

Academic Writing Style

To book an **individual** or a **group drop-in session**, please visit the **Compass App**.

1. Look at the **two sources** on the topic of **academic writing in British Higher Education**. Which one is likely to demonstrate features of **academic writing style**? Give reasons.

Source 1	Agaoglu, A. (2013, April 19). Academic writing: why no 'me' in PhD? The Guardian. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2013/apr/19/academic-writing-first-person-singular
Source 2	Singh, M.K.M. (2017). International EFL/ESL Master Students' Adaptation Strategies for Academic Writing Practices at Tertiary Level. <i>Journal of International Students</i> ,7(3), pp. 620-643. DOI:10.5281/zenodo.570025

Answer: Source 2. It is an **academic journal article** so it will demonstrate features of **academic writing style**.

2. Look at a sample analysis of the style in the **academic source**. Think about the **academic writing style features** you need to improve.

Source 2

Being specific

¹In the context of Master programs in any discipline, there is a general consensus among scholars, researchers, and teachers that academic writing is an essential component for many coursework assessments and it is critical that graduate students continuously develop their academic writing skills (Stevenson, 2006; Thomas, 2005; Wasley, 2008).

²Currently, academic writing is also intricately related to a student's sense of self and identity. ³ In fact, writing aids in both developing and demonstrating critical-thinking skills, and has been categorized as "the exterior sign of an interior thinking process" (Bean, 1996, p. 20).

⁴ As a result of this, new graduate students have to identify themselves as part of a particular academic community, and without this identity formation, they will not be able to participate or acquire academic literacies skills linked to academic success.

Singh, M.K.M. (2017). International EFL/ESL Master Students' Adaptation Strategies for Academic Writing Practices at Tertiary Level. *Journal of International Students*,7(3), pp. 620-643. DOI:10.5281/zenodo.570025

Impersonal structure with the pronoun 'it'

Formal and specific vocabulary

Referring to sources when paraphrasing

Passive voice, i.e. *is related*

Avoiding very short sentences and paragraphs

Referring to sources when citing directly from them

Modal verb, i.e. 'will' + full form of verb

Noun phrase in the Subject, i.e. adj.+ noun+ head noun

3. Look at a sample analysis of the style in the **non-academic source**. Think about the **academic writing style features** you need to avoid.

Source 1

The diagram shows a sample text with several callouts pointing to specific features:

- Telling a personal story**: Points to the first sentence: "When I submitted my very first piece of writing towards my dissertation, I met with my supervisor to discuss the work I had done and he gave me some good feedback on making a plan, constructing a chapter using Endnote, and incorporating more sources instead of relying on just five books."
- Using the personal pronoun 'I'**: Points to the word "I" in the first sentence.
- Informal vocabulary and expressions**: Points to the phrase "a big no-no."
- Short sentences + short paragraphs**: Points to the second sentence: "Changing the way I write was not an easy task. I had to shut down and reboot my mind, going back to its factory default."
- Vague language + repetition, i.e. good**: Points to the phrase "Good writers did not do that; good writing stayed clear of it."
- Starting sentences with And or But**: Points to the word "And" in the sentence: "And after a year of strictly using the active voice and telling a story in the first person, removing all the 'we' and 'I' from my PhD dissertation felt as though I was building a wall between myself and the reader."
- Citing dialogue & no reference**: Points to the phrase "wasn't" in the sentence: "The reason for not using the first person, according to my supervisor, was that this wasn't fiction but academia – and 'there are no 'I's in academic writing'."
- Short forms of verbs, known as contractions**: Points to the phrase "there are no 'I's in academic writing'."

The text includes a citation at the bottom: Agaoglu, A. (2013, April 19). Academic writing: why no 'me' in PhD? The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2013/apr/19/academic-writing-first-person-singular>

Useful Tips

1. Think about your **degree programme** at the **University of Sunderland in London**.
2. Consider the **type of written assignment** you need to complete, e.g. an academic essay, a report, etc.
3. Make a **list of academic writing style features** you would like to use.
4. **Proofread** a paragraph using your **list**.
5. **Highlight** the **features** you would like to **improve**.
6. **Redraft** and **edit** the **paragraph**.
7. **Proofread** the paragraph **again**.

References:

Bailey, S. (2011). *Academic Writing. A Handbook for International Students* (3rd ed.). Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.

Gillett, A., Hammond, A. and Martala, M. (2009). *Successful Academic Writing*. Pearson Education Limited.

Swales, J.M. and Feak, C.B. (2012). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills* (3rd ed.). Michigan ELT.