

Effective Academic Writing

AWRC II F2022



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- 1. Be formal**
- 2. Be precise**
- 3. Be concise**
- 4. Be careful with I, WE and YOU**
- 5. Use subjects effectively**

1. Be formal

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AVOID:

1. Contracted forms

2. Spoken language

3. Punctuation showing your attitude

1.1. Avoid contracted forms

BAD	GOOD
Mustn't	Must not
Wasn't	Was not
Isn't	Is not

1.2. Avoid spoken words

BAD	GOOD
The results have been pretty good .	The results have been encouraging .
As a result, I obtained a huge number of unneeded connections that I could not filter out.	As a result, I obtained numerous unneeded connections that I could not filter out.

1.3. Avoid punctuation showing your attitude

BAD	GOOD
Turnout in the election was less than 20 percent!	Surprisingly, turnout in the election was less than 20 percent.

2. Be precise

2. Be precise

1. Avoid vague words

2. Use complete lists

2.1. Avoid vague words

Avoid words, such as *big (bigger, biggest), good, thing, nice*:

BAD
big
good
nice

2.2. Use complete lists

Avoid *etc.* instead of a full list:

BAD	GOOD
The periodic table divides elements into metals, non-metals, etc.	The periodic table divides elements into metals, non-metals, and semi-metals or metalloids.

3. Be concise

3. Be concise

AVOID:

1. Phrasal verbs

2. Negatives

3. Redundant pairs

4. Redundant modifiers

5. Metaconcepts

3.1. Avoid phrasal verbs

BAD	GOOD
The committee brought up this issue during the meeting.	The committee raised this issue during the meeting.

3.2. Avoid negatives

BAD	GOOD
not many	few
did not accept	rejected
did not stay	left

3.3. Avoid redundant pairs

BAD	GOOD
any and all	any
First and foremost,	First,
each and every	each
and so on, and so forth	and so on

3.4. Avoid redundant modifiers

BAD	GOOD
completely finish	finish
future plans	plans
basic fundamentals	fundamentals
in order to	to

3.5. Avoid metaconcepts

Concepts about concepts

- approach, assumption, concept, condition, context, framework, issue, level, model, perspective, process, prospect, role, strategy, subject, tendency, and variable.

3.5. Avoid metaconcepts

BAD	GOOD
The re-factoring strategy seemed to be ineffective.	Re-factoring seemed to be ineffective.
The process of data generation is explained with the following plan:	Data generation is explained with the following plan:

4. Be careful with I, WE, and YOU

4. Be careful with I, WE, and YOU

1. How to use I

2. How to use WE

3. How to use YOU

4.1. How to use I

Use I:

- to describe research steps;
- to state what you will do in a chapter/section.

BAD	GOOD
The results were compiled after they were collected.	I collected and compiled the results.
The author reviewed the literature.	I have reviewed the literature.

4.1. How to use I

Do not use I:

- to state opinions;
- to cite credible sources
- to support an argument.

BAD	GOOD
I think it is likely that mobile phone technology will be used increasingly in education.	Educators are likely to use mobile phone technology increasingly.

4.2. How to use WE

Use WE: to refer to the coauthors as a group

BAD	GOOD
As behaviorists, the authors tend to dispute ...	As behaviorists, we tend to dispute ...

4.2. How to use WE

Do not use WE to group yourself with your readers

BAD	GOOD
We can stop obesity in our society through moderate activity.	Moderate activity can reduce the risk of obesity.

4.3. How to use YOU

Do NOT use YOU. Replace it with a concrete noun.

BAD	GOOD
You can see the results in Table 3.	Table 3 shows the results.

5. Use subjects effectively

5. Be careful with the subjects

1. Avoid nominalization

2. Avoid passive voice

3. Use actors or concrete nouns as subjects

4. Place subjects close to the beginning of the sentence

5. Place verbs close to the subjects

5.1. Avoid nominalizations

- Nominalizations – nouns made of verbs or adjectives
- Do not use nominalizations for subjects combined with any form of “BE”

BAD	GOOD
Optimization of our work force is a key goal of our company.	Our company primarily aims at optimizing our work force.

How to spot a nominalization?

1. Can you change a noun into a verb or into an adjective?

2. If yes, it is a nominalization.

utilization – **use**

development – **develop**

redness – **red**

5.2. Avoid passive voice

BAD	GOOD
The external temperature is measured by a special device	A special device measures the external temperature.
The papers were graded by the teacher.	The teacher graded the papers.

When to use passives?

- 1. when describing research methods**
- 2. when the actor is unknown or unimportant**
- 3. when you want to hide the actor**
- 4. to ensure the “known-new contract”**

5.3. Use actors or concrete nouns for subjects

Avoid:

- Expletives THERE IS/ARE and IT IS/WAS
- Isolated demonstrative pronouns THIS /THAT / THOSE /THESE
- Gerundial phrases

5.3.1. Avoid expletives: THERE IS/ARE

BAD	GOOD
There is an easy way to determine the external temperature.	The external temperature is easy to determine.
There are three ways to solve this problem.	This problem has three solutions.

3.5.1. Avoid expletives: IT IS/WAS

BAD	GOOD
It is possible that the external temperature exceeds 23 degrees Celsius.	The external temperature can exceed 23 degrees Celsius.
It is clear that the data can be retrieved from different sources.	Clearly , the data can be retrieved from different sources.

5.3.2. Avoid isolated THIS / THAT / THOSE / THESE

BAD	GOOD
That seemed to be a mistake.	That tactics seemed to be a mistake.
Erhmann writes, “do not distress yourself with dark imaginings”. This is important to consider.	Erhmann writes, “do not distress yourself with dark imaginings”. This idea is important to consider.

5.3.3. Avoid gerundial phrases

BAD	GOOD
Eating uncooked horse meat can cause health problems with students.	If students eat uncooked horse meat , they can have health problems.

5.4. Place subjects close to the beginning of the sentence

BAD	GOOD
<p>Although reasonable under certain unfortunate circumstances not provided in this paper for the sake of clarity, this solution should generally be avoided.</p>	<p>This solution should be generally avoided. However, it can be reasonable under certain unfortunate circumstances not provided in this paper for the sake of clarity.</p>

5.5. Place verbs close to the subject

BAD	GOOD
<p>Lecturers in the electronics department of the university where interviews took place took a similar view to those in biology.</p>	<p>The interviews took place both in the electronics and in the biology departments of the university. In both departments, the lecturers took a similar view.</p>

References

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