

Writing Essay

Essay as Academic Writing

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Outcomes

- Know how to use an appropriate academic writing style.
- Know the differences between an essay and a report.
- Know the types of writing.
- Know the organization of an essay.

What is academic writing?

- Academic writing is formal and follows some standard conventions
- Each academic discipline has its own specialist vocabulary which you will be expected to learn and use in your own writing
- Note: The following conventions are general guidelines for academic writing. Be sure to follow the specific requirements for each assignment.

What is the point of academic writing?

- The substance of academic writing must be based on solid evidence and logical analysis, and presented as a concise, accurate argument.
- Academic writing can allow you to present your argument and analysis accurately and concisely.

How is it done?

- Aim for precision. Don't use unnecessary words or waffle. Get straight to the point. Make every word count.
- If there is any uncertainty about a particular point, use cautious language (such as 'may', 'might', 'could', 'potentially').
- Unless you are a confident writer, it is best to avoid over long sentences and to aim for a mixture of long and short sentences for variation and rhythm.
- Avoid repeating the same words.

Avoid overly elaborate language

- When using words that are not technical or subject related, use simple words in place of obscure words that have the same meaning.
- Using overly elaborate language can make your writing seem pretentious.

Technical and specific language

- Use technical language and words specific to your discipline where appropriate.
- However, it is wise to avoid convoluted phrases and terms when writing about general information.

Avoid abbreviations and contractions

- Abbreviations and contractions are informal, and are best avoided in academic writing. For example:
- ‘Department’ should be used instead of the abbreviation ‘dept’.
- ‘Is not’ should be used in place of the contraction ‘isn’t’.

Avoid slang words and phrases

Compare the following:

- ‘The individual was sentenced for nicking a bike.’
- ‘The doctor looked kind of worried when he reviewed the case notes.’
- ‘The individual was sentenced for stealing a bike’
- ‘The doctor looked slightly worried when he reviewed the case notes.’

Avoid conversational terms

- This totally changed people's lives'
- Why is 'totally' there?
- If it's a 'filler' it can be omitted.
- If it's used for emphasis, a more appropriate word could be used, for example 'significantly' or 'fundamentally'

Avoid vague terms

Consider the following:

- ‘The right thing’ would be better expressed as ‘the right action’ or ‘the right procedure’
- ‘A nice addition to the collection’ would be better expressed as ‘A popular addition to the collection’ or ‘A prestigious addition to the collection’

Be Impersonal

- In many academic disciplines, writing in the first person is not acceptable as it is believed to be too subjective and personal. Many tutors prefer impersonal language to be used in assignments.

How can you make writing impersonal?

- What is writing in the first person?
- What is impersonal writing?
- Can you give an example of impersonal writing?

Writing in the first person

- First person sentences use the pronouns 'I' and 'we'. For example:
- We have considered...
- I suggest that...
- I have observed...
- These can be transformed into ...

Impersonal sentences

- Consideration has been given to...
- The suggestion is made that...
- It has been observed that...



What are the differences
between essays and reports?

Essay ...

- Tend to present an argument
- Focus on evaluating or analysing theories, past research by other people and ideas. Rarely include new or original research.
- Are continuous pieces of prose
- Are meant to be read carefully
- Do not generally include recommendations
- Are mostly used in academic settings

Report ...

- Present information
- Present data and findings that you have collected yourself e.g. in an experiment, survey, case study or particular experience.
- Are divided into separate sections
- Their structure means they can be scanned quickly
- Often include recommendations for action.
- Are typical of writing produced in the workplace.

Similarities ...

- Both use formal academic style
- Have some form of introduction, main body and a conclusion
- Contain critical analysis
- Are well structured and presented

Types of Writing

- Expository
- Persuasive
- Narrative
- Research
- Response to literature

Expository

- Discover the best way to explain information to the readers
- Informative essay
- How to essay
- Comparison-contrast essay

Persuasive

- Learn how to convince the readers to think or act in a certain way
- Opinion essay
- Problem-solution essay
- Pro-cons essay

Narrative

- Learn strategies for writing powerful stories, whether true or fictional
- Personal
- Biographical
- Fictional

Research

- Learn to write a summary, a research report, an observation report, or lab report
- Research report
- Science report

Response to literature

- Use writing to explore books, poems, plays, and other forms of literature
- Plot summary
- Character sketch
- Theme analysis
- Analysis using certain approaches

See more essay
organization from other
materials attached

Resources ...

- Liv Jonassen and Elizabeth Tomchak
- Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue
- Jenni Reinolds
- Microsoft Student with Encarta Premium 2007 DVD

END...

Write your bad times in sand

Write your good times in stone
(G. B. Shaw)

Write your leisure times in FB
(A. B. Show)