

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63622-4 – Academic Writing Skills 1 Student's Book

Peter Chin, Yusa Koizumi, Samuel Reid, Sean Wray, Yoko Yamazaki

Excerpt

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Academic Writing Skills

Student's Book

1

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Academic Writing Skills has been developed by the Research and Development team at Waseda University International Co., Ltd., Tokyo.

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How this book is organized

Academic Writing Skills 1 introduces the essential skills and strategies required to compose academic essays.

There are four units in the textbook:

- Unit 1: how to structure a paragraph – the basic building block for essays.
- Unit 2: from writing paragraphs to composing longer pieces of work (essays).
- Unit 3: how to paraphrase and summarize, and use information from outside sources.
- Unit 4: how to write a research essay, with particular focus on presenting opinions and supporting them with evidence.

Each unit presents explanations, examples, exercises, and model paragraphs and essays to help you attain a level of academic writing expected of university students.

Academic Writing Skills 1 also includes sections focusing on grammar and stylistic aspects of academic writing, such as how to use:

- conjunctions.
- transitional expressions.
- pronouns.

Studying these sections will enable you to express your thoughts accurately using appropriate language for academic writing.

The book also focuses on using sources and citation – one of the most important skills in academic writing. The information and exercises presented will help you learn how to:

- quote, paraphrase and summarize information from outside sources.
- effectively integrate this information in your essays.
- identify the sources of information in your essays using the appropriate format.

To maximize the use of this book, you should:

- read the information in each unit thoroughly.
- take notes in the page margins of ideas and explanations from your teacher, classmates, or your own thoughts.
- complete all the exercises.

Dedicated study of *Academic Writing Skills 1* will prepare you with the basic but necessary skills and strategies to successfully write academic essays.

Introduction to academic writing

What is academic writing?

Regardless of their major, university students are required to compose different types of writing, such as term papers or exam answers, throughout their studies. “Academic writing” is a general term that refers to all writing created for the purpose of study. University students are evaluated largely based on their writing, so writing skills are essential for academic success.

Academic writing is different from other types of writing in several ways.

1. Purpose

The main purpose of academic writing is to demonstrate knowledge of a topic. Certain writing tasks, however, have more specific purposes, such as:

- to explain a subject.
- to report research findings.
- to analyze and evaluate a subject.
- to express an opinion about an issue and persuade the reader to accept it.

2. Audience

“Audience” refers to the reader of your writing. In academic writing, your audience is usually the instructor of the course, who reads your essay and evaluates it. However, whenever you write, it is often useful to imagine that you are writing for a larger audience. This audience might:

- not know about the topic as thoroughly as your teacher does.
- have a background different from yours (e.g., is from another country) and thus not have the same values or experiences as you. Keeping this audience in mind will help you write so that your message is communicated clearly and powerfully.

3. Evidence

Evidence is an important feature of academic writing. Any claim or opinion from the writer must be supported with evidence, such as:

- examples.
- statistics.
- experts’ opinions.

Without evidence, the writer’s ideas might be considered unreliable or even biased.

If your evidence is information from outside sources, you must acknowledge the original source in your essay – in other words, use citation. Not citing outside information in your essay is called plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered stealing and is strictly forbidden.

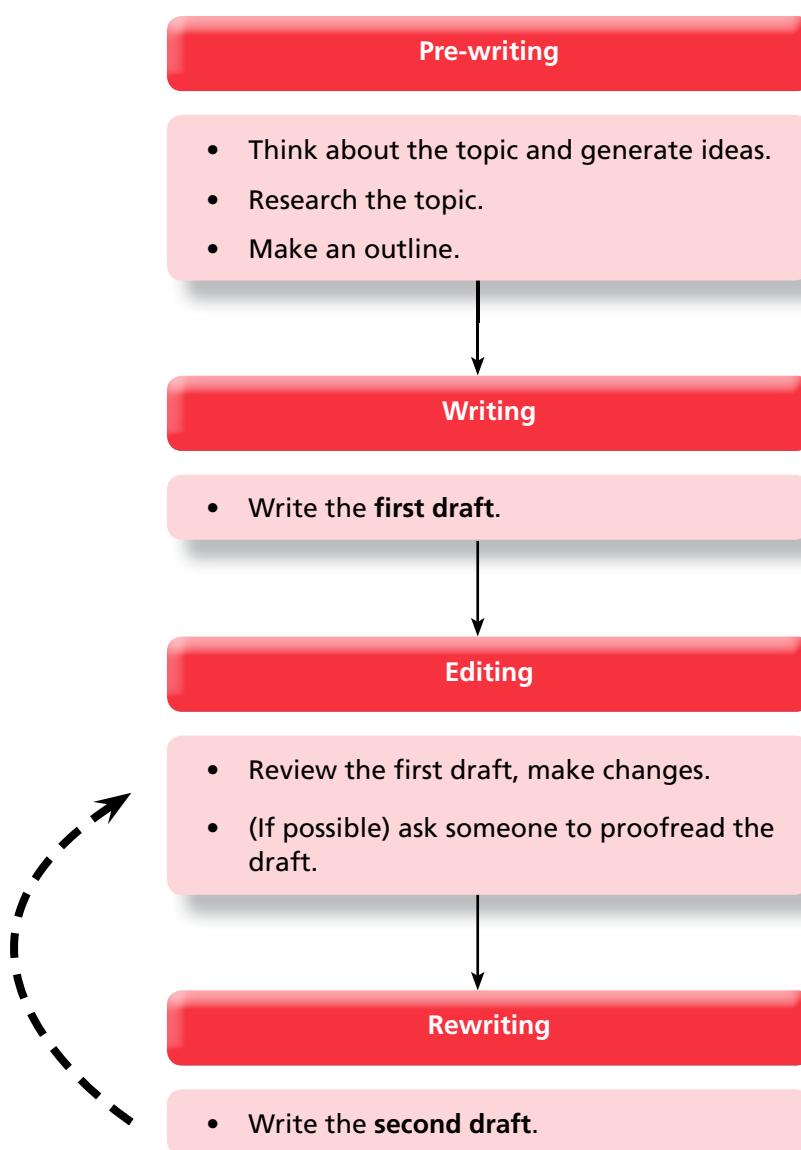
4. Style

In academic writing, you are expected to write in a certain style, which includes:

- presenting ideas clearly and logically.
- having organized paragraphs.
- writing from a third person’s point of view.
- using formal language.

5. The process of writing

Successful academic writing often cannot be achieved in one try. Certain steps should be followed before and after writing to ensure that ideas are presented effectively. A complete writing process might look like the following:



Becoming competent in each step of the writing process will lead to better writing. In fact, many writers repeat the last two steps (editing and rewriting) and write a third or fourth draft before completing the final version.