

## Academic Language

### Avoid slang and colloquialisms, such as:

- The new plans were *just the stuff*.
- The argument was *a bit over the top*.
- The company was *a big flop*.

### Avoid abbreviations and contractions

Write words out in full:

- *E.g.* as For example
- *Didn't* as did not
- *They're* as they are
- *Dept* as department

Put the abbreviation of the name of an organisation in brackets after your first use of the name. Thereafter you can refer to the organisation by the capital letters: E.g.

- 'According to the Ministry of Health (MOH) and later write 'However, the MOH states that...'

### Be cautious

Indicate lack of certainty by using expressions such as:

- appears to, seems to, may, possibly, probably, generally, tends to

Usually avoid extremes such as:

- *always, never, all, none, should*

### Be concise

Edit out unnecessary words: E.g.

- 'In a book called Nursing Theories by Jo Bloggs (2001), she says' *..becomes..* 'Bloggs (2001) states that...'

### Be objective

Avoid personal judgment and subjective words such as: *nice, wonderful, usually, basically, naturally, everybody thinks*

### Avoid apologies

Write as if you are confident of what you are expressing; do not apologise to the reader for any weaknesses you feel there may be.

### Be careful using 'I'

In an introduction you may say 'I will discuss...', but consider carefully whether to use it or make the sentence less personal. 'I' is often used in reflective writing, but never in formal reports. 'We' cannot be used in place of 'I'.

### Avoid addressing the reader

Avoid telling readers what to think:

- '*you*' addresses the reader and it is better to find another approach.
- '*We should all be more aware of...*' This statement groups the writer and readers together – you should not assume your position is shared.

### Conjunctions

- Avoid using the following words at the start of sentences: or, but, and, yet

### Use continuous prose

Write in full sentences. Avoid lists of points; it is better to incorporate them into sentences.

### Words for different purposes

**Affect:** (verb) means 'to influence'. The manager's decision affected everyone.

**Effect** (noun) means 'a result'. An effect of regular exercise is better health.

**Effect** (verb) means 'to achieve' or 'to bring about'. The team effected a workable solution.

A/the nurse/manager...because he/she... Nurses/managers...because they...

There is / are... Over there... Their cat... (This spelling shows possession)

**It's** means **it is** or **it has**. At no other time does **its** have an apostrophe.

**It's** their cat. **Its** fur is falling out. *Not it's* (it is) fur is falling out.

Place an apostrophe **before** an s if **one** person or thing 'owns' the item:

The rabbit's ears twitched – there is **one rabbit**.

Place an apostrophe **after** an s if **more than one** person or thing 'owns' the item:

The rabbits' ears twitched – there is **more than one rabbit**.