

Unit IV- Industry Analysis Report

Academic Writing

Writing is difficult and academic writing more so. Some of the main reasons why writing is troublesome is the absence of immediate feedback, ambiguity of words, lack of precision in writing and difference in knowledge levels of the writer and the reader. Reader's expectations also play a vital role in making writing challenging. Industry analysis reports primarily revolve around the ability to write fact based observations regarding the industry you are working on. Hence it is imperative to understand academic writing before embarking on an industry analysis report.

There are different kinds of writing, each presenting its own special challenges besides those that are common to all forms of writing. In this book, we focus on academic writing, a genre of writing critical for your academic success. In order to master academic writing, we need to distinguish it from two other major approaches to writing, namely, journalistic writing and creative writing. These three genres of writing are like the basic colours. You can mix them to generate other kinds of writing that are suitable for different contexts and readers. Business writing, for example, can be seen as a combination of many features of journalistic writing and academic writing.

All good writing conforms to the anticipated reader's expectations. Fluency in one genre of writing, however, does not necessarily lead to fluency in other kinds of writing. That is why some students who win prizes for short story writing or newspaper articles, struggle hard at the graduate level where they have to write academic papers or submit written assignments. In order to write well, we should figure out what our anticipated readers' expectations are and be guided by them.

Journalistic Writing

The objective of journalistic writing, generally found in newspapers and news magazines of the print and digital varieties, is essentially to inform the readers by reporting and commenting on current events. It is targeted at a wide range of people who can spare very little time and yet want to know what is happening around them. The preferred writing style is crisp, lively and attention grabbing.

The sentences and paragraphs are short. The content is people-centred and easy to grasp. There may be photographs and attention-grabbing personal details to support the written text.

Most journalistic writing answers, in as few and simple words as possible, the following questions: Who? What? When? Where? How? Newspaper articles, including editorials, which comment on events and issues, also answer 'why.' Thus, journalistic writing consists of factual reporting (news reporting) and analysis of those events that show the writer's interpretation of those events. There are norms that journalists are required to follow; those norms, however, are not as rigid as the ones academic writers have to follow.

Successful journalistic writing attracts and keeps the casual, even non-committed reader hooked. Writers use many devices including photographs to catch the reader's eyes. Wordplay such as puns, humour and exaggeration are commonplace.

The people-centredness of journalistic writing leads to the generous use of verbs and the active voice. Words that appeal to the different senses are common. They help the reader

participate in the event, as it were. He expects the news story to be factual. Short quotes from people connected to the story are generally thrown in too. They give colour and spice, and in a sense, objectivity to the story.

Creative Writing

Creative writing is expressing oneself—one's experience or imagination or a combination of both—through the written word. It creates something new. It is found in fiction, poetry and plays, collectively referred to as literature. It is the writer's subjective perception of reality that is shared with readers through words.

But this subjectivity is acceptable to readers of literature. We do not ask creative writers to tell us the truth. We do not ask creative writers to provide evidence for any assumptions they make or any conclusions they arrive at. We accept what they write because what it says feels right. We reject it when we do not enjoy it. We expect creative writing to entertain us, enlighten us and transport us to aspects of life we have not experienced.

Good creative writing displays passion, wit and intuitive knowledge. It is an art. So, one needs the basic creative talent as in music, dance or painting before it can be refined through training. Each creative writer has his own distinctive style. One can often identify the author by examining the style of an extract. In other words, creative writing reflects the personality, attitude and values of the writer's self.

Academic Writing

Academic writing—broadly defined—is for communicating scientific knowledge. It is generally addressed to scholars and other knowledgeable readers who are familiar with that branch of knowledge.

What is common among all classes of academic writing is that ideas take centre stage, people are in the background, and the writer's personal feelings have no role in the presentation of ideas or insights. Everything that the reader needs should be explicitly stated in the text; arguments are accepted or rejected because of the logic or evidence presented there, not because of who proposes them. This is in stark contrast to creative writing in which the poet's or writer's personality infuses the text with special meanings.

Readers of academic writing expect the author to analyse empirical data (collected in many different ways and from different sources depending on the discipline), arrive at a thesis—idea or claim—and support it with evidence. In other words, readers expect to be taken along the path of scientific knowledge

Academic Writing Style

Academic papers—both empirical and conceptual—are to be read carefully and analysed; not just skimmed and tossed away like a newspaper. Naturally sentences and paragraphs tend to be longer and more complex than in journalistic writing.

The language style suitable for academic writing is formal. Conversational contractions such as 'can't,' 'won't' and 'shouldn't' are not welcome. Equally unwelcome are colloquial expressions such as 'grub' for food and 'buck' for dollar.

Academic writing is somewhat subdued like formal workplace clothes. It is not exuberant; it is not supposed to draw attention to itself but to the ideas conveyed through it. Thus, colourful expressions and bold metaphors that populate creative writing are rarely found in academic writing, especially in scholarly papers that scientific journals publish.

One of the implications of the formality infusing academic writing is that it closely follows the established conventions of the genre. The most easily noticed convention is the meticulous citing of the sources of data or views borrowed from others, even when it weighs the text down and makes it less readable.

Academic Writing Characteristics

Academic writing is dispassionate. You may be convinced about something. You may be passionate or excited about it. But in academic writing you have to be like an impartial observer. You must present the pros and cons of the position you hold, rather than just evidence that supports your position. You must not suppress any inconvenient data that you cannot account for or that which block a neat conclusion. The reader may or may not agree with your position or your interpretation. That does not matter. Your credibility as an academic writer goes up when the reader finds you objective and dispassionate.

Although their analysis is systematic and reasonably comprehensive, the authors are careful not to make a categorical statement based on it.

Clarity is arguably the most highly regarded virtue in academic writing. While creative writing is full of ambiguities and multiple layers of meanings that signal the depth, variety and complexity of the human experience, good academic writing has no room for them.

Words that are more than adequate in ordinary communication such as 'many,' 'quite a few' and 'shortly,' are not welcome in academic writing because they are elastic. What number, for example, would qualify as 'many' or 'quite a few'? Similarly, in academic writing meant for international readers, symbols such as \$ and Re are not clear enough because different countries have dollars and rupees as the unit of their currency. Unless the context makes it abundantly clear, you will need to write USD or US\$ for US dollar; AUD or A\$ for Australian dollar. In the same way, you need to write INR for Indian Rupees, PKR for Pakistan Rupees and NPR for Nepalese Rupees, unless the context defines it for the reader. The idea is that what the writer means should be clear to the reader. Academic writing insists on greater rigour and clarity than is acceptable in ordinary communication.