

University of Mujahid Abdelhafid Boussouf – Mila

Faculty of Economics, Commercial & Management Sciences

Departement Of Tronc Commun

Lectures On : Academic English

Addressed To 1st Year Students – 1st Semester

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Academic vs. General English

Introduction

English is used in different contexts depending on the purpose of communication. Two important types are Academic English and General English.

Academic English is used in educational, scientific, and research contexts, whereas General English is used in everyday communication and social situations.

1. Definitions

1.1. Academic English

Academic English is the type of English used in universities, academic research, lectures, essays, reports, and scientific publications. It is characterized by formal language, specialized vocabulary, logical organization, and objective expression.

Example:

The implementation of restrictive monetary policies by the central bank is expected to mitigate inflationary pressures, thereby stabilizing the macroeconomic environment.

1.2. General English

General English is the type of English used in everyday situations, such as conversations, shopping, travel, social interactions, and informal communication. It is generally more flexible and conversational.

Example:

The central bank is expected to lower prices and keep the economy stable.

2. Differences Between Academic English and General English

The table below illustrates the main differences between academic English and general English:

Criteria	Academic English	General English
Purpose	To explain, analyze, and inform	To communicate in everyday situations
Context	Universities, research, and education	Daily life and social interaction
Style	Formal and objective	Often informal and conversational
Vocabulary	Specialized and precise	Common and familiar
Grammar	Often complex sentence structures	Often simpler sentence structures
Tone	Neutral and evidence-based	Personal, friendly, or informal
Organization	Logical and structured	Flexible
Examples of genres	Essays, reports, research papers	Conversations, messages, everyday dialogues

Observation: Academic English generally favors precise vocabulary and formal expression, while General English prioritizes natural and accessible communication.

3. Main Characteristics of Academic English

- ✓ **Formal language:** Avoids slang and overly casual expressions.
- ✓ **Precision:** Uses words that express ideas accurately.
- ✓ **Objectivity:** Emphasizes evidence and analysis rather than unsupported personal opinions.
- ✓ **Logical organization:** Presents ideas in a clear and coherent sequence.
- ✓ **Specialized vocabulary:** Uses terminology related to a particular academic discipline.
- ✓ **Evidence-based arguments:** Supports claims with appropriate examples, data, or references.

4. Main Characteristics of General English

- ✓ **Everyday vocabulary:** Uses common words and expressions.
- ✓ **Conversational style:** Often includes questions, short answers, and informal expressions.
- ✓ **Flexibility:** Adapts to different social situations.
- ✓ **Personal expression:** Frequently includes feelings, opinions, and preferences.
- ✓ **Context-dependent meaning:** Relies on shared knowledge and the immediate situation.

5. When Do We Use Each Type?

- ✓ **Academic English:** Used for writing essays, giving presentations, reading academic texts, and doing research.
- ✓ **General English:** Used in everyday situations, such as talking to friends, asking for directions, shopping, and traveling.

It is important to note that General English can also be formal, and Academic English can sometimes be simple. The main difference is the purpose, context, and conventions of communication, not simply the difficulty of the vocabulary.

Conclusion

Academic English is used in education and research, while General English is used in everyday communication. The main difference lies in their purpose and style.

Practice Exercise

Identify whether each sentence is written in Academic English or General English:

1. The data indicate a significant increase in economic growth.

☐ Academic English

☐ General English

2. I find this concept highly compelling.

☐ Academic English

☐ General English

3. The economy is growing a lot.

☐ Academic English

☐ General English

4. The study examines the effects of technology on education.

☐ Academic English

☐ General English

5. The government should take steps to help poor people.

☐ Academic English

☐ General English

6. Do you have a minute to help me with this?

☐ Academic English

☐ General English

7. Consumer spending sensitivity to price changes is determined by price elasticity of demand.

☐ Academic English

☐ General English

8. Economic growth slowed down due to weak investment.

☐ Academic English

☐ General English

Correction:

1. → Academic English.

2. → General English.

3. → General English.

4. → Academic English.

5. → General English.

6. → General English.

7. → Academic English.

8. → Academic English.

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