

Academic Skills Glossary

These are some main terms associated with academic writing and a basic definition.

Academic Integrity

Honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Students must obey the rules of honest scholarship, meaning that all written work should result from an individual's efforts. It means applying these values in your own work and when you engage with the work and contributions of others.

Analyse

The ability to analyse and evaluate information. Your analysis might tell the reader why the evidence is important, what it means, or how it connects to other ideas in your writing. Note that analysis often leads to synthesis, an extension, and a more complicated form of analysis.

Bibliography

A list of the books, articles etc. that someone has used for finding information for a piece of work they have written. It needs to be arranged alphabetically according to the author's surname. The term is used for a list of sources to write an assignment. It usually includes all the sources consulted, even if they are not directly cited (referred to) in the assignment.

Cohesion

The relationship between sentences or parts of a piece of writing that is shown by particular words or phrases. It refers to how vocabulary and grammatical structures connect ideas within a text. It provides flow and sequence to work and helps make your paragraphs clear for the reader.

Consider

To think about something carefully before deciding or developing an opinion. There are many factors to consider before you start writing. There are five of them: audience, purpose, context, and media, which will determine the language you use.

Copyright

The legal right to control the work of a writer, artist, musician etc. If you own the copyright on something, it is your intellectual property, and others must pay you to broadcast, publish, or perform it. It is an internationally recognised system of protecting the rights of creators of written, performed, or artistic works such as books, plays, paintings, computer programs or sound recordings.

Critical analysis

Considering and evaluating the claims made by the theorists, "experts", official bodies, journalists etc., that you have read, ask yourself if the basis of these claims is sound and whether they apply or are relevant to the situation you are examining.

Format

The structure and design of a written document, for example, the size and type of the letters and the width of the written area of the page. Formatting also makes information more accessible to the reader by creating and labelling sections (headings), highlighting keywords or ideas (bold, italics, or lists), and making a good impression (professional look and feel, appropriate font choice for the document type).

Glossary

A list of the difficult words used in a piece of writing or subject, with explanations of their meaning. Encountering many unfamiliar industry-specific words may be overwhelming for readers. This is why authors define words related to the topic within a glossary. This document, for example, is a type of glossary.

Identify

To recognise something and understand exactly what it is. It means exactly what it says. If you claim something to be the case or suggest some course of action, then provide facts and reasoning to demonstrate the truth of the claim or the sensibility of the action.

Illustrate

To show what something is like or to show that something is true. To illustrate means to show or demonstrate something. An effective illustration essay demonstrates and supports a point through evidence.

Illustrated Essay or Report

Use images to reinforce the points made in your essay or report. They must be relevant, well presented (not pixelated), and referenced (e.g., Fig.1/Fig. 2). Illustrative writing may benefit writers and readers. On the one hand, this type of assignment can improve students' creativity and comprehensive skills.

Interpret

To explain the meaning of something in understandable terms. When you interpret a source for research, you are trying to find the meaning and significance of the story. You are asking yourself what the text means and why it is important. One of the best ways to interpret writing is to use the text as a guide.

Objective

Something that you plan to achieve in written work. Everyday language is 'subjective', whereas academic writing is 'objective'. Although you may have strong feelings about an assignment topic, your writing should provide and reference the evidence you have used to write the assignment.

Paraphrase

To express what someone else has said or written using different words, especially to make it shorter or clearer. It is used with short text sections, such as phrases and sentences. A paraphrase offers an alternative to using direct quotations and allows you to integrate evidence/source material into assignments

Point

An idea or opinion among several others. Establishing a clear point of view is important because it dictates how your reader interprets characters, events, and other important details. There are three kinds of points of view: first person, second person, and third person. An investigation to establish facts or principles or to collect information on a subject.

Purpose

The aim that someone wants to achieve or that something is intended to achieve. The most common purpose of academic writing is to explain some idea or research finding and persuade readers that your explanation or theory is correct. In doing so, you may need to describe an object, place, or activity.

Qualify

Add something to a statement to change it slightly or state the situations in which it is false. If you qualify a statement, you make it less strong or less general by adding a detail or explanation. You could qualify that by putting it into context.

Query

A question you ask because you want information or need clarification on something. A query can give you an answer to a simple question, perform calculations, combine data from different tables, and add, change, or delete data from a database.

Quotation

Quoting involves using the exact wording used by the original author(s) in their work; quotation marks indicate this. The term direct quote is often used to distinguish a quote from a paraphrase. You use single '...' or double "..." quotation marks depending on your referencing style.

Rationale

The set of reasons that something such as a plan or belief is based on. When you are asked to give the reasoning or justification for an action or a choice, there is a focus on the 'why' in a rationale: why you chose to do something, study or focus on something. It is a set of purpose and significance statements often addressing a gap or a need.

Refer

To mention someone or something when you are speaking or writing. Whenever you use an idea from someone else's work, such as a journal article, textbook or website, you should cite the original author to clarify where that idea originated. This is the case regardless of whether you have paraphrased, summarised, or quoted their work.

Relevant (adjective)

Directly connected with and important to what is being discussed or considered. Relevant information source answers your research question. To determine relevance, the purpose and bias must be understood. All aspects of evaluation must be taken into consideration to determine relevance.

Resource

You can use something to help you achieve something, especially in your work or study. A resource can use objects, archives, and journals in your research. Your research question and the kind of resources you collect to complete your research is important. Students' access to information is greater than ever before. To be a good researcher, you must be able to locate, organise, evaluate, and communicate information.

Source

A person, place, or thing provides something you need or want. The writer uses sources to explain what readers need to understand, usually about a time or culture, to follow the paper. In other words, the sources help the writer build a context for a discussion.

Summarise

A summary is a short overview of the main points of a text. The purpose of a summary is to quickly give the reader or listener an idea of what this material is saying. You may create summaries of material by other authors, such as articles, plays, films, lectures, stories, or presentations.

Theoretical

Based on theories or ideas instead of practical experience, relating to theories or ideas. A theoretical framework is a foundational review of existing theories for developing the arguments you will use in your own work.

Topic sentence

A sentence that expresses the main idea of the paragraph in which it occurs. The topic sentence must present an idea that will unify the rest of the paragraph while relating it back to the paper's main subject.