

Academic Writing

English and Medical Terminology

Year 1

Feb 2021

Dr Bahn Agha

BDS, Msc, Phd, FHEA

Clinical Senior Lecturer

Pedodontics, Orthodontics And Prevention Dentistry Department

College of Dentistry, Mustansiriyah University

Outlines:

- Principles of Academic Writing
- Differences between a report and an essay
- Plagiarism
- Citation
- References

10 Principles of Academic Writing

1. Clear Purpose. The goal of your paper is to answer the question you posed as your topic. Your question gives you a purpose. The most common purposes in academic writing are to persuade, analyse/synthesize, and inform.

- [Persuasive purpose](#) In persuasive academic writing, the purpose is to get your readers to adopt your answer to the question. So you will choose one answer to your question, support your answer using reason and evidence, and try to change the readers' point of view about the topic. Persuasive writing assignments include argumentative and position papers.
- [Analytical purpose](#) In analytical academic writing, the purpose is to explain and evaluate possible answers to your question, choosing the best answer(s) based on your own criteria. Analytical assignments often investigate causes, examine effects, evaluate effectiveness, assess ways to solve problems, find the relationships between various ideas, or analyse other people's arguments. The "synthesis" part of the purpose comes in when you put together all the parts and come up with your own answer to the question. Examples of these assignments include analysis papers and critical analyses.
- [Informative purpose](#) In informative academic writing, the purpose is to explain possible answers to your question, giving the readers new information about your topic. This differs from an analytical topic in that you do not push your viewpoint on the readers, but rather try to enlarge the readers' view.

10 Principles of Academic Writing

2. Audience Engagement. As with all writing, academic writing is directed to a specific audience in mind. Unless your instructor says otherwise, consider your audience to be fellow students with the same level of knowledge as yourself. As students in the field, they are interested in your topic, but perhaps not so interested in reading a paper. So you will have to engage them with your ideas and catch their interest with your writing style. Imagine that they are also sceptical, so that you must use the appropriate reasoning and evidence to convince them of your ideas.

3. Clear Point of View. Academic writing, even that with an informative purpose, is not just a list of facts or summaries of sources. Although you will present other people's ideas and research, the goal of your paper is to show what you think about these things. Your paper will have and support your own original idea about the topic. This is called the thesis statement, and it is your answer to the question.

10 Principles of Academic Writing

4. Single Focus. Every paragraph (even every sentence) in your paper will support your thesis statement. There will be no unnecessary, irrelevant, unimportant, or contradictory information (Your paper will likely include contradictory or alternative points of view, but you will respond to and critique them to further strengthen your own point of view).

5. Logical Organization. Academic writing follows a standard organizational pattern. For academic essays and papers, there is an introduction, body, and conclusion. Each paragraph logically leads to the next one.

- The **introduction** catches the readers' attention, provides background information, and lets the reader know what to expect. It also has the thesis statement.
- The **body** paragraphs support the thesis statement. Each body paragraph has one main point to support the thesis, which is named in a topic sentence. Each point is then supported in the paragraph with logical reasoning and evidence. Each sentence connects to the one before and after it. The readers do not have to work to find the connection between ideas.
- The **conclusion** summarises the paper's thesis and main points and shows the reader the significance of the paper's findings.

10 Principles of Academic Writing

6. Strong Support. Each body paragraph will have sufficient and relevant support for the topic sentence and thesis statement. This support will consist of facts, examples, description, personal experience, and expert opinions and quotations.

7. Clear and Complete Explanations. This is very important! As the writer, you need to do all the work for the reader. The reader should not have to think hard to understand your ideas, logic, or organization. English readers expect everything to be done for them; your thoughts and thought processes should be clearly and completely explained.

8. Effective Use of Research. Your paper should refer to a variety of current, high-quality, professional and academic sources. You will use your research to support your own ideas; therefore, it must be integrated into your writing and not presented separately. That means that source material will be introduced, analysed, explained, and then cited.

10 Principles of Academic Writing

9. Correct APA Style. All academic papers should follow the guidelines of the American Psychological Association as found in Research and APA Style Guide 2010, regarding in-text citations, the reference list, and format.

10. Writing Style. Because this is your work, you should use your own words whenever possible. Do not try to write like a boring, overly formal scholarly article. Use the natural conversational style that you would use in the classroom. Your writing should be clear, concise, and easy to read. It is also very important that there are no grammar, spelling, punctuation, or vocabulary mistakes in academic writing. Errors convey to the reader that you do not care.

And finally, this rule will override all the principles:

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS OF YOUR INSTRUCTOR. Every instructor has a reason for giving you an assignment, and each instructor's requirements may differ. Follow your instructor's directions to get the most from an assignment.

Key differences between a report and an essay

1. Purpose

Reports are the **presentation and analysis of findings from practical research**. They begin with **an aim** (to investigate, to explore) and probably a **hypothesis** (a proposition that the research will test). Depending on the guidelines or purpose, a report may make **recommendations**.

Essays begin with a question and seek to **answer that question based on research** into existing theories and through the **writer's own evaluation**. An essay may include **results of practical research** but only in so far as it may help support the writer's conclusions.

Key differences between a report and an essay

2. Content

Reports are generally descriptive, reporting sequential events (experiments or fixed results from surveys etc). However, they involve an evaluation in either the conclusion or recommendations sections.

Essays can be descriptive, discursive, evaluative, etc. This is dependent on the process given in the essay question. Content usually involves a synthesis of knowledge gained from existing texts and from the author's own opinions and argument.

Key differences between a report and an essay

3. Format

- Both essays and reports use an **introduction and conclusion format**. The main content, findings, analysis etc. come inbetween.
- **A report** generally has a **fixed structure**. The choice of sections will depend on the purpose of your report and, while at university, the preferences of your tutor or department.

In an **essay**, the **thought process taken from the question dictates the structure** of the main body of an essay.

Parts of a Report

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Bibliography
- Appendices

Write this first before the rest
of the report

Differences between an academic Report and an Essay

	Report	Essay
The topic	based on reading and/or practical work May be: • a problem • a case study • an experiment	based on reading and critical thinking May be: • a question • a proposition
The purpose	to investigate, present and analyse information May be: to make recommendations	to articulate a well-argued response
The outcome	presentation of findings may recommend action or change	conclusion drawn from evaluation or argument may recommend action or change
The reader	May be: • lecturer • client • manager	lecturer

Differences between an academic Report and an Essay

	Report	Essay
The format	• sections with headings • headings numbered	• sections may include headings • headings not numbered
The content	• must include introduction, conclusion and references • may include recommendation • choice of other sections depends on purpose	• must include introduction, conclusion and references • choice of other sections depends on structure of argument
The style	• impersonal • objective	• impersonal • • can be subjective (based on evaluation)
Assessment	Success depends on: • the demonstration of good research skills • the objective presentation and analysis of relevant information	Success depends on: • how well the proposition is established • how one point relates to the next

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking the words, theories, creations or ideas of another person and passing them off as your own.

Plagiarism can be **deliberate** – copying a passage from a book or journal or pasting something from the internet into an assignment without referencing the original source.

You can also commit **inadvertent plagiarism** which is where you unintentionally repeat some of the information you have read in the course of your research. You must ensure you do **reference ALL material** that comes from another source so question yourself as to whether you have read the information elsewhere and go back to your sources to locate the reference.

Plagiarism can also result from **not referencing correctly**. You must ensure you know how to reference your work using the style advised by your tutor.

Plagiarism

Consequences

Plagiarism is a serious issue that can result in failing an assignment, failing the year or even having to leave the course.

To avoid plagiarism, make sure you include **references** within your assignment to **all** sources you use and then include full details of all the sources in a reference list at the end of your work.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism can occur in lots of different ways:

- copying a chunk of text from someone else's writing without citing the source
- paraphrasing what someone else said but not showing who said it or where the idea came from
- putting your references into your bibliography , but not indicating in the text of your paper where these sources are used
- copying anything that is created by someone else, such as images, tables, graphs, etc, into your paper and not naming the source
- copying from another student' s paper , or even from one of your own papers
- acquiring a complete essay from another source, such as buying it off the net. This **really** is academic misconduct!

Imprint it on your brain – Plagiarism is **always wrong**; there are no times when it is acceptable. If you use someone else's words or ideas, you must **always reference** them.

Citing your source within the text

As the name suggests, the citation in the text normally includes the name(s) (surname only) of the author(s) and the date of the publication. This information is usually included in brackets at the most appropriate point in the text.

Citation within the text:

Heritable differences in craniofacial structures have been shown between OSA patients and controls (Agha and Johal, 2017).

Bibliography (Reference list):

Agha B, Johal A. Facial phenotype in obstructive sleep apnea-hypopnea syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis. J Sleep Res 2017; 26: 122–131.

When a publication has several authors, It is usual to give the surname of the first author followed by ***et al.*** (an abbreviation of the Latin for 'and the others') although for works with just two authors both names may be given, as shown in the above example.

Research using techniques such as ICP-OES (optical emission spectrometry in inductively coupled plasma) or ICP-MS (inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry) may provide answers to questions related to the release of, for example, silver or zirconium ions from composites containing S–P (Sleibi et al, 2019).

References in an essay or report

At the end of your **essay** or **report** you should include a list of **references**. Such a list of **references** provides more details than just the name of the author and the year of publication. It's this list that allows identifying the work cited. Each work you cited in the **essay or report** is cited once, and listed in alphabetical order.

These details should include:

- surname(s) and initial(s) of the author(s);
- the date of publication;
- the title of the text;
- if it is a paper, the title of the journal and volume number;
- if it is a chapter of an edited book, the book's title and editor(s)
the publisher and place of publication*;
- the first and last page numbers if it is a journal article or a chapter in an edited book.

For particularly important points, or for parts of texts that you might wish to **quote** word for word, also include in your notes the specific page reference.

There are different styles of using references and bibliographies.

Referencing styles

There are many different referencing conventions in common use. Each department will have its own preferred format, and every journal or book editor has a set of 'house rules'. The commonly used formats, the '**author, date**' system. The most popular styles are:

MLA style: Agha, Bahn, and Ama Johal. "Facial phenotype in obstructive sleep apnea–hypopnea syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis." *Journal of sleep research* 26.2 (2017): 122-131.

APA style: Agha, B., & Johal, A. (2017). Facial phenotype in obstructive sleep apnea–hypopnea syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of sleep research*, 26(2), 122-131.

Harvard style: Agha, B. and Johal, A., 2017. Facial phenotype in obstructive sleep apnea–hypopnea syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of sleep research*, 26(2), pp.122-131.

Vancouver style: Agha B, Johal A. Facial phenotype in obstructive sleep apnea–hypopnea syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of sleep research*. 2017 Apr;26(2):122-31.

Book references

The simplest format, for a book reference, includes the following:

- the surnames and forenames or initials of both the authors;
- the date of publication;
- the book title;
- the place of publication;
- the name of the publisher.

Example:

Knapper, C.K. and Cropley, A. 1991: Lifelong Learning and Higher Education. London: Croom Helm.

Lecture References

Full references to unpublished oral presentations, such as lectures, usually include the speaker's name, the date of the lecture, the name of the lecture or of the lecture series, and the location:

Agha, B. 2020 (7 July): Cell, Tissue and Organ Terminology, Lecture 4. College of Dentistry, Al-Mustansiriyah University.

Web page or website Reference

Information on the internet changes rapidly and web pages move or are sometimes inaccessible meaning it can often be difficult to validate or even find information cited from the internet. When referencing web pages it is helpful to include details that will help other people check or follow up the information.

Little, J.W. and Parker, R. 2010. How to read a scientific paper.
[<http://www.owl.net.rice.edu/~cainproj/courses/HowToReadSciArticle.pdf>]. Accessed August 24, 2011.

i.e. Last name(s), initial(s) of the author(s) NB! in the same order as on the webpage/site*. Publication or last updated date. Title. [URL-address]. Accession date

*note that the "author" of a website often is an organization, a government or a university!

Sometimes the link is very long and then you may shorten the URL, but think of that you lose useful information included in the original link i.e. the name of governmental body or university responsible for the document.