

Grammar, Spelling and Vocabulary

Now that you are studying at a tertiary level, it is important that you use the correct grammar, spelling and technical vocabulary in your writing. Cultivating these aspects of your writing is a critical step toward developing your academic autonomy.

Grammar

In academic writing you are often expected to demonstrate your ability to think critically about a particular topic. If you think of grammar as “the system we use for organising language so that it is deliberately meaningful” (University of Reading, 2020), you can appreciate how crucial it is to get it right. In other words, use grammar to help you structure your sentences so that they convey the **exact** meaning of what you are trying to communicate to your reader—usually your lecturer.

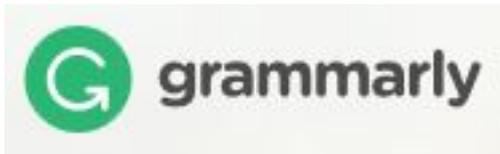
Basic Parts of Speech

Written grammatical language is usually organised into eight main parts of speech—nouns, pronouns, articles, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, conjunctions and prepositions.

noun	A noun is a word that indicates a person, place or thing. <i>Example: Jane went to London on the train yesterday.</i>
pronouns	A pronoun is a word that replaces (or refers back to) a noun. <i>Example: Jane went to Sydney after she got back from Newcastle.</i>
articles	An article is the word a , an or the placed before a noun/noun phrase. <i>Example: She came back on the train after a very tiring day.</i>
adjectives	An adjective is a word that describes or modifies a noun or a pronoun. <i>Example: The angry cat sat on the mat.</i>
verbs	A verb is a word that indicates action or a state of being. <i>Example: We are not going on the bus because Dad will drive us there.</i>
adverbs	An adverb is a word that further describes or modifies a verb. <i>Example: He shouted hysterically to get her attention.</i>
conjunctions	A conjunction is a word that joins two sentences or clauses together. <i>Example: They ran outside to look for him, but he had already left.</i>
prepositions	A preposition is a word that describes location of place or time for a noun. <i>Example: The angry cat sat on the mat.</i>

Grammarly

If you lack confidence in your grammar skills, consider using software programs like Grammarly to provide you with some preliminary feedback before submitting your paper. All Avondale students have access to a free Grammarly Premium account which you can sign up for. Among many other writing services, Grammarly locates grammar, spelling and punctuation mistakes, and suggests corrections.



Spelling

Accurate spelling is essential in academic writing. You will lose marks if your assignments are full of spelling errors. Make use of the spelling check built into your electronic document and make sure the document dictionary is set to English (Australia) and not English (US) in your dictionary setting. Remember the automatic spelling checker will only find about 60% (University of New England, n.d.) of the spelling errors in your writing, so make sure you proofread your writing and use a standard Australian dictionary to check for the correct spelling of any unfamiliar words.

Technical Vocabulary

During the course of your study, it is necessary to build up a technical vocabulary that is specific to your discipline (University of Sydney, 2019). For example, in Nursing, instead of writing about pain relief, you would refer medication that provides pain relief as **analgesia**. The best way to expand your technical vocabulary is to make a note of any unknown technical terms that you hear in class or encounter in your research and practical placements. Find out what these terms mean, and challenge yourself to use any applicable ones next time you submit an assignment.

Resource References

University of Reading. (2020) *Academic writing*. <https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/writing/grammar>

University of New England. (n.d.) *Spelling problem words*.

<https://aso-resources.une.edu.au/academic-writing/spelling/problem-words/>

University of Sydney. (2019) *Grammar, spelling and vocabulary*.

<https://sydney.edu.au/students/writing/grammar-spelling-vocabulary.html>