

Tips to Recognize Good Academic Writing

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Whether you're a researcher starting a [literature review](#) for a new project, or just staying current with the research in your field, recognizing good academic writing can help you to make the most of what little time you are able to make available to reading research journals.

Audience Awareness

A large percentage of academic literature is written by authors sharing the results of research that they themselves have undertaken. However, the focus should never be on the writer, but rather on an objective [presentation of the research topic](#) and the audience for that topic. Readers deserve a clear sense of context—why this research was performed—as well as some recognition of what they will be looking for in reading the journal article or [research paper](#).

A Logical Framework

Good [academic writing](#) presents a logical framework with a clear progression of ideas. In simpler terms, readers should be able to follow the who, what, why, where, when, and how of your research. This may feel like the writer is holding your hand as the reader, but since the writer has no way of gauging your familiarity with the material, the safer approach is to assume no previous knowledge and position of the research writing accordingly. This may make for some frustrating explanation of concepts with which you are already very familiar, but it should be treated as a forgivable appreciation of a potentially broader audience.

Qualified Language

Strong, declarative statements that are not supported with appropriate source citations are, at best, dismissed as only the opinion of the writer. For this reason, good academic writing should always maintain a cautious approach to any specific claims made in the article, especially when [presenting new research](#). For example, phrases such as: “the

evidence seems to suggest that,” or “it appears from the data collected that,” are more cautious than: “it is clear from the evidence that.” By all means convey the significance of your work, but take the necessary steps to avoid any implied sense of definitive discovery.

Quality over Quantity

Researchers are interested in both the research process as well as the resulting data from that process. For good academic writing, that means your logical framework should include both elements—what you did (readers may be looking to replicate your study) and what you found. However, readers have less interest in being impressed with how much work you did to generate your findings. A [poorly planned research project](#) might generate an initial [literature review](#) of hundreds of research articles. If this is presented to readers in the form of a meandering introduction and an overwhelming number of citations, those readers will be left dazed and confused rather than inspired by your work.

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