

CHARACTERS OF GOOD ACADEMIC WRITING

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Introduction

Being unique species human being, we have ability to think and express through speech or writing. These skills can be developed. Writing is a skill which help us to record. There are different types of writing fictional writing, imaginary writing, poetry writing, non-fictional writing etc. Academic writing is different from other type of writing.

“In academic writing it is a well-established trend and responsibility to share our gathered knowledge via writing essay, passage, dissertation, thesis, research/review article, short notes, books, abstracts, digital writing/OER.”

Academic writing in English has a unique style – it is formal and uses particular language standards that you need to learn. Here in this article basic traits in academic writing are discussed.

Basic traits in Academic Writing:

In all types of writing following are the basic traits:

- Clarity
- Completeness
- Logic
- Technicality
- Sequencing

In academic writing all the above traits are compulsory as well as there is **NO PLACE FOR UNAMBIGUITY** and **THE READER FRIENDLYNESS** is the key point in academic writing.

As earlier mentioned readership is always the main focus of academic writing. If the reader who are going to decide right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate as readers are judges in academic writing, academic writing should be reader friendly.

Academic writing is like a different culture of writing with its own language.

“It is as it is because that is the way it has developed through centuries of use by practitioners. So, it has to be learned. No one speaks (or write) academic English as first language (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1994, p8).”

So, all are non-native for academic English.

In academic writing following are pre requisite or basic requirements.

- **Critical reading:** In reading, we just absorb the idea or understand it while in critical reading we go through a process of analysis, interpretation and evaluation. After reading we conclude the text as summary but in case of critical reading we interpret, describe the text.

- **Awareness to Language:** Language is the second important part of academic writing. The most interesting fact about language is that you're doing with language (output) is a reflection of language you have absorbed (input). **So to write better, you have to read the best.**
- **Good knowledge of grammar:** vocabulary and mechanics is also a main part of academic writing which helps in clear demonstration of our ideas in a sophisticated and precise way.

Other unique required traits of Academic Writing are

- Rational, logical, sequential flow and reader friendliness.
- The purpose of writing should be argumentary.
- Academic credibility of content is very important.
- Connecting ideas and cohesive writing style is a prime requirement in academic writing.

“Readers of scientific papers do not read them to assess them they read them to learn from them what is needed is more simplicity not more sophistication!” Aim “to inform not to impress.”

- Jean Margaret, quoted by Carolyn Brimley, Norris, Language Services, University of Helsinki, 2018 in academic writing in English.

So, following are the basic rules of academic writing

- Keep it simple....
- Keep it clear/ non-ambiguous
- Keep it short/concise
- Keep it reader friendly
- Do not try to impress by ornamental English, just communicate for better understanding.

To make it simpler and reader friendly we need to connect ideas and sentences with proper cohesion and coherence.

Cohesion and coherence are the attributes of a good and effective piece of writing. It is derived from word “cohere” means to join together.

Coherence means the connection of ideas at the idea level and cohesion means the connection of ideas at the sentence level. Thus, coherence means connection of ideas and cohesion means logical connection between sentences.

Cohesion and coherence needed for presenting the objectives or the ideas in easy to understand and easy to follow manner. For connecting these ideas or main points for making the easy to understand and follow reducing the interpretive burden of the readers following the outline of manuscript or roadmap of ideas.

So, cohesive writing is easy to follow reader friendly and effective in communicating the research ideas.

“When we talk about coherence in writing we talk about how the piece of writing moves through ideas.” Cohesion and coherence should be achieved at three levels

1. Within a sentence
2. Between sentences (within paragraphs)
3. Between paragraphs

Thus, there should logical connection within the sentence and between sentences.

There is one more important trait of academic writing that it should be **free from plagiarism**. As earlier mentioned human beings are unique species having great power to express and to write “With great power comes the greater sense of responsibility” so it should be done ethically sound. We must understand that academic writing demands zero tolerance towards plagiarism.

Let us understand what plagiarism is first and then ways of avoiding it

Plagiarism is academic/literary theft (intentionally or unintentionally). Plagiarism occurs when someone uses other person’s language, ideas or any other type of material, figures graphs when do not belong to common original knowledge without its acknowledgement.

According to the Merriam, Webster online dictionary, to plagiarize means to-

“Steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own.

Use (another's production) without crediting the source.

Commit literary theft. Present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source”

Following are the types of plagiarism:

1. Direct plagiarism: word to word copying of paragraphs
2. Mosaic: Patch work
3. Self-plagiarism: copying from one’s own previous work
4. Accidental plagiarism: while doing work neglecting sources
5. Intentional plagiarism
6. Unintentional plagiarism

Plagiarism can be detected using certain software and the work may be rejected if found plagiarized.

To avoid plagiarism:

One should not take or reproduce any theory, idea or any other study material of another person without acknowledgment.

One must acknowledge the source whether in each case whether directly quoting, borrowing facts, paraphrasing of using other persons idea.

Thus we can avoid plagiarism for that we need to refer good quality, reliable resources in literature survey. Keep record of each source and arrange and organize the literature for further use.

In this way we have discussed the important traits of good academic writing.

Thus one can produce original academic work using above mentioned traits.

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