

Reflect:

- 1 In your own experience, what are the biggest challenges that student writers face in getting to grips with academic writing?
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- 2 To what extent do you think new student writers can learn from reading and analyzing academic texts? What potential drawbacks might there be to this approach?
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- 3 In what ways do you think the grammar syllabus for an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course should be different from a General English course?
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.....
- 4 Which features of grammar do you think might need less attention in an EAP course?
.....
.....

Discuss:

If you have someone to discuss with, compare your answers. If any are different, think about why.

Explore:

- 1 Briefly explain why academic writers use each of the following grammatical features.
 - a. nominalization:
 - b. passive verb forms:
 - c. tentative or hedging language:
- 2 How do the statistics below help to highlight the differences (and similarities) between conversational English and academic writing?

'In everyday conversation there are roughly equal numbers of nouns and verbs. In academic writing, there are around three or four nouns for every verb.'

.....

'Academic writing uses relatively more passive verb forms than other styles of English, but passives still only make up around 25% of all verbs.'

.....

'Both conversation and academic writing tend to use predominantly present tense verbs.'

.....

3 To what extent do you agree with the following comments? Why? /Why not?

'Academic writing should be objective and impersonal. That's why it contains a lot of passive verbs and few personal pronouns.'

.....

'Although student writers need to develop an academic style of writing, it's more important that their writing is clear and easy to read.'

.....

4 Read the short academic text below. Underline examples of the three grammatical features discussed in the blogpost.

- a. nominalization and long noun phrases
- b. passive verb forms
- c. tentative or hedging language

Globally, members of ethnic minority groups in different countries tend to be overrepresented in the prison population. Research has suggested that these people are put at a disadvantage in the criminal justice system for a variety of reasons, including social and economic deprivation, typically lower than average levels of educational attainment, and discrimination at both societal and institutional levels. One factor that has perhaps been underappreciated until now is the role played by language and communication skills in negotiating the criminal justice system in jurisdictions where a standard form of the majority language dominates.

5 Add tentative language to the following sentences to avoid possible criticism in terms of overgeneralization or overconfidence.

- a. Lack of proper education about food and nutrition is to blame for the unhealthy eating choices that children make.
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- b. Introducing all-female shortlists for senior roles will redress the gender imbalance at senior management level.
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- c. Children from higher socio-economic groups achieve better grades in school than those from economically deprived backgrounds.
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- d. Half of the world's population live in areas where there is a risk of malaria.
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Suggested answers:

'Explore', Ex 4

(long noun phrases: underlined ; passive verb forms: *in italics* ; tentative language: **in bold**)

Globally, members of ethnic minority groups in different countries **tend to** be overrepresented in the prison population. Research has **suggested** that these people *are put* at a disadvantage in the criminal justice system for a variety of reasons, including social and economic deprivation, **typically** lower than average levels of educational attainment, and discrimination at both societal and institutional levels. One factor that *has perhaps been underappreciated* until now is the role played by language and communication skills in negotiating the criminal justice system in jurisdictions where a standard form of the majority language dominates.

Ex 5

- a. Lack of proper education about food and nutrition is **in part/ to some extent/ partially** to blame for the unhealthy eating choices that **some/many** children make.
- b. Introducing all-female shortlists for senior roles **could/might** ~~will~~ **help to redress/ go some way towards redressing** the gender imbalance at senior management level.
- c. Children from higher socio-economic groups **often/typically/tend to** achieve better grades in school than those from economically deprived backgrounds.
- d. **Approximately/Roughly/Around** half of the world's population live in areas where there is a risk of malaria.