

INTRODUCTION TO ACADEMIC WRITING

- Writing skill expectations change as a student moves from school to college.
- Academic writing skill is needed for success in higher education.
- Only through constant and deliberate practice one can master academic writing.
- Academic writers are not expected to make subjective judgments, categorical remarks and use information from unreliable sources.
- Writing tasks assigned to students at college/university is referred to as academic writing. • Academic writing is formal and follows a well defined pattern.
- Non academic writing is informal and without any predictable pattern.
- Students, teachers and researchers who engage in academic writing at college or university are called 'scholars' or 'academicians'.
- Papers sent for publication in a scholarly journal undergo peer reviewing and evaluation.
- Academicians are expected to adhere to certain basic ethics, and they have to conduct themselves in a responsible manner.

Academic writing:

- Formal language, use technical and formal vocabulary
- Signal words to indicate organizational pattern of the work.
- Formal introductory paragraph containing statement.
- Body paragraphs are long and with each sentence serving a specified purpose
- Elaborate explanation of the central idea or argument with supporting expert sources
- Referencing
- Others ideas and answers incorporated to in body paragraphs as direct quotations, paraphrasing.
- Author's stand on the issue raised in the essay, but without expressions like 'I think', 'In my view'.
- Tables
- Precise figures.

Non-Academic writing:

- Simple language, use informal phrases and slangs.
- Language use suitable for a larger audience
- Short introduction, suiting the subject a thesis matter of the work.
- Main body paragraphs are shorter in length like topic sentence, substantiation and transition.
- Ideas are elaborated well, but not supported with expert sources.
- Personal stories or impressions and no referencing.
- Direct quotations from others without citing sources.
- Author expresses opinion directly as 'I'

Essay

Essay includes introductory paragraph, body paragraph and concluding paragraph. The introductory paragraph is the first paragraph of your essay. Introduction aims at grabbing the attention of your reader and makes a few statements on background, the main ideas and outline of your essay. Body paragraph is the main paragraph of an essay. Each paragraph in an essay works like a link in a chain, contributing to the wholeness of the work. However paragraphs are to be written in such a way as to make them stand independent of the totality of the essay. Concluding paragraph is the last paragraph of the essay. You are expected to restate your thesis statement given in the introduction, summarize the points through which you explained your thesis statement in the body paragraphs and finish your essay with a concluding remark.

There are three types of sentences in an academic essay. They are topic sentence, substantiation, conclusion or transition. Each sentence in a paragraph has a function. Topic sentence expresses the main idea of each paragraph. It contains the focus of the paragraph and tells readers what the paragraph is going to be about. Although the topic sentence can be located anywhere in a paragraph in academic essays, it is usually located at the beginning of each paragraph. Successful academic writing requires claims and arguments to be substantiated with evidence from research or other authoritative sources. This practice goes to the heart of academic writing because it reflects the objectivity of your writing. Concluding sentence summarizes the points that you have made. It should tie the whole paragraph together without simply rephrasing the topic sentence. At the end of your concluding paragraph your concluding sentence should wrap up your entire argument and provide guidance to your readers about what to do with the information you have given them.

main steps in planning an essay

Pre-writing, writing and revising are the major steps in planning an essay.

1. Pre-writing

Pre-writing activities are the preliminary steps before starting to write your essay.

- Understanding the question/topic, purpose and audience.
- Use pre-writing techniques like brainstorming, clustering/mind-mapping to list and organize your ideas.
- If your instructor has given you a question convert the question into a topic. If the topic is given by the instructor convert the topic into a question. If only a key word is given, you are required to frame topic as well as the question.

- Identify the sources and gather relevant materials.
- Prepare an outline; decide the logical ordering of ideas/cluster ideas for paragraphs.
- Identify the thesis statement.

2. Writing

- Frame the thesis statement and list the main points.
- Draft the introductory paragraph.
- Draft each body paragraphs with supporting points, substitution and transition.
- Drafts the concluding paragraph.

3. Revising

- Edit and revise your essay: check for inconsistencies, tone, use of taboo words and expressions, grammar, spelling, punctuation and referencing.

Letter Writing

Letter writing is an essential communication skill. In today's internet and email driven society, the need to write a letter arises less often than in the past. However, it is still necessary to present a formal letter to obtain information, to apply for a job, to write a complaint letter or simply to express your opinion in an effective manner. Before writing a letter you have to draw up certain things such as ;

- Decide the topic.
- Think about the receiver.
- Identify the purpose of writing
- Gather information you need and do additional research, if it is required.
- Make a simple outline of the points you need to cover.

Types of letters

Generally there are two types of letters; formal and informal or personal.

Informal letters have one or more of the following purposes;

- ♣ To thank, to give news, to apologize, to invite to reply another letter.
- ♣ General format of an informal letter.
- ♣ Write your address and the date at the top right hand corner of the page.
- ♣ Begin with a salutation or greeting like 'Dear....'
- ♣ Set the main purpose of your letter in the beginning itself.
- ♣ No need to follow punctuation rules
- ♣ Use the last paragraph to send good wishes and mention your future meeting and so on.
- ♣ Finish letter with a farewell message like, love, best wishes, regards, see you soon, all my love etc.

The structure of a Formal letter

- All the lines aligned towards the left margin
- The first information you put on a formal letter is your name, address and the date.
- Then type the recipient's address. Use their full name and include their title (Mr., Mrs., Dr. etc.) If you don't know the person, begin with the position of the person
 - Skip a line and write your salutation(Dear Sir,/madam/ Dear Manager etc)
 - Begin the letter with the purpose and reference if any
 - Keep to the point, be brief and give all the necessary information
 - Conclude the letter with 'Yours Sincerely' or Sincerely.
 - After the complimentary close , skip three lines and write your full name

Cover letters

A cover letter is a one- page document that, along with your CV, is sent with your job application. A strong cover letter makes your application stand out. The basic format of a cover letter Every cover letter should be included; • Your contact information and date • Employer's contact information. • Paragraph 1: - reason of writing – • Paragraph2: your offers to them • Paragraph 3: What happened next • Closing.

Writing summaries

What is a summary? A summary is condensed version of a book, article or other piece of writing. It is not a rewritten form of the original. To write a summary, use your own words to express briefly the main idea and relevant details of the piece you have read. The purpose of writing a summary is to give the basic ideas of the original reading.

When preparing to write a summary; → Understand the material you are working with. → Try to identify the purpose of the reading. → Identify what type of text you are dealing → Skim the text and identify the main idea of the text, noting in your mind the titles and subheadings and highlight the important points → Read with who, what, when, where, and why and how question in mind and take notes. → Write down main points in your own words. → Go through the process again, making changes as appropriate.

Main requirements for writing summary

- The summary should cover the original as a whole
- The material should be presented in a neutral fashion
- The summary should be the condensed version of the material presented in your own words.