Use academic language when writing explanatory/informative papers.

Avoid these types of mistakes. If you start to use these terms, check the rule below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **contractions (using ‘)** | **a lot/lots of** | **big/huge** |
| **like** | **really** | **so** |
| **stuff/things** | **figure out** | **till, til** |
| **sort of, kida, sorta, kind of** | **awesome, super, OMG** | **got** |
| **I, me, my, we, us, our…avoid all “I” statements.** | | |

1) Spell out contractions.

As examples, use “does not,” “was not,” and “he would” instead of “doesn’t,” “wasn’t,” and “he’d.”

2) Do not use “you” in formal papers in sentences similar to the following.

**X** ~~You~~ can easily calculate ~~your~~ college tuition with this online calculator.

**☺** Calculating college tuition is easy with this online calculator.

3) “a lot of” or “lots” Use “many” or another word instead, for example:

**X** Donald Duck likes ~~a lot~~ of food.

**☺** Donald Duck likes many different kinds of food. Donald Duck likes to eat large portions of food.

4) “big” or “huge” Use “large” or “significant” instead.

**X** The corporation has a ~~big~~ amount of stock outstanding.

☺ The corporation has a significant amount of stock outstanding.

5) “like” Use “for example” if that is the meaning of “like” in your sentence.

**X** Pluto ruins Mickey’s days in many ways, ~~like~~ running around the office, jumping up on desks, and

slobbering on customers.

**☺** “Pluto ruins Mickey’s days in many ways, for example, running…”

(Notice the use of commas around “for example.”)

6) “really” Use “very” instead or pick a better word that doesn’t need it.

**X** Huey and Dewey are ~~really good~~ employees in Donald’s company.

**☺** Huey and Dewey are very good employees. Best: Huey and Dewey are capable employees.

7) “so” If “so” is used as a connecting word, use “so that,” “then,” “for example,”

“for instance,” or “therefore,” instead.

**X**: Management must take control of the company’s financial condition ~~so~~ the company

does not go into bankruptcy.

**☺**: Management must take control of the company’s financial condition so that the company does

not go into bankruptcy.

**X**: Mickey should have better time management, ~~so~~ he should keep a daily calendar.

**☺**: Mickey should have better time management, for example, he should keep a daily calendar.

8) “stuff” and “things” These words are too informal for academic writing. Alternative words include: items, objects, points, articles, belongings, factors, or

property. Describe what you are writing about instead.

**X**: There are many ~~things~~ that affect climate.

**☺**: Temperature, land forms, humidity, and location all affect climate.

9) “to figure out” Use “to determine” or “to calculate” instead.

**X**: I need to ~~figure out~~ the main idea of this article.

**☺**: I need to determine the main idea of this article.

**X**: I need to ~~figure out~~ the bottom line of this company’s financial projection.

**☺**: I need to calculate the bottom line of this company’s financial projection.

10) “til” or “till” We often use these shortened versions in texting or emails, but for academic papers, spell out the full word, until.

**☺:** Use “until” instead.

11) “got” Use acquired, received, obtained, collected, etc.

**X**: He ~~got~~ an A on his explanatory essay.

**☺**: He received an A on his explanatory essay.

**X**: Kamal ~~got~~ his lab equipment to ~~do~~ his lab.

**☺**: Kamal collected the necessary equipment to complete his lab.

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**Just do not. Ever.**

Avoid using language meant for everyday oral conversation, such as:

awesome

super

sweet

totally

not much

I know, right?

bae

totes

don’t go there

sort of, sorta, kind of, kinda

• texting “talk” (OMG, TTYL, B4, PLZ, :\, :-{, ☹)

And any other popular phrase that is, like, so not yesterday.

p

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Casual (Informal) Language:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Formal Language:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Academic Language:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Casual (Informal): Formal:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Combo |  |
| Kinda |  |
| I was like, OMG! |  |
| Sorta |  |
| ‘cause |  |
| Our experiment worked. |  |
| The soldiers got medals. |  |
| I don’t think so. |  |
| Got |  |
| Plz |  |
| Gonna |  |
| Lots of |  |
| Can’t |  |
| Didn’t |  |

Rewrite these statements using formal language:

• Martin Luther King was an awesome leader.

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• Harriet Tubman went through a lot of stuff.

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• I think Ms. Dehn is kinda a good teacher.

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*On the back of this page, write a casual (informal) sentence AND an academic sentence for 6 of the numbered rules.*