

Week 1: Introduction to Academic Writing

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

Course Video 2: Purposes of Academic Writing

Transcript

Hello everyone, welcome to this video and in this video we will talk about the purpose of academic writing. So when we think about different purposes of academic writing, the first one that comes to my mind is engaging with an academic topic or issue or problem. By that I mean think about something like I am doing an experiment in a lab and I am thinking about how to write it in a way that will convey the findings of what I am doing in the lab. Let us say I find something that goes with whatever is already there or it is different from the existing findings in relation to the same experiment. So if my findings are different, I need to let people who are working in the same area, in the same academic community, I need to let them know about my findings. So that they can take it further and they can experiment and see whether what I am claiming is true or it is something problematic about it, they will find out. So whenever people work on academic topics, they write about their topics, they write about their findings, they write about their problems, they write about what the problems mean, what the findings mean, they discuss this. They do it in the form of let us say research papers or academic articles or blogs in different forms. So do use the norms of academic writing and follow the norms of academic writing, conventions of academic writing to convey these things to people who are working in the area. The next one which is closely related to the first one is conveying your ideas to the members of your academic community. Sometimes you come up with theories, you come up with hypotheses, you come up with ideas from your reading, from your experience and from the experiments you conduct in laboratories in other places. So there you have a lot of information you get which people may not have access to, unless you tell them what you are doing, unless you share your findings with them, the academic community cannot benefit from your research. It will become, let us say you come up with certain kind of battery that saves, that lasts for let us say 20 days and that is this much in size and people can use it for keeping their mobile phones active. So why not share it with mobile phone makers who will benefit by using this kind of battery that you are talking about, which is let us say eco-friendly, which lasts long and which is really cheap. You need to share this idea with your community. Also it will benefit you financially is another thing, but you need to share it in an academic manner. So this is what academic writing helps us with. The next one is academic writing helps us inform, explain, persuade, analyze and evaluate information. So when we are thinking about informing people about things and explaining to them, explaining our ideas to them, convincing them about something or putting forward an argument in certain ways, analyze certain ideas, evaluate those ideas and share what we believe in and why we believe in, with evidence we share, we need to follow certain norms, certain kind of writing and this is what academic writing does, this is where academic writing comes to play. It helps us convey the information in a manner that is acceptable to the community and that helps us build on these things like we talked about informing, explaining, persuading, analyzing, all these things happen within the territory of academic writing. Next one is share your knowledge or research findings. We have

already talked about it, let us take it a little further. So you have ideas, you have knowledge, let us say you are a professor, you are conveying your ideas to a community of people who want to learn from you, you are delivering a lecture or writing in a journal for people, then you need to write in a certain way that the community will find useful. This is what we do, we make use of academic writing. The next one is verifying claims made by peers. There are people like you when you write, there are people in other parts of the world who look at these claims, who take those claims and verify those claims in laboratories or such settings and they come up with their findings, whether they agree with you, whether they disagree with you, whether the kind of battery we talked about earlier, if that really works in all kinds of settings, in all kinds of phones, whether that is affordable, whether that is doable, whether people can produce and use in mobile phones, those kind of things can be verified. Even if you make a claim, unless it is verified, it does not actually become a strong thing, it is something that does not become part of practice unless it is verified. The next one is examining scientific methods. Let us say you conduct an experiment in a certain way and you have certain findings, can we follow the same methods when we are conducting the same experiment in another laboratory, can we take it elsewhere and verify it, if we are able to do this, that works well. So when we verify these methods, we need academic writing because we drive the process of data collection, we talk about the different tools we are using in the lab, these are the things you do with academic writing. Next one is conveying a point of view. When we are saying that point of view, I am thinking about an argument, I am thinking about something that you want to talk about, something that you believe in, something that is strong in you, something you strongly believe in and you want to convey the same thing to people around and you do that by writing about it. The next one is reporting the validity of a theory. Theory is when you propose something, this is how this will work, but somebody needs to take your theory, verify it in certain ways, follow certain principles, use certain methods that you have identified and then come back and say whether they agree with you or not. If they agree with you, the theory gets strengthened. Sometimes you come back and challenge the theory saying that the experiment did not lead to the same kind of results. So you go against that theory. In that case, the theory challenged. So in this video, we talked about different purposes for which we use academic writing, starting with verifying theories, conveying our ideas to the academic community, sharing our ideas, sharing our research with community, sharing the methods of experiment with the community. These are some of the purposes for which we use academic writing. I hope you go back and think about it clearly and think about whether you can use your academic writing for such purposes in future. Thank you.