

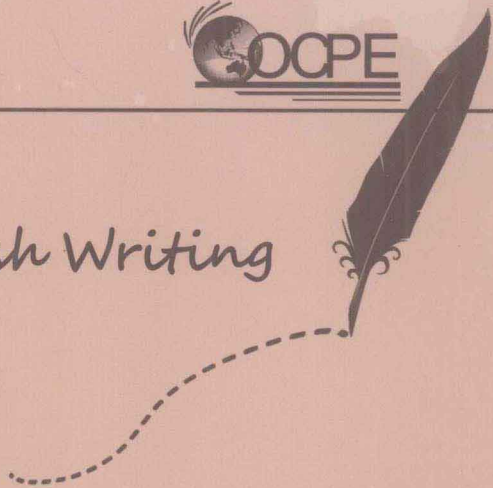
# 学术英语写作教程

— 东方剑桥应用英语系列 —

主 编 殷小琴



*Course of  
Academic English Writing*



ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY PRESS

浙江大学出版社

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主 编 殷小琴

副主编 唐 洁 黄庆欢 杨怡人 朱俊伟

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## 学术英语写作教程

殷小琴 主编

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丛书策划 张琛 包灵灵

责任编辑 张琛 (zerozc@zju.edu.cn)

文字编辑 徐瑾 (cherryxj@zju.edu.cn)

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# P 前言

## REFACE

本教材主要针对高等学校的低年级学习者，同时也适合中外合作办学项目中英语语言学习者和希望留学英语国家的学习者使用，帮助他们了解英语国家的学术规范和学术英语写作的基本要求，有助于学习者顺利完成在专业课学习中所涉及的论文撰写、案例分析、研究报告等方面的学术英语写作任务，运用规范的语言表达自己的学术思想。

教材内容共分五章，主要就学术英语写作的语言要求、引用规范、句子特点、段落组织、篇章构建等方面进行介绍。

第一章介绍学术英语写作的语言要求。编者在这个部分着重分析了学术英语与通用英语写作的语言差异，介绍了几种不符合学术英语写作的语言形式，并结合大量练习让学习者懂得如何在学术写作中正确使用学术英语。

第二章介绍学术英语的引用规范。为避免“剽窃”，学习引用规范是学术英语写作的重要内容。这一章节介绍了几种目前国际上通用的引用体系以及它们各自的使用范围。编者分析了各大引用体系之间的区别并重点介绍了哈佛系统的引用规定。通过这一章的学习，学习者对国际学术引用体系会有一个比较清晰的认识。

第三章介绍句子写作技能。句子技能的掌握能够为学术英语写作奠定必要的基础。本章从句子结构入手，介绍了句子的基本构成要素，主要分类和相关的语法规则。在此基础上，介绍了多种常见的句子问题及其修改办法。通过举例和练习，学习者能够掌握基本的组句技能。

第四章介绍段落写作的基本要求和方法。从段落结构分析开始，本章讨论了段落中各个组成部分的写作方法。与此同时，编者介绍了如何实现“统一性”和“连贯性”的基本要求和具体方法，以加强学习者梳理段落总体思路 and 选择具体词句等方面的意识。

第五章介绍论文写作的方法。围绕着学术论文的基本结构，本章分析了论文的开头段落、主体支撑段落、结尾段落的具体要求和写作方法。在分析的过程中，除了重申“统

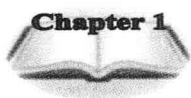
一性”和“连贯性”原则在整篇论文中的体现以外，更强调了论点的充分支撑对论文的重要作用。

本书的特色主要体现在两个方面：首先，全书突出“学术英语”的使用，强调国际学术规范以及学术语境下的英语运用能力，为学习者使用规范的英语交流学术思想奠定基础。其次，突出“从做中学”的教学理念，强调学术写作过程中的操作与实践，本书设计了大量的课内外练习，让学习者通过语言的运用，不断提高自己的语言能力。

本书的编者(殷小琴、唐洁、黄庆欢、杨怡人、朱俊伟)均来自浙江大学城市学院外语分院，长期从事中外合作办学项目的英语教学，特别是在学术英语教学方面进行了积极地探索。其中，唐洁负责编写第一章；黄庆欢负责编写第二章；杨怡人负责编写第三章；殷小琴负责编写第四章；朱俊伟负责编写第五章。我们希望能与广大师生交流相关教学经验和问题。但是，由于编者的水平所限，本书一定存在诸多不足之处，欢迎广大读者和同行批评指正！此外，本书的编写获得浙江大学城市学院的大力支持，在此表示衷心感谢！

编者

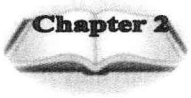
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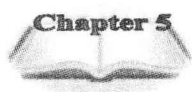


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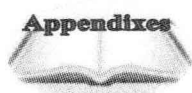
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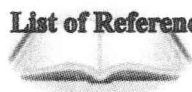
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# Chapter 1 Writing an Essay in the Academic Style

Style is the dress of thoughts; and let them be ever so just, if your style is homely, coarse, and vulgar, they will appear to as much disadvantage.

—Philip Dormer Stanhope

Proper words in proper places make the true definition of style.

—Jonathan Swift



## Objectives

On successful completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- cultivate a sense for the academic writing style;
- differentiate between formal and informal language;
- familiarize yourself with academic language features;
- develop an awareness of objectivity;
- follow the style guide and citation policy of your writing.



## 1.1 Introduction



There are different writing styles used for various writing purposes. For college and university students, academic writing or scholarly writing is imperative for the completion of learning tasks. Students must be aware that academic writing is quite different from personal writing, journalistic writing, creative writing, and even different from textbook writing. It takes time to master the special writing skills, even the most basic academic writing mechanics. In this chapter, the general features of academic style will be explained with examples and exercises.

Academic essays demand particular attention to the style. Although there may be disagreement on details regarding what is considered academic style, some generalizations can still be made about the basic tenets of academic writing. Academic writing is usually analytical or argumentative in content, explicit and objective in tone, formal and complex in language structure.

Written language can vary on a continuum of formality. Some texts are no more formal than spoken language (e.g., an e-mail you send to your buddy or an advertisement); some are highly formal or academic in nature (e.g., a research paper in *ELT Journal*); some fall in-between in terms of formality (e.g., a business letter or a textbook). Academic writing is essentially the most formal in writing styles. The formality of a text depends largely on lexical choice and sentence structure as well as the overall structure of the article.

The following texts will be used as model texts throughout this article to demonstrate the differences between formal and informal writing styles. You may need to refer to them from time to time.

Text A—Formal Text	Text B—Informal Text
<p>The inequity in the distribution of wealth in Australia is yet another indicator of Australia's lack of egalitarianism. In 1995, 20% of the Australian population owned 72.2% of Australia's wealth with the top 50% owning 92.1% (Raskall 1998, p. 287). Such a significant skew in the distribution of wealth indicates that, at least in terms of economics, there is an established class system in Australia.</p> <p>McGregor (1988) argues that Australian society can be categorized into three levels: the Upper, Middle and Working classes. In addition, it</p>	<p>Because only <u>a few people have most of the money</u> and power in Australia, I conclude that it is <u>not an equal society</u>. Society <u>has an Upper, Middle and Lower class</u> and I think that most people when they are born into one class, <u>end up staying in that class</u> for their whole lives.</p> <p>When looking at the all three classes more closely, other <u>things</u> such as the differences between the <u>sexes</u> and</p>

Text A—Formal Text	Text B—Informal Text
<p>has been shown that most Australians continue to remain in the class into which they were born (McGregor 1988, p. 156). The issue of class and its inherent inequity, however, is further compounded by factors such as race and gender within and across these class divisions.</p> <p>The relative disadvantage of women, with regard to their earnings and levels of asset ownership, indicates that within classes there is further economic inequity based on gender.</p>	<p>people's <u>racial backgrounds</u> can also <u>add to the unequal nature</u> of Australian society.</p> <p>Women earn less than men and <u>own less</u> than men. Why is this so?</p>

(Adapted from *Academic writing* 2012, University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia, viewed 12 May 2012, <<http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/academic/1b.html>>.)

### Activity 1 Matching

Please find the formal expressions in model Text A to match with the informal expressions underlined in model Text B.

Formal	Informal
1.	A. a few people have most of the money
2.	B. not an equal society
3.	C. has an Upper, Middle and Lower class
4.	D. end up staying in that class
5.	E. all three classes
6.	F. things
7.	G. sexes and racial backgrounds
8.	H. add to
9.	I. the unequal nature
10.	J. own less

## 1.2 Academic Essay Structure



A conventional essay has three parts: introduction, body and conclusion. This structure is determined by the purpose of an essay, which is to answer an underlying question and express the

writer's opinion about the assigned or chosen issue. The **introduction** explains to the readers what the essay is about, and what position the writer takes on the topic. The **body** part develops the argument by supporting evidence and references. Then the **conclusion** restates the main argument and summarizes all the points briefly.

## 1.2.1 Essay Introduction

The first 10%–15% of an essay is usually dedicated to the introduction part. A good introduction should serve to engage the reader's attention by providing interesting and updated background information. More importantly, it should define the scope of the essay, map out the points to be discussed in a brief outline, and state clearly the writer's position on the issue in question.

Academic writing requires an argument, which is presented in a sentence called **thesis statement** in the introduction of an essay. It clearly asserts the writer's response to the essay question. For example, lecturers and tutors will ask you questions such as: If a child behaves badly, his parents should be considered responsible and should be punished. To what extent do you agree with this?

Please compare the following two statements:

a) This essay will explain why some people believe that parents should be punished for a child's inappropriate behavior.

(This is **NOT** a thesis statement.)

b) This essay will argue that parents should be responsible for a child's inappropriate behavior, but whether they should be punished depends on factors such as the nature of the child's behavior and age.

(This **IS** a thesis statement.)



1. Why is statement a) not a thesis statement while statement b) is?

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## 1.2.2 Essay Body

It is a convention of academic writing to express arguments and opinions in the opening part of an essay, followed by **argumentation** in the body part. Argumentation is the process of using evidence (examples, data, and quotations) to support the arguments being presented. Without supporting evidence, arguments may sound as if they are just the writer's groundless assumption.

Evidence must be **authoritative**, rather than **anecdotal**; it must be already published or known information in the field.

Evidence should be integrated carefully into the essay. You must decide on which point evidence is needed. Usually the right place for evidence is the place after you have made a point in the topic sentence and explained that point in the next one or two sentences. The evidence usually appears in the middle of a paragraph in the body. In model Text A, you will find three pieces of evidence, which have been aptly placed to support the point the writer has made in the topic sentence; whereas in model Text B, all the claims are unsupported.



2. How does the evidence in model Text A help to extend the argument?

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In academic writing, the words or ideas of others you used to support your point is called **referencing**, which should be used with meticulous rules in mind. You must acknowledge the source of words and ideas being used and indicate where those words or ideas can be found; otherwise you are **plagiarizing** (stealing other people's ideas). Plagiarism is a severe offence in the academic context. Students will face heavy penalties including exclusion from university if they are found guilty.

Referenced words can also be called **quotations**, which can be used in two ways: direct quotation (verbatim copy) and indirect quotation (**summaries** and **paraphrases**). There is no rule about how many direct or indirect quotations to use in an essay, but it is generally agreed that the direct quotation is only appropriate for emphasizing a point, not for explaining a point, because it indicates a lower level of understanding than the indirect quotation.



3. Are the quotations used in model Text A direct or indirect? How does the writer acknowledge the source of borrowed ideas?

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### 1.2.3 Essay Conclusion

An essay must have a conclusion, which takes up roughly 5%–10% of the essay length. The conclusion actually is the statement and outline restated in a more concise way. It summarizes all the findings and analysis from each section of the body part, and makes emphasis on the main argument. No new ideas or new information should be presented in this part; otherwise readers

might get confused. Sometimes, some writers will consider the implications of the current research and propose topics for further discussion.

### 1.2.4 Reference List

An essential part of a piece of academic writing is the reference list, or **end-text references**. Students are often confused by the difference between references and reference lists. A reference, or **in-text reference**, is the bracketed or footnoted piece of information within the text, as shown in model Text A. It differentiates someone else's thoughts from those of the writer. A reference list should be attached to the end of the text as a separate part. It provides the full **bibliographic information** (the author's name, publication date, publication place, publishing house, and page numbers, etc.) for each of the source you have referenced within the text of your writing.

## 1.3 Academic Language Features



Many factors are involved in creating a piece of academic writing. Perhaps the greatest difference between non-academic writing and academic writing is the formality of the tone. Lexical choice and grammatical structure both strongly influence the academic tone achieved in a text.

The following five features of academic writing are most often discussed. Academic writing tends to be formal, complex, and objective; it uses language precisely, accurately, and tentatively.

### 1.3.1 Formality

Obviously, academic writing is formal. The informal text has a much more colloquial and conversational word choice while the formal text creates a more academic tone by choosing more sophisticated words, including technical and specialist language and by avoiding elements of spoken language.

#### A. Avoid using contractions and abbreviations

A **contraction** is a word formed from two or more words by omitting or combining some sounds, such as don't, can't and it's. An **abbreviation** is a shortened or contracted form of a word or phrase, used to represent the whole, as US for the United States, etc. for et cetera. For example:

**Write:** Trade will not improve until the economy is stronger.

**Avoid:** Trade won't improve until the economy is stronger.

**Write:** The Internet cafe only opens to adults, that is, people over the age of 18.

**Avoid:** The Internet cafe only opens to adults, i.e., people over the age of 18.

**Write:** The World Health Organization (WHO) issued a report on that matter.

**Avoid:** The WHO issued a report on that matter.



4. In the above example, what is the purpose of the acronym WHO in the brackets after the full name?

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### B. Avoid using colloquial language

**Colloquial** vocabulary includes words and expressions that are used in everyday spoken language; for example, pretty good, a lot of, and so on. There are other types of conversational language need to avoid such as figures of speech, clichés and idioms; for example, instead of saying “beyond a shadow of doubt”, you should say “definitely”.

Also, in negative sentences:

**Write:** no, little, few

**Avoid:** not...any, not...much, not...many

**Write:** There is no consistency in the results of the two experiments.

**Avoid:** There isn't any consistency in the results of the two experiments.

**Write:** Few people achieved the greatness of George Washington.

**Avoid:** Not many people achieved the greatness of George Washington.

### C. Avoid using phrasal verbs

Academic writing prefers single verbs, often **polysyllabic** verbs, instead of verb phrases. Do not use **phrasal verbs** if you can avoid them. For example,

**Write:** conceive, investigate

**Avoid:** think of, look into

### D. Avoid direct questions

When introducing opinions, **rhetorical questions** should be avoided. Such questions are inappropriate for academic writing because a statement can usually make a point more strongly and clearly. These questions also sound personal because they seem to be addressed directly to the reader. Notice that in model Text B, the last sentence is a question, which inevitably contributes to the informality of the overall tone. You can change your rhetorical questions into statements and still use them effectively in an essay. Therefore, generally avoid question marks. For example,

**Write:** Doctors feel it necessary to explore other options to treat this disease.

Other options need to be explored to treat this disease.

**Avoid:** Are there any other way to treat this disease?

### E. Avoid wordiness

Many students like to use idioms, without realizing that some words and expressions have already become **clichés** and may weaken the author's argument. Clichés often include redundant words and are usually ineffective because people have grown weary of them. In such cases, more direct and simple expressions are preferable. For example,

**Write:** last

**Avoid:** last but not least

**Write:** recently

**Avoid:** in the recent time

**Write:** Women believe that...

**Avoid:** As far as women are concerned,...

**Write:** This argument is irrelevant.

**Avoid:** This argument is not connected with the matter in hand.

Sometimes, words redundant in meaning are used to show emphasis, but they are actually not necessary. For example, some students would write “cooperate together”, while the word “cooperate” already carries the meaning of doing things together.

## Activity 2

### A) Replace phrasal verbs.

The sentences below all have some words or phrases that are not academic. Choose a word from the list below to replace the nonacademic words or phrases.

augment	assist	create	decline	eliminate
establish	fluctuate	increase	investigate	perform

1. New forms of alternative energy are used to get rid of the energy crisis. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Electronic systems can help out the doctors in the diagnosis of diseases. \_\_\_\_\_
3. For more than thirty years scientists have been looking into this situation. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The program was set up to improve computer literacy in mountain areas. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The unemployment rate has been going up and down in recent years. \_\_\_\_\_

## B) Rewriting

The following paragraph lacks formality. Read it through and underline the parts that are not in an academic style. Then rewrite the whole paragraph in a more academic tone.

Because drinking has health risks, it's no wonder that heaps of drinkers have tried to quit. However, in most cases, their attempts are unsuccessful. Why is it so? Some people start drinking when they're adolescents for lots of reasons, including peer pressure and parents' neglect. If one's friends are starting to drink, it can be pretty hard to resist following suit. Once people start drinking, they're likely to get hooked. The addiction to drinking comes partly from our mind; drinkers become used to the effects of alcohol and go through painful withdrawal symptoms when they try to give it up. In addition, many people become psychologically dependent on drinking as a way of reducing anxiety and coping with particular situations.

(Adapted from *Academic style* 2011, Study & Learning Centre, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia, viewed 24 December 2011, <[www.rmit.edu.au/learningandstudycentre/Super Tips/appropriate style](http://www.rmit.edu.au/learningandstudycentre/SuperTips/appropriate%20style) February 2007 6>.)

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## 1.3.2 Complexity

Academic writing is often described as abstract. This is partly due to the subject matter of the writing; however, it is also due to the language itself. Academic written language has longer words, it is lexically denser and it has a more varied vocabulary. It uses more noun-based phrases than verb-based phrases. Its grammar is more complex, employing more **subordinate clauses**, **complement clauses**, and passive verbs. To become a sophisticated writer at university, you must learn to use these structures in your own writing.

The following features are common in academic written texts:

### A. Passive voice

The decision about whether to use the active or the passive voice is governed by the choice in focus of the sentence. When describing processes, if you use the active voice, the agent (the person or thing performing the action, or the “doer”) is important. However, in much of academic writing,



it is not important that who did the action as what the action is. When you want readers to focus on the thing (or person) affected by the action or on the action itself, you can make the effect or the action the subject of the sentence and use the passive form of the verb.

Look at the sentence taken from model Text A:

*Australian society can be categorized into three levels: the Upper, Middle and Working classes.*

Here it is not important who did the categorization. The key information of the sentence is categorization itself, and the passive voice verb can draw readers' attention to these three levels. For another example, if you are writing a lab report, you should:

**Write:** The two chemicals were mixed in the beaker.

**Avoid:** I mixed the two chemicals in the beaker.



5. Why is passive voice more suitable than active voice in this case?

---



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**Note:** You should only use the passive voice when you really need to; overuse tends to produce dull writing!

### Activity 3

**A) Rewrite these sentences using an appropriate passive verb form.**

1. Someone will expose the truth to the public.

---

2. People are consuming junk food in alarming quantities.

---

3. Hopefully they have discussed this issue thoroughly.

---

4. The patient's heavy smoking could have caused the problem.

---

5. They had never planted corn in this area until the 1900s.

---

**B) Sometimes a sentence has two possible forms in the passive, for example:**

They say that the plane crash was the result of pilot negligence.

For this sentence, two possible constructions can be:

It is said that the plane crash was the result of pilot negligence.

The plane crash was said to be the result of pilot negligence.