

FEATURES OF ACADEMIC WRITING

Academic writing is writing which communicates ideas, information and research to the wider academic community. It can be divided into two types: student academic writing, which is used as a form of assessment at university, as well as at schools as preparation for university study; and expert academic writing, which is writing that is intended for publication in an academic journal or book. Both types of academic writing (student and expert) are expected to adhere to the same standards. Academic writing has the following features.



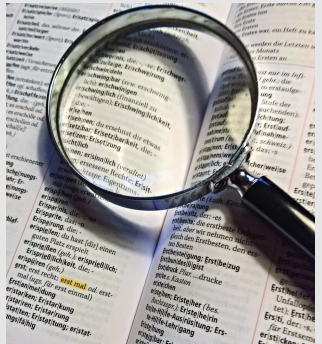
1 STRUCTURED

Academic writing should have a clear structure, which often derives from the genre, e.g. Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion for a report; introduction (with thesis), body paragraphs (with topic sentences), and conclusion for an essay. Careful planning is essential.



2 EVIDENCED

Opinions and arguments should be supported by evidence. This may include information from experts in the field, for which paraphrasing, summarising and referencing skills will all be important.



3 CRITICAL

An academic writer should not accept everything as fact. Information should be analysed and evaluated before it is used. Critical writing requires a great deal of research to develop a deep understanding of the topic.



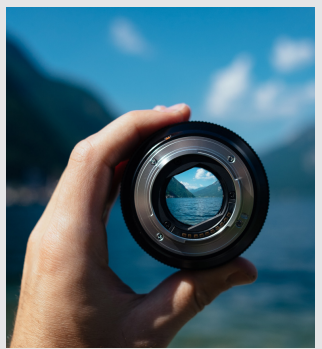
4 BALANCED

Academic writing should give consideration to all sides of the issue and avoid bias. It is important for the academic writer to show how strong their claims are, e.g. by using hedges such as 'the evidence suggests...' or boosters e.g. 'clearly'.



5 PRECISE

Academic writing should use clear and precise language to ensure the reader understands the meaning. This includes the use of technical (i.e. subject-specific) vocabulary.



6 OBJECTIVE

In academic writing, emphasis is placed on the arguments and information, rather than on the writer. It tends to use nouns/noun phrases more than verbs/adverbs, as well as passive structures.



7 FORMAL

Academic writing uses more formal language than everyday writing. It tends to use longer words and more complex sentences, while avoiding contractions and colloquial or informal words or expressions.

