



THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 19 2020-05-08

Hustle Culture

Maintaining Health Amidst Incessant Productivity

Hungriest Ghosts

A Taste of Writing

Fly on the Wall

Stomp Your Feet



Plus:

*How to Write the Perfect Essay
Homemade is Better
and much more!*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you!
Send your questions and comments to voicemagazine.org,
and please indicate if we may publish your letter!

Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

Editorial

The COVID Mother's Day

Karl Low



This is one of those social distancing times that people are going to notice, and, sadly, I expect we'll see a spike in deaths in four to six weeks that will coincide with those who just didn't believe that the virus is all that bad.

And the results will be too tragic for even *schadenfreude*, but may drive home the reality of our situation.

So what are you doing for Mother's Day? I found a place that does e-gift cards for a variety of restaurants, in particular, one that my mother and I would occasionally go to on our own. Dad didn't come, he didn't like chicken.

It didn't happen very often, but I remember it specifically because of that, and thought it might make for a gift that holds some sentiment, even as it remains practical in our new era.

Which brings me to this issue. Our new era may be showing how some of our old expectations may not work, or even be damaging to us. So our feature article this week takes a look at the side hustle

phenomena. We're all at home, so, for some reason, we're all expected to be spending this time developing some sort of new skill or side hustle or we've just been wasting the time, right? But is such an expectation truly realistic while we're also dealing with the reality that is COVID-19? "Hustle Culture" digs into the issue.

And on the issue of sentiment and restaurants, the Porkpie Hat this week was a challenge for me, as I'll tell you right now, you won't be a better person for reading it. You won't take away any ideas to improve your life, or even any meaningful insights that might have implications in how you think or act later on. But I urge you to read it anyway. It creates an image in your head so vivid you can almost taste it, even if you'd rather not.

I also want to direct your attention to the Fly on the Wall, continuing his look at May Day from last week, this week moves into a more vivid look at the connections of May Day, non-conformity, labour movements, and, of course, you at AU. It's a bit of a route dragging that all together, but worth the read nonetheless.

Finally, a note that if you're a regular reader of the PDF, recent updates to Adobe mean that this issue of *The Voice Magazine* in handy, portable PDF format will be a bit delayed as I figure out what exactly is conflicting with what on my system. I'd go into it in more detail, but cursing would be involved. Fortunately, everything you need is right here on the website, whether that's advice, course reviews, scholarships, imaginative articles, thoughtful investigations, events, a look at Mother's Days past in *The Voice Magazine*, and more!

Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl".

Hustle Culture

Natalia Iwanek

Maintaining Mental and Physical Health amidst Incessant Productivity and Burnout



As society attempts to navigate the uncertainty of current events, the economic sector continuously reminds us that, despite our fears, productivity is still important above all — with headlines proclaiming 9 Tips To Be Productive When Working At Home During COVID-19 and What You Need To Know About Holding Productive Virtual Meetings During COVID-19. One quick glance through social media reveals prompts to write a novel, learn a new language, begin professional development courses, or start a new side hustle. Workers and students are expected to quickly adapt to remote working conditions as though the world has not been dramatically altered. Those who cannot adjust are derided as unproductive, unmotivated, or simply lazy.

However, this push toward productivity fails to address that, we, as a society, are living in a time of collective grief. For many, this is a new reality. A sense of directionlessness and sadness pervades our daily thoughts; our mental health is suffering.

Unfortunately, this push toward productivity does not come as a surprise, as society has historically lauded hustle culture or toxic productivity — recent catchphrases designed to draw attention to the fact that our worth is based upon our labour under our current

economic system. We hustle and grind every moment of every day, feeling irrational guilt during moments of rest. We take pride in overwork and taking on more than we can handle. “I pulled another all-nighter,” we proudly tell our friends. Our failures in life are simply a result of not putting in the work, of not “pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps,” rather than structural barriers designed to maintain the status quo.

Although disability justice activists have struggled against these standards for years, perhaps this pandemic may finally bring these views into the mainstream. Perhaps, the one positive that can be seen among tragic losses is the possibility of a mindset shift. Perhaps, we can reflect on what this culture of relentless productivity is doing to our bodies, our minds, as well as our communities — in turn, saving future lives.

While striving to reach our goals is inherently positive, in the end, our dreams will mean nothing if we work ourselves to death.

Ultimately, hustle culture underlies larger structural issues in our societies. Our healthcare and educational systems are underfunded. Minimum wages have only risen slightly, in comparison to skyrocketing rents and costs of life. Traditional fulltime jobs are becoming increasingly rare, which often results in a lack of benefits and traditional employment protections. Increasingly, we live in a part-time or gig economy, where workers are not paid a living wage. Society has now deemed many of these workers essential.

Despite many individuals being forced to continue working, either as a result of their in-demand skills or their economic situations and being lauded as heroes, in reality many are being sacrificed

against their will. Although the media increasingly espouses war rhetoric for the bravery of essential workers “fighting on the front lines,” these workers themselves remind us that they are indeed fighting, often without proper protection. Like others, they would like to stay home with their families, or at the very least, obtain wage increases, benefits, and safe working conditions, with proper personal protective equipment.

They are our nurses, pharmacists, personal support workers, and doctors, who never expected to have to put their lives on the line. As we thank these workers for their “sacrifice,” it would be prudent to be mindful of other essential workers: our migrant workers, cashiers, cleaners, grocery store clerks, liquor stores clerks, construction workers, and flight attendants. They also include individuals who are undocumented and ineligible for benefits.

Hustle culture and economic pressure has taken a severe toll; our mental health is suffering. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, one in five Canadians will experience mental health problems in any given year. By the age of 40, 50% of Canadian will have or have previously suffered from mental illness. Although mental illness results from a combination of factors, including genetics, biology, and personality, it is also largely affected by our environments, which includes our jobs.

Recently, Canada has experienced an increased demand for mental health services. According to CMHA, “Many people with complex or chronic mental health problems do not receive the full scope of care they need and end up cycling through the acute care system.” In addition, “1.6 million Canadians report unmet mental health care needs each year,” as the Canadian government only dedicates 7.2% of its health care budget to mental health services.

Our physical health is suffering as well, as chronic stress has been linked as one of the causes of high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes. In addition, increasing studies reveal that mental health is strongly connected to physical health.

As a result of deteriorating physical and mental health, many individuals are developing substance abuse issues. A recent example of this includes what has been termed “Mommy drinking culture.” Social media, including memes, such as “Boxed wine is just a juice box for moms” have normalized drinking culture for mothers, making daily drinking socially acceptable and at times, amusing. In an interview with Global News, according to Addictions Foundation of Manitoba AFM Education and Research Specialist, Kathleen Keating-Toews, “Some of the ‘Wine Moms’ that we see are typically women who are parents and they are stressed, they’re overwhelmed...and they are using wine as a means of enhancing a social experience, or as a means of numbing out from the stresses of being a parent.”

However, she continues, “We aren’t saying women should never be drinking...We’re just asking for people to take a look at why alcohol should be considered as a gender equalizer when the reality is it does cause a lot of harm, and it causes a lot of harm particularly for women.”

More Canadian women in general are drinking, not simply overwhelmed and unsupported mothers. A recent study by the Canadian Institute for Health Information has found that since 2001, the rate of women who die as a result of alcohol has risen 26%. In 2016 – 2017, Canada-wide, there were 25,000 women alcohol-related hospitalizations. According to Dr. Sheri Fandrey with the Manitoba Addictions Knowledge Exchange Centre, this is because alcohol stays in women’s systems longer, as they have less enzymes to break alcohol down before it enters the bloodstream.

However, alcoholism affects Canadians of all genders. According to a 2019 report by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction, in 2012 alone, 3.2% of Canadians reported

alcohol abuse or dependence while, in 2014, approximately 15,000 died as a result of alcohol. COVID-19 has revealed the extent of this alcoholism, as liquor and beer stores have been deemed essential services. Experts, such as Elaine Hyshka, a researcher and assistant professor with the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta, believes, “Alcohol dependency can be psychologically and physiologically. If the supply is cut off for that population of people, it can be potentially catastrophic.” Although not everyone will suffer complications, such as seizures and psychiatric issues, our already overwhelmed health care system cannot handle those who will. For this same reason, in 2018, Edmonton’s Royal Alexandra Hospital allowed supervised drinking, the first of this type of program in Canada. Experts, such as Jurgen Rehm, senior director of the Institute for Mental Health Policy Research stated that alcohol needs to be taken more seriously, believing that less advertising, decreased affordability and availability would decrease the burden of alcoholism, despite the fact the “our political system doesn’t want to do that.”

Although affected by a variety of factors, deteriorating economic situations and substance abuse issues may contribute to domestic violence. According to relief organizations, gender-based violence is a common trend during disasters and emergencies. Domestic violence shelters have been bracing for increases in violence amidst COVID-19, fearing that economic stress and self-isolation may lead to increased incidents. Already, increases in domestic violence have led to more people seeking help.

Although hustle culture and its underlying structural problems and associated outcomes have become standardized over the years, the pandemic has truly revealed the extent to which this relentless drive for excess has harmed society. Perhaps, what is needed is a paradigm shift, one in which we stop acquiring unnecessary consumer goods to fill the void in our increasingly lonely lives. Perhaps, we need to stop killing ourselves for an economic system set up to keep many of us one paycheque from financial ruin, working for employers who will replace us the instant we no longer serve their purposes. As COVID-19 has shown, our careers, our homes, our cars, our possession bring no joy; what we truly miss is connection with others.

For many Canadians privileged to work remotely in a safe and stable home, this is a new reality and despite fears and hardships, lessons can be learned. For those without this privilege, hope remains that these lessons will bring positive and lasting change. For many, this global slowdown is a chance to gain perspective, to contemplate our fast-paced, consumption-driven lives, which have led to deteriorating mental health, substance abuse, and increasing violence.

This is not simple idealism. Throughout history, our economic system has proven unsustainable, destructive, and cruel for much of the world’s population, as well as the environment. For many of the world’s inhabitants, the Global North’s increasing consumption and extraction has led to devastating outcomes.

Admittedly, it would be foolish to say that we should not focus on our economic situations. At times, the adage, “Money doesn’t buy happiness,” rings false, as money allows us access to food, shelter, medical care, safety, and dignity. Perhaps instead of hustle culture, we find a balance: a focus on individual and community care in a new a system in which we take care of our own needs, as well as those of others.

For students struggling, AU’s Homewood Health – Wellness Support Program offers a free, 24/7 helpline in over 150 languages.

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Porkpie Hat Hungriest Ghosts

Darjeeling Jones



*"Oh well, the devil makes us sin
But we like it when we're spinning in his grip
-Massive Attack, 'Paradise Circus'*

*"God made food; the devil the cooks."
-James Joyce, Ulysses*

The chefs' movements are fluid as any dancer's, their hands skilled as any surgeon's.

(Saltimbocca, cassoulet, roasted vegetables, veal with hollandaise sauce.)

The restaurant has no name, and is in a different location each night, but It is the most sought-after reservation in the city. Only the wealthiest and most notorious inhabitants of the metropolis ever make it past the door.

(Lobster with white truffles, reindeer marrow, swan livers in cream and brandy.)

To be a well-heeled murderer or a financially independent arsonist is not nearly enough; at best, it might get you a stifled yawn from maître d', as he points one white-gloved finger at the entrance and the street beyond, directing you back from whence you came, across the threshold where the former middle-class are huddled against the cold. The rare bohemian, if they're lucky and crafty enough, may sneak by, until they're discovered and disposed of.

(Filet de tigre, elephant lung consomme, a gingered lark's tongue, roasted within a woodland hare, stuffed inside a wild boar with a golden apple in its mouth.)

The competition is becoming more stringent by the year. Black market ivory dealers, human organ smugglers, rare game poachers, opioid tycoons, biological weapons merchants, political torturers: every evening, all the hungriest ghosts are there, like slaving beasts gathered at a watering hole, crushed together, cheek-by-jowl. Old money lunatics, new money gangsters, Pall Mall madams, underworld solicitors, Russian oligarchs, Eurotrash semi-celebrities, upper echelon drug magnates, disgraced politicians, venture capital money launderers, double-agent diplomats, and the occasional flavour-of-the-month writer or artist hoping to give themselves a bit of cachet-by-association through hanging around with a notoriously dodgy crowd.

The blue velvet curtains are drawn tight, so that it might just as easily be approaching midnight as 3 PM, just as easily be late December as early May. The bartenders are shaking dirty martinis into existence, whilst the cigarette girls and the flower girls are making their rounds, peddling Gitanes, Davidoffs, unearthly orchids, and obscenely voluptuous long stemmed roses. On the small dais stage, Misty Beaucoup, the latest sensation, is performing her highly interpretive version of "Tainted Love," accompanied by an orchestra of animatronic mannequins, wearing Plague Doctor masks.

(And for dessert: a figurine of the Virgin Mary, as fine as any statue in the Uffizi, perfectly crafted from spun sugar, with a cherry dipped in baby's blood concealed in the centre, to symbolize a heart.)

Despite its minimalist furnishings of glinting chrome and steel, the restaurant is as old as humanity itself. Such a timeless carnival of wonders and horrors this terrifying palace, this elegant abattoir has beheld! The proprietor stands on the mezzanine, his pale, long-fingered hands gripping the ivory railing, and gazes indulgently down upon the rich and jostling throng. Nobody has ever seen him, he likes his anonymity above all else. In the room below, the guests all order special coffees. It is their unspoken hope: if the dinner party goes on long enough, their thinking goes, then perhaps the bill need never be paid.



Fly on the Wall

If You're Happy & You Know it Stomp Your Feet

Jason Sullivan



Although May Day is now past, the insight it can bring continues on, much like how we continue our exploration from last time of it and how our studies at AU separate us from the conformity of clapping hands and stomping feet.

As times changed so did Mayday celebrations. But, like Mother's Day that celebrates human life in all its origins, toil itself remained a common denominator as society shifted from agrarian to industrial labour. From celebrations that danced with coloured ribbons around maypoles evolved a drabber and sterner

demonstration of the work that builds and maintains the modern world. Although North America has Labour Day in autumn, for much of the world, and through much of history, early May was the time to appreciate the labouring classes.

As the medieval era gave way to the Industrial Revolution a different spirit was in the air, one that contained and embodied the same collective sentiments present all along but with a clearer understanding that in all societies there exists more than a single economic class of bipedal participants. We're not all just humans; some of us (to paraphrase Orwell's famous pigs) really are more equal than the others.

Labour unions arose not long after the Tiny Tim era of the Industrial Revolution reached its zenith, or, if you were a soot-covered worker in the belly of the coal-fired beast, it's nadir. In terms of human abuse and denigration, the 1800s were awful for people wherever the steam engine had supplemented the water wheel. This demonstrates how new technologies in the wrong hands may not improve life but simply improve the means of oppression. May Day thus came to symbolize not only liberation from winter but a demand for freedom from unreasonable work conditions; a springtime of the spirit was in the air.

This buxom exuberance, with an undercurrent of certainty in the progress of human life toward a brighter and sunnier future, found concrete expression by the latter half of the 1800s. In 1886 the battle was for an eight (rather than up to 16) hour work-day, and the weapon of choice was the general strike. In North America, as in France and England, "the idea of celebrating the First

of May was an appropriate day for Labor's festival" (Goldman, 302). Emma Goldman, then considered an anarchist theorist but, to 21st century eyes, a thoughtful advocate of the need for labour rights, described how on May 1 of 1886 "the workingmen were to give the first practical demonstration of the power of the General Strike as an at least one-day protest against oppression and tyranny" (Goldman, 302). With joyous rebellion the strike, earnest and dour though it appeared to those whose riches it threatened, succeeded.

May 1 of 1886 wasn't the first May moment of unrest leading to justice; Karl Marx himself noted that "the French took action on May 13, 1839. The sections of the federation joined in the fray and were thus involved in the general defeat" (Marx in Ruhle., 73). Defeat was common for labour unions fighting management.

Unlike in pagan days of yore, where the outcome of a Maypole dance's success was hinged on the mystical whims of nature herself, unionizing workers could fully see who was dispensing their manna from heaven and bread for their families. Management stood between them and prosperity, simple as that. Yet there remained an element of gleeful idealism to the proceedings that still remains whenever the small and many undertake to challenge the few but powerful. As the greatest rock icon of the past fifty years famously sang: "it's fun to lose, and to pretend".

Changing the Tune

Goldman in her time realized how steep the climb to attain a more egalitarian society really was. Anybody can sing songs of freedom or imagine a better world but to achieve it means utilizing the ability to stomp one's feet and not just affix flowers to one's hair. Yet history shows that justice and free thinking often win out, as the modern rights of unions to organize and engage in collective bargaining (including student unions such as publishes *Voice Magazine*) show.

Ideally, fun comes with revolution! Seasons change and turn like constellations in the night sky and yet progress is attained when the general will shifts its focus. There's something ineffably powerful about people united in seriousness and glee. It's a tough combination to beat and collective glee proves almost irrepressible by the whips of authority. This May Day let's recall that every special event, such as banging pans and ringing bells to celebrate our Health Care workers, has the capacity to change, rather than simply celebrate, the collective nature of our world.

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Online MBA Application Webinar

Wed, May 13, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabascau.ca/events/online-mba-application-webinar-20200513

Register through above link

Hack the Library - Using Discover to Access Journal Articles, Books, and E-Books

Wed, May 13, 4:00 to 5:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library
library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

Live Chat: General Q&A about AU

Thurs, May 14, time t.b.a.
Online

Hosted by AU
www.athabascau.ca/online-learning/how-au-works/open-house/

Register through above link

The Grad Lounge

Fri, May 15, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MDT
Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies
news.athabascau.ca/events/the-grad-lounge-may-15

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

Goldman notes how from these successful early fights for labour rights, something easily clarified these days as workers around the world are forced to risk their lives during the pandemic to satiate the greed of their bosses, led to a sea change in people's mentality toward authority figures in general. She wrote: "the clergy, too, learned a valuable lesson. They were like hens hatching duck eggs. When the young ones took to water, they realized, to their horror, that they had hatched not their own kind." (Goldman, 303). Back then many people's only encounter with the reading of books was in church; today let's consider how social media functions as a congregating agent not unlike a church. What sort of sea change might be imminent?

Do All Emotions Amount to Being Emotional?

Eruptions of ecstasy and anger are wrought of the same essence of social connection; progressive potential involves creativity while also demanding a certain conformist component. As *Time Magazine* succinctly summarised 45 years after Goldman (in 1929) described the 1886 General Strike: "To old-fashioned people, May Day means flowers, grass, picnics, children, clean frocks. To up-and-doing Socialists and Communists it means speechmaking, parading, bombs, brickbats, conscientious violence. This connotation dates back to May Day, 1886, when some 200,000 U.S. workmen engineered a nationwide strike for an eight-hour day". It takes awhile for the mainstream media to fully acknowledge the winds of change. And yet, May Day has historically been the day that unites people in a common purpose. At AU, one task we might consider for ourselves is to see above the commonality of sentiment and emotion and consider the pedagogical meaning of our unusual times.

As a child who resisted singing children's songs the emotional unleashing of forces of creation, destruction, or both struck me as intuitively disconcerting. Maybe I was just a dweeb. It was just a song, after all, but it was clear that if one wasn't happy, and knew it, one was nevertheless expected to tow the line, smile, and 'do the actions'. Social science begins, for better or worse, with what the structural functionalist Talcott Parsons famously termed a sense of our self as 'alienated' from society as a whole. To be sure, we must place ourselves beyond our normal purview to attain a scientific view of the human condition either in our specific time or as an abstract universal. Yet, social structures are built for stability and seem to have an answer to every question. When all else fails the powers that be resort to the classic "because I say so!"

Groupthink, at its height in classrooms, cult meetings and social media chat forums, demands conformity to the bounds of a conversation adorned with baubles of pre-existing assumptions and expectations. Parsons wrote that "without deliberate planning on anyone's part, there have developed in our type of social system, and correspondingly in others, mechanisms which, within limits, are capable of forestalling and reversing the deep-lying tendencies for deviance to get into the vicious circle phase which puts it beyond the control of ordinary approval-disapproval and reward-punishment sanctions". To think outside the collective mindset is to preach not to the choir of expectations but to enable our intellectual critical thought capacities.

This *Fly on the Wall* can attest that not everything we learn in kindergarten is in the official syllabus. Once you've tasted the playdough of alienation, you're on your way to thinking like a creative participant in society. AU is thus a unique experience; we're not immersed in a campus environment. Instead, that each moment of learning propels us into new cerebral climes. Whoever we are entering AU, we may become a different sort of self by the time we emerge. There's creative potential in academic learning, as with any social act. Recall that textbooks are living artifacts of humanity, as are our phone conversations with tutors, and online forum discussions with classmates. And when we take what we learn and apply it to our world of peers, coworkers and loved ones we find ourselves adding our newfound harmony to any social setting. One of the best things about distance education is that our world becomes a chance to

demonstrate our learning. We may clap our hands or stomp our feet but all along we will be learning and, happily, becoming more independent-minded and less apt to be carried away by the slipstream of unthinking conformity.

References

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The Creative Spark

Simple Tricks to Sweeten Your Dialogue

Marie Well



If you've ever been tasked to write dialogue, you'll likely stumble at first. But once you know the rules, your dialogue will excite and rouse readers. If you're a student, I can't stress enough how writing frees the soul. Writing can cause you to self-publish, position yourself as an expert, and make some extra cash.

And, mostly, writing can unveil the story burning inside of you. You've journeyed this far in life. It's time you faced it: your contribution to the bigger reality is much more significant than you could imagine. Your story is a universe unto itself, precious and meaningful. How generous of you to let us peek inside.

Here are simple tricks to hasten your journey into dialogue writing:

Questions make tension, which makes your story sizzle. Author Rayne Hall says, "Questions rouse the reader's interest, so simply turn some statements into questions 'I'm looking for my wallet.' 'Have you

seen my wallet?' 'You haven't gone to church for a long time.' 'When was the last time you went to church?'" (3%). Notice the tension when framed as a question?

You can also "build tension by withholding answers" (5%), or have your characters Ping-Pong questions, neither character answering one another (Hall, Rayne).

For example,

Peter: What's for dinner? Tomato slop, I mean soup—again?

Jane: You spent the night with Tammy?

Peter: Did you pick up my dry cleaning—the suit I dropped off not one, but two weeks ago?

Jane: You like trash?

Peter: Did you hang over John's cubicle today? Ooh, John is heading for VP.

And so on.

Why do questions outshine statements? They make you second-guess. And, in stories, questions lay out a promise of an answer.

Say it with a short sentence. According to Rayne Hall, "The shorter the sentences, the more 'real' they feel to the reader. Simply take any dialogue sentence that's longer than twelve words and split it into two or more short ones, perhaps shaving off unneeded words at the same time" (12%).

A shorter, leaner sentence is simple to create:

Before: "I'm okay with the criticism from my tutor as I know he's seen hundreds of papers. I'll learn from it quickly and move on just like ambitious people do."

After: "I'm okay with the criticisms from my tutor. I'll learn from it quickly and move on."

Find the spirit in shortened and shaven sentences.

Fewer tags look good in writing. Rayne Hall advises, "To make it easier for the reader to understand who says what, writers add tags: 'he said', 'she asked', 'I grumbled' My advice is simple. Use as many tags as needed, and as few as possible" (26%). In other words, toss the tags.

Here is an example of cutting out tags:

Before: "The light is streaking your hair with gold," Jenn said shyly, darting a stare into Brett's eyes. "Matches your heart."

After: "The light is streaking your hair with gold." Jenn darted a shy stare into Brett's eyes. "Matches your heart."

Wrap your words with fewer tags

Speak with actions, not tags. Rayne Hall claims, "Actions make tags unnecessary. When a character acts and speaks, the action is enough to attribute the dialogue, so you don't need a tag. By deleting the tag, you can make your writing tighter and more exciting" (27%).

Note the following examples where I show a "before" with tags and an "after" without them:

Before: Lynn realized she was lost and shouted, "God, give me a sign." A cone dropped from a pine within arms reach and a butterfly fluttered forth. Lynn fixed her gaze on the autumn colored butterfly and whispered, "Lead me to the river."

After: Lynn realized she was lost. "God, give me a sign." A cone dropped from a pine within arms reach and a butterfly fluttered forth. Lynn fixed her gaze on the autumn colored butterfly. "Lead me to the river."

Before: Amy looked at her grade and moaned, "Ms. Dickles, you put me in a pickle."

After: Amy looked at her grade. "Ms. Dickles, you put me in a pickle."

Splash the actions; snub the tags.

Talking heads are your foes. Rayne Hall says, "'Talking heads' means pure dialogue. The characters don't do anything besides conversing. In fiction, this feels stilted and dull. The solution is simple: give the characters something to do besides talking. The obvious choice is to let them have a meal. Then you can use the motions of eating and drinking as beats." (32%).

Here is an example: “What would you prefer, Gramps?” Lynn poured thick gravy on Gramps's mashed potatoes. The gravy trickled under his corn and sourdough bun and sparkled with bubbles. “A tombstone of an angel or of a book?”

No talking heads mean no headaches.

Life gets grounded with no white space. As stated by Rayne Hall, “‘White space’ refers to scenes which don't seem to have a clear location and could be taking place anywhere Inexperienced writers dump a lot of location description at the beginning of the scene, and then don't mention the setting again.” (33%).

Readers skip over lengthy dialogue, says Rayne Hall. During the winter I picked up a Lee Child's action book and got lost in the description—so lost I never looked at another of his books. Now then, how could he (and you and I) tighten description, making it more inviting?

Rayne Hall answers, “Here are two suggested solutions: 1. Take that chunk of setting description, split it into several small parts, and sprinkle those throughout the scene. 2. Create dialogue beats in which the characters interact with their environment, perhaps touching an item of furniture.

Mary tapped her talons on the desk. “Get to the point.”” (33%).

Here's another example of weaving setting into dialogue:

Jane closed her eyes, the sunlight lacing its soft arm inside her right eyelid. The birds gushed their cedar-loving songs in her left ear. “You are closest to God.” She felt Jake's coarse hair feather against her cheek as he turned a page of his Bible.

White space is for heaven, not dialogue, but the spiritual is meant for my readers.

You've now earned your wings in dialogue writing. I encourage you to bring a journal wherever you go. Write down things people say, and type them up with the above tips in mind.

When you begin your story, you'll tap into a headspace only you have ever known. Set your story free, and lead us to the river.

References

Hall, Rayne. (Dec. 2015). *Writing Vivid Dialogue*. E-book



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine.

Mother's Day is Sunday, May 10. Mothers have featured in many Voice articles over the years; here are two perspectives.

Who are we saving the good china for? Debbie Jabbour recalls her mother's good china, and who was special enough to use it. “Every once in a while she would pull out the lace tablecloth, and set the table with the good dishes for dinner.” [From My Perspective—Good China](#), July 16, 2003.

Out of her comfort zone. Janice Behrens examines the fear that accompanies her role as a mother. “I can't see any sign of her. Then, a movement up near the very topmost branches catches my eye, and my heart skips a couple of beats.” [The Good Life—Resisting Fear](#), August 24, 2007

Course Exam**Brittany Daigle**

LGST 369 (Commercial Law) is a three-credit, upper level business and administrative studies (legal studies) course that is designed to inform business people and those dealing with businesses of the core legal principles, laws, and institutions which govern trade and commerce in Canada. It will help business people to anticipate and, if possible, avoid legal problems and know when to seek legal advice. Furthermore, it will inform consumers and customers will learn about their legal rights. This course supports efforts to make the commercial laws of Canada understandable and responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens. LGST 369 will assist everyone to understand and make use of the law in pursuing their legitimate interests. This course has no prerequisites and has a challenge for credit option, if interested.

Commercial Law is made up of thirteen units, with five assignments weighing ten percent each, and a final examination weighing fifty percent. The thirteen units within this course cover several topics such as real property, sales, mortgages, employment law, secured transactions, creditors' rights, special contracts, and much more. To receive credit for LGST 369, students must complete all five assignments and the examination, achieving an overall course grade of a "D" or fifty percent or better and a passing mark of fifty percent or better on the final examination.

Ryan Miller is currently enrolled in Athabasca University's Bachelor of Management program. He enrolled into AU in December of 2018 and is almost half done. He explains that he enjoys AU for many reasons, stating "I have access to my studies anywhere, I can write online exams from the comfort of my home anytime. It is super flexible with me, being as busy as I am working full-time and involved with my family."

When asked to explain LGST 369 to students, Ryan explains that "This course is very informative and not just for those students who plan on owning or working for a private or corporate business. Each unit focuses on different areas of commercial law."

As for the structure of the course, he states that "This course has thirteen units, with five assignments and a final examination. The first three assignments are case studies with four to five questions. These assignments are essay style assignments that have to be between 1200-1500 words each. Assignments four and five are different than assignments one to three, as they have factual case studies where an analysis is done for different situations. The final examination has twenty-five multiple-choice questions, six short answer questions, a short essay, and a case study analysis."

"To provide further detail, the final examination is a closed book 3-hour examination written in person on a computer at an authorized invigilation center or through ProctorU. The exam has four parts. Part A of the exam consists of 25 multiple choice and true/false questions covering the whole course—similar to those in the practice quizzes (50 marks – 2 marks each). Part B consists of six questions, each to be answered in a paragraph, that are drawn from the learning objectives listed in the Study Guide for Units 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, and 11 (30 marks – 5 marks each). Part C requires you to write a short essay of several paragraphs on a topic chosen from Units 4, 5, 6, 10, and 11. Two topics will be given, from which you will choose one. (10 marks). Part D requires you to prepare a case study analysis of several paragraphs for a case based upon Units 4, 5, 6, 10, and 11. Two cases will be given, from which you will choose one. The question is similar to Assignments 4 and 5. (10 marks)."

When asked if Ryan had any tips or tricks to completing this course, he states that for this, students should just read and follow the units like they have outlined. Make sure you also read the textbook, as reading the textbook is important to use as a reference when doing your assignments."

Ryan would recommend this course to other students, explains that "For this course just read and follow the units like they have outlined. Reading the textbook is important to use as a reference when doing your assignments."

As for communications with his tutor for LGST 369, he states that "The tutor gave very good feedback on my assignments, which will help me when I write my final exam. I did email the tutor about the final and he was very fast with his response and gave me some insight on what to focus on."

If you are interested in enrolling in this course, I highly recommend reading the detailed syllabus that is linked within the LGST 369 online course page. Also, if you have any further questions regarding the content of the course or its structure, the course professor, Archie Zariski, encourages you to reach out via email at archiezariski@athabascau.ca.

Whether LGST 369 is a degree or program requirement of yours, or the topics discussed above are of interest to you, this course will have you learning a lot of material surrounding the topic of commercial law.

Brittany Daigle is 22 years old and completing her BSc in Computing Science & Information Systems with AU from Toronto, Ontario.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.



AthaU Facebook Group

Katt posts the magic words, "print or digital," and a lengthy conversation ensues about textbook preference (spoiler alert: print wins!) Jesse wonders what the status is for courses with print exams; responders suggest some are still on hold but suggest to check with the course tutor for an update. Sibylle got dinged marks for following APA7 instead of APA6 on an assignment; what's up with that???

Other posts include course materials backlog, student email addresses, MAIS, and courses CHEM 218, HRMT 208, and MKTG 414.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "#AthabascaU is thrilled to announce a new partnership with

@GPRC_AB! GPRC currently has 700 online courses that will be migrated to the new platform this summer. Plans are also underway to launch an additional 26 courses online by Sept. 2020 with the support of #PowerEDbyAU." t.co/pqZ18EgkZg

@austudentsunion tweets: "Want a chance to get involved with your AU Students' Union, gain some experience, and make a bit of extra cash? Apply to sit on the AUSU Finance Committee! Deadline to apply is May 8, 2020 at midnight MT. <https://ausu.org/2020/04/finance-committee>."

Homemade is Better

Grilling Season & Cheeseburgers

Chef Corey



It's grilling season! You can smell it in the air on a hot weekend, someone cooking on their outdoor grill. I call it grilling for two reasons. One, grilling is a high heat, a quick outdoor cooking method where we sear grill marks into our food. And two, BBQ (which we sometimes use interchangeably with grilling) is a low heat, long cooking method.

I'm sure you've seen those shows about bearded men in the southern US who use logs and smokers, make their rubs and sauces, and cook their food for several hours. That is BBQ to me, but I'm not here to teach you vernacular. No, I'm here to teach you how to get that perfectly seared, well seasoned, delicious meal. It can be a daunting task to get those perfect grill marks on your food. The food sticks to the grill, then you try to move it and leave half of it stuck to the grates. Then you go to eat it only realizes it either overcooked or undercooked. The

stress of it all! Well, have faith. I can teach you a few simple rules.

Rule 1: Salt *IS* your friend. You certainly don't need a lot of it, but you should use some. Salt performs some magic for us. Salt makes things taste better. I'm not a scientist, and I don't play one on TV, but salt is a reason food has flavour. I prefer Kosher salt because it is easier to distribute the granules. Coarse salt, kosher, sea salt, all of them do the same job. I do not use table salt for cooking because of the additives in it. Nothing to run away in fear from, but table salt is better as a baking salt. The smaller granules spread out better, but I'm not looking for that in my cooking salt. I want the salt to do the same job, but I need a larger granule for this purpose.

Rule 2: After the meat touches the grill; **don't touch it**. At least, not yet. We are using some science here to add more flavour. The Maillard (my-ard) Reaction is why your food browns. Heat causes a rearrangement of amino acids and some of the simple sugars in your food. The heat from your grill caramelizes these sugars, and you get grill marks. By letting the food sit for a few minutes, the grill will give your food the marks you are after. When it is easy to move, and there is no sticking, then, but not before, is when you can flip it. You will need to be patient, and we are playing a long game here. If you're not one who can wait, this is an excellent lesson in how immediate satisfaction isn't the answer. And your waiting isn't that long, maybe three minutes a side for burgers. Once your meat is ready to turn, **DO NOT FLIP IT**. Instead, turn it 90 degrees. Now you have made that diamond-shaped grill mark you see in restaurants. (insert burger 2)

Rule 3: Rest your meat. Resting meat allows the molecules to settle down. When you apply heat to water, the molecules start to get excited, and like West Edmonton Mall in the middle of December, they start going crazy. Resting your food allows the molecules to slow down, and the



pressure to decrease. This part will leave the fluids where they belong, in the meat and not on the plate.

Now for this week's recipe. Homemade burgers!



Cheeseburgers (insert cheeseburger 1)

Ingredients

- 2 lbs ground beef
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp pepper

Directions

1. Combine the beef, salt and pepper. Split the burgers into 8 equal sizes (if you want smaller burgers, they will be about 4oz or 1/4lb each or 131.5g). You can also make 4 burgers which would weight about 8oz or half a pound each.
2. If you oil your gates on your grill, do so now. Then turn it on to high and let your grill warm-up for at least 10-15 minutes.
3. Flatten your portioned beef balls into round disks and place them on the grill. Do your best, and these are going to shrink anyway, so it doesn't need to look pretty.
4. Grill your burgers on your outdoor grill for about 3 minutes per side. If they do not move easily after 3 minutes, wait for another 2. Once they move easily, turn it 90 degrees and cook for another 3 minutes. Flip them over carefully and cook another 3 minutes, then turn it 90 degrees and cook another 3 minutes. When the internal temperature reaches 160F, you have cooked burgers. This timing is only an estimate; your grill might have different hot spots and cold spots, which will affect how long it takes.
5. Add the cheese if you so desire and let them rest for at least 5 minutes on the turned-off grill before consuming. Close the lid to let the cheese melt.



The Study Dude

How to Write the Perfect Essay

Marie Well



What is smart, beautiful, and perfect? Your next essay, of course. Here are tips to help you to write a work of art as your next essay. This guide works mostly for first- or second-year undergraduates, but a graduate student may discover a few tidbits, too.

Ready to write?

Tip #1: Logical flow begins with a question.

“A good essay is never just a string of sentences. It is a journey from the question in the title to the answer in your ‘conclusion’” (18%).

Essays flow best with questions. At the graduate level, you must map out one or more questions your thesis answers.

At the undergrad level, if the professor asks, “How does S. J. William's article tie into themes of the eternal?” then make your title something like “Euphoric love, Redemption, and Formlessness in S.J. William's Writing.”

Then begin the journey.

Tip #2: Cut out anything that doesn't answer the question.

“Everything you say in an essay should contribute in some way to answering the question in the title. This is the great value of having a problem to solve—it gives you a way of deciding what to put in and what to leave out. It also helps you to organize what you put in, so that it builds up towards your conclusion” (18%).

Just like in playwriting, essay writing wants you to cut out the chafe. Skim off the stuff that doesn't answer your question. Nowhere should you say anything not said in your thesis statement.

If it jives with the question, it's a keeper.

Tip #3: Lay out your argument.

“An essay never asks you just to ‘write what you know about the topic’ – it always requires you to present an argument of some kind. Often ... the purpose is to answer a question...But ... it is always meant to pose a ‘problem’ which your essay should then set out to argue about and solve” (18%).

You might, for instance, write an essay that analyzes an article. If so, pick three or more broad generic themes that capture the essence of the article, arguing in each section how each theme contributes to your question. If you cement a logical structure, bonus points to you.

Nothing shines an essay like an argument.

Tip #4: Your first sentence should grab the reader's interest.

“There is a lot to be said for brisk, direct opening sentences in an essay The first sentence should grab your reader's attention. It should be related to the essay question and it should be doing important work for your argument. But it doesn't have to be fancy” (25%).

One professor said to write your introduction at the last stage of your essay-writing process. I say to write a generic introduction with your thesis statement and, at the end, blast in a strong introductory sentence.

Grab your reader's attention in your first sentence.

Tip #5: Don't make your introduction a sleeper.

"It is often said that in your 'introduction' you should say what you are going to do in the essay (then do it in the 'middle' part of the essay, and then say what you have done in the 'conclusion'). But this kind of writing to a 'formula' is tedious to do and pretty dull to read" (25%).

Professors at the graduate level told me to write the 'formula.' Maybe a formula is useful for a book-sized document, but it's a drag to read. At the undergrad level, I never wrote the formula outside of inserting a thesis statement.

You always want a thesis statement, though. My favorite professor neared the end of her thesis draft only to be told to start over from scratch. She didn't have a thesis statement.

Interest the world with your introduction.

Tip #6: Your conclusion should answer the question.

"In the concluding paragraph of your essay you should give a direct answer to the essay question you have been asked (or a solution to the problem posed in the title) The judgements you make should be: relevant and appropriate to the question you are discussing; and justified by what you have argued earlier on" (33%).

If you say the world is red, blue, and green in your essay, say it is a rainbow in your conclusion. If you say he drank, courted many women, and gambled, say he indulged in a hedonist lifestyle in your conclusion.

The world awaits your relevant conclusion, where you tie it all together.

Tip #7: Connect your flow of thought with linking words and introductory words.

"Your readers cannot see into your mind. They may not be able to see connections between points that seem perfectly obvious to you. Link words act as 'signposts' that indicate the direction your argument is taking next They help your readers 'follow' your meaning as they read. So, you should use them often" (38%).

The best essays have paragraphs linked with words such as "therefore," "moreover," "despite this," "on the contrary," and so forth. Another linking system I read in a book involves using the keyword or synonyms of the keyword in each sentence. Yet another linking system is to end your sentence with the next point to discuss, and begin your next sentence with that word or a synonym.

Linking words act as your train track, each wooden rail an argument to the destination.

Tip #8: Write like Spock from Star Trek.

"Your writing 'voice' is who are you presenting yourself as? Basically you are expected to be a calm detached observer, pointing out to an equal (who happens not to be informed on this subject) some arguments that are relevant to a question you are both interested in (that is the question in the essay title)" (67%).

One professor said to write the paper as if she was your audience but she didn't know anything about the topic. In other words, write for an uninformed genius.

Write seriously like Spock.

Tip #9: Only add your opinions if you support them with citations.

"Dropping thoughts of your own into your essay, in passing, tends to raise lots of complicated questions that you cannot deal with. Any ideas you do bring in need to be explained and justified" (31%).

In graduate studies, some soft science theses allow for you to drop in your personal voice. The autoethnography methodology allows you to speak your own voice regarding your lived experiences with the thesis topic.

Outside of that, only state your opinion if it agrees bang-on with the evidence (I.e. the citations) you provide. Just don't say it with the word "I."

The coolest opinions come from data.

More than that, all you need to succeed at university is a perfect essay.

Reference

Open Learn: Free Learning from The Open University. (2016). *What Is Good Writing?* The Open University.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Got a Spine Scholarship

Sponsored by: Arctic Chiropractic

Deadline: June 2, 2020, 11:59 pm EST

Potential payout: \$500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Canadian or U.S. residents, be attending university or college in Canada or the U.S. full-time as of October, 2020, and have a GPA of 2.5 or greater.

What's required: A completed online application form, including contact info and a maximum 1000-word essay answering three specified questions relating to back pain.

Tips: Check out Arctic Chiropractic's website for information to help with your essay.

Where to get info: arcticchiropracticfairbanks.com/chiropractor_fairbanks.php





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Boss Accountability

Dear Barb:

Hi, I am a junior accountant at a small accounting firm. I'm willing to do many tasks since I'm at the bottom of the totem pole. The problem I am having is with my boss. I feel like I am invisible to him, or maybe he doesn't like my work. I do journal entries, update accounts and do reconciliations, also help with payroll and submit weekly and monthly reports. When I submit a report my boss doesn't say anything about whether it's completed correctly. Most of the time he doesn't even mention that he has received the report. When I don't hear anything all I can do is assume it's acceptable. It would be nice to receive some feedback, just to know that my work is good. I have heard him comment on other people's work. We do butt heads from time to time. I'm beginning to think maybe I should be looking for another job. Am I just being insecure, or am I correct in expecting some type of feedback from my boss. Thanks, Invisible Girl.

Hi, Invisible:

I hear ya! There are good bosses and bad bosses as many of us have witnessed from the movie *Horrible Bosses*. Good bosses create a healthy atmosphere for their employees, as opposed to bad bosses who manage by intimidation and fear. An important aspect to being a good boss as opposed to a bad boss is to communicate and inspire your employees to do better. Everyone likes to be acknowledged for what they do,

and this is especially important in an employee/employer relationship. I agree that you should be acknowledged for your work, especially since you are early in your career, but all employees should be recognized for their accomplishments. Your boss obviously is lacking in communication skills. Not everyone is a good communicator, but, as a boss, that is something that should be worked on through communication courses or books.

I do not think you are insecure. Whether you and your boss butt heads should not impact the way in which he interacts with you. A good boss does not take things personally and actually encourages their employees to express themselves. Good bosses should work toward staff retention, which is achieved through a positive and interactive work environment. As well, a good boss should be available to their employees, by answering emails, text messages, or phone calls within a reasonable amount of time. If you submit a weekly or monthly report you should at the very least receive confirmation that it has been received and whether it is acceptable or not. Here is the link to a book *How to be a Great Boss*. Perhaps you could find a way to anonymously leave the book on your boss's desk. There is always the option of having a conversation with your boss and sharing your feelings. Thanks for your important letter and good luck.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.



Poet Maeve Honesty

Wanda Waterman



The information on this page is provided by the AU Students' Union. The Voice does not create this content. Contact AUSU at services@ausu.org with any questions about this article.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **May 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Jun 1](#)
- **May 15:** [Jun degree requirements deadline](#)
- **May 20:** [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)
- **May 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for June](#)
- **Jun 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Jul 1](#)
- **Jun 15:** [Jul degree requirements deadline](#)

Student Support – COVID-19 & Natural Disasters

Athabasca University Support for Students

Athabasca University has many supports in place for students impacted by COVID-19, including free course extensions, exam rebooking, exam accommodations, course restarts for front-line workers, and more.

For information on AU support for students, visit the AU website [here](#).

If learners would like extra assistance with any academic challenges they may be facing, they can also schedule an **online appointment** to speak with a counsellor using the appointment request form [here](#).

Mental Health Support

Athabasca University has a [FREE mental health and wellness program](#) through Homewood Health to provide students with counselling, as well as coaching and services on a variety of topics relating to mental health and wellness.

For immediate help, call Homewood Health, anytime:

1-800-663-1142 (English) / 1-866-398-9505 (French)
1-888-384-1152 (TTY/hearing impaired)
1-877-301-4776 (Outside of Canada)

Disaster Relief

Spring and Summer unfortunately can bring floods and fires. There are many support in place for students impacted by natural disasters, which are outlined on the university website [here](#), or you can email ausu@ausu.org for assistance navigating supports.

Visit the AUSU website [here](#) for more info.

Indigenous Student Advocacy

Your AU Students' Union recognizes that Indigenous learners experience many barriers to accessing post-secondary education in Canada, and we are working to develop support and recognition for indigenous students at Athabasca University and across Canada.

AUSU executive has worked with [Indigenous student leaders across Canada](#) to address barriers for Indigenous People, worked on facilitating policy developments for an inclusive post-secondary system, and advocated for the development of an Indigenous Student Circle at AU and additional support for Indigenous students.

AUSU council recently approved out new AUSU position policy to direct the Students' Union in its advocacy efforts on behalf of Indigenous students, including:

- improvements to accessibility and resources for Indigenous learners.
- inclusivity of Indigenous views and knowledge throughout institutional development, research, curriculum development, and teaching methods.
- acceptance and implementation of the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada as it relates to post-secondary education.
- advancement of reconciliation efforts.
- implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- recognition that Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which should be appropriately reflected in curricula.

Click [here](#) to read the full policy.

Thank you to Natasha Donahue (current AUSU President & former VP External & Student Affairs) for her work on these initiatives.



CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students!
Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

THE VOICE

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