

Essential Skills For Successful Academic Writing

By

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Introduction

- ▶ Academic writing is a special type of writing that college students and scholars cannot do without. It is in every research, study, or guide. But despite its importance, many people struggle with it, and this is understandable. Academic writing has so many rules it is easy to lose track of them.
- ▶ Those who are good at writing it often make money from writing it for people through freelance websites. But it isn't until you want to learn how to be a freelance writer that you need to learn to write academic papers. Academic writing is a skill that could be useful for you elsewhere.
- ▶ There are some skills that every academic writer needs to master to improve the quality of their academic papers. These are some essential skills writers need for a successful academic writing:

1. The Art of Researching

- ▶ Before you put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard, whatever works for you) to write anything, you must do extensive research on the subject you want to discuss. Even if you are very knowledgeable in the subject, you need to arm yourself with as much information as you can to tackle the subject effectively.
- ▶ Mastering the research skill can only be possible when you have the right tools to do so. I can imagine how stressful academic researches might have been before the internet. It would require spending hours at a library and poring over pages for unending hours. Thanks to the internet, search engines are your best friends when it comes to research. There are many websites, such as JSTOR, that contain a lot of academic materials. Google Scholar, an arm of Google search also helps you to search for academic materials all around the internet.
- ▶ And when you are doing your research, it is often a good practice to gather the resources you have found useful so you may reference them in the bibliography of your paper.

2. The Art of Planning

- ▶ Academic writing is all about making points based on academic research and studies. But sometimes, the studies can become so overwhelming that the writer gets lost in the middle of writing. This is very common among many beginner academic writers.
- ▶ Lack of proper planning leads to a lousy academic paper with points scattered all over the page. The paper then ends up confusing the reader instead of educating them. Therefore, proper planning is an essential skill in academic writing that must be mastered.
- ▶ To become better at planning your academic papers, you first need to understand the purpose of your writing. Are you writing a descriptive paper to describe a concept or phenomenon? Is your subject an expository paper to argue a point? Or your paper may be focused on trying to persuade your readers to see your perspective.
- ▶ Knowing your audience also helps. When you know who you are writing to, you would have a better idea of how to best pass the information across to them.
- ▶ When you get these out of the way, you would know how to better present your points to organize your paper in an orderly manner.

3. The Art of Formal Writing

- ▶ Academic writing is unforgiving with its standards, especially when it comes to formal and informal writing styles. Informal writing is a big no in any kind of academic writing. In other words, things like word contractions have to be avoided at all costs. No “don’t” or “shouldn’t” or “can’t”. Rather, use “do not” and “should not” and “can not” respectively.
- ▶ Idioms and colloquialisms are also frowned at in academic writing. Puns, ironies, and many other figures of speech many other writers may depend on to spice up their writing are not allowed in academic writing. Whatever you say in an academic paper is taken the way it is written. There is no room for implied meanings.
- ▶ Because of these dos and don’ts (**do not** forget that “**don’t**” **does not** fit into academic writing), it takes a lot of practice for someone who is not used to writing in this way. They have to practice until they master the skill.
- ▶ Another skill an academic writer needs to learn is the ability to use the right words. Every single word counts in academic writing. Don’t forget you are most likely going to be writing to a scholarly audience, so your choice of words has to be precise. You can use a tool like [Thesaurus](#) to find synonyms of words.

4. The Art of Proper Formatting

- ▶ Here is another skill that an academic writer has to gain control of. There are many academic paper formats. Some of them are APA, MLA, and Chicago writing styles. Each of these styles has rules and regulations that writers must strictly adhere to. The slightest disregard for any of these rules is a crime against the academic writing community and can cost you the credibility of your paper, even if all you did was to omit a single comma. Yes, it is that serious.
- ▶ For instance, each of those writing styles has different methods of in-text citations. They also have different ways of writing references and/or bibliographies. It would be wrong to get them all mixed up.
- ▶ That is why you must adhere to the rules of each writing style. Many tools on the internet can give you a template for each of these writing styles.

5. The Art of Proofreading

- ▶ After you have done all the research in the world, complemented with proper planning, and adhered to all the rules of your writing style, the last thing you want is to have a single error mar your hard work. That single error, no matter how little it may seem, could cost you the credibility of your work. That is why you should master the art of proofreading.
- ▶ As a rule of thumb, you should leave the paper for a while before you return to it to do a final review and proofreading. This way, errors that were not obvious before might become glaring to you. Another proofreading hack that helps you detect any hidden errors is by increasing the font of your text if you are writing on your computer. This tricks your brain into thinking you are reading a different article, making it easier to spot errors or inconsistencies in the paper.

Conclusion

Mastering these skills would help to improve the quality of your academic paper while making it easier for you to write them. But like any other skill, each of these skills takes a lot of practice and keep training then you will be professional writer.

Thank You for Listening