

Choose prepositions carefully. Should you use *through* or *by*? Compared to or compared with? Consider your options and revise.

Avoid contractions. Replace them with the words that they abbreviate. This is a simple way to transform your tone from conversational to academic.

Avoid get verbs. Use synonyms for *getting*, *got*, *gotten*, and so on.

Depending on context, *become* and *acquire* are good substitutes.

Avoid abbreviations except within parentheses or in footnotes: *etc.* = *and so on*; *e.g.* = *for example*; *i.e.* = *in other words*; *viz.* = *namely*.

Start with strength. *There is* and *There was* are unengaging, nonspecific ways to begin statements. Make sure that the beginnings of your sentences are engaging.

Don't be "scared." Placing quotation marks around terms is not an ideal way to indicate your skepticism. Instead, try using words to express distance: *so-called history*. See more of TWEED's advice at <http://tweedediting.wordpress.com/2010/04/19/scared/>

☞ TWEED Editing ☞

With personal and professional experience in higher education, TWEED answers the call of the scholarly writer, offering editing tailored for academic success. Katie Van Heest, M.A., has a certificate in editing from the University of Chicago and offers an affordable range of services for scholars and students.

www.tweedediting.com

Choose prepositions carefully. Should you use *through* or *by*? Compared to or compared with? Consider your options and revise.

Avoid contractions. Replace them with the words that they abbreviate. This is a simple way to transform your tone from conversational to academic.

Avoid get verbs. Use synonyms for *getting*, *got*, *gotten*, and so on.

Depending on context, *become* and *acquire* are good substitutes.

Avoid abbreviations except within parentheses or in footnotes: *etc.* = *and so on*; *e.g.* = *for example*; *i.e.* = *in other words*; *viz.* = *namely*.

Start with strength. *There is* and *There was* are unengaging, nonspecific ways to begin statements. Make sure that the beginnings of your sentences are engaging.

Don't be "scared." Placing quotation marks around terms is not an ideal way to indicate your skepticism. Instead, try using words to express distance: *so-called history*. See more of TWEED's advice at <http://tweedediting.wordpress.com/2010/04/19/scared/>

☞ TWEED Editing ☞

With personal and professional experience in higher education, TWEED answers the call of the scholarly writer, offering editing tailored for academic success. Katie Van Heest, M.A., has a certificate in editing from the University of Chicago and offers an affordable range of services for scholars and students.

www.tweedediting.com

TWEED

editing tailored to the academic

GUIDE to ACADEMIC STYLE

What is academic style?

Broadly defined, *academic style* encompasses all of the syntactical, grammatical, and tone-related indicators of scholarly writing. Attention to style signals to your readers that you are serious about your research.

Use jargon strategically

Technical terminology is a hallmark of academic writing. Though *jargon* is often used pejoratively, you cannot completely avoid specialized language. Limit your use of jargon so that it enhances rather than detracts from your writing.

Know your audience. How much jargon can your readers tolerate?

Don't overqualify with adjectives, contingencies, and prepositional phrases.

Academic writing works against its own goals when points are obscured.

Read your work to a friend outside of your discipline.

Define your terms. Doing so will make you tire of using jargon.

Use analogies. If you can think of a simple real-world equivalent of a complex idea, invoke it.

TWEED

editing tailored to the academic

GUIDE to ACADEMIC STYLE

What is academic style?

Broadly defined, *academic style* encompasses all of the syntactical, grammatical, and tone-related indicators of scholarly writing. Attention to style signals to your readers that you are serious about your research.

Use jargon strategically

Technical terminology is a hallmark of academic writing. Though *jargon* is often used pejoratively, you cannot completely avoid specialized language. Limit your use of jargon so that it enhances rather than detracts from your writing.

Know your audience. How much jargon can your readers tolerate?

Don't overqualify with adjectives, contingencies, and prepositional phrases.

Academic writing works against its own goals when points are obscured.

Read your work to a friend outside of your discipline.

Define your terms. Doing so will make you tire of using jargon.

Use analogies. If you can think of a simple real-world equivalent of a complex idea, invoke it.

✧ CRAFTING *your* ACADEMIC VOICE ✧

You know that your research and ideas are exciting. Paying attention to syntax, grammar, and tone can make that enthusiasm contagious.

Don't overstate your claims. Build readers' trust by being prudently conservative in your depictions and points. If you are precise in your argumentation, your thesis holds more weight.

Avoid value judgments. In a book review, you might evaluate how "good" a source is, but otherwise stick to substantive description that advances your argument. For example, use *excellent* and *great* with caution.

Remove meaningless elements. Is every sentence—and every sentence *part*—adding to your argument? Nuance is important, but be critical of tangents and unimportant details.

Understand bias-free language and use it. Don't assume the demographics of your audience, either. Refer to *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association's* comprehensive section on bias.

Employ active voice wherever possible. Passive voice does have a place in academic writing (especially in the social sciences), but if you can make your point actively, do so. Passive voice masks the subject of a sentence. Consider the differences: *Farmers were pushed off their land* / *Farmers were pushed off their land by wealthy elites* / *Wealthy elites pushed farmers off their land.*

✧ CRAFTING *your* ACADEMIC VOICE ✧

You know that your research and ideas are exciting. Paying attention to syntax, grammar, and tone can make that enthusiasm contagious.

Don't overstate your claims. Build readers' trust by being prudently conservative in your depictions and points. If you are precise in your argumentation, your thesis holds more weight.

Avoid value judgments. In a book review, you might evaluate how "good" a source is, but otherwise stick to substantive description that advances your argument. For example, use *excellent* and *great* with caution.

Remove meaningless elements. Is every sentence—and every sentence *part*—adding to your argument? Nuance is important, but be critical of tangents and unimportant details.

Understand bias-free language and use it. Don't assume the demographics of your audience, either. Refer to *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association's* comprehensive section on bias.

Employ active voice wherever possible. Passive voice does have a place in academic writing (especially in the social sciences), but if you can make your point actively, do so. Passive voice masks the subject of a sentence. Consider the differences: *Farmers were pushed off their land* / *Farmers were pushed off their land by wealthy elites* / *Wealthy elites pushed farmers off their land.*

✧ PARTICULARS *of* ACADEMIC STYLE ✧

Refer to these specific tips for elevating your academic writing.

Be conservative in your use of first- and second-person pronouns.

Referring to your reader or to humanity in general with pronouns such as *you* and *your* sounds conversational and unprofessional. The use of *I* is appropriate when used in a limited way. Similarly, adopting a professorial voice by using *we* can be effective. Those in the social sciences, though, should only employ *we* and *our* to refer to the researchers.

Try adhering to the old rule of not ending a sentence or clause with a preposition.

For example, change *the rules she lives by* to *the rules by which she lives*. Sometimes using a preposition + *which* or *whom* will sound contrived. Weigh clarity concerns against the value of precision.

Use the serial comma. Whenever you list three or more items, insert a comma before the conjunction and final item, as in this example: *theory, methodology, and results*. In more complicated lists, the serial comma becomes absolutely essential, so use it consistently in *all* lists.

Know the difference between that and which. These relative pronouns actually serve different purposes. *That* is used with restrictive clauses; *which* with nonrestrictive clauses. Understand these distinctions—don't simply use *which* because it seems smarter.

✧ PARTICULARS *of* ACADEMIC STYLE ✧

Refer to these specific tips for elevating your academic writing.

Be conservative in your use of first- and second-person pronouns.

Referring to your reader or to humanity in general with pronouns such as *you* and *your* sounds conversational and unprofessional. The use of *I* is appropriate when used in a limited way. Similarly, adopting a professorial voice by using *we* can be effective. Those in the social sciences, though, should only employ *we* and *our* to refer to the researchers.

Try adhering to the old rule of not ending a sentence or clause with a preposition.

For example, change *the rules she lives by* to *the rules by which she lives*. Sometimes using a preposition + *which* or *whom* will sound contrived. Weigh clarity concerns against the value of precision.

Use the serial comma. Whenever you list three or more items, insert a comma before the conjunction and final item, as in this example: *theory, methodology, and results*. In more complicated lists, the serial comma becomes absolutely essential, so use it consistently in *all* lists.

Know the difference between that and which. These relative pronouns actually serve different purposes. *That* is used with restrictive clauses; *which* with nonrestrictive clauses. Understand these distinctions—don't simply use *which* because it seems smarter.