

Academic Writing Characteristics

formal neatly presented objective **explicit** hedged responsible
 professionally acceptable neutral *precise*
unambiguous clear *understandable* **well structured** cohesive
coherent correct timeless tentative **specific** impersonal
referenced factual *nominalised* backed up by evidence
with full forms of words third person pronouns accurate
 few direct questions **revised** responsible to your audience
re-drafted more frequent passive voice without colloquialisms
logically linear structure without clichés **without redundancies**
 with explicit links between presented ideas flowing structure
with a clear understanding of subject matter *formal negative forms* relevant
 claiming authority within the discourse of your discipline

Look at these four very different styles of saying the same thing and identify the academic style.

- a) It rained cats and dogs yesterday, didn't it?
- b) What a downpour last night!
- c) The UK Meteorology Office monitored a heavy rainfall with the rate of precipitation reading 46 millimetres per hour on 24th March 2011 in North Cumbria.
- d) She was standing there in the storm waiting for deafening thunder to come, feeling the water cooling the air and thinking of how heavy the drops of water must be so that they could fall down from the dark clouds and make her feel refreshed and so light that she could fly, and make her full of energy, make her appreciate the eternal life it delivers, when finally she realised this precipitation was indeed a friend, her only true friend.

(Adapted from: Štěpánek, L., deHaaff, J., Hradilová, A.(2011): Academic English, Grada, Praha, p.153)