Academic vocabulary and phrases

Writing for academic assignments requires you to use more formal vocabulary than when you speak. Here are some tips to get you started.

1. Use formal vocabulary

Formal words are not used in everyday situations or conversations. For example:

> *Informal sentence using conversational language:*
> The research was really hard to do.
>
> *Academic sentence using formal language:*
> The research was difficult to conduct.

2. Use full forms of words

Academic language uses the full forms of words rather than contracted versions. Examples include:

Contractions (***not*** academic)	Full forms of words (academic)
can't	*cannot*
doesn't	*does not*
haven't	*have not*
isn't	*is not*
won't	*will not*

3. Use technical terms

Academic writing in your field of study will often use technical terms that are specifically related to that discipline area. For example:

If you are studying to be a teacher:			
pedagogy	*literacy*	*syllabus*	*curriculum*
If you are studying to be a nurse:			
injection	*patient*	*therapy*	*abdomen*
If you are studying business:			
management	*deliverables*	*fiscal*	*stakeholder*
If you are studying engineering:			
installation	*technology*	*construction*	*element*

4. Use inclusive language

Inclusive language does not discriminate in terms of age, gender, race or ethnicity. To ensure that your writing is inclusive, you should:
- only highlight differences between people if it is relevant to your work and based on evidence;
- use people's preferred names (both for individuals and/or as a community), and
- avoid excluding people based on race, class or gender.

Ensure that you are familiar with the 'rules' for what is considered inclusive language, as these rules can change over time, may be specific to a particular community or group, or may be more commonly used in your area of study.

Refer to the UniSA guidelines on inclusive language to ensure that both your written and verbal communication is appropriate in this area.

Useful links *(all open in a new window)*

Visit the links below for:
- Tips and suggestions about using inclusive language, i.e. language that is inclusive of all readers (UniSA)
- An academic phrasebank of terms and phrases suitable for academic writing (University of Manchester)

There may be resources that have been created with your lecturers, addressing assignment tasks and topics specific to your courses. Follow the links below to find out:

| Business | Education, Arts and Social Sciences | Health Sciences | IT, Engineering and the Environment |