

## Key Skills in Academic Writing: A Summary

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This is a summary from the webinar on "Key Skills in Academic Writing" that was held on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2021. The recording video of the webinar is currently in embargo. For a full access to the video recording of the webinar, please kindly contact CRU at [cru\\_hpupm@upm.edu.my](mailto:cru_hpupm@upm.edu.my).



### Introduction

Academic writing is a unique genre of writing, which usually has an educational function that allows further elaboration and explanation. Essentially, academic writing is clear, concise, focused, structured and backed up by evidence to demonstrate understanding or perspectives in describing theories, processes and practices or to answer to a specific hypothesis or research question.

Some of the key features in academic writing include:



### Important Components in Academic Writing

#### 1) Language and Styles

Academic texts are generally characterised as **formal, objective and cautious**. In order to establish authority, authors will use language that is more formal than the language that is typically used in casual conversation or that which is used in other forms of writing such as emails, gossip magazines, blogs. In academic writing, language is also used to present claims or conclusions in an appropriately cautious and qualified manner.

Features	Journalistic text	Academic text
<b>Readers</b>	General public/ laypersons	People with expertise, academics, researchers
<b>Purpose</b>	To engage interest, to entertain	To extend knowledge, to discuss ideas
<b>Layout</b>	Depends on type of publication, informal	Specific format, headed section, in-text citations, list of references
<b>Starting point</b>	Hot news/ viral issues	Research gap leading to research questions
<b>Information presented</b>	Through feelings or images	Through explanation, evidence
<b>Sources of information</b>	Personal experiences, words of mouth	Published work of academics, carefully referenced
<b>Language</b>	Informal, conversational language	Formal, academic and cautious language

## 2) Voice

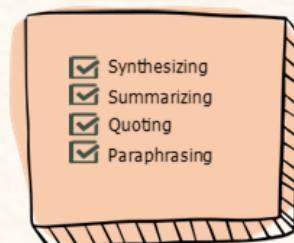
Characteristically, academic writing has an objective tone: that is, the language of a written text sounds independent from the writer and reader. An objective tone can be achieved with impersonal language.

Personal language is usually avoided in academic writing because it is subjective and therefore may decrease the authority of the text. Some of the examples of personal language include:

- Using personal pronouns such as "*I think*", "*you should*", "*my opinion*"
- Judgemental words that indicate feelings such as "*I am convinced*", "*I dislike*"
- Words that emotive such as "*terrible*", "*horrific*"

### Writing in Your Own Words

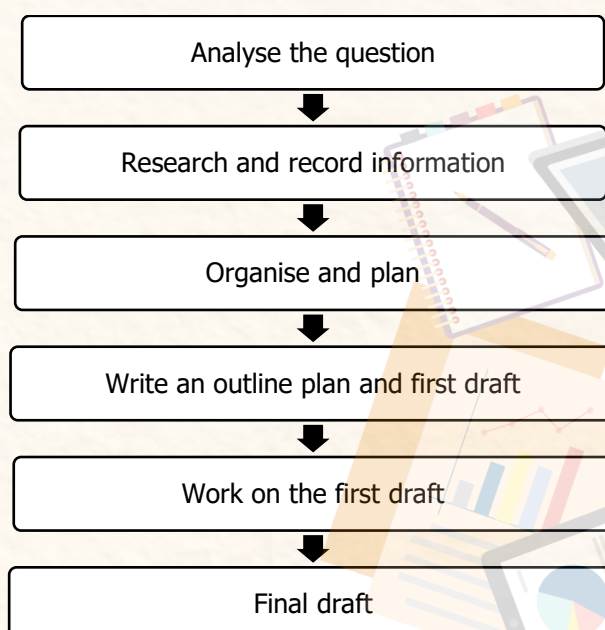
Preparing your writings or your findings based on your reading and your evidence into your own words whilst clearly acknowledging your sources is the key to avoiding plagiarism. There are several ways to include literature findings or research findings into writing:



In addition, academic writing also demonstrates arguments supported by evidence (assertions do not constitute an argument and your opinions are not evidence). It also requires authors to be critical to determine whether the evidence available justifies the conclusions that are drawn from it.

### Important Step-by-step Process in Academic Writing

There is no "right way" or "wrong way" to write. Writing can be a very messy and fluid process, however, with careful planning, writing can be made easier and efficient. The following is a representation of commonly used steps in academic writing.



#### Reading Material

Do check out our webpage **Research@HPUPM** for additional important references and toolkits in academic writing, or click:

[https://hpupm.upm.edu.my/research\\_hpupm/research\\_toolkits\\_resources/academic\\_writing-59971](https://hpupm.upm.edu.my/research_hpupm/research_toolkits_resources/academic_writing-59971)