**Academic Tone**

Developing the skill of writing in a formal academic tone is important for college success.

**Formal Language** is most commonly used in academic papers, such as essays, research papers, and reports. It is sometimes recommended to omit the use of “I” in this type of writing.

**Informal Language** is characterized by expressions that are often taken from spoken English. This type of language may be appropriate for informal journal writing, reflections, personal letters, and creative writing. It is usually acceptable to write from the first-person perspective (using “I”).

**In academic writing, AVOID:**

**Sexist Language-** One way to avoid sexist writing is to use alternatives to the pronouns “he,” “him,” and “his” when referring to both genders.

1. **Use the plural form for both nouns and pronouns**

Avoid: In order to do well in a class, a **student** needs to do **his** homework.

Revised: In order to do well in a class, **students** need to do **their** homework.

1. **Omit the pronoun**

Avoid: Every leader should develop **his** communication skills.

Revised: Every leader should develop communication skills.

1. **Use her/his, she/he, or s/he** **(sparingly)**, since overuse can create awkward sentences

Avoid: If any student is late, he will lose points.

Revised: If any student is late, s/he will lose points.

**Clichés** are figurative expressions that are overused and often informal. Avoid using them in academic writing, for example: crack of dawn, a dime a dozen, free as a bird, better late than never.

**Colloquialisms** are used in conversation and are usually too informal for academic writing. These include-

**Contractions**: can’t, won’t, he’ll, and she’d. Instead, use cannot, will not, he will, and she would.

**Fillers**: like, well, or anyway.

**Informal terms**: folks, kids, guy, okay, pretty good, hassle, and kind of.

**Slang** is vocabulary that is usually too informal for academic writing. Avoid using slang not only for its informality but also because it may cause confusion for a reader who is not familiar with the word or who may use it in a different way, for example: sick, freaked out, flipped out, bummed, dissed.

**Jargon** is a unique vocabulary, often with terms that are specific to a field. For readers who may not be familiar with the terms of a given field, avoid jargon, when possible, for example: subcutaneous hemorrhage, beta decay, psychoanalytic theory. If it is necessary to use jargon, define or explain it.

Works Cited

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