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Writing Skills (1)

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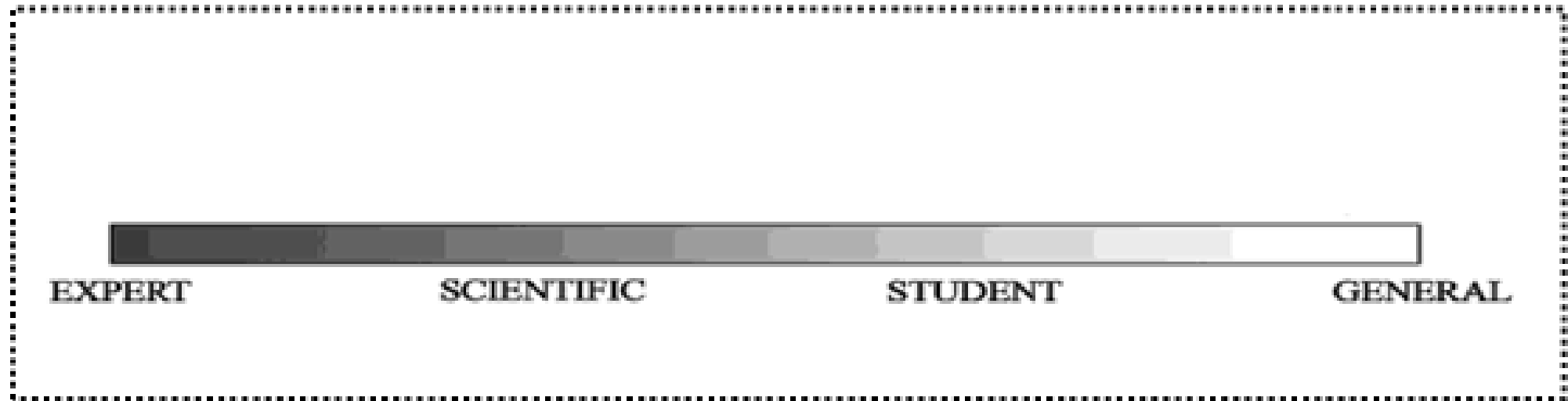
What is academic writing?

What is academic writing?

- **Who** is writing? **Who** is the audience?
- **What** is the writing about?
- **Why** is the writing done?

Academic audience

What kinds of texts do academics write? Who are these texts for?



What are the most important aspects?



neatly presented
objective
explicit
hedged
frequent 3rd person pronouns
well structured
professionally acceptable
linear structure
without colloquialisms
precise
claiming authority
more frequent passive voice
with explicit links between ideas
with clear understanding of the subject
relevant within the discourse of your discipline

cohesive
correct
factual
unambiguous
accurate
neutral
revised
timeless
re-drafted
clear
formal
impersonal

with full forms of words
without redundancies
with flowing structure
without clichés
responsible
backed up by evidence
understandable
specific
referenced
nominalized
tentative
no negative forms
coherent
concise

Academic writing vs. speaking

Nowadays companies are finding that they have to change the way they do things and they're finding that human resources planning is really helpful when they have to do this. One reason why it's helpful is because it can help the companies work out what the issues are and then, when you've done that, it can help you make up your mind what you're going to do about it. Basically, human resource planning is what you do when you're going through

As companies experience the need for change, they often apply human resource planning to define the relevant issues and develop responses to them. Broadly defined, human resource planning is the process of analysing an organisation's human resources needs under changing conditions and developing the activities necessary to satisfy those needs.

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How is Czech academic writing different?

Academic writing: Czech vs. English

What differences are there between academic texts written in Czech and English?

Think about:

- Structure
- Organisation of ideas
- Language
- Style
- Author's aims

‘[Czech academic writing] is more **intellectual** and **less reader-friendly** than the Anglo-American academic style. Anglophone authors tend to present their ideas in a clear and easily comprehensible way: they organize their texts carefully, indicating text-organization by transparent graphical signals, and apply simpler lexical and grammatical patterns, including repetition. Many Czech authors, by contrast, prefer more **complex grammatical structures**, and – in agreement with the Czech stylistic norm – avoid the repetition of words by an **extensive use of synonyms**. Czech texts are often **less logically and less transparently organized** than texts written in English. English academic texts are primarily oriented towards the reader, while Czech texts **focus on the topic** and the presentation of all its **complexity**.’

(Chamonikolasová 2005: 77)

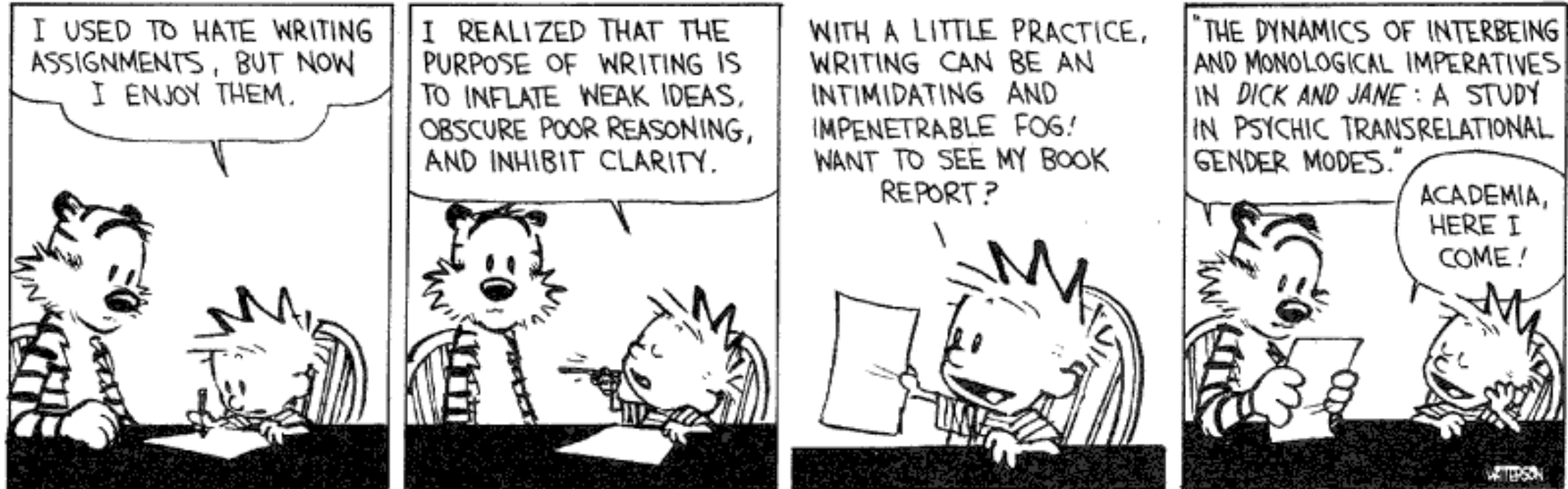
Want to know more?

Chamonikolasová, J. (2005) 'Comparing the structures of texts written in English and Czech', *Slovak Studies in English I*, pp. 77-84. <http://www.phil.muni.cz/stylistika/studie/comparing.pdf>

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What is academic style?

Do you agree?



First draft: what's wrong here?

1.1

How to make people work harder is a topic that lots of people have written about in the last few years. There are lots of different theories etc and I think some of them are ok. When we think about this we should remember the old Chinese proverb, that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink. So how do we increase production? It's quite a complex subject but I'll just talk about a couple of ideas.

(Bailey 2011: 151)

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How to make people work harder . . .	Imprecise vocabulary – use ‘motivation’
. . . lots of people . . .	Vague – give names
. . . the last few years.	Vague – give dates
lots of different . . .	Avoid ‘lots of’
. . . etc . . .	Avoid using ‘etc’ and ‘and so on’
. . . I think . . .	Too personal
. . . are ok.	Too informal
When we think about this . . .	Too personal
. . . the old Chinese proverb . . .	Do not quote proverbs or similar expressions
So how do we increase production?	Avoid rhetorical questions
It’s quite a . . .	Avoid contractions
. . . I’ll just talk about a couple . . .	Too personal and informal

(Bailey 2011: 151)

Second draft: what's changed?

1.2

Motivation has been the subject of numerous studies during recent decades, but this essay will focus on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) and Herzberg's two-factor theory (1966). Their contemporary relevance to the need to motivate employees effectively will be examined critically, given that this can be considered crucial to a firm's survival in the current economic climate.

(Bailey 2011: 151)

Academic style guidelines (Bailey 2011)

Read Bailey's guidelines for academic style.

- Are there any points you disagree with? Why?
- Are there any points which Bailey has missed?
- What do you think are the most common style errors in your academic writing?