

Authority and Style

You need to develop your own
credible academic voice

- In academic writing, your ideas and claims must be supported by **evidence** and **argument**, and the sources of all ideas and data must be acknowledged

Academic writing is judged on

- how well supported your ideas or arguments are, and whether that support is:
- **valid**
- **relevant**
- **sufficient**
- **convincing**

Cont.

- **range** and **currency** of sources you have consulted and referred to.
- For this you need to use texts recommended by lecturers and your own research
- However – obscure and old material is not considered appropriate. You will have to argue for its inclusion

Style of writing

- Academic writing is a specific style –
- Objective
- Formal
- ‘critical’- analysis, evaluation, critique
- Standard – grammar, etc
- Formula – structure - beginning middle end

4 statements

1. Emotional intelligence is essential in the practice of counselling.
2. In my opinion emotional intelligence is essential in the practice of counselling.
3. According to Smith (1967) emotional intelligence is essential in the practice of counselling.
4. Jones (2004) argues that emotional intelligence is essential in the practice of counselling. In his view successful counselling practice hinges on effective communication between people, and emotional intelligence can contribute to that.

Statement 1

- Emotional intelligence is essential in the practice of counselling.
- Presents someone's **opinion** as a factual statement.

Statement 2

- In my opinion emotional intelligence is essential in the practice of counselling.
- Presents the same statement as **your** opinion.

Statement 3

- According to Smith (1967) emotional intelligence is essential in the practice of counselling.
- Simply states the view of a writer (who may have done research on the topic or who may be expressing just a personal opinion – we don't really know from 'according to...')

Statement 4

- Jones (2004) argues that emotional intelligence is essential in the practice of counselling. In his view successful counselling practice hinges on effective communication between people, and emotional intelligence can contribute to that.
- What more can be done here to make this statement more academically robust?

What works

1. Presents the view as something which needs to be argued for, not something which can be accepted just because an author has said so.
2. It is fine to say 'according to', but it does not (yet) really prove anything or give an idea of what sense
 - You
 - made of the information.

How

- Rather than explicitly stating your opinion, in academic writing often your opinion can
- *emerge*
- through your choice of sources and how you
- **present** and **examine** the ideas of others.

avoid making **categorical** or **emphatic** statements.

- This is in order to:
- acknowledge that there may be exceptions
- acknowledge that there may be a range of possible causes, ideas, theories or explanations
- avoid making statements that cannot adequately be supported or defended.

How

- qualify your ideas
- Give examples and reasons
- Build up an argument
- explain your ideas
- Show you understand the material
- explore your ideas.
- Show confidence, interest, authority

Tendencies/possibilities

- When you write or make a statement, ask yourself – Is this true in all cases? Are there exceptions?

Exercise

- The evidence Rogers developed an interest in children's development in the 1950's
- This ... *to* indicate a ... to understand development through early experience.
- The results of this suggest that...
- for this interpretation is that...
- The work his own early experience ... a contributing factor to the later theory.
- This claim indicate a ... connection between...

Suggestions

- The evidence **suggests that** Rogers developed an interest in children in the 1950's (you will have referred to his early paper on children)
- This **appears to** indicate a **tendency** to understand development through early experience.
- The results **would seem to** suggest that...
- **One possible explanation** for this interpretation is that...
- The work **suggest that** his own early experience **may be** a contributing factor to the later theory.
- The findings indicate a **possible** connection between...

Style and clarity

- precise use of formal language
- impersonal style
- clearly constructed sentences
- care with abbreviations and acronyms
- logical and systematic development of ideas.

Formal ?

- When I look at the situation in emergency wards, with many staff leaving, it's hard not to worry about how many doctors will be available to treat patients in the future.
- If we consider the situation in emergency wards, with increasingly low staff retention rates, there are concerns about the capacity of hospitals to maintain adequate doctor to patient ratios.
- It's so obvious that people were given jobs just because they were male or female. I don't think that is an acceptable approach and is even against the law.
- It appears that in a number of instances jobs were assigned on the basis of gender. Given the current anti-discrimination laws, this raises serious concerns.

Academic style

Informal

- *When I look at* the situation in emergency wards, with many staff leaving, *it's hard not to worry* about how many doctors will be available to treat patients in the future.
- *It's so obvious* that people were given jobs *just because they were male or female. I don't think that is an acceptable approach* and is even against the law

Formal

- If we consider (**when considering**) the situation in emergency wards, with increasingly low staff retention rates, there are concerns about the capacity of hospitals to maintain adequate doctor to patient ratios.
- It appears that in a number of instances jobs were assigned on the basis of gender. Given the current anti-discrimination laws, this raises serious concerns.

From the above sentences

- minimise the use of the personal **I** in the text: avoid writing 'When **I** look; **I** don't think this is an acceptable approach'
- use formal verbs, use **consider** rather than **look at**
- use impersonal expressions: **there are...**, **this raises**
- use more nouns than verbs: **concerns**, rather than **to worry**

- avoid **emotional** expressions, such as **it's so obvious** (**it appears** is preferable); **just because** (**assigned on the basis of** is preferable)
- aim for concise, often abstract expression, **gender**, rather than **male or female**.

Formal and informal – match up

- help out
- set up
- gone up
- found out
- get rid of
- looking into
- brought up
- investigate
- assist
- raise
- discover
- establish
- increase
- eliminate

Objective writing

personal

- In my opinion
- I believe that...
- In my view...

objective

- It has been argued that
- Some writers claim...
- Clearly,...
- It is clear that...
- There is little doubt that...

Avoid reference to yourself as agent in your writing

Agent or performer

- I undertook the study...
- I propose to
- In this essay I will examine...

No agent or performer

- The study was undertaken ...
- It is proposed to ...
- This essay examines...

Next time

- Sentences
- Structure