# Academic Language used from Various Disciplines

**Nature and Characteristics of an Academic Text**

An *academic text* is a written language that provides information, which contain ideas and concepts that are related to the particular discipline. Essay, Research Paper, Report, Project, Article, Thesis, and Dissertation are considered as academic texts.

**Structure**

The basic structure that is used by an academic text is consist of three (3) parts introduction, body, and conclusion which is formal and logical. This kind of structure enables the reader to follow the argument and navigate the text. In academic writing a clear structure and a logical flow are imperative to a cohesive text.

**Tone**

This refers to the attitude conveyed in a piece of writing. The arguments of others are fairly presented and with an appropriate narrative tone. When presenting a position or argument that disagrees with one's perspectives, describe the argument accurately without loaded or biased language.

**Language**

It is important to use unambiguous language. Clear topic sentences enable a reader to follow your line of thinking without difficulty. Formal language and the third person point- of-view should be used. Technical language appropriate to area of study may also be used, however, it does not mean using "big words" just for the sake of doing so.

## Citation

Citing sources in the body of the paper and providing a list of references as either footnotes or endnotes is a very important aspect of an academic text. It is essential to always acknowledge the source of any ideas, research findings, data, or quoted text that have been used in a paper as a defense against allegations of plagiarism.

## Complexity

An academic text addresses complex issues that require higher-order thinking skills to comprehend.

## Evidence-based Arguments

What is valued in an academic text is that opinions are based on a sound understanding of the pertinent body of knowledge and academic debates that exist within, and often external to a specific discipline.

## Thesis-driven

The starting point of an academic text is a particular perspective, idea or position applied to the chosen research problem, such as establishing, proving, or disproving solutions to the questions posed for the topic.

## Features of Academic Texts:

1. **Complex**- Written texts are shorter and the language has more grammatical complexity, including more subordinate clauses and more passives.
2. **Formal**-  Should avoid colloquial words and expressions.
3. **Precise**- Facts are given accurately and precisely.
4. **Objective**- has fewer words that emphasize on the information you want to give and the arguments you want to make. mostly use nouns (adjectives), rather than verbs (adverbs)
5. **Explicit**- It is the responsibility of the writer in English to make it clear to the reader how the various parts of the text are related.
6. **Accurate**- Uses vocabulary accurately. Most subjects have words with narrow specific meanings.
7. **Hedging**- It is necessary to make decisions about your stance on a particular subject, or the strength of the claims you are making.

**8. Responsible**- You must be responsible for and must be able to provide evidence and justification for any claims you make.

**9. Organize**- Well-organized and It flows easily from one section to the next in a logical fashion.

**10. Plan-** Well-planned. It usually takes place after research and evaluation, according to specific purpose and plan.

**Purposes in Reading an Academic Text**
1. To locate a main idea;
2. To scan for information;
3. To identify gaps in existing studies;
4. To connect new ideas to existing ones;
5. To gain more pieces of information;
6. To support a particular writing assignment; and,
7. To deeply understand an existing idea.

**Academic Language**

Academic language is the language needed by students to do the work in schools. It includes, for example, discipline-specific vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, and applications of rhetorical conventions and devices that are typical for a content area (e.g., essays, lab reports, discussions of a controversial issue.) Students who master academic language are more likely to be successful in academic and professional settings. Social language is the set of vocabulary that allows us to communicate with others in the context of regular daily conversations. Here are some of the differences between social and academic language includes:

| Social Language | Academic Language |
|---|---|
| In everyday interactions in spoken/written form | In textbooks, research papers, conferences in spoken/written form |
| For everyday conversation | Used in school/work conversations |
| Used to write to friends, family, or for other social purposes | Appropriate for written papers, classwork, homework |
| Informal, such as words like "cool," "guy," "kidding") | Very formal and more sophisticated in its expressions, such as words like "appropriate," "studies," "implementation" |
| Can use slang expressions | Don't use slang |
| Can be repetitive | Uses a variety of terms |
| Can use phrases | Uses sentences |
| Sentences don't follow grammar conventions necessarily, with phrases like, "you're hungry?" | Sentences begin with appropriate transitions, like, "moreover" or "in addition") |

(Social & Academic Language Acquisition: Differences & Characteristics, 2020)

**Characteristics of Academic Language**

**A. Formal** - It should not sound conversational or casual. Colloquial, idiomatic, slang or journalistic expressions should particularly be avoided.
Examples:
**Use**                                    **Instead**
Consider, monitor --------------- Look at
Revise, review------------------- Go over
Solve, repair, amend------------- Fix
**B. Objective**- This means it is unbiased. It should be based on facts and evidence and are not influenced by personal feelings.
**C. Impersonal**- This involves avoiding the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we'. For example, instead of writing 'I will show', you might write 'this report will show'. The second person, 'you', is also to be avoided.

# Techniques in Summarizing Variety of Academic Texts

**Techniques in Summarizing Academic Texts**

   Summarizing is how we take larger selections of text and reduce them to their bare essentials: the gist, the key ideas, the main points that are worth noting and remembering. Webster's calls a summary the "general idea in brief form"; it's the distillation, condensation, or reduction of a larger work into its primary notions. ("Reading Quest Strategies | Summarizing")

**Basic Rules:**

A. **Erase things that don't matter.** Delete trivial material that is unnecessary to understanding.

B. **Erase things that repeat**. Delete redundant material. In note taking, time and space is precious. If a word or phrase says basically the same thing you have already written down, then don't write it again!

C. **Trade, general terms for specific names.** Substitute superordinate terms for lists (e.g., flowers for daisies, tulips for roses). Focus on the big picture. Long, technical lists are hard to remember. If one word will give you the meaning, then less is more.

D. **Use your own words to write the summary**. Write the summary using your own words but make sure to retain the main points.

**Techniques:**

1. **Somebody Wanted But So.** The strategy helps students generalize, recognize cause and effect relationships, and find main ideas.

| Somebody (Who is the text about?) | Wanted (What did the main character want?) | But (What was the problem encountered?) | So (How was the problem solved?) | Then (Tell how the story ends.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Little Red Riding Hood | She wanted to take cookies to her sick grandmother. | She encountered a wolf pretending to be her grandmother. | She ran away, crying for help. | A woodsman heard her and saved her from the wolf. |

Kris Bales, "5 Easy SUMMARIZING Strategies for Students," ThoughtCo, accessed August 4, 2021, https://www.thoughtco.com/summarizing-strategies-for-students-

After answering the questions, combine the answers to form a summary:
Little Red Riding Hood wanted to take cookies to her sick grandmother, but she encountered a wolf. He got to her grandmother's house first and pretended to be the old woman. He was going to eat Little Red Riding Hood, but she realized what he was doing and ran away, crying for help. A woodsman heard the girl's cries and saved her from the wolf.

2. **SAAC Method.** This method is particularly helpful in summarizing any kind of text. SAAC is an acronym for "State, Assign, Action, Complete." Each word in the acronym refers to a specific element that should be included in the summary.

| State (the name of the article, book, or story) | Assign (the name of the author) | Action (what the author is doing (example: tells, explains)) | Complete (complete the sentence or summary with keywords and important details) |
|---|---|---|---|
| "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" | Aesop (a Greek storyteller) | tells | what happens when a shepherd boy repeatedly lies to the villagers about seeing a wolf |

Use the four SAAC cues to write out a summary of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" in complete sentences: "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," by Aesop (a Greek storyteller), tells what happens when a shepherd boy repeatedly lies to the villagers about seeing a wolf. After a while, they ignore his false cries. Then, when a wolf really does attack, they don't come to help him.

3. **5 W's, 1 H**. This technique relies on six crucial questions: who, what, when where, why, and how. These questions make it easy to identify the main character, important details, and main idea.

Try this technique with a familiar fable such as "The Tortoise and the Hare."

| **Who** is the story about? | **What** did they do? | **When** did the action take place? | **Where** did the story happen? | **Why** did the main character do what s/he did? | **How** did the main character do what s/he did? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The tortoise | He raced a quick, boastful hare and won. | When isn't specified in this story, so it's not important in this case. | An old country road | The tortoise was tired of hearing the hare boast about his speed. | The tortoise kept up his slow but steady pace. |

4. **First Then Finally**. This technique helps students summarize events in chronological order.

**First:** What happened first? Include the main character and main event/action.
**Then:** What key details took place during the event/action?
**Finally:** What were the results of the event/action?
Here is an example using "Goldilocks and the Three Bears."
First, Goldilocks entered the bears' home while they were gone. Then, she ate their food, sat in their chairs, and slept in their beds. Finally, she woke up to find the bears watching her, so she jumped up and ran away.

5. **Give Me the Gist.** This type of techniques is like giving a friend the gist of a story. In other words, they want a summary – not a retelling of every detail.

# Identifying Thesis Statement and Outline Reading Text

**Thesis Statement Definition**

A *thesis statement* is the controlling idea that you will develop in your paper. This can be found usually at the end of an introduction. A thesis statement can be one sentence. However, if necessary, it can also be two or three sentences.

**Elements of a Thesis Statement**

1. **Topic**- The topic of your paper.
2. **Argument/Claim**- This depends on the type of paper you are writing. If it is an argumentative paper, then this should express your opinion. If it is a research or explanatory paper, this should explain the purpose of your paper.
3. **Evidence-** The support for your argument/claim.

If you already have these three elements, you can combine them to create your thesis statement.

Example 1: (argumentative)

1. Topic – The Harry Potter book series
2. Argument – stole many fantastical elements from The Lord of the Rings series
3. Evidence – giant spiders, dangerous hooded undead creatures (Dementors and Nazgul), and a wise mentor.

The *Harry Potter book* series stole many fantastical elements from The Lord of the Rings series. Some of the uncanny similarities include giant spiders, dangerous hooded undead creatures, and a wise mentor that the hero must learn to survive without.

Example 2: (Research/explanatory)

1. **Topic** – Cheese
2. **Argument** – has healthy tendencies
3. **Evidence** – calcium helps bones and teeth, boosts the growth of good bacteria in the gut, and the protein helps cells repair themselves.

Research has shown that cheese has healthy tendencies because its calcium provides necessary nutrients for the growth of bone and teeth, it boosts the growth of food bacteria in the gut, and it has protein that helps cells repair themselves.

**Outline**

An *outline* is a design to follow when writing a structure, a discourse, or a article. It arranges a material in a logical way into main ideas, supporting ideas, and supporting details.

The main idea or topic is the main topic of the outline. All main topics are indicated by Roman Numeral. Subtopics are noted by letters and supporting details are indicated by Arabic Numerals.

An outline can be a **sentence outline or topic outline**. A sentence outline is written in full sentence while a topic outline is in words or phrases.

**Guidelines in Writing an Outline:**

1. Place the title at the center above the outline.
2. Every level of the outline must have at least two items (I and II, A and B, 1 and 2).
3. Put a period after each numeral and letter.
4. Indent each new level of the outline.
5. All items of one kind (roman numerals, capital letters, Arabic numerals) should lineup with each other.
6. Capitalize the first letter of each item.
7. The terms Introduction, Body, and Conclusion do not have to be included in the outline. They are not topics; they are merely organizational units in the writer's mind.

**Example**

**Benjamin Franklin** – Scientist and Inventor
    I.     Experiments with Electricity
        A. Studied nature of Electricity
        B. Discovered Lightning Equals Electricity
        C. Invented Lightning Rod

II. Other Scientific Work
  A. Invention
    1. Bifocal Glasses
    2. Franklin Stove
    3. Daylight Saving Time
  B. Scientific Studies
    1. Charted Gulf Stream
    2. Worked on Soil Improvement
III. Importance as a Scientist
  A. Scientific Honors
  B. Writing Translated into Other Languages
  C. Experts' Comments