

Example Journal Entry Activity for Students in ESL 15: Composition for American Academic Communication II.

Blog Post 7: Contrasting Grammar and Rhetoric

Due Date: _____

Purpose: to examine grammatical and rhetorical differences between English and your native language.

Read this sample email message from a junior-year student to a high-level professor:

Dear Dr. Smith,

I really enjoyed your Economics 376 course last spring, and I am grateful for the extra help you gave me during your office hours. Thank you also for encouraging me to apply to internships related to government policy. I have found three internship opportunities that I would like to apply to. The applications are due in about four months, and I am looking for possible references.

Given your familiarity with my work in Econ 376, I was wondering if you would be willing to write a letter of recommendation for me.

If you are available, I would like to stop by to share more about the internships I found and about my current research interests. I know this is a busy time of the semester, but if you have the time, would it be ok if I stopped by during your office hours sometime over the next 3 or 4 weeks?

Thank you,

Firstname Lastname

Next, complete the following translation activity, and then write a short reflection about it.

1. Think about the sample email for a moment. What do you notice about the language and tone in the email? This kind of language is considered polite and respectful in the US if you are emailing a professor you know pretty well. However, would this tone be appropriate in your home culture? Think about how you would write a similar request to a university professor in your home country.
2. On a sheet of notebook paper, translate this email message into your native language. However, try to make it sound as natural as possible for your own cultural environment. Think about how you would communicate respectfully with the professor in your home country. You may change the style so it would make more sense or sound better in your native culture. It is possible your introduction, body, and conclusion would be quite

different from the American English version—you might even need to delete some parts and add other parts. Please bring this translated message to class as well.

3. Compare your version to the original version and write about any major differences you notice. There may be different grammatical features or different rhetorical features that your classmates and I would be interested in reading about.
4. After you compare and contrast both the grammar and the rhetorical style, write a 200-300 word journal post discussing what you noticed. Don't forget to read and comment on your group members' posts, because we can all learn a lot from each other.

I look forward to reading your responses and learning more about your perspectives concerning your native cultures!