

What are Academic Writing Conventions?

Worksheet

Academic writing conventions are the standards that define scholarly discourse: formal register, cited sources, logical structure (thesis-driven), passive voice when appropriate, no first person (unless reflective), and adherence to citation styles. They ensure credibility and professional rigor.

Questions

1. Which is a strong academic thesis?

- A) Social media is good for teenagers.
- B) Social media's addictive design algorithms negatively impact adolescent mental health by increasing dopamine-driven feedback loops.
- C) I think social media is bad.
- D) Many people have different opinions about social media.

2. In academic writing, when is 'I' acceptable?

- A) Always—first person is natural
- B) Never—always use passive voice
- C) In reflective essays and personal narratives
- D) Only in the conclusion

3. Which sentence is in academic tone?

- A) The study showed that people liked the product, which was cool.
- B) Empirical data indicate significant consumer preference for the product.
- C) Lots of folks dug this product, no doubt about it.
- D) Personally, I really liked how this product works.

4. A counterargument in academic writing...

- A) weakens your argument
- B) shows the opposing view, then refutes it
- C) should not be included
- D) confuses readers

5. What makes a thesis statement academically strong?

6. Rewrite in academic tone: 'Lots of people think video games are bad, but I think they're awesome.'

7. What citation format should a psychology essay use?

8. Define: What is a thesis statement?

9. Define: Should I use 'I' in academic writing?

10. Define: What are the main citation styles?

Answer Key

1. B) Social media's addictive design algorithms negatively impact adolescent mental health by increasing dopamine-driven feedback loops. — Strong thesis: specific claim, causal relationship identified, arguable, evidence-able.
2. C) In reflective essays and personal narratives — Academic writing typically avoids first person except in reflective pieces or personal research narratives.
3. B) Empirical data indicate significant consumer preference for the product. — Academic tone is formal, evidence-based, objective, and avoids slang, first person, and casual expressions.
4. B) shows the opposing view, then refutes it — Counterarguments demonstrate critical thinking—acknowledge opposing views, then explain why your thesis is stronger.
5. Weak: 'Climate change is bad.' Strong: 'Rising CO2 emissions disproportionately affect coastal economies through habitat loss and resource depletion.' Key: specific claim, arguable, supported by evidence.
6. Casual: ignores evidence, uses 'I' and colloquialisms. Academic: 'While critics contend video games impair cognitive development, empirical research demonstrates enhanced problem-solving skills.' Key: formal, evidence-based, neutral POV.
7. Psychology typically uses APA (American Psychological Association). Format: (Author, Year) in-text; full reference at end. Example: (Smith, 2020) states that... / Smith, J. R. (2020). Title. Journal Name, 45(3), 123-145.
8. A single sentence that states the main argument—specific, arguable, and supported by evidence throughout the essay.
9. Avoid first person unless reflective (personal narrative). Use 'the author', 'researchers', or passive voice instead.
10. APA (psychology, social science), MLA (humanities, literature), Chicago (history, general academic).

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