

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. In this video, we will talk about features of academic writing. Let us begin. When we talk about features of academic writing, the first thing that comes into my mind is that it is highly structured. What do I mean by highly structured? So, when we write an academic paragraph or an academic essay or a report, you think about how it is structured. For example, when you are writing an essay, you are thinking about how to write a strong thesis statement, how do we include the ideas that you will be converting into paragraphs in that thesis statement, how to conclude in a paragraph. So, when you think about it, what is the way in which you plan to write, what are the things that will go to each section of the essay, and how you will include information in each section of the essay. These are the things you think clearly. Beyond that, you also think how to cite others, how to create proper references, how to follow a style sheet, what comes first, what comes next, how to use signposting. So, you are constantly thinking about how it is structured, what comes first, what comes second, how everything goes, what goes into each section. These are almost fixed. Let us say, for example, if you are writing a report, a lab report, when you are talking about findings in the lab report, findings of an experiment, you write in a certain way, you use past tense, that is fixed. You use starting with the summary of the findings, then you go to each main finding, and then you explain the findings, and then you conclude. So, you have a particular structure that you follow when you are writing the finding section of a lab report. And that structure, it does not really change. Whereas, when you think about, let us say general writing, it is not really structured, how you write and all, nobody actually tells you how to write an email or how to write about something to your parents or to your siblings or to a friend how to text message. Nobody tells you how to message your friends. The next feature is, it is formal. The language is always formal in academic writing. Formal means the kind of vocabulary, the kind of language, the kind of sentence structure, the tense forms, everything is almost fixed in academic writing. There is very little flexibility. And the formal is, when you choose certain kind of words, you have preference over certain kind of words. For example, when you are writing, if you have to talk about a lab experiment, generally you use passive forms, you avoid words like cool, a bit, like that, you mean, it is awesome. You do not use such words when you are writing, when it comes to academic writing. So, you choose words instead of a bit, well, you say a little, instead of saying it is cool, or it is the findings are really cool and this is so awesome. You say that the findings are significant, they are impactful, something like that. Next one is, academic writing is objective. By that you mean, you cannot generally share your opinion just like that. You need evidence to say whatever you are saying. You need to back your claims with evidence. That means it is objective. People also use certain other forms of language like passive voice and all to convey this objectivity in writing. Then, generally, academic writing is thesis driven. You have an idea, a strong idea, and then you back it with appropriate details. So, this is always, there is always a thesis, something that contains the main

idea. You support that with evidence or details that are required to support. Next one is, academic writing is complex. It is complex because it uses certain kind of words and phrases and information that people who are working in a particular academic community, they understand. For example, if you are working in, let us say, in political science, you understand the meaning of power, constitution, laws, and all those things, you understand really well. You understand concepts like hegemony, you understand dominance, equity, justice, all those things. Whereas these things, people outside the community may not be aware of the terms like these. That is why academic writing is complex. Next one, it is evidence-based. You need evidence to write. You cannot write without evidence in academic writing. You need to refer to others' works, you need to derive your ideas from others' work, and then you can build your own argument on those. That is why it is evidence-based. Last one, academic writing is convention driven. You have certain rules, regulations, style sheets that you follow in academic writing. For example, you can choose whether I will follow APA or MLA or something, it is always there, it is fixed, and you follow an academic style, a way of writing that is acceptable in a particular community. Next, when we think about academic writing, we think about presenting a writing in appropriate context. And also, we think about things like summarizing, paraphrasing, and all. You also use language cautiously. You do not say, this is the thing, this could be, this may be, probably is, that is called hedging. Not saying things directly, but taking slightly cautious, using slightly cautious language. Then following a style sheet for referencing and citations. Then using from things like academic genres like descriptive writing, compare and contrast, argumentative, cause and effect, all these kinds of writings are used in academic, for academic purposes. And then, you also think about using, you consider using signposting and correct language. And I am talking about correct language, it is very important to write grammatically correct language, which is, may not be the case in general writing. Lastly, academic writing should be inclusive in nature. In a sense, it should, there should not be any gender bias or any kind of bias involved or any kind of bias related to race, ethnicity, gender, and other things. So, in this video, we talked about different features of academic writing. And we started with how it is formal, how it is convention driven, and how it follows a certain rules, regulations in terms of language and conventions. And then we talk about how, what are the kind of genres we use in academic writing, and how academic writing works in things in, when you convey in academic settings across disciplines and in particular disciplines. Thank you.