

## What is academic writing?

Academic writing is:

### 1. Being clear about your purpose

- Be very clear about the specific purpose of the writing task – what have you been asked to do?
- Seek clarification if in doubt.
- Ensure that you are following the instructions of the task strictly and carefully.
- See *Academic writing process* for more information on how to interpret an assignment question.

### 2. Being clear about your audience

- The most obvious audience for your assignment is the marker, who presumably knows a lot about the subject. However, do not leave out any basic or essential information because you think it is too obvious for the marker. The marker expects you to show that you know the material and the subject matter, and that you are able to perform the task at hand.
- Imagine that you are writing for someone in order to teach the person about the topic. Consequently, you need to be explicit and clear.
- See *Academic writing: paragraph level* and *Academic writing: sentence level* for more information on how to enhance the clarity in your writing.

### 3. Getting the right tone

Setting the right tone in your writing largely depends on:

- the nature and purpose of the task;
- the lecturer's requirements;
- the assignment type – e.g. case study, report, reflective journal, literature review; each assignment type has different expectations in regards to the structure and appropriate language use; and

- the social distance between you and your reader, which will dictate whether you should use a personal or impersonal tone, and an informal or formal writing style.
- For more information on the various assignment types, see *Assignment types*.

Adapted from the following source:

Morley-Warner, T. 2000, *Academic writing is... A guide to writing in a university context*, Centre for Research and Education in the Arts, Sydney.

