Academic writing is the style of writing used in an educational setting to provide information and discussion on certain issues, theories and learning concepts.

Academic writing should include:
- Formal, precise language and vocabulary from the academic discipline.
- Impersonal and objective language, avoiding reference to personal feelings or emotions.
- Emphasis on objects, facts and ideas.
- A third person discussion/argument with minimal narrative. A purely narrative essay will score a lower mark.

Academic writing should not include:
- Slang, or casual and colloquial language; jargon, abbreviations or clichés; emotive or discriminatory language; generalizations and anecdotes or personal experiences unless explicitly requested by your teacher or lecturer.
- Passive sentences. Passive sentences are less persuasive and significantly increase a word count.
- “I” statements, for example: “I think” or “I believe”.

Academic writing outlines a certain point of view or views whilst providing supporting evidence from reputable sources. Effective academic writing uses objective, clear, concise language appropriate to the topic under discussion. Keep a glossary of useful words appropriate to your discipline area that can assist with academic writing.

Academic evidence
Always provide evidence to support a point of view or argument. Evidence strengthens and provides authority to an academic argument. Evidence includes:
- Quotes from a literary or academic text
- Quotes from primary sources (people, diaries, interviews original artefacts)
- Quotes from websites, blogs or forums, newspapers, journal articles, TV, radio movies
- Images, paintings or photographs
- Charts, graphs or statistics
- A personal experience where appropriate.
Any evidence included must be referenced using in text citations and a reference list or bibliography at the end of the essay or report. Claiming other’s ideas as one’s own is plagiarism and will result in disciplinary action.

**Planning the assignment**

Carefully analyse the task and look at what the assignment requires. For example, note format, word length, task words, key words, terms and concepts.

Write down key ideas using brainstorming and free writing. This can be done both before and after completing research. Work out what is already known to help understand what further information is needed to answer the question. The number of ideas depends on the specific assignment topic and the set word limit.

Create an assignment plan using the key ideas.

Use each of those ideas as the topic sentence for each paragraph.

**The writing process**

- **Preparation:** The foundation of a successful piece of academic writing is sound research, thorough reading and an understanding of the topic. Take notes and build a reference list at this point. Write down everything learnt about the topic so far. This is important for getting started and working out ideas.

- **First Draft:** The first draft sets out the structure and framework of the essay/report. Consolidate ideas and address the topic. Decide how to answer the question and which evidence to use to support the argument/discussion. Create a logical structure, avoid passive sentences and use clear concise language.

- **Refinement:** Editing and proof reading is the key to polished writing. Refine the ideas and statements made in notes and first draft and work them into the essay or assignment. Ensure the discussion or argument builds throughout the essay in a logical way. Read the essay aloud and ask someone else to read it with a fresh pair of eyes. Polish it further before submitting for assessment.

**Writing tips**

- Put ideas down early because avoiding the writing process will add unnecessary stress as the assessment deadline approaches.
- Delay writing the introduction and conclusion until after the main body of the essay is completed. Ideas can change if new evidence or points of view shift over the course of the writing process rendering early introductions and conclusions obsolete.
- Put the essay aside, revisiting with fresh eyes after a few days. This is the ideal time to let a trusted friend read and comment.
- Always keep the question in mind and keep referring back to it to avoid wandering off-topic.

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