OBJECTIVES

• Recognise the purposes of and differences between spoken and written communication in academic context
• Apply and write functions common in written academic discourse
• Comprehend and observe how to avoid plagiarism
• Use and apply accurate referencing.
What is Academic Writing?

It is writing ...

• meant for a critical and informed audience
• based on closely investigated knowledge
• which is expository & argumentative in nature
• That adheres to specific conventions
• Examples: Essay, research & report writing
What is Academic writing (Cont.)

Do you have a good academic writing style?

Yes!
Maybe
No!
1. Which one of the following is closest to academic style?

a) A novel
b) A newspaper
c) An advertisement
d) A letter from the bank
2. The best way to start an academic text is...

a) With a question
b) With some new or surprising information
c) With some background details
d) With the topic of the text
3. The best way to keep your readers attention in an academic texts is ...

a) To write short sentences
b) To give familiar information first and then new information
c) To be friendly, e.g. as in an e-mail
d) To ask questions first and then give answers
4. The best order of ideas in an academic paragraph is ...

a) From a general idea of the main point to specific details
b) From specific details to general idea of the main points
c) The order in which I think of the ideas when I am writing
d) No particular order as it does not matter
5. The best way to start a sentence in an academic text is ..

a) With some information the reader knows already
b) With some background details
c) With some new or surprising information
d) With a person or personal pronoun, e.g. We can see ...
6. The best kinds of words to use in academic writing is ...

a) Unusual words that a reader will notice and admire
b) Simple words, such as big and important, which are easy to understand
c) Words such as reason or similarly which show relationships between ideas
d) Special technical words which are specific to the subject I am studying
What is Academic Writing? (Cont.)

Writing which is **FORMAL**

- Certain words which we frequently encounter in everyday communication may **not** be suitable for use in academic essays.

Examples:
- *The authors don’t provide evidence for their claim.*  
  (Contractions)
What is Academic Writing? (Cont.)

Examples (Cont.)

- One wonders if cosmetic surgeries really originated from the psychological challenges of **busted** individuals. *(Slang)*
- The survey was conducted **ASAP** since the respondents needed to leave the country in two weeks’ time. *(Abbreviations)*
What is Academic Writing? (Cont.)

Examples (Cont.)

• The research of Yuan et al. (2007) on sustainable architecture in Singapore is considered to be the cream of the crop. (Clichés)

• While current concerns about the loss of jobs in the United States are valid and real, what is more alarming is the growing negative cultural attitude towards India among those who have been Bangalored. (Colloquialism)
What is Academic Writing? (Cont.)

Writing which is IMPERSONAL

Academic style often avoids use of the first person, ‘I’. Unless you are writing your own reflections or self-evaluation, it is better to write, ‘It can be seen that...’, rather than ‘I think that...’; ‘this essay will cover...’ rather than ‘In this essay I will cover...’.
What is Academic Writing? (Cont.)

Writing which is **OBJECTIVE**

It is better to use **neutral** rather than emotionally-loaded words. For example, say that a system is ‘inefficient’ or ‘defective’, rather than describe it as ‘rubbish’. It may take longer to find and spell-check the right word, but you’ll gain higher marks.
What is Academic Writing? (Cont.)

Writing which is **CAUTIOUS/ TENTATIVE**

As academic ideas are not clear cut, statements are usually introduced in a tentative way, such as: ‘It can be argued that...’; ‘Recent research suggests...’; ‘It is possible that...’; ‘Further research is needed to establish whether...’.
What is Academic Writing? (Cont.)

• This kind of language shows that you have considered different points of view, not just jumped to a conclusion.

• In other words, your writing contains an argument. Being cautious does not mean being vague. Avoid ‘sort of’ and ‘kind of’!
What is Academic Writing? (Cont.)

Writing that REFERENCES others’ work

It is essential to record where your quotations, data and information came from so that the reader can find the original text. As referencing style varies, it is important to consult the guidelines for your course.
Here are some ways of introducing references in your text:

• Bloggs (2007, p. 28) argues/concurs/demonstrates/states/suggests ‘…

• According to Bloggs (2007, p. 30) ‘…..

• In a recent study Bloggs (2007) identifies …

Note: See Unit 2
Academic Writing cont...

• It can be defined as a form of writing that is expository and argumentative in nature. Mostly used by students and researchers in expression of information on a certain subject.

• In Academic Writing style avoid using more informal language, such as slang, contractions, colloquialisms and clichés.

• Genres of Academic Writing: Essay, reports and research writing.
Academic Writing style includes:

• The use of tentative rather than assertive language. *e.g.* using probably and possibly in front of verbs and noun phrases.

• Use of formal vocabulary. *E.g.* Discuss rather than talk about...

• Use of a more formal grammar. *E.g.* use there, it and one as subjects. Use the passive voice.