

# **The Characteristics of Academic style**

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# Definition of Style

- **Galperin:** *Functional style of language is a system of interrelated language means which serves a definite aim in communication.*
- The style in writing can be defined as the **way** a writer writes and it is **the technique** which an individual author uses in his writing. It varies from author to author and depends upon one's syntax, word choice, and tone.

## **Task 1**

- One of the texts is more academic than the other. Give some examples of the differences in style.


**1. Throughout the world, cell phones have become omnipresent in classrooms, cafeterias and hallways, and research indicates that cell phones are used more frequently to send text messages than to make phone calls (Mindlin, 2008). <sup>2</sup>Indeed, forty-three percent of teenage respondents in a 2010 report by the Nielsen Company claimed that they got a cellular phone primarily for text messaging (The Nielsen Company, 2010).**

**2. Most people take drug overdoses because they find that it's difficult to sort out their problems clearly. That's why you should treat your patients in a clear way. That means you should treat your patients in a way that helps them to tell the difference between their problems and find ways to deal with them.**

<i>informal word</i>	<i>Possible alternatives</i>
big	large, great, huge
little	small, lesser
tiny	extremely small
like (adverb)	such as
kind of, sort of	somewhat, to an extent
kind, sort	type
thing	object, concept, idea, issue, factor
Good, nice	high quality, suitable, effective, positive, beneficial
bad	inadequate, unsuitable, ineffective



## **Task 2. Improve the following sentences by supplying a more academic word or phrase where necessary.**

- The reaction of the official was sort of negative.
  - The economic outlook is nice.
  - The future of Federal funding is up in the air.
  - Within any country, political and economic systems have a big impact on the way university business is conducted.
  - The resulting high competition between students is good.
  - The economy of Greece is affected by things that happen outside it.
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# Choose single word verbs

- When there is a choice between a multi-word verb (usually a phrasal verb) or a single word verb, always choose the latter in your writing.

## *Examples*

- Expert systems can help out the user in the diagnosis of problems. (= informal style)
- Expert systems can assist the user in the diagnosis of problems. (= academic style)
- Research expenditures have gone up to nearly \$350 million. (= informal style)
- Research expenditures have increased to nearly \$350 million. (= academic style)



## Task 3

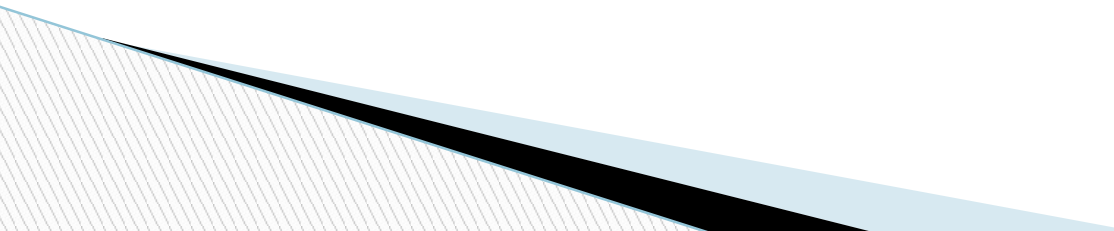
Choose a verb from the list to make the sentences formal.

eliminate – establish – intervene – investigate – raise – reduce

- ❑ Researchers have been **looking into** the problem for 15 years now.
- ❑ This issue was **brought up** during the investigations.
- ❑ This creates a "guardian angel" assumption that the next level of the hierarchy knows what is happening and will therefore **step in** if something goes wrong.
- ❑ Realistically, we cannot altogether **get rid of** the possibility of errors.
- ❑ Dry office air **cuts down** employees' immunity to colds
- ❑ A primary education system was **set up** throughout Ireland as early as 1831.

## Task 4

**Can you suggest more formal verbs to replace phrasal verbs?**

- As export-oriented policies are being followed, the new protectionist movements should also be *thought about*.
  - He *went on* speaking for over an hour.
  - The meeting was *put off* until December.
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# Use formal negative forms

**neutral**

>

**more academic**

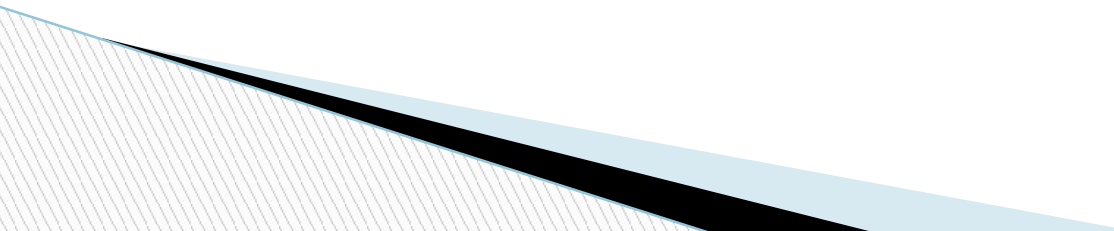
- not ... any > no
- not ... much > little
- not ... many > few

# Examples

- The analysis *didn't* yield *any* new results. > The analysis yielded *no* new results.
- The government *didn't* allocate *much* funding for the programme.> The government allocated *little* funding for the programme.
- The problem *doesn't* have *many* viable solutions. > The problem has *few* viable solutions

## **Task 5**

**If necessary, make improvements to the following texts.**

- Not many parents who are bakers would want to see their children destined for the same end.
  - In fact, there hasn't been much agreement among researchers, labour and industry.
  - A new worker will not be expected to know many different procedures on arrival.
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# Avoid redundancy

- Redundancy in writing is where you use more words than necessary to express the required meaning. For example:

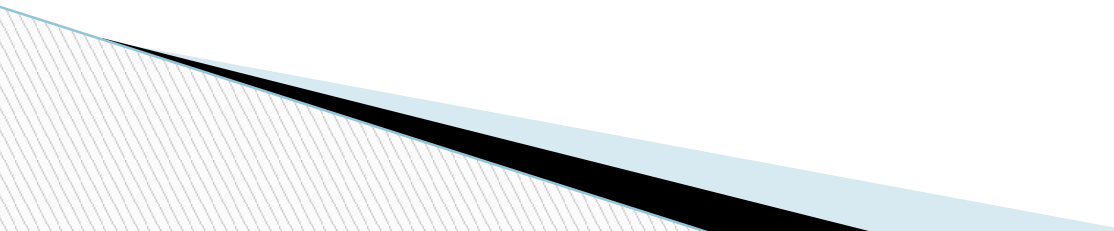
There are desirable benefits to be gained from increasing research into English.

*...would be better phrased as:*

- There are benefits to be gained from increasing research into English.  
[Benefits are always desirable, so "desirable" is redundant.]

## **Task 6**

**Pick out any words or phrases that are redundant in these sentences and rewrite them where necessary.**

- ❑ An attempt will be made to try to achieve an understanding of the present situation in the EU.
  - ❑ The subject of the discussion is about the role of government in scientific advance.
  - ❑ Other reasons, too, have also contributed to the development of privately-owned universities.
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# Limit the use of expressions such as 'and so forth', 'etc.' and

‘ ’

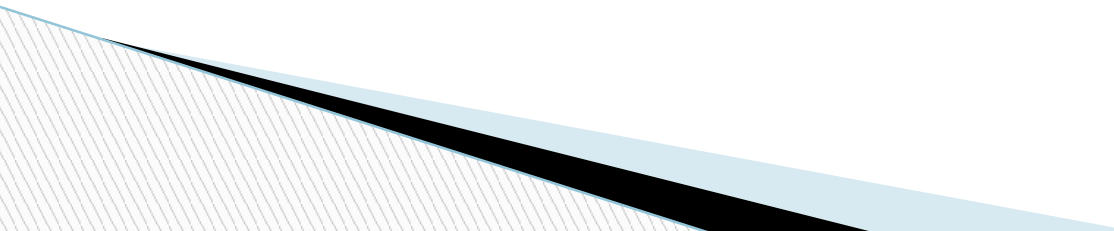
## Example

- These semiconductors can be used in robots, CD players, *etc.*
- > These semiconductors can be used in robots, CD players, *and other electronic devices.*



## **Task 7**

**If necessary, make improvements to the following texts:**

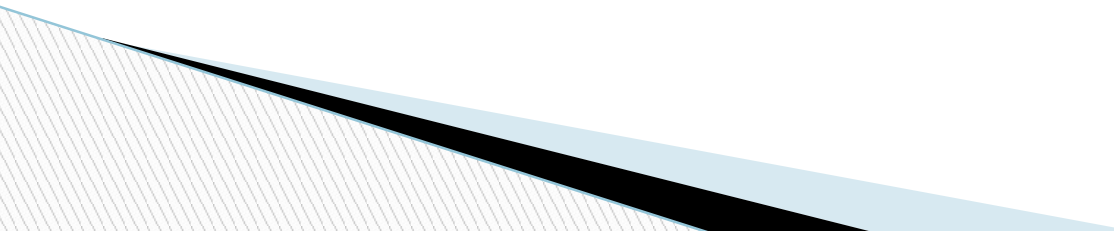
- He attempted to reform the village of New Lanark by rebuilding houses, etc.
  - Sitting in a sports arena, for example, will be tall people, small people, large people, thin people, black people, white people, elderly people, and so on.
  - There have been broad changes in work patterns: in job locations, hours, ...
- 

# Avoid addressing the reader as "you"

- ▣ *You* can see the results in Table 1. > The results *can be seen* in Table 1.
- ▣ We can argue (demonstrate) that ... > It can be argued / demonstrated / that...

# **Task 8**

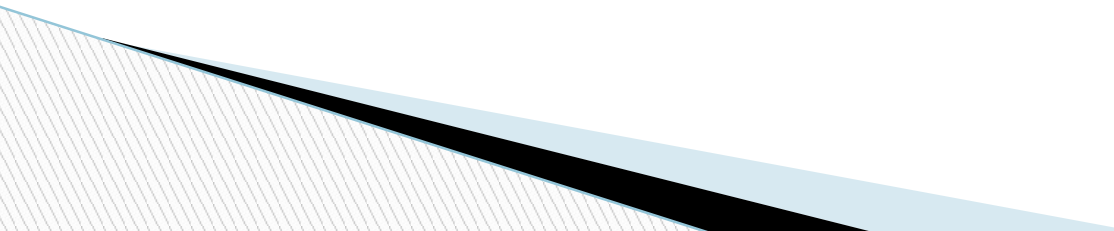
## **Suggest improvements**

- ▣ You can apply the same concept to universities.
  - ▣ You can only do this after you have first specified what you should do.
  - ▣ In the second section of the report, we will consider the effects of domestic abuse.
  - ▣ I have divided my report into five sections.
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# **Limit the use of direct questions**

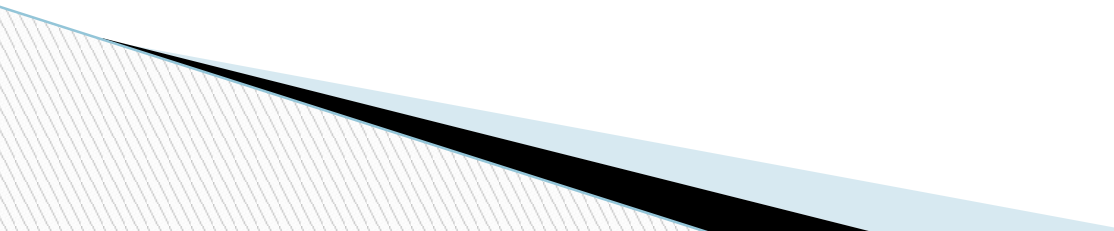
▣ What can be done to increase motivation?

▣ *Instead of this question, you could write:*

1. We now need to consider what can be done to increase motivation.
  2. We now need to consider how motivation can be increased.
  3. The ways/methods/of increasing motivation should be considered.
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## **Task 9**

**Suggest improvements to the following sentences where necessary:**

- Can we identify whether or not there is a relationship between high levels of understanding and clarity of text?
  - Why do some departments develop and thrive while others stagnate or even go bankrupt?
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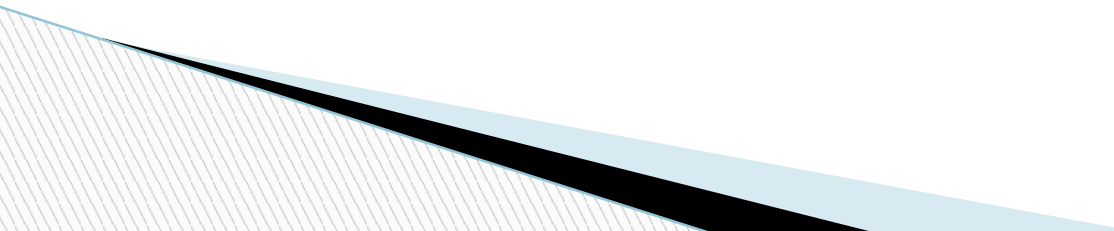
# Place adverbs within the verb phrase

## *Examples*

- *Then* the solution can be discarded. > The solution can *then* be discarded.
- The process is introduced *slowly*.> The process is *slowly* introduced.

# **Task 10**

## **Improve the following sentences.**

- These decisions are concerned primarily with the nature of the students or services.
  - The view is that a university's results and financial position are affected materially by the market.
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**Use nominalisations:** try to write noun-based phrases rather than verb-based ones.

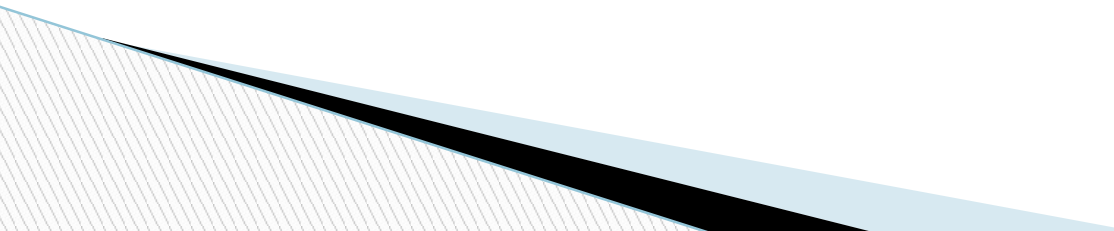
### *Examples*

- ▣ **The chances of disease are much reduced** because of our knowledge of hygiene and the application of public health practices.
- ▣ **The reduction in the chances of disease** is the result of our knowledge of hygiene and the application of public health practices.  
[This is called nominalisation]



## **Task 11**


**Rewrite the following using nouns as in the example above.**

- Continuous process technology was adopted. This was because of its greater efficiency.
  - If women consume alcohol during pregnancy, this can lead to birth defects.
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# Avoid contractions

- Export figures **won't** improve until the economy is stronger. > informal
- Export figures **will not** improve until the economy is stronger. > formal

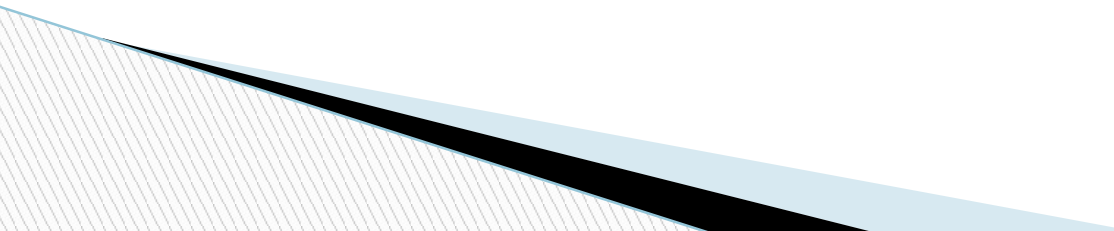
## **Which of the two alternatives in bold do you think is more appropriate in academic writing?**

- 1 The government has made considerable/great progress in solving the problem.
  - 2 We got/obtained excellent results in the experiment.
  - 3 The results of lots of/numerous tests have been pretty good/encouraging.
  - 4 A loss of jobs is one of the consequences/things that will happen if the process is automated.
  - 5 The relationship between the management and workers is extremely/really important.
  - 6 Some suggestions springing up from/arising from the study will be presented.
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# Rewrite the following text in academic style

- Lots of times in many years, different professional people were interested in making education better. They have asked me what we know about how people learn in order to use it to make education better.

# In conclusion

- ‘Academic style’ is not only a matter of particular words or particular grammatical features. It involves **how you think**, how you reason, and how you interact with what has already been discovered or argued.
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# Video about academic style

- <https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/eltu/isp/courses/el7030>

# Sources:

- <http://library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.20.htm>
- [http://services.unimelb.edu.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/541254/Academic\\_Style\\_Update\\_051112.pdf](http://services.unimelb.edu.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0003/541254/Academic_Style_Update_051112.pdf)