mobile Computing Systems and Applications, Santa Cruz, CA, U.S. pp. 70-82 (1994).

C.Sc. 110: Computer Systems

## Constructing a paper

- Paragraphs...
  - Definition: "A cluster of sentences relating to a particular idea or argument."
  - Use one paragraph to make one strong point (clearly)
  - Use them to help the reader...
  - Often paragraph breaks become apparent on re-reading the complete paper

C.Sc. 110: Computer Systems

## Constructing a paper

- Sentences...
  - Favour short sentences (but make sure they are sentences – i.e. contains verb, i.e. a doing word, subject and a predicate (i.e. saying something about the subject))
  - Be careful of missing out needed words...
    - I never have **accepted** and never will accept a bribe.
    - As Joe began to prepare dinner he discovered **that** the oven wasn't working properly.

C.Sc. 110: Computer Systems

## Constructing a paper

- **Use of Language...**
  - Avoid slang/colloquialisms/hyperbole
    - e.g. 'kind of', 'fantastic'
  - Explain jargon that cannot be assumed common knowledge to the intended audience

C.Sc. 110: Computer Systems

## The Process..

- Sketch down your ideas on paper
  - What you want to say
- Produce a structure for the paper
- Produce successive drafts of the paper
- Have someone proof read the draft
  - For content/structure – does it make sense?
  - For spellings/grammar
- Produce the final version...

C.Sc. 110: Computer Systems