The Writing Center Presents:

Academic Language

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What is Academic Language?

• Academic Language is the language used in textbooks, tests, essays and publications.
• Academic Language is the language expected of all students in essays to give their papers a professional tone.
• A paper without academic language or a professional tone can easily have its grade diminished.
What Academic Language is NOT

• Academic language is not simply using big words to sound more intelligent.
  – Using a thesaurus to enhance your vocabulary can backfire, especially if you use certain words improperly.
• It does not appeal to emotion over the logical appeal of your argument.
• It does not contain personal reference or bias.
Tone

• The tone of your essay should be professional and intelligent.
• To avoid a casual tone, stay away from using slang terminology.
• An extremely biased viewpoint with use of heavily opinionated statements may detract from your argument.
“Professional Distance”

- Professional Distance is the practice of keeping your essay detached and in third person. You should not address yourself or your reader directly.
- This detachment helps maintain a logical standpoint and helps avoid an emotional appeal to the reader.
- Avoid using personal pronouns such as: “I,” “you,” “we,” and the like.
  - In certain assignments such as personal statements, it is ok to use personal pronouns.
Things to Avoid

Avoid using contractions:

• Don’t, Can’t, they’ll, et al.

Avoid abbreviations:

 Certain abbreviations like U.S.A and mph are acceptable.

• Etc, Monthly Abbreviations, w/o, min, ASAP, et al.

Symbols:

• @ & % $

“Net Language”

• OMG, LOL
Colloquialism/Slang

Colloquial language comes off as unprofessional and may not be understood by most readers. Idiomatic expressions like “Cool” or “Hit-or-miss” or “red herring” should also be avoided.

Two-word verbs like “looking into” or “take off” should also be avoided. Verbs with broad meanings like “get” should be avoided.
Helping Your Paper Flow

• You must help your reader understand your paper by being specific.
  – Define key terms.
  – Define the purpose of your work/paper.
  – Link your ideas/paragraphs together when transitioning.
  – Have evidence that backs up every point you make
Ending Your Paper

Every paper needs to end as strongly as it began. A weak ending can completely derail a great essay.

An ending must:

- Reiterate your thesis.
- Logically tie all your argument points together.
- End on a note to stimulate the reader about your topic.
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