

Academic language

- The **informal** style has the following characteristics:
 - It uses a personal style: the first and second person (“I” and “you”) and the active voice (e.g., “I have noticed that...”).
 - It uses short simple words and sentences (e.g., “latest”).
 - It uses contractions (e.g., “won’t”).
 - It uses many abbreviations (e.g., “TV”).
 - It uses many phrasal verbs in the text (e.g., “find out” instead of discover, learn etc.)
 - It uses a subjective style, expressing opinions and feelings (e.g., “pretty much”, “I feel”).

Academic language

- It is formal, rational, logical, unemotional
- It tries to persuade by a well-supported argument rather than emotive language
- Avoids informal, conversational language
- Avoid sweeping generalizations, Provide evidence :
e.g. :The British people were pacifists in the 1930s
use cautious wording (tend to... it seems... with the exception of... usually... it could be suggested...likely...suggests that...is evidence for... it is possible that...)

- It is often impersonal

It may avoid 'I' or 'we' – If not, it uses them sparingly. For instance, instead of 'in my opinion...' you could write 'it can be argued...' 'this essay argues...', 'one could consider...'

- Uses the third person

1. I collected the samples and recorded the results.

The samples were collected and the results were recorded.

2. We saw a lot of evidence of teamwork. You could see it was positive.

There was considerable evidence of teamwork, which was clearly positive.

- Formal language
 - Do not use contractions (don't... isn't)
 - Do not start a sentence with a simple conjunction (And, But or So)
 - Find more formal alternatives (In addition, Moreover; However; Consequently...)
 - e.g. But there are other things to consider.
 - However, there are other things to consider.
- Avoid rhetorical questions
 - e.g. How far are poverty and health linked?
 - A central issue raised by this essay is to what extent health and poverty are linked.

- Avoid short, two-word phrases

e.g. think about - consider

get through - survive or connect

E.g. Dieters often feel that they should totally get rid of high-fat and high-sugar foods.

Dieters often feel that they should totally eliminate high-fat and high-sugar foods

INFORMAL

Ask
Ask for
Book
Check
From (company)
Get
Give
Help
Need
Say sorry
Say hello to
Tell

FORMAL

Enquire
Request
Reserve
Verify
On the behalf of
Receive
Provide
Assist
Request
Apologise
Give my regards to
Inform

Examples:

➤ Victorian theories of criminality tended to be based on what a person looked like.

Victorian theories of criminality tended to be based on a person's appearance.

➤ Even now, researchers do not know exactly how it works.

Even now, researchers are unaware of the exact mechanism of action.

Non-discriminatory language

- Expresses equality and respect for all individuals
- Make sure your writing is free of sexist language and free of bias based on such factors as race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability. Use gender-neutral language.

Not: Chairman - Chairperson

Not: Executives and their wives - Executives and their spouses

Not: Dear Gentlemen - To Whom It May Concern

Not: Each student must provide his own lab jacket.

Students must have their own lab jackets. /Each student must have his or her own lab jackets.

- Don't use extra words unnecessarily. Avoid repetitions.
Instead of "2 pm in the afternoon" - "2 pm"
- Avoid using run-on expressions
Run on expressions include phrases such as 'and so forth', 'and so on' or 'etc'. Try to complete the sentence properly; do not use these if you can avoid them; for example
E.g. Public transport includes vehicles for public use such as buses, trains and airplanes etc.
Public transport includes vehicles for public use, such as buses, trains and airplanes.

- **Hedging words and phrases**

Your writing should appear to be well-considered and reasonable. If it is appropriate for you to be tentative (medium certainty) with your claims, you can use language techniques to 'soften' your claims to indicate the degree of certainty you want to express. This technique is called **hedging**.

Medium certainty: probably, perhaps, likely, occasionally, appears to be seems to be, suggests etc.

High certainty: certainly, definitely etc.

- Do not use imperatives (orders) – these too are informal:
 - e.g., Make sure passwords are changed regularly
 - It is essential that passwords are changed regularly.
- Avoid abbreviations such as i.e., e.g.; use the full forms (and so on, that is, for example).

1. He's really good at math - He exhibits a high level of proficiency in mathematics.
2. She's an excellent chef - She possesses/has exceptional culinary skills.
3. The movie was so entertaining- The motion picture/ feature film/ cinematic production provided a highly captivating and engaging experience.
4. They are very good friends- They share a strong and enduring friendship/bond.
5. I love going to the beach during the summer. - I derive immense enjoyment from beach/sea coast excursions during summer.

6. This book is really interesting – This book is intriguing./ This book elicits intellectual curiosity.
7. I think science is fascinating - I hold a profound/ an intense fascination for the field of science.
8. He's really good at playing football- His football proficiency is highly commendable.
9. She's a very good student- She demonstrates/ exhibits exceptional scholastic / academic aptitude.
10. The bridge is strong and safe - The structural integrity and safety of the bridge are robust.

11. The software works well- The software demonstrates optimal performance and functionality.
12. This machine is very reliable - This machinery is characterized by its highly reliability and consistent performance.
13. The software is easy to use - The user interface of the software is designed for a user-friendly operation.
14. The airplane can fly long distances- The aircraft possesses the capability for extended-range flight.
15. The building is designed to withstand earthquakes - The architectural design incorporates seismic-resistant features to ensure resilience during seismic events/earthquakes.

(fluctuate, investigate, eliminate, raise, reduce, propose, intervene, establish)

1. Researchers have been **looking into** the problem for 15 years. - investigating
2. This issue was **brought up** during the seminar.- considered
3. It is assumed that the management knows what is happening and will therefore **step in** if there is a problem. – intervene
4. Schools cannot altogether **get rid** of the problem of truancy.- eliminate
5. The number of staff has been **cut down** recently.- reduced
6. It was very difficult to **find out** exactly what happened.- establish
7. House prices have a tendency to **go up and down**.- fluctuate
8. A potential solution was **put forward** two years ago.- proposed

Replace the following phrasal verbs with a more formal single word.

1. The locals could not **put up with** the visitors from the city.-
tolerate
2. The decline was **brought about** by cheap imports. - caused
3. The university is **thinking about** installing CCTV. - considering
4. Sales are likely to **drop off** in the third quarter. – decline
5. He **went on** speaking for over an hour.- continued
6. The meeting was **put off** until December.- postponed
7. The cinema was **pulled down** ten years ago. - demolished

Use a more formal word or phrase to replace those in bold.

1. The reaction of the officials was **sort of** negative. - somewhat
2. The economic outlook is **nice**. - positive / encouraging
3. Car manufacturers are planning a **get together** to discuss their strategy. - meeting / conference
4. The resulting competition between countries is **good**.
positive / encouraging
5. The economy is affected by **things** that happen outside the country. - factors
6. She was **given the sack** because of her poor record. - dismissed
7. The examination results were **super**. - excellent

Which of the two alternatives in bold do you think is more appropriate in academic writing?

1. The government has made **considerable**/great progress in solving the problem.
2. We **got**/**obtained** excellent results in the experiment.
3. The results of lots of/**numerous** tests have been pretty good / **encouraging**.
4. A loss of jobs is one of the **consequences**/things that will happen if the process is automated.
5. The relationship between the management and workers is **extremely**/really important.
6. Some suggestions springing up from/**arising from** the study will be presented.

Suggest improvements to the following sentences to avoid use of personal language.

1. You can apply the same theory of learning to small children.

The same theory of learning can be applied to small children.

2. You can only do this after the initial preparation has been conducted.

This can only be done after the initial preparation has been conducted.

3. The figures are accurate to within 1%, but you should note that local variations may apply.

The figures are accurate to within 1%, but it should be noted that local variations may apply.

4. In the second section of the report, we will consider the environmental consequences.

The second section of the report will consider the environmental consequences.

5. In the third part of the essay, we will look at the reasons for public hysteria over the SARS virus.

The third part of the essay will examine / discuss / analyse the reasons for public hysteria over the SARS virus.