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ROUTLEDGE

The Essentials of Academic Writing for International Students

Stephen Bailey

Second Edition



Praise for *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*

Academic Writing is organized in a way that makes sense for teaching writing skills. The content covers a diverse body of samples from various fields, so it works wonderfully for my undergrad or graduate students. I especially like the section on common language errors, which includes extra practice for students; there is a good balance between writing instruction and discrete skill practice. It isn't easy to find a text that addresses plagiarism in a way that is clear for students to understand, and this text does the job!

Ixchell Reyes, *University of Southern California, USA*

This book is an excellent example of inclusive teaching. It is aimed primarily at international students, but reaches further, as it is equally useful for British students and students who come from a more practice-focused background. It is also a strong companion to books on research methods that need a solid basis for academic skills. The clear structure, accessible content, and well thought through activities in this book, all give students the confidence to write effective academic work without the fear of breaking rules of plagiarism or academic malpractice. This is the book I recommend to all my students at the beginning of each academic year, independent of the subject I teach and the composition of my cohort.

Maria Lonsdale, *University of Leeds, UK*

Academic Writing is simply organised, allowing ease of access for beginner writers and specifically introducing them to the language needed to enter the conversations on academic writing.

Djuddah Leijen, *University of Tartu, Estonia*

The fifth edition of *Academic Writing* includes many new features which are extremely useful for all university students who are inexperienced in writing for academic purposes. The book provides both information on important aspects of academic writing and practice exercises which all students will find invaluable. It is a useful book for anyone who is new to writing for academic purposes, regardless of her level of proficiency in English.

Radhika Jaidev, *Singapore Institute of Technology, Singapore*

An excellent book that, although aimed at international students, would also benefit UK students who come from a more practice-focused background. Study skills tutors can use it to strengthen particular issues or areas of study that students might be struggling with.

Jan Beechey, *Dyslexia Review*

Praise for *Academic Writing for International Students of Business and Economics*

The book provides insight into writing quality and can be used in person or online by teachers or learners studying on their own. It is clear, accessible, objective, and user friendly, with a glossary, answer keys, and index, which can support autonomous, independent learning. Thus, the book provides several insights into the fundamental principles behind the art of writing, I highly recommend this volume, particularly to international students whose responsibilities include academic writing in business and economics.

Maria Claudia Nunes Delfino, *JALT Journal*

Praise for *Academic Writing for University Students*

This volume provides an accessible and thorough introduction to academic writing, with content relevant to students across a wide range of disciplines.

Benjamin Kooyman, *The Australian National University, Australia*

The Essentials of Academic Writing for International Students

Written to help international students write essays and reports for their English-language university courses, this key title covers the essentials needed to achieve academic writing success. An easy-to-follow course that builds writing confidence and can be used both in the classroom and for self-study, this second edition has been thoroughly revised and updated to contain relevant examples, explanations and exercises.

Split into two key areas, the first part explains and demonstrates every stage of essay writing, from choosing the best sources, reading and note-making, through to referencing and proof-reading. The second part explores key areas such as academic vocabulary and punctuation and is organised alphabetically for easy reference. A progress check at the end of each part allows students to assess their learning. All units are fully cross-referenced, and a complete set of answers to the practice exercises is included. There is also additional online support material available including a full set of teaching notes, more challenging exercises, revision material and links to other sources as well as interactive quizzes and videos to help develop knowledge. Additional features of the book include:

- Use of authentic academic texts from a wide range of disciplines
- Designed for self-study as well as classroom use
- Useful at both undergraduate and postgraduate level
- Fully updated, with sections on using electronic sources

All international students wanting to maximise their academic potential will find this practical, concise and easy-to-use book an invaluable guide to writing in English for their degree courses.

Stephen Bailey taught English for Academic Purposes at the University of Nottingham, UK. Previously he taught in Barcelona, Tokyo, Johor Bahru and Prague. His other books include *Academic Writing, A Handbook for International Students*, *Academic Writing for International Students of Business and Economics* and *Academic Writing for University Students*, all published by Routledge.

Online resources for all of Stephen Bailey's books have been compiled at:

academicwriting.routledge.com

The Essentials of Academic Writing for International Students

Second Edition

Stephen Bailey

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the students I have taught over the years, on Academic Writing courses both in Britain and abroad. Whatever their career choices – Law, Medicine, Engineering or Business – learning to write for academia is a challenging proposition. But it is their enthusiasm and interest that have motivated me to develop these materials and so have been the inspiration for this book.

Introduction

This second edition of *The Essentials of Academic Writing for International Students* has been written to help students who are not native speakers of English with their written academic work. The course can be used by both undergraduate and postgraduate students, since in either case their written work has the same requirements: to be objective, accurate, precise and fully referenced.

The course is designed to be used in a variety of learning situations: with a teacher in the classroom, on full-time or part-time language courses, or by students studying on their own.

Teachers do not expect international students to write perfect English, but students should consider that their academic course, at any level, provides an ideal chance to develop their writing skills, not only for academic success but also for their future career.

The book is divided into two parts:

Part	Topic	Main Application
1	The Writing Process and Writing Skills	Classroom use
2	Elements of Writing	Classroom use, self-study and reference

Part 1 is a step-by-step guide to the whole process of academic writing, in 12 units. Each stage of the process is linked to a key writing skill, for example Unit 6 on summarising and paraphrasing links this with finding synonyms. Each unit contains practice exercises, and an answer key to these is included at the end of the book. The emphasis throughout is on simple explanation and maximum student involvement through writing.

Part 2 consists of 12 units that explain key areas for writing accuracy such as academic vocabulary, using numbers and punctuation. These units can be used in conjunction with Part 1 or for self-study and reference, when required.

Note that *The Essentials of Academic Writing for International Students* uses authentic reading texts from a variety of disciplines (e.g. medicine, politics, law, engineering) that were selected to be of general interest.

Using the book

Instructions to students are printed like this:

- Choose the correct alternative in these sentences.

Cross-referencing to relevant sections in other units is shown thus:

- ▶ See **Unit 2.1 Academic Vocabulary: Nouns and Adjectives**

The index on page 231 can be used to find specific information.

While every effort has been made to make the book both accurate and relevant to students' needs, improvements can always be made, and I would be glad to receive any comments or suggestions for future editions from both students and teachers.

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Academic Writing Quiz

How much do you know about academic writing? Find out by doing this quiz, with a partner or by yourself.

1. An important difference between academic writing and other writing is that academic writing:
 - a) uses longer words
 - b) tries to be precise and unbiased
 - c) is harder to understand
2. Teachers frequently complain about students:
 - a) not answering the question given
 - b) not writing enough
 - c) writing in pencil
3. The purpose of an introduction is:
 - a) to give your aims and methods
 - b) to amuse the reader
 - c) to summarise your ideas
4. Making careful notes is essential for:
 - a) writing essays
 - b) revising for exams
 - c) all academic work
5. Paraphrasing a text means:
 - a) making it shorter and simpler
 - b) changing both vocabulary and structure
 - c) adding more detail
6. Paragraphs always contain:
 - a) six or more sentences
 - b) an example
 - c) a topic sentence

7. Proofreading means:
 - a) getting a friend to check your work
 - b) checking for minor errors
 - c) rewriting the text

8. Teachers expect students to adopt a critical approach to their sources:
 - a) sometimes
 - b) only at postgraduate level
 - c) always

9. A suitable synonym for 'a business' is:
 - a) a firm
 - b) an organisation
 - c) an outfit

10. 'Progress' and 'research' are both nouns. What kind of noun?
 - a) countable
 - b) uncountable
 - c) proper

11. An abstract is normally found:
 - a) on the back cover of books
 - b) before journal articles
 - c) in exam questions

12. When making notes you should always include:
 - a) your own ideas
 - b) a full reference
 - c) the date

13. A pie chart is used to show:
 - a) changes in time
 - b) proportion
 - c) the structure of an organisation

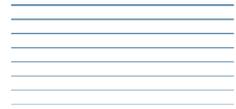
14. Acknowledgements are generally used:
 - a) to admit possible errors
 - b) to suggest more research
 - c) to thank people who helped

15. The conclusion to an article usually includes:
 - a) results of the study
 - b) additional data
 - c) references

Answers on page 186.

The Writing Process and Writing Skills

PART 1

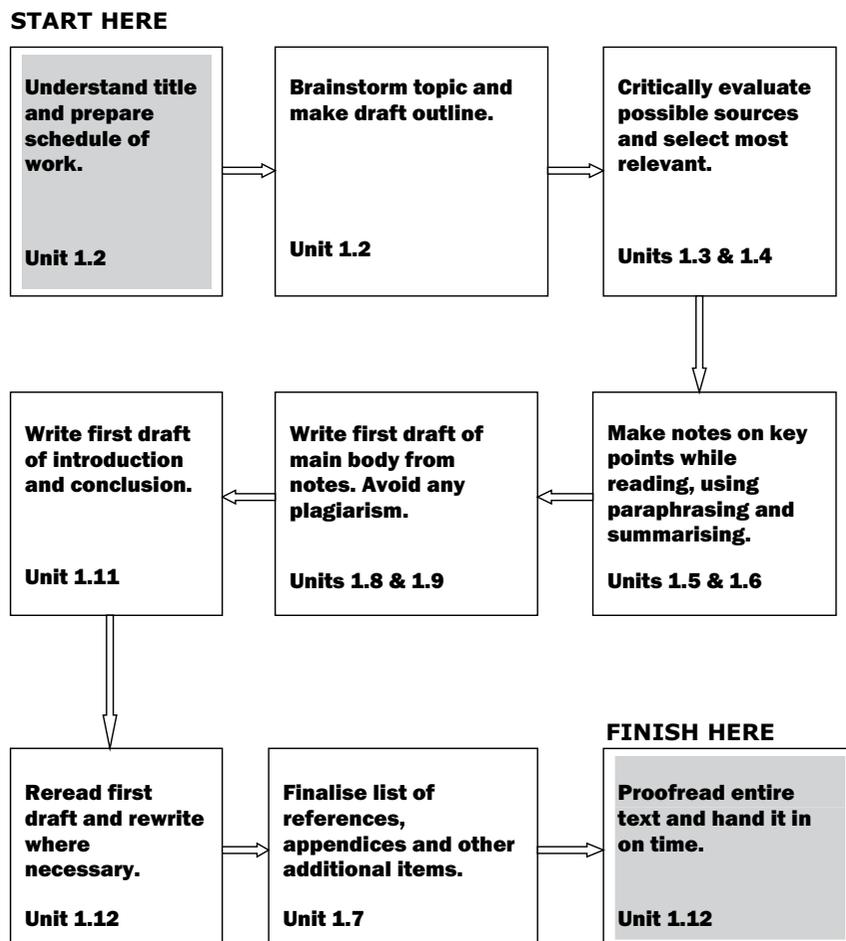


This first part of the course provides a step-by-step guide to the entire process of academic writing. It begins by clarifying some basic vocabulary, and then explains and practises the whole sequence from understanding an essay question to proofreading the final paper. Each unit integrates this process with a key writing skill, so that for instance finding synonyms is linked to summarising and paraphrasing.

The Writing Process Diagram

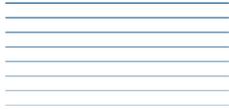
- Study the flowchart below, which illustrates the stages of academic writing.

Each stage is fully explained in the relevant units.



UNIT
1.1

The Writing Process
Writing Basics



Writing Skills
**Approaches to
Vocabulary**

Most academic courses test students through written assignments. These tasks include coursework, which may take weeks to write, and exam answers, which often have to be completed in an hour. This unit explains:

- The purpose of academic writing
- The main features of academic texts
- The names of different writing tasks
- The format of short and longer writing tasks
- The use of paragraphs

Key vocabulary issues that face students when reading academic texts include processing new vocabulary, understanding phrases from other languages and avoiding confusion between similar words, which are all practised in this section.

1 Why do we write?

Academic writing allows us to share ideas, discoveries and arguments with other students and researchers in our field, all over the world. Our purpose may be:

- to **report** on a piece of research the writer has conducted
- to **discuss** a subject of common interest and give the writer's view
- to **synthesise** research done by others on a topic
- to **answer** a question the writer has been given or chosen

■ Ask a partner if they can suggest any other reasons.

- _____
- _____

2 What makes academic writing different from other writing genres?

- Working with a partner, name as many writing genres (e.g. poetry) as you can. Then suggest answers to the question ‘What makes academic writing different from other writing genres?’
- Compare these two extracts from longer texts. What are the main differences between the two genres?
 - a) Carrying their few possessions in bags and shopping trolleys, hundreds of desperate storm victims in the Bahamas gathered at a port in Grand Abaco yesterday, hoping to get off the hurricane-blasted island amid rising frustration about the speed of the relief effort. ‘It’s chaos here,’ said Gee Rolle, who was waiting with his wife for a boat to the capital, Nassau. ‘It’s not livable for nobody. Only animals can live here.’
 - b) Despite the reputation of ‘engineering’ as a politically innocent, technocratic kind of expertise that is above partisan wrangles, the modern engineering profession has from its inception been bound up with power-infused processes of socio-spatial and material transformation. As Andrew Barry (2005:94) argues, ‘far from having anti-political effects the calculations of engineers [have] had political resonances’.

Extract (a) is from a newspaper, reporting an event in vivid language and emotional phrases (desperate storm victims), and using comments from local people. Extract (b) is from an academic article, and illustrates several common features of academic writing:

- rather formal words and phrases are used to explain complex ideas:
(*power-infused processes of socio-spatial and material transformation*)
- citation and quotation to support the writer’s argument:
(*As Andrew Barry (2005:94) argues ...*)
- tendency to use the passive:
(*been bound up with ...*)

Although there is no fixed standard of academic writing, and the style may vary from subject to subject, academic writing is clearly very different from the style of newspapers or novels.

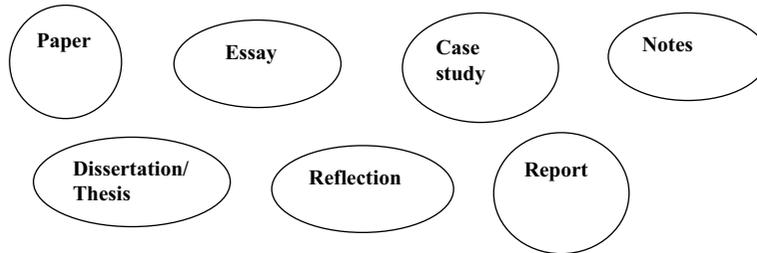
- What other differences can you think of? Working alone or in a group, list your ideas below about academic writing.

- *Impersonal style - generally avoids using ‘I’ or ‘we’*
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

3 Common types of academic writing

Look at these common types of written work produced by students.

- Discuss the differences between them with a partner.



- Match definitions a–g to the types above:
 - The longest piece of writing normally done by a student, often for a higher degree (20,000+ words).
 - A general term for any extended piece of academic writing.
 - A description of a situation or process, often with suggestions for dealing with a problem.
 - The answer to a question or task set by the teacher, often on a theoretical subject.
 - A detailed account of a particular situation or organisation.
 - A piece of writing in which students critically examine how they dealt with a situation or task and what they learned from it.
 - A condensed summary of something read or listened to, for a student's own use.

4 The format of written assignments

There is no standard format for written work, but in most subjects the following sections are commonly included in shorter essays and reports (1,000–5,000 words).

- Discuss the meaning of these terms with a partner and then arrange the sections in the most suitable order using the framework below:

Appendices

Conclusion

Discussion

Literature review

References

Case study

Introduction

• •
• • •
• •

Longer papers such as dissertations and journal articles may have the following format:

Abstract List of contents List of tables Introduction
Main body Literature review Case study Findings Discussion
Conclusion Acknowledgements¹ References Appendices

In addition, books may also include:

Foreword² Preface Bibliography/Further reading
--

■ Match the following definitions to terms listed above:

- a) A short initial summary which explains the paper's purpose and main findings.

- b) A list of all the sources the writer has mentioned in the text.

¹ May be placed before the introduction.

² Short introduction usually written by a well-known authority.

- c) A section, at the end, where additional information is included.
-
- d) A short section where people who have helped the writer are thanked.
-
- e) Part of the main body in which the views of other writers on the topic are discussed.
-
- f) A section where one particular example is described in detail.
-
- g) A preliminary part of a book in which the author may explain her reasons for writing.
-

5 Common text features

- a) Use of **titles** and **sub-titles**. The title is often short and may be more eye-catching; the sub-title tends to contain more detail:
The Engineer and the Plumber: Mediating Mumbai's Conflicting Infrastructural Imaginaries
- b) Reference to sources using **citation**:
 ... while the second (Karlan and Zinman, 2009) compared borrowers and non-borrowers.
- c) The use of **abbreviations** for convenience:
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
- d) **Italics** are used to show words from other languages, to highlight examples or to add emphasis:
 ... proposals that all players prefer to the *status quo*.
- e) **Brackets** are used to give extra information or to clarify a point:
 ... the means by which the circulation of vital substances (such as water) is achieved.
- f) **Inverted commas** are used to draw attention to a word or phrase:
Despite the reputation of 'engineering' as a politically innocent ...
- g) The use of **footnotes** or **endnotes** to give extra information. Footnotes are found at the bottom of the page, while endnotes are listed at the end of the chapter or paper.
 ... the local Community Empowerment Network (CEN)¹

6 Writing clear sentences

Sentences are the basic component of all types of writing. Sentences generally have a subject and a verb: