

การเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ เชิงวิชาการ

(Academic Writing)



มหาวิทยาลัยมหาจุฬาลงกรณราชวิทยาลัย
MAHACHULALONGKORNRAJAVIDYALAYA UNIVERSITY



Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Bachelor of Arts Program in Buddhism

Subject Category : Applied Buddhism

Text

Code 302 420

Academic Writing



Curriculum Arrangement and Development Project

Academic Affairs Division, the Office of Rector

Fiscal Year: 2565

Academic Writing

Authors : Lecturers, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Editorial staffs : Asst.Prof.Dr.Samran Khansamrong
Asst.Prof.Dr.Wisuttichai Chaiyasit

Editor : Mr.Steven Epstein

Expert/Co-producer : Ascoc.Prof.Dr.Nopporn Karobol,
Ascoc.Prof.Chusana Rungpatchim

Designer : Mr.Somboon Pengpis

Proofreader : Academic Affairs Division, the Office of Rector

Cover Design : Mr.Pijit Phomlee

First Edition : August 2565

Publication : 100 copies

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National Library of Thailand Cataloging in Publication Data

Lectures of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

Academic Writing.-- Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya :

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2565.

192 p.

1. Academic writing. I. Title.

808.066

ISBN 978-616-300-812-1

Published by : Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

79 Moo 1 Lamsai sub-district, Wang Noi district, Ayutthaya, 13170

Tel: 035248013 Fax: 035248013

Printed at : Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press

79 Moo 1 Lamsai sub-district, Wang Noi district, Ayutthaya, 13170

Tel: 035-248-555-9 Fax: 035-248545

Foreword

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has launched curriculum arrangement and development project with objectives to develop the content of applied Buddhist courses to be recognized and used together; to develop the design of books and textbooks to clip the same identity, good-looking, durable and interesting for a study; to develop their contents for producing different forms of educational media and dissemination in terms of printings, electronics and questions bank; to vastly develop personnel and academic works of the university; and to provide an opportunity for presenting lecturers' academic works in University.

This Project has taken place by the lecturers from all parts of the university, the main campus, campuses and Sangha collages to get this work accomplished with their great contribution to produce the standard books and textbooks.

This subject 'English for Public Relations' contains 7 chapters: (1) Introduction to Academic Writing; (2) Sentences and Paragraphs in Academic Writing; (3) Preparing for Academic Writing (4) Citations and References ; (5) Writing a Report; (6) Writing a Research Proposal and (7) Writing an abstract.

I am thankful to the Curriculum Arranging and Developing Committee, executive members, lecturers and staff of the university who have contributed to the producing of this invaluable textbook the rights which will belong to the university. Hopefully this textbook 'Academic Writing' will be useful for the English language affairs and communication skills for lectures, students and people in general.

Phra Rajpariyatkawee, Prof. Dr.

Rector, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Preface

This textbook ‘Academic Writing’ has been developed according to the curriculum arrangement and development project in Fiscal Year 2563 by the Academic Affairs Division, the Office of Rector, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University with the following objectives: (1) to develop the content of applied Buddhist courses to be recognized and used together; (2) to develop the design of books and textbooks to clip the same identity, good-looking, durable and interesting for a study; (3) to develop their contents for producing different forms of educational media and dissemination in terms of printings, electronics and questions bank; (4) to strengthen lecturers’ standard textbooks producing skills for educational quality assurance and international recognition.

The textbook is one of applied Buddhist courses to focus on a study of forms and practice of writing academic English; searching, collecting, compiling and presenting data in report, summary, abstract and research proposal. The details are presented in each chapter.

The authors hope that this textbook would be useful for all concerned according to the objectives of the project. I would like to sincerely express my appreciation to all who have helped complete the textbook including Mr.Steven Epstein who kindly edited this text and supervised how to make the text interesting and complete in the content. I am also very thankful to executive members and staff of Academic Affairs Division of the university. Lastly I would like to express my appreciation to advisory committee including Assoc. Prof. Chusana Rungpatchim from Maefaluang University and Ascoc.Prof.Dr.Nopporn Karobol from Thammasat University to partially join in the producing process with all their attempts so that this text has been completed as aforesaid objective.

Course Content Development Committee

August 2565 B.E.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Academic Writing

Asst.Prof.Wattana Moulmuangsaen

Objectives:-

After learning this chapter, the students will be able to

1. describe the meaning of 'Academic Writing'.
2. classify the purposes of 'Academic writing'.
3. classify the elements of Academic writing
4. classify the difference between non-academic and academic style of writing works.
5. understand about the essential of writing works

Contents:-

- Introduction
- Definition of Academic Writing
- Elements of Academic writing
- Essentials of Academic writing
- Purposes of Academic writing

1.1 Introduction

When someone sees or hears the word “academic” he may ask what does this word mean? It is easier to understand this word in order to recognize the difference between “academic writing” and non-academic writing”.

For example, suppose that a student who lives at home will wear clothes that are comfortable but when he goes to school he must wear the uniform of that school. In the same way, academic writing is appropriate for academic purposes and non-academic (ordinary writing) is appropriate for other purposes.

1.2 Definition of Academic Writing

Before offering the definition of the term academic writing’, it is important to know the history of the term. In 1994, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* by John Swales was published. It was the first textbook for non native English speakers on academic writing. Since that time there have been other key developments particularly the development of the internet which has led to the universal adoption of online programs and class. (AWG) was published. In the following decade, a number of important developments in academic writing had taken place in graduate education. The American practice of requiring advanced graduate students to take courses of academic writing as part of advanced research degrees has been adopted by more and more countries. Finally, the traditional distinction between native and non-native speakers of English had become less and less clear-cut. In the research world in particular, there are an increasing number of “experts users” of English who are not native speakers of English.

We need to define the meaning of ‘academic writing’, so that it is clear what this term means. Academic writing is the writing in the official style in that it differs from the normal style of writing. “Academic” is defined by Collins COBUILD Advance Learner’s English Dictionary:

“Academic is used to describe things that relate to the work done in schools, colleges, and university, especially work which involves studying and reasoning rather than practical or technical skill. And the example sentence in this term is ‘Their academic standards are high . . . I was terrible at school and left with few academic qualifications.’”¹

¹ Harper Collins, *Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary*, (Harper Collins Publishers: Great Britain, 2006), p.114.

Here is a definition of writing in the Encyclopedia of Americana

“Writing is the communication of ideas by means of conventional symbols that are traced, incised, drawn, or otherwise formed on the surface of some material such as stone, metal, bamboo, papyrus, parchment, or paper.”²

However, there are many definitions given by many scholars of writing. So, it is appropriate to present the definition from various sources as shown in the next paragraph.

From the website of ‘library.leeds.ac.th, the definition of ‘Academic Writing’ is

“Academic writing is clear, concise, focused, structured and backed up by evidence. Its purpose is to aid the reader’s understanding. It has a formal tone and style, but it is not complex and does not require the use of long sentences and complicated vocabulary.”³

For the definition presented above, however, it seems to be too short for understanding. There is another explanation about academic writing shown in the paragraphs below:

Each subject discipline will have certain writing conventions, vocabulary and types of discourse that you will become familiar with the course of your degree. However, there are some general characteristics of academic writing that are relevant across all disciplines.

Academic writing is planned and focused and both answers the question and demonstrates an understanding of the subject. It is structured, written in a logical order, and brings together related points and material. Moreover it is evidenced, demonstrating knowledge of the subject area, supporting opinions and arguments with evidence, and is referenced accurately. Sometimes, it can be said that the way to write any kind of writing with higher or specific form specified by the Academic Writing for Graduate Students is academic writing although general kinds of writing without this specific form is not academic writing. This discourse can be called the ‘rule of academic writing’.

² Grolier, **The Encyclopedia Americana international edition**, (2000), p.974.

³ Leeds University, **Academic Writing**, https://www.google.co.th/search?q=What+is+Academic+writing&source=lmns&hl=th&ved=2ahUKEwj0yoy8qfvpAhUUCbcAHSEOCBkQ_AUoAHoE-CAEQAA (12 June 2020)

Academic writing has a formal tone and style with the appropriate language and tenses, and is clear, concise and balanced. The first step to writing academically is to clearly define the purpose of the writing and the audience.

Dhirawit Pinyonattagarn gives the meaning of the term of ‘Academic Writing’ as shown in the following paragraph:

“Academic Writing is a particular style of writing that is characteristic of academic institutions. It is the style essential for undergraduates, graduates, researchers and even lecturers when they explore particular academic questions in essays, reports, dissertations or theses, and academic papers. Although it shares many similarities with other styles or writing, it has its own characteristic features.”⁴

1.3 Elements of Academic Writing

“<https://writingcenterpsu.wordpress.com/2018/04/23/elements-of-academic-writing/>” offers the explanation about the elements of academic writing.

Academic writing can be a big shock to some students, as the expectations for academia are often much different than those found in high schools or in creative works. However, writing in academia is a skill that can easily be learned through practice and knowledge of a few “do’s and don’ts” of the genre. We at the Writing Center are experts at academic writing, so here are our tips for writing for academia.

1) Unity

What differs between academic writing and other forms is that it is formal and logical. The argument presented should unify the writing under a singular idea, and that idea acts as the focus of the essay. While outside sources should be used, they should work to advance the logical argument presented, and they should be cited using a recognized style system.

2) Tone

The tone of an academic piece of writing should be professional and objective. You should avoid first or second person because they are not objective

⁴ Dhirawit Pinyonattagarn, **Academic Writing in English for Asian Students and Researchers**, Second Edition, (Section of English, Department of Social Technology, Suranaree University of Technology, 2012), p.1.

perspectives; third person forces you to work in facts, which is imperative in academic writing. You should also refrain from appearing ignorant of your topic. Your work should be authoritative and show that you are an expert in what you are talking about. Therefore, instead of using phrases like “I believe” or “I think,” simply state whatever the thing is as a fact.

3) Clear organization

Academic writing can sometimes cover complex and difficult-to-understand material, so it is important to make clear to the reader the meaning behind the information presented. This is done through the use of topic and concluding sentences, evidence commentary, and thesis statements. Although research must include empirical facts, without an overarching argument or theme, those facts have no meaning. It is up to the writer to put the information presented into context by explaining its meaning to the larger point of the paper.

4) Citations

Source attribution is imperative in academic writing. Academia encourages the use of others’ work to support an original argument, but you must also give credit where credit is due. With this in mind, you need to use an accepted style guide (usually APA, MLA, CMS, or ACS) to format source citation. You should also avoid excessive quoting, and instead rely on paraphrases to maintain your own voice.

5) Arguments Developed by Evidence

Academic writing requires the use of empirical evidence to support an author’s claims. If a claim is not backed up by evidence, it can be difficult to develop a cohesive argument. Therefore, instead of claiming that “*To Kill a Mockingbird* is a great work of literature,” you should instead provide reasons for this claim. For example, “*To Kill a Mockingbird* is a great work of literature because it pits childhood innocence against socially-constructed assumptions about race.” It’s best to assume that your reader will be skeptical of your argument, and you must provide relevant facts to draw them over to your side.

6) Argument is stated in a Thesis Statement

The argument of the paper should be explicitly stated in a statement found at the end of the introduction. This is called a thesis statement, and it is absolutely

essential to academic writing. The thesis acts as the unifying concept behind all information presented in the paper. Without a thesis statement, the paper will lack meaning, and the reader will be forced to find that meaning on their own, when we should be doing all the work for them.

7) Structure of Argument

Academic writing presupposes an exact order for elements in a paper: an introduction, body, and conclusion. Within those parts is its own structure, with the intro being composed of broad and narrowing statements, along with the thesis statement, and the conclusion including a restatement of the thesis statement, a review of evidence, and the all-important “So what?” that explains the importance of your work. For more information on the internal structures of these components of an academic paper, see our previous posts: *How to Structure Introductions and Conclusions*, *Perfecting the Body Paragraph*, and *Writing a Thesis Statement*.

Sometimes writing in academia can be like writing in a whole new language. There are lots of expectations for this type of writing, which can be hard for newcomers to learn.

1.4 Essentials of Academic writing

The essence of academic writing is the essence of academic writing in each step of its writing. The subject matter of essential forms of academic writing, is concerned with the process of academic essay writing for some students in the course in the colleges. The text in the writing must cover the process of writing whatever the matter of planning, drafting and documenting, revising and proofreading academic papers.⁵ For someone who wants to create a good model of academic writing, they must try to present works of writing in accordance with the essentials of academic writing and can become models for others. Theme and the main components of essentials of academic writing are the way to recognize that makes a perfect work of academic writing.

⁵ Derek Soles. (2009). **Essentials of Academic Writing**. Retrieved 12 June 2020 from <https://books.google.co.th/>

When we have learned and recognized the essentials of academic writing, we will offer the essence of each process of academic writing as follows:-

To summarize, the essentials of academic writing contain following process:

1) Process of title or topic selection. The name or the title of the academic writing must be interesting or attractive.

2) Process of setting the scope of outline or plot of academic writing. The scope or limitation of the academic writing is appropriate to the content of the work.

3) Process of checking academic writing. This means the author(s) of each work must check and make the correction of the work, starting with words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and to make sure that it is perfect and complete.

4) Process of completely checking academic writing. This is the last process of academic writing. After having finished all complete and perfect work, the work will be published in perfect form of work. Finally, the perfect work, whether article, thesis and research etc. can be taken to make various advantages as shown in the next topic of 'Purposes of Academic Writing'.

1.5 Purposes of Academic Writing

In general, the purpose of academic writing is to present information in order to show a clear understanding of a particular thing or form or subject. There are so many different types of academic writing. Each of them has its specific purpose such as to explain, describe, retell, persuade, etc.

The purposes of academic writing can be classified into three aspects:

1) The purposes in the personal level

Is the subject matter personal, private or it is the work of academic writing for personal affairs? For example, a graduate student writes his theses/research for his own educational qualification.

2) The purposes in the institutional level

Is the subject matter of personal, private or it is the work of academic writing for an institution. For example, a unit of the university, especially the Research Institute, needs to show the exemplary academic works of articles/journal articles/theses/research of the university. The rector of the university exchanges these papers with another university or the governmental sectors.

3) The purposes in international level

This the subject matter of personal, private or it is the work of academic writing for international relations. For example, the Exchange Project of Agricultural Research on Rice between Thailand and Vietnam, etc.

Conclusion

After having studied from the details above, we can recognize that the meaning of ‘Academic Writing’ is the writing that differs from other styles of general writing. For general writing, it is recognized in the term of ‘non-academic’ or the writing work without the formal style. The elements of academic writing is about the subject matter of the components of the writing such as its appropriateness, its consistency, its attractiveness etc. to make it to become an academic work.