
WRITING IN AN ACADEMIC STYLE

SLS WEBINAR PROGRAM

Student Learning Support

WEBINAR GOALS

During this webinar you will learn how to:

1. use formal English.
2. write objectively.
3. write in passive voice.
4. use cautious language.
5. be concise.

ACADEMIC WRITING CONVENTIONS

Academic and professional writing is:

- logically organised
- formal and objective
- accurate in spelling, grammar and punctuation
- clear and concise



USING FORMAL ENGLISH

Avoid:

- a 'chatty' tone
- slang
- colloquialisms



Why are these sentences considered too informal for academic writing?

1. This is where skilful 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.

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 go **increase**.
3. There are three **factors** that need to be considered before making a decision.

WRITING OBJECTIVELY

Avoid personal pronouns such as *I, my, me, mine, we, us, you, your, us and our*.

Observation of the patient can provide you with important information.

I believe that stress can have a significant impact on our well-being.

Observation of the patient can provide the counsellor with important information.

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.

ACTIVITY

Rewrite these sentences more objectively.

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

Possible solution:

Feedback from **supervisors** can help **counselors/psychologists** identify skills that need further development.

2. As a psychologist, you should be aware of the different aspects of a client's behaviour.

Possible solution:

Psychologists should be aware of the different aspects of a client's behavior.

USING INCLUSIVE OR BIAS-FREE LANGUAGE

Ensure your words *DO NOT*:

- demean, offend or exclude groups in society
- include ableist language; use terms that stigmatise people with disabilities or frame them as different or other
- imply an age discrimination e.g., old woman, immature teenager
- use gendered binaries that are exclusive to anyone who is not heterosexual
- assume a person's sexual orientation and categorise them according to appearance

To Avoid Bias Language:

- Acknowledge difference without being judgmental
- Be specific in your language choices, rather than lumping everyone in together

ACTIVITY

How might you re-write the following sentences using bias-free language?

1. The client is usually the best judge of the value of his counseling.

Possible Solutions:

The client is usually the best judge of the value of counseling.

The client is usually the best judge of the value of their counseling.

2. The female researcher conducted multiple trials with disabled, wheelchair dependent men.

Possible Solutions:

The researcher conducted multiple trials with people in wheelchairs.

The researcher focused their trials on people using wheelchairs.

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/general-principles>

USING PASSIVE VOICE

- a feature often used with both formality and objectivity in academic writing

When we use an **active** verb, we say what the subject does:

The counsellor assessed the client.

When we use **passive** verb, we say what happens to the subject:

The client was assessed.

The nurse assessed the patient.

The patient was assessed.

They reviewed the admissions policy in 2013.

The admissions policy was reviewed in 2013.

ACTIVITY

Write this sentence in passive voice.

You can use this model for ethical decision-making.

Possible solution:

This model can be used for ethical decision-making.

USING CAUTIOUS LANGUAGE

- important in academic writing because your ideas can always be challenged

Useful expressions:

appears to, seems to, tends to, may, possible, probably, apparently, generally, seemingly

Useful phrases:

in some cases ..., this evidence suggests that ...

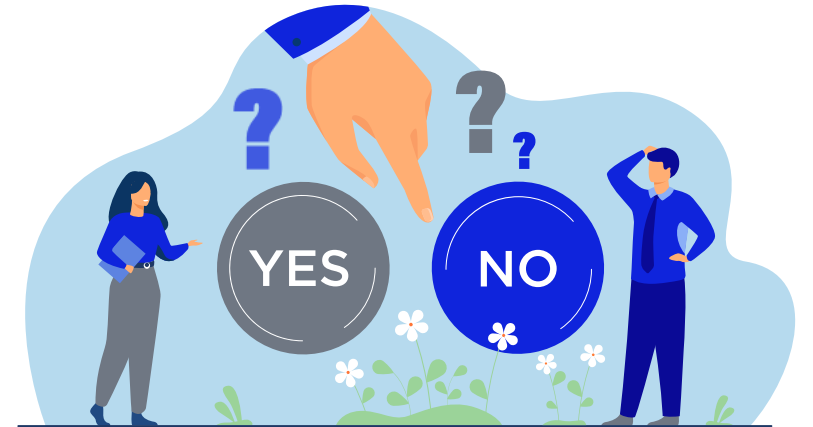
Examples:

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.



ACTIVITY

Rewrite these sentences using more cautious language.

1. Women develop psychological problems during and post pregnancy.

Possible solution:

Some women develop psychological problems during and post pregnancy.

2. Mental health issues lead to unemployment.

Possible solution:

Mental health issues **may** also lead to unemployment.

WRITING CONCISELY

Avoid rambling.



~~In the article 'The counsellor and the client' by~~ Blay et al. (2012), ~~they~~
discussed how a client transfers impact on the counsellor's workload.

ACTIVITY

Write these sentences more concisely.

1. The depression that occurs may also cause further psychological problems.

Possible solution:

Depression may also cause further psychological problems.

2. Inexperienced counsellors have limited experience. They do not have the freedom to take on complex cases on their own.

Possible solution:

Inexperienced counsellors often do not have the freedom to take on complex cases on their own.

ONE LAST PRACTICE

Identify the words or issues you think might be problematic here, then rewrite in a more academic style:

It's definitely a good idea to practise meditation for self care! Smith (2020) says you'll feel so much happier and you're energy will go up. The activity of meditating literally slows down time and takes away stress.

One possible solution:

Research suggests that meditation is one positive technique for self-care. According to Smith (2020), it may lead to improved mood, a sense of calm, increased energy and reduced stress.

10 FINAL TIPS

1. Be clear and concise and avoid ambiguity.
2. Use words precisely – avoid 'chattiness'.
3. Avoid unnecessary words and 'long-winded' sentences.
4. Be consistent in spelling, verb tense, your writing style and presentation.
5. Do not use slang or conversational language
6. Avoid personal language; for example instead of 'I think that...' an alternative might be: 'The literature supports...'



10 FINAL TIPS

7. Avoid contracting words – e.g. ‘doesn’t’ → does not
8. Write words in full the first time they are used, followed by the acronym in brackets. Then the acronym alone can be used from then on. E.g. The Australian College of Applied Professions (ACAP)
9. Spell out all one-digit numbers but use figures for numbers containing two or more digits except at beginning of a sentence. Always express dates, currency, and times in figures.
10. Use correct grammar and punctuation!



RESOURCES

Formal writing:

<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/vef/load/097772b5dc6b89d0d0f28134477203b2?width=850&height=605>

Proofreading:

<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/editing-and-proofreading-0>

SLS resources:

<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/academic-writing-0>



STUDENT LEARNING SUPPORT WEBSITE



Study Skills



Referencing and Academic Integrity



Assignment Types



Enhance Your Writing



Preparing Your Assessments



Presentation Skills



Making The Technology Work For You



Being a Critical and Reflective Thinker



Essential Skills For Your VET Diploma Studies



Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)



Test and Exam Skills



English Language Support

<http://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/>

CONTACT

Reach out to Student Learning Support (SLS)

Sydney students

SLSSydney@acap.edu.au

Byron Bay students

SLSByronbay@acap.edu.au

Brisbane students

SLSBrisbane@acap.edu.au

Melbourne students

SLSMelbourne@acap.edu.au

Adelaide students

SLSAdelaide@acap.edu.au

Perth students

SLSPerth@acap.edu.au

Online Campus (email contact for MBA and
Graduate Certificate of Coaching students)

SLSOnline@acap.edu.au

THANK YOU

CONTACT:

Student Learning Support