

## 2. Characteristics of Academic Writing

Most academic disciplines employ their own stylistic conventions. However, all academic writing shares certain characteristics.

**2.1. Clear and limited focus.** The focus of an academic paper- the argument or research question- is established early by the thesis statement. Every paragraph and sentence of the paper connects back to that primary focus.

It's important to use clear and precise language to ensure that your reader knows exactly what you mean. This means that you should avoid vague language.

The best way to familiarize yourself with the kind of jargon used in your field of research is to read published papers.

**2.2. Logical structure.** All academic writing follows a logical, straightforward structure. In its simplest form, academic writing includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

**The introduction** provides background information, lays out the scope and direction of the essay, and states the thesis.

**The body paragraphs** support the thesis statement, with each body paragraph elaborating on one supporting point.

**The conclusion** refers back to the thesis, summarizes the main points, and highlights the implications of the paper's findings. Each sentence and paragraph logically connects to the next in order to present a clear argument.

**2.3. Evidence-based arguments:** Academic writing requires well-informed arguments. Statements must be supported by evidence, whether from scholarly sources (as in a research paper), results of a study or experiment, or quotations from a primary text (as in a literary analysis essay). The use of evidence gives credibility to an argument.

The challenge is to convince the reader of the validity of your opinion through a well-documented, coherent, and logically structured piece of writing. This is particularly important when proposing solutions to problems.

**2.4. Impersonal tone.** The goal of academic writing is to convey a logical argument from an objective standpoint. Academic writing avoids emotional, inflammatory, or otherwise biased language. Whether you personally agree or disagree with an idea, it must be presented accurately and objectively in your paper.

Excessive use of personal nouns [e.g., I, me, you, us] may lead the reader to believe the study was overly subjective.

Note that personal nouns are generally used in the discussion part of a paper because this is where you as the author interpret and discuss your results.

### 2.5. Formal and unbiased

To avoid bias, it's important to represent the work of other researchers and the results of your own research fairly and accurately. This means clearly outlining your methodology and being honest about the limitations of your research.

In addition, you should avoid informal language, including slang, contractions, clichés, and conversational phrases.