

UTS:

HELPS

HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION SUPPORT

Writing in Academic Style

- Location: CB01.03.08
- Telephone: 9514 9733
- Email: helps@uts.edu.au
- Website: ssu.uts.edu.au/helps

Contact us

What is academic writing ?

Academic writing...

- is formal
- is impersonal
- is cautious
- Is more complex
- references/cites other writers' work

- Avoiding the use of personal & informal language
- Checklist of personal & informal language to avoid in academic writing
 - Contractions
 - Colloquialisms
 - Run-on expressions
 - Rhetorical questions
 - Phrasal verbs

- Gone are the days when English is drilled into students at school.

Rewritten as

- The era when English was drilled into school students has passed.
- **Colloquial Language**

1. Researchers have been looking into the problem for 15 years.
2. This issue was brought up during the seminar.
3. It is assumed that the management knows what is happening and will therefore step in if there is a problem.
4. Schools cannot altogether get rid of the problem of truancy.
5. The number of staff has been cut down recently.
6. It was very difficult to find out exactly what happened.
7. House prices have a tendency to go up and down.
8. A potential solution was put forward two years ago.

- Industrial sites cause vast amounts of environmental pollution, so why do we still use them?
- The question surrounding the continued use of industrial sites, given their vast pollution production, still remains.

Rhetorical Question

- Academic writing uses the techniques of nominalisation, impersonalisation and passive structures.
- Let's look at each

- When to use the passive voice?
- When describing processes, use the passive voice. When you use the active voice, the subject (the person or thing performing the action) is important / is the focus. Passive voice puts the focus on the process or the action.
- **The Passive Voice**

- *I prepared the test-tubes by heating them.*
- Verb needs to be in the third form (past participle)
- Verb = **prepared** (past tense) **prepared** = (past participle)
- We add the verb 'be' in front of the verb.
- Here '**prepared the test-tubes**' = past tense plural
- 'were' is required. The verb becomes '**were prepared**'.
- The object '**the test-tubes**' becomes the subject. So...

Passive Voice

- Instead of: *I prepared the test-tubes by heating them.*
- We write: *The test tubes were prepared by heating them.*
- OR
- *The test tubes were heated in preparation.*

Passive Voice

- If the 'doer' or the agent is obvious, unimportant or unknown.
- Instead of: ***Employers pay employees overtime when the workload is especially heavy.***
- ***Employers*** = obvious / unnecessary

- Changing active to passive.

*Employers **pay** employees overtime when the workload is especially heavy.*

The object (employees) becomes the subject.

- *Employees **are paid** overtime when their workload is particularly heavy.*

The active verb **pay** becomes the passive verb

- **are paid.**

- What exactly is nominalisation?
- The use of noun groups in writing.
- Why use nominalisation?
- To make the relationship between your ideas explicit & succinct.
- Examples of extended nominalised groups

Nominalisation

- Abstract nouns suit the impersonal, conceptual-theoretical approach required in academic writing.
- Noun groups can make writing more succinct and make it easier for the writer to position important information at the beginning of sentences

Nominalisation

- Often the word-endings **-ion**, **-ment**, **-ness** are clues that nominalisation has occurred.
- A text with a lot of nominalisation might sound like this:
- The **taking** of evasive measures resulting in the **avoidance** of predatory **actions** by the offending party was a result of the **meeting** of the previously mentioned little pigs and their **awareness** of the **premeditation** of the wolf in terms of harmful **deceptions** and his **cleverness** in the **execution** of his criminal **intentions**.

- The little pigs evaded the attempt of the sneaky wolf to kill them because they had met before and knew that he planned to deceive and to kill them.

Verb clauses

- Higher educational standards will improve graduate employment opportunities for industrial designers.
- Presentation and animation software has provided additional employment opportunities for industrial designers.
- Industrial designers deal with overall product structure.
- Product development and maintenance is a core requirement for manufacturers.

Nominalisation

- **Verb Clause**
 - *Bubbles form rapidly in heated silver*
- Change the verb into a noun in the same word family, to be used as the subject.
- ***form* → *formation***

Nominalisation

- **Verb Clause**
 - *Bubbles form rapidly in heated silver*
- Change the subject into the ‘of’ possessive. (The preposition ‘in’ is sometimes also used).
- ***bubbles form → formation of bubbles***

Nominalisation

- *Bubbles form rapidly in heated silver*
- If there is an adverb, change it to an adjective and place it before the head noun subject.
- ***bubbles form rapidly → rapid formation of bubbles***

Nominalisation

- If there are any words remaining at the end of the sentence, put them at the end of the nominalisation without any change
- *bubbles form rapidly in heated silver* →
rapid formation of bubbles in heated silver

Nominalisation

- In general, the definite article ‘the’ is placed before the nominalisation.
(However, sometimes ‘a’ or no article is more appropriate.)
- → *The rapid formation of bubbles in heated silver...*

Nominalisation

- *Now you try*
- [People are more aware of the problem] has led to [the standard of education have improved.]
- [The student population has grown rapidly] has resulted in [the number of people enrolled in the courses has increased.]
- [Foster approaches design in a unique way] has contributed to [he is recognised internationally.]

- What is wrong with the following sentence?
- People find it hard to breathe because of pollution.
- **People** find it **hard** to breathe **because of** pollution.

Impersonalisation

- **People** find it **hard** to breathe **because of** pollution.
- Get rid of '**people**' it is unnecessary
- find it **hard** to breathe = nominalisation?
- breathing difficulties
- Breathing difficulties caused by / resulting from pollution...

- Now you try.
- Management information systems are a tool which help you to collect information, plan for projects and make final decisions.

- Management information systems are tools for collecting information, planning projects and decision making.

- Weekly workshops
- Drop-in consultations
- Writing clinics
- Conversations@UTS
- Intensive academic English programs
- Self-help learning resources