

Academic Writing Etiquettes: A Brief Analytical Approach to Rewriting an Opinion Piece

In the Metropolis article “Why Are There So Few Great Accessible Buildings” – Bess Williamson discusses the lack of accessible architecture in most buildings across public and private spheres. As an opinion piece, it was successful in being able to convey the information to the readers, but it failed to adhere to the basic academic writing conventions. If it is rewritten into an academic essay, the article will have to take a formal and professional approach in addressing the issues of accessibility to the readers through writing a brief abstract, helping the readers to quickly understand what they need to know before reading the entire piece.

In many parts throughout the article, there’s a lack of proper use of citations and references. An example would be “Indeed, as the New York Times noted in a follow-up article, Holl’s design was in compliance with the law, given that the library offers a retrieval service for any patron who is not able to visit the stacks.” [1] There’s no way for any members in the academic circle to look further into this, as no references to the New York Times article is given. For the essay to adhere to the basic academic conventions, it would have to be backed by evidence acknowledging every source and reference. Giving a footnote to the New York Times article here, for instance, can back this statement and help the readers to further their research into this topic.

In some parts of the article, the writer addresses their reader using first-person perspective. In academic writing, using first-person perspective is mostly avoided for maintaining a formal approach to addressing the issue in question. For instance, changing the first-person perspective in this statement “To find the best examples of accessible architecture, we need to seek out disabled people themselves—as architects, project planners, and occupants of buildings.” to “To find the best examples of accessible architecture, disabled people can be sought out – as architects, project planners and occupants of buildings.” would help the essay in keeping a more professional tone.

Cited References

- [1] B. Williamson, *Why Are There So Few Great Accessible Buildings*, Metropolis, accessed May 22, 2020, <https://metropolismag.com/viewpoints/why-are-there-so-few-great-accessible-buildings/>