

Academic style in writing tape script

This video will introduce you to academic style in writing.

So, what does it mean to write academically?

Many new students wonder about this. Some may get feedback that their writing is too casual or conversational. It's too *informal*.

Others try to be complex and use long words, so their writing becomes too grand and hard to understand. It's too *formal*.

Academic writing is neither of those things.

Let's look at an analogy to explain.

Here you can see three people going to a job interview. Who do you think is dressed most appropriately for the workplace?

If you think number three, you'd be right.

Let's take number one. This person is too casual. If we relate this to writing, we might say that some people write too casually or conversationally. That is, they write like they speak.

When we write academically, we avoid

1. Personal pronouns, like you
2. Contractions, like should've they're or we're
3. Abbreviations for words like uni or 1st
4. Text-speak like LOL or IMHO
5. Strong emotive words like AWFUL
6. And we never use slang, like *flat out* or *figure out*

Let's take number two. This person is too formal. If we relate this to writing, we might say that some people try to write in a way that is too clever or pretentious. That means their writing becomes a bit pompous and it's probably not very easy to read.

When we write academically, we avoid things like:

1. Unnecessary padding, like using two words that mean the same thing like, *carefully and meticulously*
2. Using long, obscure words like *pedagogues* or *manuscription*. This can be a problem, because if we use a thesaurus, we could choose a word with a slightly different meaning. Also, simpler words like *tutors* or *writing* may be clearer for your reader.
3. Using noun forms like *disclosure* and *improvement* when verbs like *disclose* or *improve* would be more direct and succinct.
4. Using long phrases when a single word is clearer. For example, *in the fullness of time* could be replaced with *later*, or even better, with a specific time, like *in June*.
5. Using long, overly complex sentence structures. You will see complex sentences in published academic papers, but these can be hard to understand. As a student and an academic writer, always aim to be clear and direct.

Okay, Let's now take number three. Academic writing should be clear and direct.

Think of it like this: speakers need listeners. So, writers need readers. Always write with your reader in mind.

Remember this:

At university, you write to *inform* or *persuade* your readers. You **don't** write to *impress* your readers. Don't use complex language if it will make it hard for your reader to understand you.

This material will help you to develop a clear and appropriate academic writing style. If you would like more help, visit the Language and Learning Advisors page for more information and resources.