




VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR

Sub : Academic
Writing
By : Farah Faisal
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For Academic Writing
Unit 5



Revision

- A written work creates a permanent impression about your quality of education. Therefore, you have to be careful about every single sentence you write for an academic purpose. After writing, every formal written work needs revision and editing before its submission. Revision helps you to realise your mistakes and while editing you can improve the words and sentences and remove unnecessary words and expressions to make the writing clear and effective.
- In order to make your writings effective; you have to,
- Ensure that your vocabulary is suitable for the purpose
- Avoid using colloquial style, slang expressions, non-standard diction and conversational style in your writing.
- Diversify your sentences
- Remove redundant expressions and avoid wordy sentences
- Use parallelism
- Maintain the tense
- Remove weak phrases use strong verbs instead

Vocabulary

In order to maintain the formal nature of your academic writing, you have to be careful about the words you choose for the text. Your text has to be precise and clear. Avoid unnecessary words and informal expressions. The text should communicate the idea properly to the readers. There are a few suggestions to improve the quality of your vocabulary:

- Familiarise yourself with the words listed in Academic Words List (AWL). It will help you to pick the right words while you are writing.
- Avoid informal words and expressions.
- Use discourse markers to link your ideas and to signal transition.
- Make your writings less wordy

Academic Words List(AWL?)

The high frequency words in academic works in English language are referred to as Academic Words List. The AWL includes a main list and sub list, learning the words in the list will enable you to understand academic text as well. The important prerequisite to learn academic words list is the ability to use the most elementary words in English. The list includes words often used in different academic disciplines. You have to familiarise yourself with these words to make your writing more effective with suitable vocabulary. Averil Coxhead from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand was among the earliest compilers of AWL. After examining papers from different disciplines, she came up with 570 headwords.

Words and phrases to be avoided

You need to check the suitability of your language while writing for different purposes and in different occasions. You are not expected to use, the words you make use of in everyday conversations in your academic writing. There are certain categories to be avoided in your writing; however there is no strict ban for anything. If the word or expression is suitable for the situation, you can go on with the same. Nevertheless, be careful while using words and phrases used in expressing doubt. Such expressions are called qualifiers. Eg: appears, suggests, may, might, usually, probably, possibly etc. You have to check these qualifiers if you are doubtful about the accuracy of your writings.

Discourse Markers.

‘Discourse is a unit of language longer than a sentence’. It may be one or two sentences or a lengthy piece of writing. Discourse markers are those words or phrases which are used to connect one discourse to another. Eg: anyway, right, okay, to begin with. We use them to connect, organise and manage our writings or conversation. Discourse markers connect one discourse to another. They are also called sentence connectors, linking words, linking phrases, and transition signals.

Some of the discourse markers are used in informal conversations eg: actually, let me see, I think, I suppose, as I was saying, you know etc. There are formal discourse markers, which you can make use of in your academic writings. Eg: as a result, however, in other words, therefore, to begin with etc. Formal/informal (Table)

Use of Discourse Markers

- Balance contrasting points
- Introduce a new idea
- Present a counter argument
- Adding
- Changing of subject
- Clarifying points
- Summing u

Completeness of a Sentence.

- A sentence is a group of words arranged properly to make a sense.
- it is the basic unit of a language, it starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, exclamation or a question mark.
- A sentence contains a subject and a verb. a clause contain a subject and predicate, and it is the smallest grammatical unit that can express a complete proposition.
- An independent clause or a group of words that can stand alone as an independent thought is a complete sentence.
- Whereas a dependent clause does not make complete sentence, so it cannot stand-alone. a dependent clause is also called a sub ordinate clause. Eg: when I was at school..
- A sentence is complete only when it makes proper sense while standing alone

Diversify sentences

- It is important to use different types of sentences in a text.
- Simple sentence : which contain only one independent clause.
- Compound sentence: with two independent clauses or simple sentences
- Complex sentence: one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses connected to it.
- Compound complex sentence: two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.
- Adding different types of sentences in different lengths will avoid monotony . you have to be careful while using too long sentences. It is advisable to break it into two or three different small sentences. Also you have to avoid choppy sentences, as it would make your writing repetitive.

Fragments

A fragment is an incomplete sentence or disconnected piece of a main clause, it usually happens when a subject or verb is absent in a sentence. You have to link the same to an adjoining sentence to complete it. In a conversation fragments are necessary, but they are not acceptable in a conversation

Subject Verb Agreement.

- The most important aspect of a sentence is subject verb agreement. The basic rule is that they should agree in number. A singular subject takes a singular verb, and a plural subject always takes a plural verb. While writing a simple sentence it is easy to arrange the subject verb agreement. But it is difficult to handle with it while you are using compound subjects, indefinite pronouns, collective nouns, inverted subjects .

Consistent use of tenses.

- Always it is better to keep the tenses consistent in your formal writing . it adds the readability of a text. Inconsistent use of tenses is suggestive of poor writing skills in academic writing. Shifting tenses is allowed if the time frame of your subject matter changes and it has to be presented with a signal word or phrase indicating change of timeframe. For narrative type of writing consistent use of past tense is appropriate while present tense is preferred when you are writing an analysis of some writers and their works.

Parallelism

Parallelism is the use of components in a sentence that are grammatically the same. Or similar in their construction, sound and meaning. Because of the repetition the idea is conveyed deeply and properly. And also it adds the flow of the text. Eg: the poem is lyrical, long, interesting and meaningful. It will improve the readability of your work

Wordiness

“Brevity is the soul” – William Shakespeare

- Wordiness is one of the most common mistakes in academic writings.
- In formal writing wordiness’ refers to the imperfection caused by the use of more words than the meaning demands.
- Wordiness is one of the barriers of communication.

To Avoid Wordiness

- You can eliminate wordiness while revising and editing your work. it is better to make another person read your work to trace out the errors.
- In order to improve the quality of your work , use the language of your discipline.
- Replace stock phrases with one-word equivalents.
- Eg: The phrase 'is aware of the fact that' can be replaced with the word 'knows'.
- Avoid redundant expressions
- Avoid sentence openers like 'it', 'there is' etc.
- Avoid weak and wordy verbs.
- Reduce the use of 'that' and 'which'.
- Eliminate the unnecessary qualifiers and intensifiers.
- Avoid words like 'very', 'quite' and 'just'.
- Simplify your sentence structures.