

ES1103

English for Academic Purposes



TUTORIAL 1 (PART A)

Centre for English Language Communication

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Academic Genres and Language

Tutorial Learning Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, you should:

- be aware of what makes language '**academic**'
- be better able to **identify** a range of **academic genres**, their **structure** and their main **linguistic features**
- be better **able to analyse** how these **features** are used
- be better **prepared to use** these **features** in your writing

Academic Discourse

As a university student, you are a member of an academic community, a discipline. Learning about your academic community will help you feel a part of it and meet the expectations in your writing and other tasks. To do this, it is useful to consider three key questions.

What values are important in your discipline?

How do scholars in your discipline express their ideas?

What types of texts and what kind language do they use?

Various disciplines use a variety of genres (text types) and these tend to follow expected stages and structures to fulfil the purpose of the text and the intentions of the writer. Also, academics value debate and discussion of ideas and use logical argument and precise evidence to support their views. These factors have an impact on the style of English that is acceptable in your assignments at university.

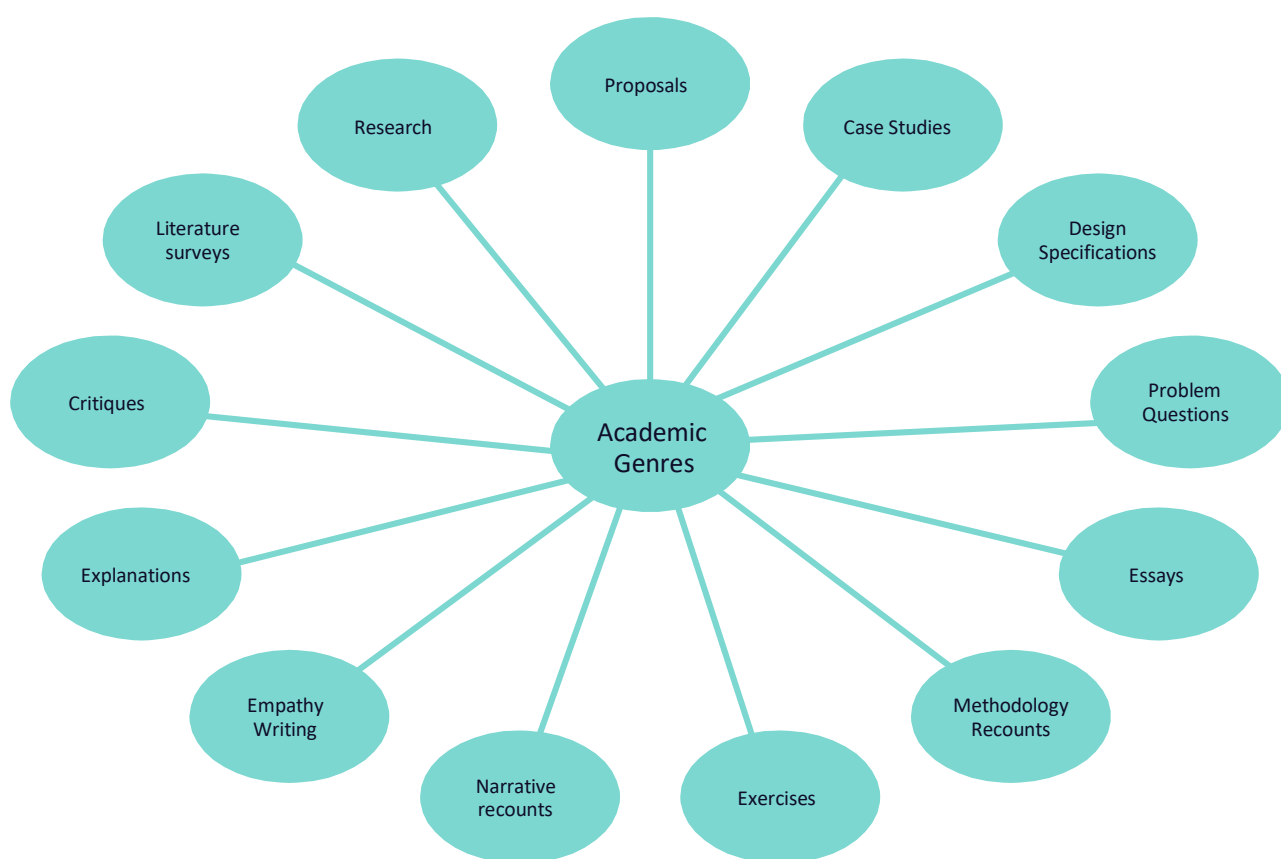
As a student, **you are expected, through clear and precise language, to demonstrate your understanding of concepts and show your ability to synthesise and discuss the assigned readings.** You are also required to **write according to the expectations of your disciplines.**

Despite some variety between disciplines, Academic English makes use of several recurrent language structures which are very useful and help you meet the requirements of your discipline.

In this tutorial, we will first look at genres (text types) and then at some of features academic writing and consider the role (function) they play.

Academic Genres

Now let's look at some genres that are commonly found in the academic community.



Adapted from: Nesi, H., & Gardner, S. (2012). *Genres across the disciplines: Student writing in highereducation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Task 1

Look again at the figure above showing different academic genres.

Indicate with 'R' the ones you need to read and 'W' the ones you are required to write.

Add any additional genres that you are exposed to that are not indicated in the figure.

Academic Language

Linguistic systems and features are the parts of language used to make texts cohesive, dense and technical.

Academic language is also used to organise ideas into logical development and to express evaluation.

Throughout ES1103, **we will learn how to use linguistic toolkits** that are key to good academic writing. We will study language for evaluating and appraising, and for expressing academic content and organising concepts logically.

There are **four main ‘linguistic toolkits’** you can use to ensure your work conforms to the standards of academic discourse.



1	Textual Cohesion
2	Logical Links
3	Noun Groups
4	Evaluation

Do not worry about trying to understand all the features of the toolkits at this stage of the course. As we progress through ES1103, you will come to see how these toolkits are useful in your writing for your discipline.

Toolkit 1 – Textual Cohesion



Purpose

To create texts that flow logically and represent your views more persuasively

Features

Macro theme (Thesis statement)

Hyper themes (Topic Sentences)

- General nouns (problems, causes, effect, impact, reasons, issue)
- Nominalisation (experimentation, investigation, formulation)
- Referencing pronouns and other words (shopping centres→ they→ such places)
- Conjunctions/linkers (however, as a result)

Thematic progression (information flow) (A→ B B→C A→ B A→C)

Paragraph cohesion

- Lexical chains (Hong Kong→ the SAR → the territory→ the city)
- Reference and substitutions (shopping centres→ they→ such places)
- Lexical field/sets (related words) (computer components, printers, CPUs, memory chips, high tech equipment)

This is the toolkit to produce texts that flow well.

Toolkit 2 – Logical Links



Purpose

To express complex thoughts and their logical links

Features

Complex sentences (with more than one clause)

- Non-defining relative clauses (who, whose, which, where)
- While, whereas
- Time (while, as, before, after, until, as soon as)
- Manner (as)
- Cause, condition, concession (because, in order that, if, unless, although)
- Projection (state, suggest, argue that, think, believe)

This is the toolkit to indicate the logical links between concepts (cause/effect; sequence).

Toolkit 3 – Noun Groups



Purpose

To discuss abstract concepts

Features

Noun groups use of *headnouns* (Continued *exposure* to such chemicals can lead to reduced *functioning* of the auto-immune system.)

Modifiers

- Prepositional phrase (of the auto-immune system, in the lab, at the top)
- Adjective (difficult, complicated)
- Relative clauses (who, which, whose, that)

Nominalisation

- Verb→noun (to formulate→formulation)
- Adjective→noun (complex→complexity)

This is the toolkit to express the content of your discipline, including the technical words.

Toolkit 4 – Evaluation



Purpose

To present views persuasively; to show caution and tentativeness when presenting arguments or discussing results; to express a critical stance on sources used in the text

Features

Hedging and Modality

- Modals (may, might, could)
- Adverbs (perhaps, probably)
- Quantifiers (some, many)
- Verbs (appear to + v, seems to + v, tend to + v)
- Other expressions (is likely to + v)

Reporting structures (The study concludes, As X argues, According to Y)

Endorsing and distancing

- Evaluative reporting verbs (claim, suggest, demonstrate)
- Intensifying and limiting adverbs (clearly, unambiguously, strongly/somewhat, to a certain extent)
- Concessive clauses (although, while)

This is the toolkit to critically evaluate the concepts, to present results and discussions, and to persuade the reader.

Task 2

To familiarise yourself with the toolkits, we will use them to analyse a text.

Read 'The Value of a College Degree' below.

Highlight the main points and note the benefits stated.

ERIC Identifier: ED470038 Publication Date: 2002-00-00 Author: Porter, Kathleen
Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education Washington DC.

The Value of a College Degree

(1) The escalating cost of higher education is causing many to question the value of continuing education beyond high school. Many wonder whether the high cost of tuition, the opportunity cost of choosing college over full-time employment, and the accumulation of thousands of dollars of debt is, in the long run, worth the investment. The risk is especially large for low-income families who have a difficult time making ends meet without the additional burden of college tuition and fees. In order to determine whether higher education is worth the investment, it is useful to examine what is known about the value of higher education and the rates of return on investment to both the individual and to society.

(2) There is considerable support for the notion that the rate of return on investment in higher education is high enough to warrant the financial burden associated with pursuing a college degree. Though the earnings differential between college and high school graduates varies over time, college graduates, on average, earn more than high school graduates. According to the Census Bureau, over an adult's working life, high school graduates earn an average of \$1.2 million; associate's degree holders earn about \$1.6 million; and bachelor's degree holders earn about \$2.1 million (Day & Newburger, 2002). These sizeable differences in lifetime earnings put the costs of college study in realistic perspective. Most students today-- about 80 percent of all students-- enroll either in public 4-year colleges or in public 2-year colleges. According to the U.S. Department of Education report, Think College Early, a full-time student at a public 4-year college pays an average of \$8,655 for in-state tuition, room and board (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002). A full-time

student in a public 2-year college pays an average of \$1,359 per year in tuition (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002). These statistics support the contention that, though the cost of higher education is significant, given the earnings disparity that exists between those who earn a bachelor's degree and those who do not, the individual rate of return on investment in higher education is sufficiently high to warrant the cost.

(3) College graduates also enjoy benefits beyond increased income. A 1998 report published by the Institute for Higher Education Policy reviews the individual benefits that college graduates enjoy, including higher levels of saving, increased personal/professional mobility, improved quality of life for their offspring, better consumer decision making, and more hobbies and leisure activities (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998). According to a report published by the Carnegie Foundation, non-monetary individual benefits of higher education include the tendency for postsecondary students to become more open-minded, more cultured, more rational, more consistent and less authoritarian; these benefits are also passed along to succeeding generations (Rowley and Hurtado, 2002). Additionally, college attendance has been shown to "decrease prejudice, enhance knowledge of world affairs and enhance social status" while increasing economic and job security for those who earn bachelor's degrees (Ibid.)

(4) Research has also consistently shown a positive correlation between completion of higher education and good health, not only for oneself, but also for one's children. In fact, "parental schooling levels (after controlling for differences in earnings) are positively correlated with the health status of their children" and "increased schooling (and higher relative income) are correlated with lower mortality rates for given age brackets" (Cohn & Geske, 1992). A number of studies have shown a high correlation between higher education and cultural and family values, and economic growth. According to Cohn and Geske (1992), there is the tendency for more highly educated women to spend more time with their children; these women tend to use this time to better prepare their children for the future. Cohn and Geske (1992) report that "college graduates appear to have a more optimistic view of their past and future personal progress."

(5) Public benefits of attending college include increased tax revenues, greater workplace productivity, increased consumption, increased workforce flexibility, and decreased reliance on government financial support (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998). While it is clear that investment in a college degree, especially for those students in the lowest income brackets, is a financial burden, the long-term benefits to individuals as well as to society at large, appear to far outweigh the costs.

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Task 3

‘The Value of a College Degree’ is an example of a general academic text.

Let’s consider **how the text is organised**.

Annotate the text for the **main ideas** and **supporting information** in each paragraph.

Use the table below to highlight the main ideas and supporting information.

Para	Structural Features: Main idea/Supporting Info	Language Features
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Task 4

Let's consider **the language of the text** by using the four toolkits.

Search the text to find examples of some of the features of the toolkits.

Use the table on page 12 to note the **language features**.

As this is the first time you have used the linguistic toolkits, you might not be able to identify many features, or you might see only some, but not others.

As the semester progresses, you will become more used to noticing these features in your reading and you will see how they contribute to academic writing. You should also try to use them in your writing.

The CAs for ES1103 will give you ample opportunity to become more familiar with the purpose and features of the toolkits, and to develop your skills in using them.