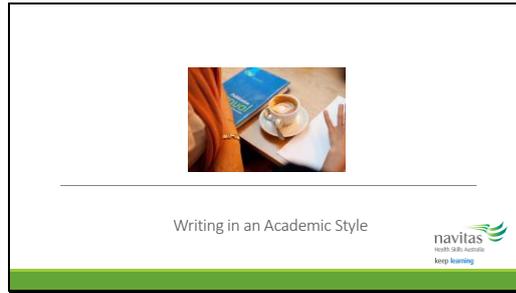
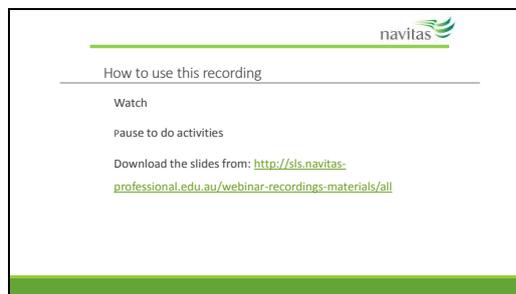


Slide 1



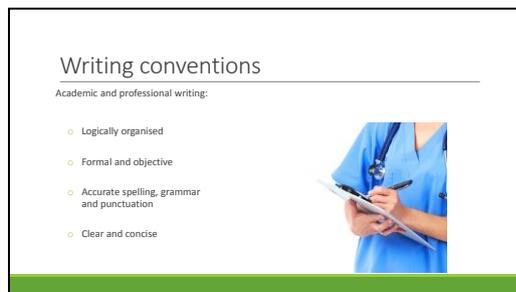
Welcome to the writing in an academic style recording. Academic writing and formal writing are similar, and you may hear both terms used in your classes.

Slide 2



To download the slides for this presentation: go to the SLS website page and click on the link below this recording.

Slide 3



The formal writing used for assessments and the writing you will do in professional settings are similar in many ways. In both contexts, a formal approach is important, which means writing should be logically organised and objective; it should have correct grammar, spelling and punctuation while being clear and to the point.

Slide 4

Goals for this session

Learn strategies for:

Writing in an academic style

- Using formal English
- Being objective and concise
- Writing in passive and active voice



Slide 5

Using formal English

Avoid:

- a 'chatty' tone
- slang
- colloquialisms

Why are these sentences considered too informal for academic writing?

1. *This is where skillful communication comes into play.*
2. *The medication didn't seem to have any effect.*
3. *According to Bailie (2007), teens are at a high risk.*

This formal writing is different to the language used in everyday conversation, emails, magazines and most newspapers. In formal writing, you should avoid sounding 'chatty' and also avoid using slang and colloquialisms. Look at these sentences. All of them have parts that are too informal. For number 1, 'comes into play' is an expression that is too colloquial. Instead, you could say: becomes important. For number 2, 'didn't' is a contraction of did not, and is too informal. It needs to be written as two separate words. For number 3, 'teens' is both an abbreviation and a bit slangy. So it would be better to use 'teenagers'.

Slide 6

Activity

Find the informal word(s) in the sentence and replace it with a more formal word.

1. Indigenous **children** are at risk.
2. Hopefully the number of nurses participating in the program next year will **increase**.
3. There are three **factors** that need to be considered before making a decision.

Here's an activity for you to try. Pause and have a go.

What did you think? Well, 'kids' is informal, so we can change it to children. 'Go up' is also informal – we can use 'increase' instead. Lastly, 'things' is quite unspecific, so a word like factors would be better here.

Slide 7

Being objective

Many assignments require you to avoid personal pronouns such as I, we and you. Instead, sentences should be written more objectively.

Observation of the patient can provide you with important information.	→	Observation of the patient can provide the nurse with important information.
I believe that stress can have a significant impact on our well-being.	→	Stress can have a significant impact on a person's well-being.
OR		
Research shows that stress can have a significant impact on a person's well-being.		

OK, let's move on to writing in an objective way. Objectivity is about taking personal viewpoints out of communication. One way we do that is by not using personal pronouns such as I, we and you. Here you can see that a sentence written with 'you' can be made more objective by replacing 'you' with 'the nurse' or 'the counsellor'. The second example is made more objective by deleting 'I' or replacing it with 'research shows'.

Slide 8

Activity

Rewrite this sentence more objectively (i.e. try and eliminate "our" and "us")

1. Feedback from our supervisors can help us identify skills that need further development.

OK, an activity for you. Pause to think about this one.

Slide 9

Activity answer

Rewrite this sentence more objectively (i.e. try and eliminate "our" and "us")

1. Feedback from ~~our~~ supervisors can help ~~us~~ identify skills that need further development.

Possible answer:
Feedback from supervisors can help **nurses** identify skills that need further development.

And here is a possible answer.

Slide 10

Using passive voice

A feature that is often used with both formality and objectivity in academic writing is use of the passive voice.

When we use an active verb, we say what the subject does:
The nurse assessed the patient.

When we use passive verbs, we say what happens to the subject:
The patient was assessed.

A passive sentence is formed by moving the object of the active sentence into the subject position. Notice also that the form of the verb also changes.

*The nurse assessed **the patient**.* *They reviewed **the admissions policy** in 2013.*

The patient was assessed. *The admissions policy was reviewed in 2013.*

Apart from taking out words like 'I', 'we' and 'you', often writers will create sentences in passive voice to sound more formal and objective. Active voice, which is the more common, includes the doer of the action in the sentence. For example, here who assessed the patient? It was the nurse.

The passive voice would take the nurse – the doer of the action – out of the picture. In passive voice, you would say that the patient was assessed, but you don't say by whom. To create a sentence in passive voice, move the object of an active sentence to the front – in the position of the subject. The verb form also changes, for example to 'was assessed' or 'was reviewed'.

Slide 11

Activity

Write this sentence in passive voice.

1. You can use this model for ethical decision making.

Have a go at passive voice yourself in this activity. Pause the recording.

Slide 12

Activity answer

1. You can use this model for ethical decision making.

Solution:

This model can be used for ethical decision making.

OK, so the core sentence here is 'you can use this model'. So move 'this model' to the front and write 'This model can be used for ethical decision making'.

Slide 13

Writing concisely

i.e. don't ramble on



In the article "Patient transfers in Australia" by Bilay et al. (2012), they discussed how patient transfers impact on nursing workload.

Patient transfers can also have implications for nursing management.

Let's move on to writing concisely. Look for words or phrases that are a repetition of the same idea in your writing. Are there any words that could be taken out while still retaining the meaning? Has the same thing been said twice but in a different way? Edit out the unnecessary words in order to be clear and get straight to your point. Here are some examples of editing out unnecessary words.

Slide 14

Activity

Write these sentences more concisely.

1. The depression that occurs may also cause further psychological problems.
2. Inexperienced nurses have limited experience. They do not have the freedom to take on complex cases on their own.

Have a go at editing these sentences to make them more concise. Pause to do this one.

Slide 15

Activity answers

1. The depression that occurs may also cause further psychological problems.
Possible solution:
Depression may also cause further psychological problems.
2. Inexperienced nurses have limited experience. They do not have the freedom to take on complex cases on their own.
Possible solution:
Often inexperienced nurses do not have the freedom to take on complex cases on their own.

Here are some possible answers.

Slide 16

Using cautious language

Useful expressions:
appears to, seems to, tends to, may, might, possible, probably, apparently, generally, seemingly

Useful phrases:
in some cases... and this evidence suggests that...

Examples:
*Teenage boys **are** reluctant to see a counsellor.
Teenage boys may be reluctant to see a counsellor.*

*Physically active people **have** less mental illness.
Research suggests that physically active people have less mental illness.*

OK, one other aspect of academic writing to look at is: using cautious language. Your writing should indicate that you are aware that nothing is completely certain. Here are some expressions and phrases to help with being cautious about what you claim. This first example shows that 'may be' is more cautious than 'are'. Notice that 'may be' is two words here. 'Maybe' as one word would be too informal. Then, saying that 'research suggests' something, is more cautious than giving the information as a bare fact.

Slide 17

Activity

Choose one of these sentences and add word(s) to make it more tentative and not so definite.

1. Women develop psychological problems during and post pregnancy.
2. Improper hand washing also leads to more severe consequences such as death.

Here are a couple of sentences. Can you make them more cautious? Pause to have a go.

Slide 18

Activity answers

1. Women develop psychological problems during and post pregnancy.
Possible solution:
Some women develop psychological problems during and post pregnancy.
2. Improper hand washing also leads to more severe consequences such as death.
Possible solution:
Improper hand washing may also lead to more severe consequences such as death.

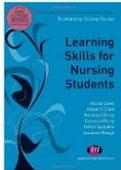
There are different ways to make these sentences more cautious, but here are some suggestions.

Slide 19

Useful resources and links

Learning Skills for Nursing Students

Available in the library



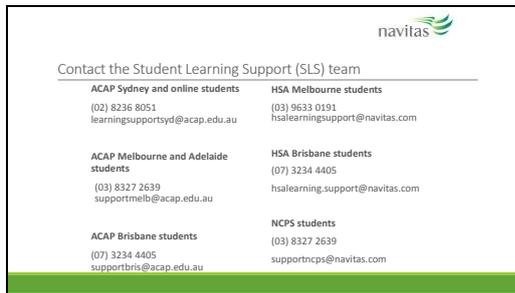
You've done a great job to stay with me to the end of this session! A final look at further resources to help build your study skills. This is a great book that is available from the library.

Slide 20



For more information about formal or academic writing and other workshops and events, check out the Learning Support website.

Slide 21



You can get in touch with us at Learning Support if you have any queries or need specific advice about an assignment you are writing. Good luck with your studies.