

# INTRODUCTION TO ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL WRITTEN GENRES

Although all academic written genres use formal language and share features concerning structure, not all of them have the same aims and target audience. In this section, we are going to deal with its similarities and differences, as well as with the vocabulary used to discuss them. Moreover, we will emphasize the importance that formal writing (academic, technical, professional) has for a successful professional career, according to its own practitioners.

## WARMING-UP

1. Look at the genres included in the box and try to answer the following questions spontaneously: *Which ones do you use? How would you describe them in one sentence? Are there any more items that you use and are not included here?*

Dissertation	Research article	Technical Report
Final Degree Project	Research Monograph	Conference Proceedings
...		

2. Look at the verbs related with written academic functions and join them with as many nouns as possible from the previous box, e.g. *to submit a research article*. Can you briefly define the meaning of each verb? Are there any verbs that you can add?

write	carry out	elaborate	submit	deliver	draft	tutor/mentor
supervise	proofread	edit				
...						

3. Look at the basic characteristics of academic writing and try to think of examples of each one of them. Could you add any other?

Precision/accuracy	Hedging/indirection	Relevance	Formality
Objectivity	Clarity	Cohesion	Brevity

4. But what is academic writing? Read some available descriptions and identify common features. Then, discuss in which way academic writing differs from other forms of writing:

*Academic writing is straightforward, concise, concentrated, organized, and evidence-based.*

*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.*

*Though the tone, style, content, and organization of academic writing vary across genres, nearly all academic writing shares a relatively formal register, and the use of rhetorical moves to mark structural changes among sections or paragraphs.*

Would you add any other characteristics to the descriptions above?

#### AND WHY IS ACADEMIC WRITING SO IMPORTANT?

1. You are going to watch a **video** in which several engineers talk about the importance of acquiring suitable professional writing skills for their career. During the first viewing, try to become familiarized with their different accents, since only some of them are native English speakers. Then, discuss to what extent they are trying to **raise our awareness** of the importance of writing.

2. Watch it a second time and try to decide where the following statements are **true** or **false**. Read the statements first and make sure that you understand them:

**Speaker 1** states that academic writing has changed completely, both in the technological aspect and in the format (structure, sections...).

**Speaker 2** emphasizes how the way you report on something has an effect on others.

**Speaker 3** describes a case study in which a good report was crucial.

**Speaker 4** argues that writing a good technical report is only vital when trying to obtain a good job.

**Speakers 5 and 7** maintain that writing a good technical report is indispensable for being promoted within your company.

**Speaker 6** grants only secondary importance to report writing for an engineer.

**Speaker 8 (1)** holds that effective communication is the top ability for an engineer.

3. After answering the questions, let us have a look at the verbs, adjectives and expressions used both in the video and in the box above, and arrange them in parallel, as in the example:

Verbs	Adjectives	Expressions
<b>Box:</b> emphasize. <b>Video:</b> overstate.	<b>Box:</b> crucial / vital. <b>Video:</b> important / key	<b>Box:</b> being promoted. <b>Video:</b> escalating up in your career.

4. In which specific ways is academic writing useful for you? How do you think it can become even more necessary in the future?

### FURTHER REFLECTION

From a piece of your own research choose a short paragraph (from any section, except the abstract). Next to the paragraph, write down all the concepts used in the lesson that, in your opinion, apply to it (e.g. it is concise, it is objective...).