

1.1 Background to writing

1 The purpose of academic writing

Other reasons might include:

- to present a hypothesis for consideration by others
- to make notes on something read or heard

Possibilities include:

- semi-formal vocabulary, lack of idioms
- use of citation/ references
- normally impersonal style
- use of both passive and active

2 Common types of academic writing

Notes – A written record of the main points of a text or lecture, for a student's personal use.

Report – A description of something a student has done, e.g. conducting a survey.

Project – A piece of research, either individual or group work, with the topic chosen by the student(s).

Essay – The most common type of written work, with the title given by the teacher, normally 1000–5000 words.

Dissertation/ Thesis – The longest piece of writing normally done by a student (20,000+ words) often for a higher degree, on a topic chosen by the student.

Paper – A general term for any academic essay, report, presentation or article.

3 The format of long and short writing tasks

- (a) abstract
- (b) references
- (c) appendix
- (d) acknowledgements
- (e) literature review
- (f) case study

4 The features of academic writing

- (a) title
- (b) sub-title
- (c) heading
- (d) sentence
- (e) phrase
- (f) paragraph

6 Simple and complex sentences

(Example sentences)

- (a) In 2007 the company produced nearly 165,000 vehicles.
- (b) Vehicle production fell in 2008.
- (c) In 2009 fewer vehicles were made than in the four previous years.
- (d) Between 2005 and 2009 vehicle production peaked in 2007, when the number reached 164,000.

7 Writing in paragraphs

See Unit 1.10. Organising paragraphs 1 for initial questions

para 2 begins: But a new use for charcoal ...

para 3 begins: The other benefit of biochar ...

para 4 begins: But other agricultural ...