

Week 1: Introduction to Academic Writing

Lesson 2: Purpose, Types, and Features of Academic Writing

Course Video 2: Purposes of Academic Writing

Study Notes

Study Notes: Features of Academic Writing

1. Academic Writing Is Highly Structured

Academic writing follows a clear and fixed structure.

This structure guides:

- Essays – include a thesis statement, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion
- Paragraphs – have topic sentences, supporting ideas, and concluding sentences
- Reports – follow predetermined sections (e.g., Introduction → Findings → Discussion → Conclusion)

Examples:

- Lab report findings use past tense, begin with a summary, list main findings, explain them, and then conclude.
- Signposting (e.g., *firstly*, *however*, *in conclusion*) helps readers follow the structure.

In general writing (texts, emails), such structure is not required.

2. Academic Writing Is Formal

Academic writing uses:

- Formal vocabulary
- Standard grammar
- Precise and clear sentence structures
- Appropriate tense forms

Avoid:

- Slang: *cool*, *awesome*, *a bit*, *like*, *you know*

Use instead:

- *significant*, *impactful*, *slightly*, *approximately*, etc.

Formal tone ensures clarity and professionalism.

3. Academic Writing Is Objective

Objectivity means:

- Ideas are supported by evidence, not personal opinions
- Claims must be backed by credible sources
- Passive voice is sometimes used to maintain neutrality

Example:

✗ *I strongly feel the experiment was cool.*

✓ *The results were significant, as demonstrated by...*

4. Academic Writing Is Thesis-Driven

Every academic piece has:

- A main idea or thesis
- Supporting arguments, examples, and evidence
- A logical flow from thesis → explanation → evidence → conclusion

The thesis guides the direction of the writing.

5. Academic Writing Is Complex

Complexity comes from:

- Use of discipline-specific vocabulary
- Technical terms known mainly within an academic community
- Concepts that require prior knowledge

Example:

Political science uses terms such as *hegemony*, *constitution*, *equity*, *justice*, which may not be familiar to others.

6. Academic Writing Is Evidence-Based

Evidence is essential.

Writers must:

- Cite earlier research
- Use data, studies, books, or credible sources
- Build arguments using previous scholars' work

You cannot make unsupported claims.

7. Academic Writing Is Convention-Driven

Academic writing follows established conventions, such as:

- Citation styles (APA, MLA, Chicago)
- Discipline-specific rules
- Accepted formats for reports, essays, and papers

These conventions ensure uniformity and clarity.

8. Academic Writing Uses Appropriate Context and Careful Language

Writers must:

- Summarize and paraphrase accurately
- Use hedging to show caution (e.g., *may*, *might*, *could*, *possibly*)
- Maintain precise context when presenting information
- Avoid over-generalization and vague claims

Hedging shows academic caution:

- *This may suggest that...*
 - *The results could indicate...*
-

9. Academic Writing Uses Academic Genres

Common academic genres include:

- Descriptive writing
- Compare and contrast writing
- Argumentative writing
- Cause and effect writing

Each genre serves a specific purpose.

10. Academic Writing Uses Signposting and Correct Grammar

Signposting helps guide readers:

- *Firstly, however, in contrast, therefore, in conclusion*

Correct grammar is essential. Unlike informal writing, errors are not acceptable.

11. Academic Writing Is Inclusive

Academic writing must avoid:

- Gender bias
- Racial or ethnic bias
- Discriminatory language

It should be neutral, respectful, and inclusive.

Summary

Academic writing is:

- Structured
- Formal
- Objective
- Thesis-driven
- Complex
- Evidence-based
- Convention-driven
- Cautious in language
- Inclusive

It follows strict rules, uses academic genres, and relies on clear, validated, and discipline-specific communication.
