

The DOs & DON'Ts of Academic Writing

What NOT to do:

DO NOT use slang, jargon or colloquialisms.

DO NOT use shortened verb forms
they're, isn't, can't.

DO NOT use **etc.**, **i.e.**, or **e.g.**

"...they are not deadly, **i.e.**, mental issues have a significant impact on life the lives of many people;
e.g., low self-confidence, depression, **etc.**"

DO NOT use generic vocabulary, such as
have got, a lot, nice, the other thing.

DO NOT use conversational opening phrases,
such as *Well*, *you see*, *Yes...*, *Let's move on*.
Let's say...

DO NOT write "*I think*" or "*In my opinion*"
"*I think / In my opinion global warming will...*"

DO NOT use personal pronouns e.g. *I*, *you*,
we, *our* (unless specifically required), i.e. do not write:
"*We think that you should be able to compete.*"

DO NOT write "*In this paper I will...*" OR
"*The purpose of this essay is to...*"

DO NOT use sweeping generalisations: e.g.,
"*...everyone knows...*" "*...X is the best...*"

DO NOT use bullet points or lists, unless it is
in a report.

DO NOT make assumptions or give your opinion
(unless specifically asked / or in the concluding paragraph).

DO NOT change your mind or repeat yourself.

DO NOT plagiarize.

DO NOT take for granted (assume) that the spell
check on your computer is accurate or will spot all
spelling mistakes (e.g., whether vs. weather).

DO NOT pose (direct) questions in the running text,
that is, do not write, for instance:
"*Can carbon emissions be reduced?*"

DO NOT mix words and numbers unsystematically.

What to do:

Use formal language.

Use the full verb form instead, e.g. *they are*, (contractions), such as
is not, *cannot*.

Use MEANING, FOR EXAMPLE or AND / OR.

"...they are not deadly, **meaning** mental issues have a significant impact on life the lives of many people; **for example**, low self-confidence **and / or** depression."

Make more formal vocabulary choices, e.g.
have found, *a great deal*, *attractive / advantageous*, *the other issue / problem / notion / idea / topic etc...*

Leave out conversational phrases.
Use appropriate connectors and
introductory phrases.

Leave out "*I think*" or "*In my opinion*"
"*Global warming will...*" OR
"*It is believed that global warming will...*"

Be non-personal, e.g.
"*It should be possible for everyone to compete.*"

You are writing the paper and will clearly do something. There's no need to say you will do something – just do it! And never write "*In conclusion...*" This is an overused transition to the conclusion. The reader should know they are at the conclusion of your paper based on the content of the concluding paragraph.

State main ideas clearly and concisely in
your own words in topic sentences.
Use hedging.

Use complete sentences and link these into
logical paragraphs.

Be objective.

Be clear and concise.

Provide references whenever you say
something that is not your own.

Check spelling, grammar and punctuation.
Proofread and use a dictionary.
Ask somebody to proofread your text for you.

Convert questions into statements, for
example: "*The possibility of carbon emissions being reduced is questionable.*"

(In general) Use words for numbers nine and below and numbers for 10 and above.