

## Academic Language

Having the skill of using academic language in a piece of writing is necessary. It is a critical factor for academic and professional success, and if you don't know where to implement academic language, it can have a negative impact on your overall argument or message.

Assess when academic language is most important by considering whom your audience is (e.g., peer, professor, customer, manager). A peer, for instance, might not require the level of formality a manager does. By replacing the casual and everyday words with appropriate academic language, your writing will be stronger and more persuasive.

### Street Talk vs. Real Talk

The lingo you use with your friends and the lingo you should use in your essays are drastically different. Slang might be expected in a conversation with your friend, but it is considered inappropriate for an essay. It is important to distinguish the words that are appropriate for conversation versus academic writing. Writing for school/work should be composed of formal and organized language. Knowing the appropriate situation is critical in any professional workplace or academic environment.

### Words to Avoid in Academic Essays

There are some words that are used in casual conversations that do not belong in academic essays, called dead words. Avoiding them will make your essay formal and professional. Being able to recognize and remove these everyday words is critical to writing a better essay. Here are some common colloquial words/phrases that people often misuse in academic writing.

Got/Get	You	Stuff	A lot
Funny	Things	Awesome	Kind of
Like	Nice	Good	Very
Just	Used to	Said	Gonna
Cool	Big/Huge	Guy	Kid
Sort of	Mad	Nice	Sad
And also	Being that	Scared	Irregardless
Many	Due to the fact that	Try and	Won't
Isn't/Can't	Give	The reason why is because	Til/ Till
Bad	Really	People	

### Words to Use in Academic Essays

To replace the dead words, there are more sophisticated words to use. Some of these words will effectively replace the dead words associated with them, but some might not be as fitting. It is important that these words are used carefully when replacing dead words. These words will help specify the information that you are relaying. Dead words are vague and make the sentences appear unclear. If there are some words you're having trouble with replacing or defining, you can find more information on the following website:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/plague.htm>

Receive	Obtain	Acquire	Produce
Numerous	Substantial	Significant	Abundant
Excessive	Exceptional	Outstanding	Impressive
Immense	Massive	Tremendous	Sizable
Excellent	Favorable	Exceptional	Satisfactory
Person	Individual	Child	Adolescent
Somewhat	Slightly	Such as	Similar to
Frustrated	Furious	Enraged	Pleasant
Captivating	Pleasing	Melancholy	Dejected
Extremely	Unusually	Severely	Especially
Exceedingly	Eminently	Profoundly	Noticeably
Innumerable	Many	A great deal	Ample
Amusing	Comical	Laughable	Jovial
Peculiar	Develop	Become	Splendid
Superb	Rather	Charming	Indignant
Despondent	Terrified	Timid	Diffident

In addition to sounding unprofessional, using casual language can also negatively impact your intended meaning.

A few scientists got results that said that the product was good.

Several scientists acquired results that concluded that the product was effective.

Notice how switching the dead words with academic words provides a more specific explanation of why the product was “good.” The word “good” could have multiple meanings; it could mean that many people liked the product, or the product was physically appealing. By replacing it with “effective,” the reader now knows *how* the product was “good.”

Sometimes, the use of casual language can impact how the audience perceives you.

The kid ate a lot of candy, but irregardless, he was still kind of hungry.

The child ate an ample amount of candy, but he was still somewhat hungry.

Even though “kid” and “child” carry the same meaning, one is more appropriate in a formal situation than the other. In addition, since “irregardless” is not a real word, it is unnecessary and might impact the audience’s perception/judgment of the writer.

### Activity:

Identify the “dead words” and replace them with academic words.

1. San José State University hired a lot of people with cool degrees.

2. Donald Duck needs therapy. The reason why is because he has many issues.
3. Leonardo DiCaprio should get more Oscars because he is a good actor and is very nice.
4. I admire Chris Hemsworth due to the fact that he is Australian and awesome.
5. I get scared of spiders because nothing should have more than four legs.
6. Michelle Obama should try and run for president in 2020 due to the fact that she is already familiar with a lot of the political stuff.
7. Drugs are bad, so they should be banned.
8. Stuff like that only egg on Twitter trolls to continue attacking celebrities.

### **Answer Key for Activity**

1. San José State University hired numerous professors with impressive degrees.
2. Donald Duck needs therapy because he has various issues.
3. Leonardo DiCaprio should receive more Oscars because he is an exceptional actor and is amicable / kind / courteous.
4. I admire Chris Hemsworth because he is Australian and awe-inspiring / outstanding / tremendous.
5. I am terrified of spiders because nothing should have more than four legs.
6. Michelle Obama should try to run for president in 2020 since she is already familiar with a majority of the political terms / positions / responsibilities.
7. Drugs are harmful, so they should be banned.
8. Such actions only encourage Twitter trolls to continue attacking celebrities.

### **References**

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