

Week 1: Introduction to Academic Writing

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

Course Video 1: Definition of Academic Writing

Study Notes

Study Notes: Definition and Features of Academic Writing

1. Introduction to Academic Writing

Academic writing is a formal style of writing used for academic purposes. It is different from general or everyday writing because it follows specific rules, conventions, and expectations.

2. Purpose of Academic Writing

Academic writing is used for tasks related to academic work. Examples include:

- Writing examinations
- Research papers
- Lab reports
- Assignments
- Emails to teachers regarding courses or topics

All these belong to the domain of **academic writing**.

3. Features and Conventions of Academic Writing

3.1 General Features (Across Disciplines)

Some characteristics are common in all academic disciplines:

- Formal tone
 - Clear organization
 - Evidence-based-arguments
- These are known as **general academic writing features**.

3.2 Discipline-Specific Features

Different fields follow their own norms:

- **Computer Science:** Writing conventions differ from those in linguistics or literature.

- **Chemistry:** Sentences can begin with numbers—acceptable in this field but not in humanities.

These discipline-specific norms shape how writing is structured.

4. Conventions in Academic Writing

4.1 Writing Conventions

Conventions include:

- What is acceptable within a discipline
- How information is structured
- How terminology is used

4.2 Referencing and Citation Styles

Different disciplines follow different citation styles:

- **APA (American Psychological Association):** Used in social sciences
 - **MLA (Modern Language Association):** Common in literature
- Each style has its own rules for in-text citations and reference lists.
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5. Audience of Academic Writing

Academic writing is intended for members of a specific **academic community**, such as:

- Teachers
- Peers
- Researchers

Because of this:

- You don't need to define common discipline-specific terms.
 - Your writing should reflect the expectations and knowledge level of that community.
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6. Topics Covered in Academic Writing

Topics typically relate to the academic subject you study.

Examples:

- Computer science topics for CS students
- Linguistic topics for linguistics students

7. How Academic Writing Differs from General Writing

7.1 Nature of Rules

- **Academic writing:** Strict rules and norms
- **General writing:** No strict rules (e.g., texting, informal emails)

7.2 Use of Evidence

- **Academic writing:** Arguments must be supported by **references** and **existing research**
- **General writing:** You can freely express personal opinions without referencing

7.3 Purpose and Pattern

- **Academic writing:** Typically aims to **explore** or **explain** a topic
- **General writing:** No fixed pattern

7.4 Language Norms

- **Academic writing:** Uses formal vocabulary and structured language
 - **General writing:** Flexible, informal, conversational
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8. Summary

Academic writing:

- Serves academic purposes
 - Has discipline-specific and general features
 - Follows established conventions and citation styles
 - Is directed at an informed academic audience
 - Differs from general writing in rules, evidence use, patterns, and language
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