

English for
Academic Study

Grammar for Writing

Study Book

Anne Vicary

	Unit title	Grammar focus
1	Starting out	A Formal style • Subject–verb agreement • Present simple • Plural nouns for situations in general • <i>There is/are</i>
		B Quantity expressions • Countable/uncountable nouns • Present continuous
		C Simple clauses: <i>S/V/O/C</i> • Unit review
2	Information flow within a text	A Using simple noun phrases
		B Using complex noun phrases
		C Using present simple passive • Unit review
3	Looking back	A Past simple active • Present perfect active
		B Uses of present perfect
		C Using the present perfect in introductions • Present perfect or past simple? • Unit review
4	Showing logical links (1)	A Short linking words • Sentence-connecting words • Simple and compound sentences
		B Paired linking words within a sentence
		C Linking words in paragraphs • Unit review
5	Showing logical links (2)	A Using subordinators to make complex sentences
		B Using further subordinators to make complex sentences
		C Using linking words with noun phrases • Review of Units 4 and 5
6	Expressing shades of meaning	A Modal verbs • Expressing certainty/uncertainty • Using modals in passive voice
		B Semi-modal verbs • Giving advice and making recommendations
		C Modal and semi-modal verbs • Conveying stance and building an argument • Intensifying words • Unit review

	Unit title	Grammar focus
7	Expressing condition	A Likely events (first conditionals) • Laws of nature ('zero' conditionals) • Using <i>unless</i> to give warnings • Modal and semi-modal verbs from Unit 6 are also reviewed
		B Unlikely events (second conditionals) • Modal and semi-modal verbs in conditionals
		C Impossible events (third conditionals) • Unit review
8	Avoiding person-based writing	A Abstract and concrete noun phrases • Summary nouns
		B Impersonal sentence structure to discuss opinions and refer to data
		C Applying impersonal style to academic writing • Unit review
9	Using relative clauses	A Defining relative clauses: expanding a subject noun phrase • Reducing relative clauses
		B Expanding an object noun phrase • <i>Whose</i> • <i>Where</i> , <i>when</i> and <i>why</i>
		C Non-defining relative clauses • Using <i>which</i> to refer back to a previous idea • Unit review

A complete *Answer Key* is available online at www.englishforacademicstudy.com in the *Student Resources* section.

Note: Names of word classes (e.g., **adjective**, **noun**) are in **bold** in the left-hand column.

Term	Definition	Example(s)
abstract noun	something which does not physically exist; you cannot touch, see or feel it	hypothesis; idea; awareness
active voice	when the subject of the clause performs the action (see also <i>passive voice</i>)	^S The engineers repaired the fault.
adjectival clause (see <i>relative clause</i>)		
adjective	describes the noun	a difficult problem The lecture was interesting .
adverb	describes how the verb is performed	Morrison (2013) rightly draws attention to empirical evidence.
article	<i>a(n)</i> or <i>the</i> before a noun	This is a report on the banking system in India.
auxiliary verb	a verb (<i>be</i> , <i>have</i> , <i>do</i> or modal) which precedes the main verb to 'help' it	The system has failed. The economy is growing.
clause	a group of words which contains only one subject and one verb	^S ^V Palm oil plantations are common in this area.
complement	an adjective or noun used after some verbs (e.g., <i>to be</i> ; <i>to seem</i> ; <i>to become</i>) to complete the clause	He seemed interested . She has become a professor .
complex noun phrase	a simple noun phrase with extra description	determiner noun noun The research organization is expanding.
complex sentence	a sentence which consists of a subordinate clause and a stand-alone, main clause (see <i>subordinate clause</i>)	main clause subordinate clause They studied hard because they wanted to pass the exam.
compound sentence	two or more simple clauses joined together by <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>so</i> , or	The room was full, but everyone could hear the lecture.
concrete noun	something which physically exists	computer; bank
conditional sentence	when an <i>if</i> clause is used within a sentence to show that one thing takes place <i>only</i> if the other thing happens	If the crops fail, there is no food to eat.
countable noun	a noun which has single units that you can count; it can have a plural form	assignment – assignments; place – places; apple – apples

Term	Definition	Example(s)
determiner	a word that precedes a noun phrase (e.g., <i>all; the/a; several; some; my, his, this; one; two; many; a few</i>)	All the students are interested. Some of her ideas are useful. One of the students volunteered as class representative.
first-person pronoun	<i>I</i> or <i>we</i> (Do not use in beginners' academic writing.)	I study at the University of Reading.
impersonal	not relating to personal facts about the writer	The United Nations website is considered useful. <i>Not:</i> I think that the United Nations website is useful. ✗
infinitive zero infinitive	<i>to</i> + verb to + verb	It was difficult to find a solution. They could not find a solution.
irregular verb	a verb which has an unpredictable past simple or past participle form	teach – taught (<i>past simple</i>) – taught (<i>past participle</i>) swim – swam (<i>past simple</i>) – swum (<i>past participle</i>)
modal verb	a verb which expresses a shade of opinion or belief; it is an auxiliary verb, not a main verb; it is followed by the zero infinitive	The students should study harder.
noun	a 'name' of a person, place or thing; it can stand alone or be the headword of a noun phrase.	lecture ^{headword} the first lecture
object	a thing or a person that follows a subject and verb; it is directly affected by the subject	The lack of resources creates a problem .
passive voice	when the subject of the clause does not perform the action (see also <i>active voice</i>) 1. used when no one needs to know the person or thing that performs the action 2. used when the person or thing that performs the action needs to be 'new information' at the end of the sentence	1. The first printing press was invented in approximately 1040 CE. 2. The first printing press was invented in the 1040s by Bi Sheng .
person-based noun	a noun which refers to a person	They work all day. The employee left early.
plural	more than one thing or person	books; students
preposition	a small word which shows the relationship between two ideas	The Prime Minister of Great Britain lives at 10 Downing Street in London.

Term	Definition	Example(s)
prepositional phrase (PP)	a group of words including a preposition + noun	 <p>The lecture on information systems</p>
pronoun	represents a noun or a previous idea	 <p>Zaynab gave an interesting presentation. She is a very good speaker. She did it without notes. This allowed her to maintain eye contact with the audience.</p>
punctuation	symbols used to separate ideas when writing to make information easier for the reader to understand	, comma . full stop ; semi-colon
quantity expression	to describe 'how many' or 'how much'	Some lectures are interesting. There is much pollution in megacities.
relative clause	a new clause which gives more information about a previous noun; use <i>who, whom, which, that, whose, where, when</i> or <i>why</i> to begin the clause	 <p>The journal article which he recommended was useful.</p>
second-person pronoun	<i>you</i> (s. and pl.) (Do not use in beginners' academic writing.)	It is difficult to write when you are tired.
semi-modal verb	a verb which expresses a shade of opinion or belief; it differs slightly in form from a modal verb	The government ought to cut energy prices.
simple noun phrase	a determiner + single noun; or pronoun; or uncountable noun	the organization; he; effectiveness
simple sentence	a sentence which contains only one clause	 <p>The lecture theatre was full.</p>
singular	one thing or person	book; student
subject	the thing or person which comes in front of verb; it directly affects the object	The lack of resources creates a problem.
subject-verb agreement	the form of the verb must match the subject of the clause	The exams are being marked by external lecturers. She agrees with the first marker.
subordinate clause	a clause which is used to add a relationship to the ideas in the main clause	 <p>They studied hard because they wanted to pass the exam.</p>
subordinator	the word which signals the relationship between the subordinate clause and the main clause	<i>because; whereas; although</i>

Term	Definition	Example(s)
third-person pronoun	<i>he/she/it</i> (singular) <i>they</i> (plural)	It is difficult. They are from China.
uncountable noun	a noun which is considered to be made up of a single mass; it cannot be used in the plural form.	information; research; money; food
verb	shows a: 1. physical action 2. state of being 3. mental process	1. The students read the book. 2. The campus is attractive. 3. Johns (2006) believes that ...

Note that the terms: 1 *noun*, 2 *subject*, 3 *object* and 4 *complement* are short form for: 1 *noun phrase*, 2 *subject noun phrase*, 3 *object noun phrase* and 4 *complement noun phrase*. Look at the sentences below.

- a. The theatre is in the centre of London.
'The theatre' is a *noun*, which is short for *noun phrase*. It is also the *subject*, which is short for *subject noun phrase*.
- b. The lecture theatre is the largest room in the building.
'The lecture theatre' is a *noun* (or *noun phrase*). It is also the *subject* (or *subject noun phrase*).
'The largest room in the building' is the *complement*, short for *complement noun phrase*.
- c. The lecturer marked all the essays.
'The lecturer' is a *noun* (or *noun phrase*). It is also the *subject* (or *subject noun phrase*). 'All the essays' is an *object*, short for *object noun phrase*.

In this unit you will:

- examine some of the basic features of grammar for academic writing
- practise correcting common errors in student writing

Stage

A

In this stage you will:

- study formal and impersonal styles of writing
- examine simple clauses: subject–verb agreement
- learn to use the present simple tense to describe permanent events
- learn to use plural nouns to describe situations in general
- learn to use *there is* and *there are* to present new information

Task 1

Formality in academic writing

1.1 Read the sentence pairs below and decide which has the more formal style, a or b. Tick (✓) the correct box.

- | | | |
|------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. a | I live in Tokyo, the capital city of Japan, which is on the east coast of the country. I travel around easily. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. | Tokyo, the capital city of Japan, is located on the east coast of the country. The transport system is efficient. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. a | People use their own cars instead of taking the bus, so there is more air pollution. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. | We use our own cars instead of taking the bus, so we create more air pollution. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. a | In Bangkok there are traditional wooden houses along the river. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. | In Bangkok you can see traditional wooden houses along the river. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1.2 Re-read the sentences and answer the following questions.

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 1. | Which sentence: | |
| a. | gives information about the writer? | _____ |
| b. | gives information about the writer and his friends? | _____ |
| c. | speaks to the reader as a friend? | _____ |
| 2. | What words does the writer use: | |
| a. | In 2a instead of <i>we</i> and <i>our</i> ? | _____ |
| b. | In 3a instead of <i>you can see</i> ? | _____ |

Grammar note: Academic writing is used for discussing **facts** and **ideas** about the world. It does not give personal details. The writer does not know the reader, and so does not address him or her as a friend. Academic writing style, therefore, is not informal and personal. It is **formal** and **impersonal**. (Impersonal means avoiding *I, you, we*.)

- 1.3 Read the following paragraphs from a student essay. Rewrite them in a formal, impersonal style by changing the words in bold:

You can see many important museums where I live in Italy.

There are many important museums in Italy.

I live in Beijing, the capital city of China, **which is** in the north-east of the country. **You can see** many new offices, factories and shops. The cities are polluted because **we** use **our** cars to go to work every day. **You cannot see** many trees, and some rivers do not have clear water. Air and water pollution is becoming more serious.

Diet is also changing. **We** are wealthier than a generation ago, and **we** now always have enough to eat. **We** also understand more about which food is healthy, which means **we** eat more fish and chicken and less red meat than before. **You can see** more supermarkets now, so food shopping is easier.

Making your writing impersonal

Academic writing is usually impersonal. Therefore, a **third-person pronoun** or a **noun** is used as the subject of a sentence, rather than a first- or second-person pronoun.

	Singular pronoun	Plural pronoun
Third person	he/she/it	they

	Singular noun	Plural noun
	a/the person	people
	a/the supermarket	supermarkets
	a/the government	governments
	a/the book	books

Subject–verb agreement

The noun or pronoun that controls the verb is called the **subject**. It is important to match the subject with the verb. This is called **subject–verb agreement**.

Singular noun Subject	Singular verb Verb	
Tokyo	has	good public transport.
This law	is	unpopular
The book	contains	useful information.

Plural noun Subject	Plural verb Verb	
These laws	are	unpopular
Books	contain	useful information.

1.4 Circle the correct form of the verb in the table.

Subject	Verb	
The supermarket	<i>is / are</i>	closed.
Orangutans	<i>is / are</i>	intelligent animals.
They	<i>walks / walk</i>	slowly.
She	<i>studies / study</i>	every day.

Task 2 Using the present simple to describe permanent events

The present simple tense is very important in academic writing. It is often used to discuss:

- a. ideas and facts which are always true
- b. habits and activities which regularly happen

These are called **permanent events**.

2.1 Study each sentence. Is it type a (ideas and facts) or type b (habits and activities)?

1. People use their cars to go to work every day. b
2. Heavily loaded aeroplanes use more fuel than empty ones.
3. Management style sometimes affects the employees.
4. The cause of earthquakes is the sudden release of energy in the Earth's crust.
5. This energy creates seismic waves.

Grammar note: Using an adverb of frequency, such as *sometimes*, *occasionally*, *every day*, *often* or *always*, helps to indicate that an activity happens regularly. Because the activity happens more than once, it is considered 'permanent' (even if it is only once a year!).