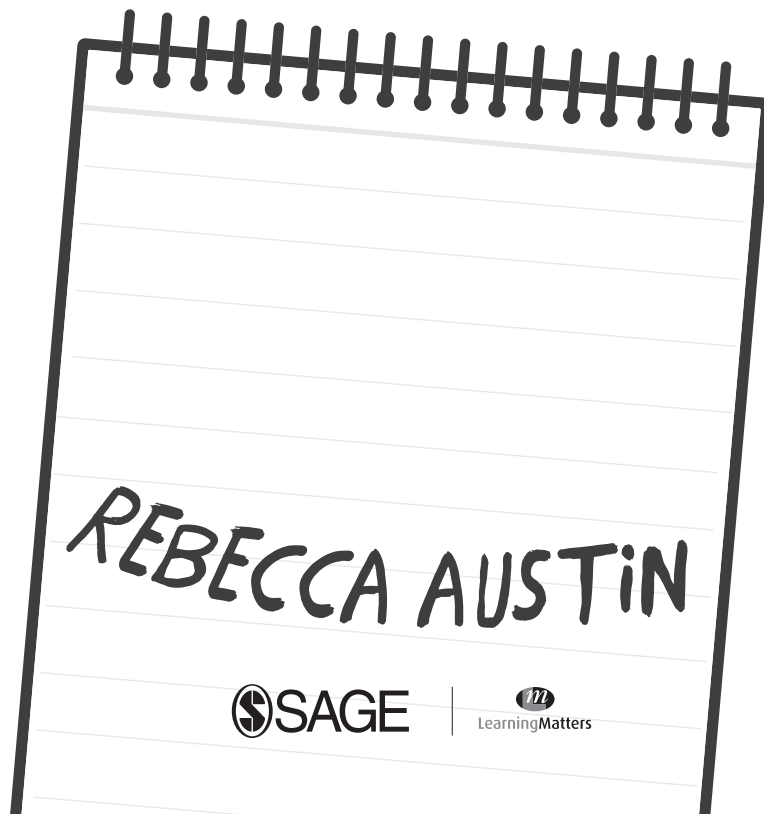


THE TRAINEE TEACHER'S GUIDE TO ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENTS





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6

WRITING ACADEMICALLY LANGUAGE, VOICE AND STYLE



This chapter focuses on using language effectively so that meaning is clearly conveyed to the reader. The contribution of academic writing to developing academic understanding is explored and its unique nature in education is discussed.

The importance of individual voice and style is highlighted and common errors in written expression are examined – including referencing.

ACADEMIC STYLE

I was once teaching science to a group of Year 4 pupils – they had been experimenting with batteries and bulbs and were then asked to write an account of what they had done. I remember one girl, Joanna, who drew her circuit diagram, labelled all the parts and then wrote beneath it: ‘And hey presto! The bulb lit up!’

While there was nothing wrong with *what* she said, because we were learning science, which involves explaining things in certain ways with a particular kind of language, the *way* she said it needed to be discussed. I wanted her to understand the language that she needed to develop – the way of saying – that would demonstrate her scientific understanding and knowledge.

For many students whose work I have read over the years, there is something similar going on for them in their assignment writing – it might be that there is nothing wrong with *what* they have said, but they have not used the right kind of language to enable them to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge. In essence, they don’t ‘get’ academic writing.

Academic writing as a form, however, is designed to facilitate the presentation of ideas within the world of academia. It is a way of writing that requires you to engage with what is already known (by reading what has already been written) and

reorganise it so that you can present your own argument in relation to past and current thinking on the matter. The discipline of academic writing means that you must present your argument in a carefully structured and thought-through way using formal language. This disciplined way of writing links to more disciplined and rigorous ways of thinking – just as Joanna needed to draw on a scientific way of writing about the bulb lighting in terms of vocabulary and style in order to develop her scientific thinking and understanding. Different ways of using language lead to different ways of thinking – just as different ways of thinking lead to different ways of using language.

ACADEMIC WRITING AND IDENTITY

One of the issues, I think, is that ‘academic writing’ is a loaded term. If you are at all unsure of your ability to write ‘academically’ you might be forgiven for thinking it is some kind of unobtainable goal with obscure rules and the requirement to use fancy words and convoluted written expression. You might imagine that you have to cast yourself aside and become some strange ‘other’ in order to be able to write ‘like that’. Ivanič identifies this struggle for students as one of identity:

Writing is not just about conveying ‘content’ but also about the representation of self. (One of the reasons people find writing difficult is that they do not feel comfortable with the ‘me’ they are portraying in their writing. Academic writing in particular often poses a conflict of identity for students in higher education, because the ‘self’ which is inscribed in academic discourse feels alien to them.)

Ivanič, 1998, no page

However, there are ways of allowing ‘you’ to come through in your writing. There are elements of academic writing that define its style, but within that style you can make your voice heard. You can still be you, even if you are writing in a formal academic style. And you have every right, as a teacher, to have your voice heard in debates about the world of primary education in which you have a significant role to play.

FINDING A VOICE

‘Voice’ is what you hear when you read words in your head – it is the unique way in which each writer expresses themselves – it sounds like them. If I have been

reading or watching too much Jane Austen I can find that my thoughts take on a kind of Jane Austen like ‘voice’ and I begin to sound like her in my head! The voice of an author is what enables people to recognise them and also to parody them; it is also what sets them apart from others. How often have you picked up a piece of writing by a child you have been teaching and you have known who has written it before you have even seen the name – because you recognise their unique way of saying what they want to say? That is voice. You can have a ‘voice’ like that even within the restraints of academic style. You can still be you!

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

It can be the case that students who are trying to write academically do so by trying to make their writing sound complicated – by using vocabulary which they are not completely familiar with, or by writing using the passive voice or by using semi-colons randomly! None of this is necessary for good academic writing. Your main aim is to communicate clearly with your reader – so at the heart of your writing is conciseness and clarity. To write clearly, you need to know what you want to say. You need to understand.

Almost every chapter of this book has peddled this same message. How can you possibly write with clarity about something you don’t understand? A common way that students try to do this is by piggybacking onto the words of others – so they will read a section of a text and offer a paraphrase of it – or fill the assignment with margin-to-margin quotes from others. This most often results in a patchworked, disjointed piece of writing which shifts perspectives and does not have a main aim or thrust. Paraphrasing others can be done well or it can be done in a clunky unhelpful way which is more designed to avoid plagiarism than to communicate meaning. A later section in this chapter looks more closely at paraphrasing, how it works best and when to use it.

THE PLACE OF ‘I’ IN ACADEMIC WRITING

In the chapter on academic reading it was suggested that you kept the key question ‘What do I think about this?’ in your mind as you read. This is also a good question to have in your mind as you write. You *can* say what you think. Students often puzzle over the extent to which they can put their own ‘opinion’ in their writing. The answer is that your own opinion is valid – if you can show how you have reached it through an informed argument in relation to your reading. You cannot throw wild theories into your assignment, or even propagate established ones, without presenting the case which supports them.

Stating what you think – or ‘reckon’ – is very different from presenting a solid argument which lays out all your reasons and gives evidence for each step of the way. In the end, you don’t really ever need to write ‘I think’ as actual words, your whole assignment is stating what you think.

Consider the following:

- I think that children need to be given freedom to write about things that interest them (Graves, 1994);
- Children need to be given the freedom to write about things that interest them (ibid.).

Which is stronger? If you have used ‘I think’ in your own writing, try removing it and see if makes your writing better – bolder! It is still your perspective – and still evidence-based.

You will need to check the regulations in your own institution as to the use of the pronoun ‘I’ in your writing. Many institutions will be looking for a personal response to the assignments that have been set so will be expecting you to write with ‘I’. If you are on a postgraduate ITE programme and have a degree in, say, science, where writing in the first person was frowned upon, you may find the freedom to use ‘I’ either liberating or perplexing! In the end, you should use what you feel most comfortable with – but do allow yourself to come through in the writing – as I have shown above, you can do that without actually using ‘I’.

Think twice before using a substitute for ‘I’ such as ‘the writer of this assignment’ or ‘the student teacher’ – this is still writing in the first person. It makes your writing difficult to follow and uses up the word count unnecessarily.

DEVELOPING YOUR ACADEMIC VOICE - THE READER IN THE WRITER

Barrs and Cork (2001) undertook a significant study with primary school children at the beginning of this century – they identified ‘the reader in the writer’ – that is, they could show that the more widely children read, the greater command they had over language, voice, style of their own writing – drawing on the ‘tunes’ of language they had experienced in their reading. It seems obvious, perhaps, that what we read influences what we write, and if it is true for children, I think it would be fair to suggest that this would be true for adults too. The logical consequence of this is that if you want to be able to write academically, you need to read academic texts. Chapter 4 focused on the idea of being active, critical readers who are engaging with what they read and focusing on meaning making from texts and interpreting the language that they use. As you develop this skill, you will develop your ear for the

'tune' (ibid.) of academic language and the more tuned in you are to this way of writing, the more able you will be to use the same language yourself – identifying where words or phrasing sound wrong or don't fit the overall feel of the writing.

AVOIDING COLLOQUIALISMS

Take the following:

- It is essential that children in primary schools are given opportunities to write passionately about the things that matter to them (Graves, 1994);
- Children are more engaged in their writing when they can write about their own interests (ibid.).

Both of the above are written in a formal academic style and both are making roughly the same point, but the strength of feeling comes through far more strongly in the former than the latter. The kind of person who has written the first version sounds quite different from the person who has written the second.

What would *not* be acceptable is:

- It's really important that children get a chance to write about stuff they do when they're not at school so that writing is more fun for them.

While this might well be what you would say in conversation with your peers, this is not the right voice for an assignment. You need to find the voice you might use when talking to a tutor in class or presenting to an audience of your peers. Take a moment to reflect on the elements of the above sentence that take it away from a formal academic style towards a more colloquial or 'chatty' style.

It's/they're	In academic writing you avoid using contractions. It is more formal to say 'it is' and 'they are'. This is a very simple way to sound more formal and easily checked for at proof-reading stage
Really	Here, 'really' is being used as a qualifier - that is, it is being used to add something to the adjective 'important'. In this case to say that this is not just important it is <i>very</i> important (very is another qualifier). Qualifiers are often useful to indicate strength of feeling - for emphasis - but they can be over-used and can also be redundant. If we remove 'really' from the above sentence, there is no change to the meaning of the sentence. However, if we feel we want to emphasise the importance we might need to find a stronger adjective - one that has a 'built in' qualifier. So to use a word like 'essential' or 'vital' would say that it is of the utmost importance. Words like 'extremely' or 'very' as qualifiers still indicate importance, but are more formal terms so would also be acceptable

(Continued)

(Continued)

Stuff/fun	Both of these are colloquial or chatty. They are the sorts of words you might use when talking to friends or children perhaps. But when your audience is an academic tutor, you need to think about the level of formality required and both these words should stand out to you as inappropriate
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'If children read lots of good books this will be a fantastic resource which will give them loads of great words and ideas for their own writing and they'll be able to copy the author's style to write brilliant stories for themselves' (Barrs and Cork, 2001).

Try rewriting this sentence with the above criteria in mind – see if you can write it in more than one way. Being able to find different ways to express what you want to say is an important part of writing, in general, and significantly important (see the qualifier!) in academic writing. Knowing what you want to say is simply not the same thing as being able to express it formally in writing – you have to say it the right way.

CHOOSING YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

Word choice really matters. I often pick up on a word that a student has used which radically affects the meaning of the sentence – it is good to keep developing your vocabulary, but do not substitute words that sound good, which you do not understand, for a simple word that does the job!

STRUCTURING SENTENCES

This is taken from an assignment by a Year 2 primary education student:

Children often struggle when starting with a piece of writing, as they often struggle to find the spark of inspiration to get started and picture books offer children an image in which they can create a story from (Edge, 2015).

My marking comment for a sentence like this might be 'This is a rather convoluted sentence.' As you can see, it twists and turns, repeats itself and then ends up rather awkwardly 'in which they can create a story from'. Reading the sentence aloud is

one of the best ways to spot where sentences are tying themselves in knots. The key point for this sentence is:

- Children who struggle to get started with writing might be inspired by an image to give them story ideas.

Trying to say the sentence as simply as possible, using the fewest words, is usually helpful – and is highly likely to be the best sentence to use.

Look at how we can identify the ways in which this sentence loses its way:

‘Children **often struggle** when starting with a piece of writing, as they **often struggle** to find the spark of inspiration to get started **and** picture books offer children **an image in which they can create a story from**’ (ibid.).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘often struggle’ is repeated 	Avoid repetition within sentences and paragraphs - if you are repeating words you are probably repeating ideas - so simplify and remove the section with repetition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘and’ has been used to create a compound sentence rather than finishing the first sentence after ‘started’ 	Deciding on length of sentences is an art in academic writing. On the one hand, you want to vary sentence length and ensure that there are sentences which elaborate on ideas, but, on the other hand, you want to express yourself concisely. Here, using ‘and’ has joined two sentences together which read better separately. We will come back to this sentence when we look at connectives in the next section
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘an image in which they can create a story from’ can more simply be written as ‘an image from which they can create a story’ 	I suspect that the more formal way of writing this phrase (so that the sentence doesn’t end with the preposition ‘from’) feels alien to the writer so they have avoided it but added a superfluous ‘in’ to avoid repeating ‘from’ and hence a muddle!

USING CONNECTIVES

The key element of your argument will be your structure, as we saw in Chapter 5. Each step of the way you will be building your case – like a highly trained lawyer offering their summing up at the end of a trial. Your weapons are your conjunctions – they show how one idea links to another and takes the reader through to the climax. Connectives need to be very carefully selected. They are not interchangeable – they perform very particular functions in writing and need to be used strategically.

The example we looked at above used the connective ‘and’, which is used to join to ‘equal’ sentences together – that is, they could be written as two separate

sentences, but 'and' has been used to add to the first sentence. In the case of this passage, though, the two sentences are not saying the same thing. If the student had written: 'Children often struggle to find inspiration and this causes them to delay getting started' it is possible to see that they started with a thought – and then extended it so 'and' works.

However, here the student is offering the idea that picture books can solve the problem of the struggle to get started – so the second sentence is offering a contrasting idea; we need a conjunction that can show that: 'Children often struggle to find inspiration to get started; a picture, however, can be a good way to get children writing.'

You could also write this as: 'Children often struggle to find inspiration to get started; however, a picture can be a good way to get children writing.'

Consider which of these connectives works here:

- *Children enjoy reading to themselves; however, they also enjoy being read to by adults*
- *Children enjoy reading to themselves; furthermore, they also enjoy being read to by adults*
- *Children enjoy reading to themselves; they especially enjoy being read to by adults*
- *Children enjoy reading to themselves – for example, they also enjoy being read to by adults*
- *Children enjoy reading to themselves, therefore they also enjoy being read to by adults*
- *Children enjoy reading to themselves, unless they also enjoy being read to by adults*

The ones that work are the 'adding' connectives – children can like both – but the qualifying connectives 'however' and 'nevertheless' offer different perspectives. 'However' says 'Yes, children do like reading to themselves, but let's not forget that they want adults to read to them too.'

'Therefore' doesn't work – you are not saying that there is a direct causal link between enjoying reading to yourself and enjoying someone else

reading to you. 'Unless' suggests that children like reading to themselves only if they don't like being read to by adults. And you might believe that children 'especially' like being read to by adults, but you would need some evidence to support this and it is unlikely to be true for *all* children. Finally, being read to by adults is clearly not an example of reading to yourself!

COHESION

A key aspect of academic writing is that it needs to fit and flow together so that it is easy for your reader to follow. One of the ways we do this in writing is through connectives as described above. Another way is by using 'cohesive ties' – this is the way that you refer back to a previous idea or object so that your reader can see the links you are making.

Another example from a student's assignment:

Martin *et al.* (2007) describe writing as a process that moves from initial ideas to draft to a finished piece of writing. If children are able to be actively engaged in this process and see why we do it, then their chances of being successful will dramatically increase

The use of 'this process' links back to the description of the process in the preceding sentence. It saves the writer having to write out the definition of the process again, but it clearly signposts what the author is referring to. The student might have just written 'this', which would have also acted as a signpost back to the 'process' which had just been discussed.

Look at this example, however: 'Children are taught from a young age to focus on comprehension of stories, however, in some books or poetry it engages children's enjoyment.'

Here it is 'it' that is used as a cohesive tie, but it is unclear what 'it' refers to. If used correctly the 'it' should refer to 'comprehension of stories' as that was the main idea in the previous sentence, but that doesn't make sense here.

CLASSROOM LINK

Myhill, Jones, Watson and Lines (2013) propose that playfulness is key when exploring grammar with children.

'Playfulness and experimentation help writers to see the elasticity of language, the possibilities it affords and what language can do, rather than what writers must not do' (p. 108).

Having a playful approach with children – experimenting with words, word order, sentence structure and how these impact on meaning will develop both your and the children's skill with words.

Consider activities with children which require you and them to say things in different ways – rewrite sentences and paragraphs using different words and structures. Try writing in different 'voices' (using drama to practise the voices orally first) to make each version individual

QUOTES, PARAPHRASING AND USING YOUR OWN WORDS

When tutors read your assignments they begin to tune into the way you write, your voice, and it is usually quite evident when there is a sudden shift in voice and a student who has tended to write in a rather flowery style suddenly uses a more concise academic tone, or a student who has been using awkward sentence structures throughout writes a whole paragraph of elegantly constructed prose. We know when you are leaning on the words of other people and their way of saying. Sometimes this is overt through the use of direct quotes, but at other times it can arise when students use near-quotes or unattributed quotes.

Tutors are also familiar with the range of writing, texts and authors that you will be drawing on for your assignment. We know when someone is misquoted or misappropriated, and we also recognise quotes – even if you have 'tweaked' them with a thesaurus.

It is not good writing to just change one or two words in a quote through the judicious use of a thesaurus – this is really a form of academic dishonesty – you are passing off someone else's words as your own. And you cannot just switch the words around a bit – you are still using someone else's words and ideas. You need to work out how to say what *you* want to say and then reference the authors whose ideas have inspired you.

INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the introduction is to signpost your intention to the reader. Depending on the way you write, it might be better to write the introduction at the end – at any rate, check your introduction when you have finished your assignment to make sure that you did write about what you said you would!

It can be tempting to recreate the assignment title in the introduction. So, using the example from the previous chapter, you might write:

In this assignment I am going to discuss what children need to be successful writers. I will define what I mean by 'success' in writing and explore strategies which help children be successful as writers.

You *could* do this, but you are, in effect, simply saying: 'I am going to do what you asked me to do.' You might forgive your reader for thinking that this is stating the obvious! It might be a helpful reminder to you, but you do not need to remind your reader.

Nor should you really need to say something like: 'I will draw on a range of reading and support my arguments with evidence.' Again, this is what you are meant to do anyway – it is a given!

What is helpful is to provide a more detailed outline of the specific focus you are taking for the assignment. Your reader will be expecting you to discuss successful writers, but they won't know the 'angle' you will be taking. It is perfectly fine to include 'spoilers' in your introduction – you want your reader to know where you are going with your assignment, you don't need to surprise them.

So you might say.

In this assignment I take the view that children are successful writers if they are motivated to write outside of lesson time in school. I argue that choosing to write indicates that they find it pleasurable and purposeful and that the writing they do for themselves will fulfil a self-chosen purpose – and this makes them successful. I also argue that the teacher has a significant part to play in facilitating opportunities for children to write for their own pleasure and purposes.

Your reader is now fully primed as to what to look for. Note how the example I have given above is written as if the assignment is fully completed. It does not say

'This assignment will ...'. This is not a major point, but I think it reads better if you write as if the assignment is already completed rather than as if you are just getting started.

CONCLUSIONS

I have already indicated the importance of using the conclusion to sum up your argument – and not to add new ideas or mention things you forgot to say in the main body. As with the introduction, you don't need to say that you have answered the question and done lots of reading – you are making it personal to the assignment.

AVOIDING COMMON ERRORS

Always, always proof-read. Even if you think you have proof-read carefully enough, give it one more read through. If your writing is made more difficult to understand by misspelled words, punctuation errors and missing words or references it makes it much harder for your marker to read. The marking tutor wants to be able to apprehend easily what you have written – so that they can understand what you are saying and what you know. The harder they have to work at that, the more likely they are to question how well you know what you are writing about.

PUNCTUATION: APOSTROPHES, SEMI-COLONS AND COMMAS

As a primary school teacher, you will be teaching punctuation and you need to be able to use it in your own writing if you are going to teach it correctly to children.

The most common punctuation errors I come across with alarming regularity in student assignments are apostrophes, semi-colons and commas.

You should make sure that you are completely sure about their use:

- apostrophes indicate possession or contractions (missing letters)
- semi-colons indicate two similar clauses – use them rarely – often a dash is better
- commas are used to separate clauses or parts of a sentence – make sure you use them to help, not hinder, the flow of your sentences.

There are very many websites, resources and books for teachers which look at the teaching of grammar – not least is a long glossary section in the National Curriculum (2013) with a list of key terms with their definitions and examples.

COMMON MISSPELLINGS AND WORDS WHICH ARE CONFUSED

You are likely to have some words that are on your own personal spelling list – words that you know you struggle to spell correctly. You need to address these – as above, you will be using them in classrooms and teaching children how to spell them. This is a subject knowledge issue for your teaching as much as it is for your writing.

Make a list of any words you have misspelled in assignments (or other contexts!) – set about learning these words in a systematic way. Include words which you confuse with other words too – anything you consistently get wrong!

Think about the strategies you use with children and apply them for yourself to your words. There are some great ideas in Adoniou (2014).

REFERENCING

WHY REFERENCE?

Part of what you are being assessed on is the extent to which you have engaged with the ‘field’ within which you are writing. You are showing that you know what is already known, what has already been written about and you are adding to the discussion and debate. In order to do this effectively you have to demonstrate where your ideas have come from and how it is you know what you know. Your referencing allows your reader to understand where you are coming from and to follow up anything that is not clear. Your reference list or bibliography is what your reader needs to track down the information that you have provided.

Your university will have lots of advice and guidance about how to reference and I am not going to repeat the basics here, rather I would like to focus on some of the most common errors I come across in my work.

1. **You need to cite the author of whatever it is that you are referencing.** This is fine when there is a single author in a singly authored piece. Issues arise when:
 - a. there is more than one author. Check your university’s policy here, but the general rule is that the first time you cite a multiply authored text you list all the names of all the contributors and then in subsequent mentions you can use ‘*et al.*’ This is an abbreviation of ‘*et alia*’ which is Latin for ‘and others’. When used correctly you need a full stop after *al.* (to indicate that it is abbreviated from *alia*) and it should be in italics to indicate that it is in a foreign language (Latin);
 - b. the author you have cited has written a chapter in an edited or co-authored book. In an edited book one (or more) person will be listed as the editor – this

will be someone who has put together a number of chapters written by different people. The editor(s) might also have written chapter(s) themselves, but they will not have written all of them. In a co-authored book all the authors are listed (and on the front cover!) as authors, but individual chapters might be identified as being written by one or other of them. The key thing to do is to look at the contents page and/or the first page of the chapter where in most cases you will see who has written the chapter that you are reading/citing. You need to reference that person because it is their work, their ideas, their thinking that you are drawing on. In the main body you use their name and the date of the book (Cobb, 2016) and in the reference list you list the author, the title of the chapter in quotation marks and then add 'in' and give the full reference of the complete book:

e.g. Cobb, W. (2016) 'Approaches to qualitative data' in Austin, R. (2016) (Ed) *Researching Primary Education*. London: Learning Matters;

- c. you are taking a reference to an author from someone else's writing. For example, you are quoting or describing Vygotsky's work – but from a book written by Shamalar. That is, you are using Shamalar's interpretation, her view, her position about Vygotsky and using it in your work. Here it is very important to ensure that you have made it clear that *you* have not read Vygotsky and you are drawing on someone else's discussion. This is called using a secondary source or citation. You should only do this rarely and when it is too difficult to go to the original source yourself. When you reference this you need to say 'Vygotsky (1938) believed in the nationalisation of cheese (Shamalar, 2018, p. 25)'. Shamalar, not Vygotsky, goes in your bibliography or reference list because you didn't read Vygotsky. In this way, your reader will be able to go to the Shamalar text in order to verify this interpretation of Vygotsky. If they went to the original Vygotsky text they wouldn't.

2. **You use page numbers when you are citing a direct quote from something you have read.** Some referencing systems also ask for a page number if you are describing a very specific idea which is found on a particular page in a text. You would not need a page number if you were referencing a text in general terms.
3. **Referencing websites or other online sources.** The key thing here is that if you are referring to key ideas or information that is a significant part of your argument, wherever possible you should try to find the name of the person who has authored the piece you are referencing. Sometimes this isn't possible, and you will need to reference the organisation. You also need to identify a date, or a date when the page was last updated. The author and the date are significant aspects in terms of the content that is written – if you can't find an

author and/or date, this might be something that makes you reconsider using the website/page as a source. In the main body of your assignment you will reference the author and date. You only put the url address of the site in the reference list – after the author and date which will be listed alphabetically as for all your sources.

In the bibliography/reference list you present the reference and then give the URL of the website/source and the date that you accessed it.

4. **Government publications.** Look out for who the authors of these documents are. They might have been issued by the education department, but the department has gone through a number of name changes (see Chapter 10 for dates etc.) so you need to ensure you are referencing the correct title. The publisher for government publications is: Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), the author is the department or associated body (such as Ofsted) which it is associated with. This information is often on the inside front cover or back page of the document. You can also do a 'cheat' by finding another text which has cited the document and use their citation (converted to whatever form of referencing your university asks for).

ACADEMIC WRITING: A CHECKLIST

Let's go back to the 'timeline' chart from Chapter 2 and add in what we have covered in this chapter.

<p>Submission date 6 days</p>	<p><i>Read through for argument</i> <i>What is my position?</i> <i>Is my argument sound?</i> <i>Am I convincing?</i></p>	<p>Will your reader know what you think and why you think it? Are there any places where you need to strengthen your position? Are there places where you need to be more cautious in your argument - do you need to add 'perhaps' and 'maybe' to any sections where there is less evidence to support your claim?</p>
<p>Submission date 5 days</p>	<p><i>Read through for analysis and criticality</i> <i>Have I explored points in depth?</i> <i>Have I explained the significance of the points I am making</i></p>	<p>Look here, in particular, for the focus of each paragraph. Does the first line of your paragraph set up what it is about? Does the rest of that paragraph stay with that point? Have you connected the thoughts within paragraphs coherently? Does each paragraph join logically to the next?</p>

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<p>Submission date 4 days</p>	<p><i>Check that you have presented evidence for your claims - and that this is correctly referenced and in the bibliography/reading list</i></p> <p><i>Is it clear where my arguments have come from?</i></p> <p><i>Do I need to use more of my own words (aim for an originality score of no more than 15% if you are using Turnitin)?</i></p>	<p>Have you used evidence convincingly throughout - have you selected the right evidence to support the point? Are you sure of your sources?</p> <p>Have you cited secondary sources correctly?</p> <p>Have you cited online sources correctly (including the date of access in the reference list)?</p> <p>Have you cited government documentation correctly?</p> <p>Have you expressed your understanding in your own words? Are there places where you can say something your own way instead of using quotes?</p>
<p>Submission date 3 days</p>	<p><i>Read through for meaning and adjust</i></p> <p><i>Does what I have written make sense?</i></p>	<p>Read aloud and listen for the sense of what you have written. Have you chosen your words carefully so that you are sure they are conveying the message you want to convey? Double-check any vocabulary that is new for you and make sure you are using it correctly</p>
<p>Submission date 2 days</p>	<p><i>Read through for flow and accuracy and adjust</i></p> <p><i>Have I chosen words carefully?</i></p> <p><i>Are my sentences well constructed?</i></p> <p><i>Are there places where I can be more concise?</i></p>	<p>Read aloud to see how your writing flows and to see where there is awkward expression, poor use of punctuation or there are missing words</p> <p>If you have someone else who will read it aloud for you while you listen you will be able to hear where they struggle with the flow and you will be able to adjust accordingly</p> <p>Watch out, particularly, for places where you have rambled, repeated or used 20 words where ten would do</p>
<p>Submission date</p>	<p><i>Final proof-read - especially check for spelling and punctuation - then submit!</i></p>	

This chapter has highlighted the need to express yourself clearly, concisely and in an academic voice in order to be a convincing writer who can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the issues under discussion.