Academic Writing

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Improve your writing.....

Get better grades!

Academic Writing

- Different to everyday styles of writing
- A more formal style – demonstrates clear, thoughtful and reasoned ideas
- May be more objective, impersonal and cautious
- Should use formal English and specialist vocabulary according to the particular subject

Activity: page 1-2 in the booklet
Academic argument

- Most essays will require you to formulate an academic argument.

A good academic argument will:

- Present a view in a clear, logical way
- Show each stage of reasoning
- Include evidence and possible counter-arguments
- Be transparent and convincing
Essay structure

- Introduction: 10% (approx.)
- Body text: 75% (approx.)
- Conclusion: 15% (approx.)
Sentence structure and length

- **Order of the sentence (syntax)**

- **Fused sentences**

  She did really well at school she came top of her class this year.
  She did really well at school. She came top of the class this year.
  OR
  She did really well at school, coming top of the class again this year

- **Sentences being too short or too long**
Punctuation and grammar

Common mistakes:

- Incorrect use of colons and semi-colons, apostrophes and commas
- Confusing singular and plural
- Incorrect use of words such as, their and there, have and of or where and were.

Activity page 3 of booklet
Answer

- **Mistakes:** Some companies incorporate ethical behaviour into their workplace policies that means that they become part of the company culture.

- **Corrections:** Some companies incorporate ethical behaviour into their workplace policies which means that they become part of the company culture.
Using informal words and phrases can make your writing sound more ‘everyday’ and less academic.

When you have written a sentence, really think about the way it sounds and ask yourself is this sentence in a style more like how you would speak, or more formal and objective?

Activity: Page 4 of booklet
Answer

Mistakes: *I mean, it seems like all this* business and ethics *stuff is really about* big companies *taking responsibility for their own actions* and stuff because then *they will treat* their customers with a bit more respect.

Corrected sentence:

*The business and ethics notion refers to large companies taking responsibility for their actions resulting in customers feeling more respected.*
Poor use of vocabulary and using unnecessary words

- Poor use of vocabulary means using words that are more informal and less formal or subject specific.

- Conversely using synonyms to make the words sound more academic or formal can have a negative affect on the overall academic style as the sentence can be too complicated or doesn’t make sense.

- Try and use vocabulary which is clear and concise.

Example: page 4
Generalisations/making assumptions

- Making generalisations or grand claims in your academic writing should be avoided.

- You can make reasoned points and arguments as long as you have the evidence or literature to back them up.

- Always be cautious with your points and evidence - avoid deterministic points and try to show counter-arguments.
Incorrect referencing within the text

- To produce a well argued and structured piece of academic writing you must develop the ability to introduce and discuss the opinions of other experts in your subject correctly.

- If you are bringing in an author directly always use their surname followed by the year the particular work was published (in brackets).

- When you start introducing their point of view or opinion, make an informed choice of what or how they say, argue, claim, highlight, discuss that particular point.
Referencing Examples

- **According to** Smith (2003), managing a business successfully needs to rely on existing theories of management.

- **It has been claimed by** Potter (2011) that in order to market a business, there must always be a clear marketing strategy.

- Kinder (2013) **highlights** that it is not always the most expensive marketing strategies that are most effective.

- It could be argued that some theories of management are quite complex and confusing (Chen, 2012).
Additional Sources

- http://www.essex.ac.uk/myskills/How_to_improve_your_academic_writing.pdf
- http://library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.20.htm
- http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/studyadvice/studyresources/sta-academic.aspx
