

Academic Language

There are several things to keep in mind when writing academic papers.

Avoid contractions:

Students who fail the exam **can't** enter the university. (no)

Students who fail the exam **cannot** enter the university. (yes)

Use formal register:

The government needs to **get rid of** the deficit. (no)

The government needs to **eliminate** the deficit. (yes)

Avoid "you"

There are several steps **you** can take to find housing. (no)

There are several steps **students** can take to find housing. (yes)

Use mid-position adverbs:

The molten steel is poured into the molds **slowly**. (no)

The molten steel is **slowly** poured into the moulds. (yes)

Don't use "etc."

Writing well involves planning, drafting, editing, **etc.** (no)

Writing well involves planning, drafting, and editing. (yes)

Word Choice/Tone

Adjust the language to achieve an academic tone.

1. A huge number of people have been really upset with Bush over the events of the Iraqi war.
2. Rents have skyrocketed in the last couple of years and the situation isn't going to change for a while, probably.
3. Nobody was crazy about the drawings submitted for the World Trade Center site, so they kept the competition open a little bit longer.

4. We can solve the problem by just switching a few elements around.
5. The research proposal was turned down because the research would have required lots of money.

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21G.228 / 21G.227 Advanced Workshop in Writing for Social Sciences and Architecture (ELS)
Spring 2007

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.