EFFECTIVE ACADEMIC WRITING

DTS
WRITING CENTER

AGENDA

- What is academic writing?

- 5 tips on effective academic writing

WHAT IS ACADEMIC WRITING?

WHAT IT IS NOT

"Write Like You Talk"

- Email
- SMS
- Social Media
- Group chat

"Popular" Level Writing

- Letter to the Editor
- Opinion piece
- Feature article
- Reflection Paper
- Sermon

ACADEMIC WRITING IS SCHOLARLY WRITING

- Adheres to a style guide

    Turabian, DTS Turabian Supplement

- Has a clear thesis and structure

- Provides supporting levels of argument

- Cites sources

- Formal and objective

5 TIPS ON EFFECTIVE ACADEMIC WRITING

#1 USE FORMAL LANGUAGE

AVOID CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE

Speech, SMS

- Casual, conversational

- E.g., slang, colloquialisms, contractions, clichés, fillers

Academic Writing

- Formal, technical

- For an example, pick up a copy of an academic publication like *Bib Sac*

EXAMPLE

Isaiah talks about <u>a lot of stuff</u> that the people of Israel <u>ain't</u> done to worship God and a <u>whole bunch more</u> they done that went against his law<u>. I guess</u> <u>they'd</u> either gone <u>bonkers</u>, or they thought they were the <u>best thing since sliced bread</u>.

EXAMPLE

Isaiah talks about <u>a lot of stuff</u> that the people of Israel <u>ain't</u> done to worship God and a <u>whole bunch more</u> they done that went against his law. <u>I guess</u> <u>they'd</u> either gone <u>bonkers</u>, or they thought they were the <u>best thing since sliced bread</u>.

Isaiah shared how the people of Israel had failed to worship God and instead committed transgressions against his law. Perhaps they had either forgotten to whom they owed their allegiance, or they had started to worship their own image.

USE THIRD PERSON

- Avoid addressing the reader directly (i.e., "you," "y'all")

- Avoid speaking in the first person (i.e., "I," "we")

EXCEPTIONS TO THE "I" RULE

- Personal reflection

  ➢ E.g., "This impacts my ministry..."

- Introducing thesis statement or methodology

  ➢ E.g., "I will argue..." vs. "This paper will argue..."

  ➢ E.g., "I have argued..." vs. "The author of this paper has argued..."

CHECK WITH YOUR PROFESSOR!!!

EXAMPLE

<u>You</u> can't help noticing that the apostle John makes many references to light and dark imagery.

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The apostle John makes many references to light and dark imagery.

#2 USE CONCISE LANGUAGE

AVOID RUN-ON SENTENCES

- Don't write as you speak.

- If necessary, break up your sentence into smaller chunks.

EXAMPLE

As a matter of fact, it is possible to baptize a new believer through immersion, or through pouring, or through sprinkling of the water, but baptism always requires the presence of a member of the clergy to baptize the individual; it is therefore not possible for a person to baptize themself in isolation from the body of Christ.

EXAMPLE

As a matter of fact, it is possible to baptize a new believer through immersion, or through pouring, or through sprinkling of the water, but baptism always requires the presence of a member of the clergy to baptize the individual; it is therefore not possible for a person to baptize themself in isolation from the body of Christ.

Although multiple modes of baptism exist (i.e., immersion, pouring, sprinkling), a clergy member must baptize the new believer. Therefore, baptism can only take place in the physical community of Christ.

LIMIT PREPOSITIONS

- General rule: no more than 3-4 consecutive prepositions

EXAMPLE

In the email sent <u>by the pastor</u> <u>of the church</u> <u>about serving</u> <u>in the youth ministry</u> <u>as a volunteer</u>, it says that members can submit an application to the youth minister.

EXAMPLE

In the email sent <u>by the pastor</u> <u>of the church</u> <u>about serving in the youth ministry</u> <u>as a volunteer</u>, it says that members can submit an application to the youth minister.

In the last church email, the pastor wrote that members interested in serving with the youth ministry can submit an application to the youth minister.

#3 USE ACTIVE VOICE

ACTIVE VOICE VS. PASSIVE VOICE

Active Voice

- Direct
- Lively
- Emphatic (decisive)
- Concise
- Definite (clearly stated)

Passive Voice

- Indirect (roundabout)
- Tame
- Hesitant (undecided)
- Wordy
- Indefinite (unspecified)

EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

- When the doer is insignificant (in comparison to the object being acted upon).

  ➢ E.g., *"Augustine was made Bishop of Hippo."*

- When the doer is unknown.

  ➢ E.g., "The house was robbed."

EXAMPLE

The paper <u>was graded</u> by the professor.

EXAMPLE

The paper **<u>was graded</u>** by the professor.

The paper was graded.
The professor graded the paper.

#4 AVOID AMBIGUOUS REFERENCES

USE SPECIFIC LANGUAGE

- Be specific when possible

- Use the following pronouns or adjectives carefully: this/these, that/those, some, many, everyone, all, most, any.

EXAMPLE OF AMBIGUOUS LANGUAGE

An individual may get involved with their local church in <u>many ways</u>.

EXAMPLE OF SPECIFIC LANGUAGE

An individual may get involved with their local church in <u>many ways</u>.

An individual may get involved with their local church in many ways, such as <u>volunteering as an usher, a Bible teacher, or a youth leader</u>.

INTRODUCING SCHOLARS

- Introduce a scholar by full name in your first reference and give a brief description that provides context for their area of expertise

- Afterward, refer to the scholar by last name only

- DO NOT refer to a scholar by their title (e.g., Dr. So-and-So)

EXAMPLE OF INTRODUCING SCHOLARS

Dr. Mark Yarbrough argues...

EXAMPLE OF INTRODUCING SCHOLARS

Dr. Mark Yarbrough argues...

Mark Yarbrough, a biblical scholar, argues...

#5 USE NON-EXCLUSIONARY LANGUAGE

AVOID BIASED LANGUAGE

- Present others' arguments fairly

- *DO NOT* misrepresent (e.g., overgeneralize) their views or make assumptions about what they believe.

- "Do unto others..." (Matt 7:12)

EXAMPLE OF BIASED LANGUAGE

Calvinists, with their <u>deterministic view</u> of predestination, <u>undermine</u> the freedom of the human will and make god an <u>arbitrary determiner</u> of human destiny. They read <u>predetermined theology</u> into the text where it <u>has no place</u>.

REVISION TO FAIR LANGUAGE

Calvinists, with their <u>deterministic view</u> of predestination, <u>undermine</u> the freedom of the human will and make god an <u>arbitrary determiner</u> of human destiny. They read <u>predetermined theology</u> into the text where it has <u>no place</u>.

Calvinism <u>emphasizes the sovereignty of God</u>, teaching that <u>God elects individuals to salvation based on his free choice</u>. <u>They understand certain biblical texts</u> as providing <u>robust evidence</u> for their position.

USE GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

	Gender Biased	Gender Neutral	Gender Inclusive
Human Beings (General)	"man," "men," "mankind," "spokesman," "chairman"	"humans," "people," "humanity," "humankind," "spokesperson," "chairperson"	"men and women"
Singular Pronoun	"he," "him," "his"	"they," "them," "their," "themself"	"she and he," "him or her," "her and his"

EXAMPLE OF GENDER-BIASED LANGUAGE

Christ died for all <u>mankind</u>. When a person responds in faith to the gospel, <u>he</u> acknowledges this fact.

REVISION TO GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

Christ died for all <u>mankind</u>. When a person responds in faith to the gospel, <u>he</u> acknowledges this fact.

Christ died for all <u>humankind</u>. When a person responds in faith to the gospel, <u>they</u> acknowledge this fact.

THANK YOU

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