

Week 1: Introduction to Academic Writing

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

Course Video 1: Definition of Academic Writing

Transcript

Hello everyone, welcome to this video. In this video, we will talk about the definition of academic writing. Let us begin. So, when we talk about definition, I am trying to come up with things that will tell you this is what academic writing is and this is how it is different from other kinds of writing. For example, the first thing, let us talk about the first part of the definition. It is used for academic purposes. What are those academic purposes that we are talking about in this? Academic purposes have to do with the purposes which are related to your academic work that you are doing. For example, if you are writing an examination or you are writing a research paper or you are submitting a lab report or you are writing to a teacher about a particular course, about a particular topic, these are all related to academic writing. So, these are the purposes for which you use writing and this kind of writing is called academic writing. The next one, it has specific features and conventions. When we talk about specific features, I am talking about across disciplines, there are certain things that are seen across disciplines and there are certain things which are very specific to disciplines. So, if it is same across disciplines, you call them general academic writing and then when these are specific for individual disciplines, for example, you are thinking of if you are doing a course in BSc in computer computing, then you will be thinking about how to write for courses related to computer science and that kind of the kind of conventions, the kind of norms you follow that are different from people who are pursuing their, let's say BA or BSc in another discipline, for example, linguistics. So, if they are doing BSc in linguistics, the kind of norms they follow for the courses that are there in linguistics, those will be different from how you write for the computer science. Then the conventions we are talking about, not only these are, the first part is features, the second part is conventions. When you are talking about features, there are things that are acceptable. For example, in chemistry, when you write, you can write with, a sentence can start with a number or something like that. But when you are writing for literature or linguistics or some social science disciplines, this may not be an acceptable feature. When you talk about conventions, there are other conventions that are important. For example, when you are referencing, when you are citing sources, you can follow one kind of style sheet. For example, if you are following American Psychological Association, what is called APA style, you have to cite certain sources in a particular way. It will be different if you follow another style, for example, MLA, which is used in literature. They follow certain other ways of citing people, certain other ways of presenting their references. Then the next one is, it is meant for members of an academic community, like we talked about earlier. Let us say if you are working in the field of chemistry, you will be writing for people who know chemistry really well, or they can be peers, they can be teachers, they can be researchers, but you will be writing for the community of people who belong to chemistry. Whereas, if you are working in computer science, you will be writing for people who are in computer science, the same is true for any social science topic, literature topic, areas vary. So, the members also vary from one discipline to another discipline, we need

to keep that in mind when we are writing for academic purposes. So, you do not have to worry about defining each and every word, if you belong to a certain community, academic community. For example, if you are from computer science, there are certain words and phrases that are common for computer science people, you do not need to define for them. Whereas, if you are writing for people, you generally need to think carefully about the kind of words and phrases you are choosing, the conventions you are choosing. Lastly, the topics are generally related to academic subjects. So, if you are working in computer science, you will be talking about topics related to your subject, mostly related to your subject. Let us talk about how academic writing is different from general writing. So, as I have already told you, in academic writing, we follow a set of rules and they are quite strict most of the time. Then arguments are built on references to the existing scientific evidence. For example, if there are people who have researched in a particular area, you refer to their work when you are presenting your work. The next one is when we think about particular topics, we are thinking about how to explore these topics, how to explain these topics. These are the two things generally we do in academic writing. How it is different from general writing. In academic writing also, this language norm, as I have already told you, is slightly stricter than in general writing. Let us look at what we do in general writing. They are not really rule bound. When you are writing to your brother or sister or writing to people around, just like that for leaving a message or something or texting them, you do not follow any rules or norms. Then you do not have these requirements. In general writing, you do not have to be able to refer to others work to talk about your own work. You can write on your own, share your opinion happily, nobody really questions, people may question, but it does not harm you as such. It is not really a strictly a norm as such. Then the next thing is that there is no pattern as such that you find in academic writing that you have to, you generally explore or explain things. There is no such pattern in general writing. And lastly, the language norms are really flexible in general writing, which is not there in academic writing. You generally have to adhere to certain academic vocabulary when you are writing for academic purposes. Now, in this video, we will talk about what constitutes academic writing and different components of academic writing and how academic writing is different from general writing in terms of language, conventions, requirements and other particulars. Thank you.