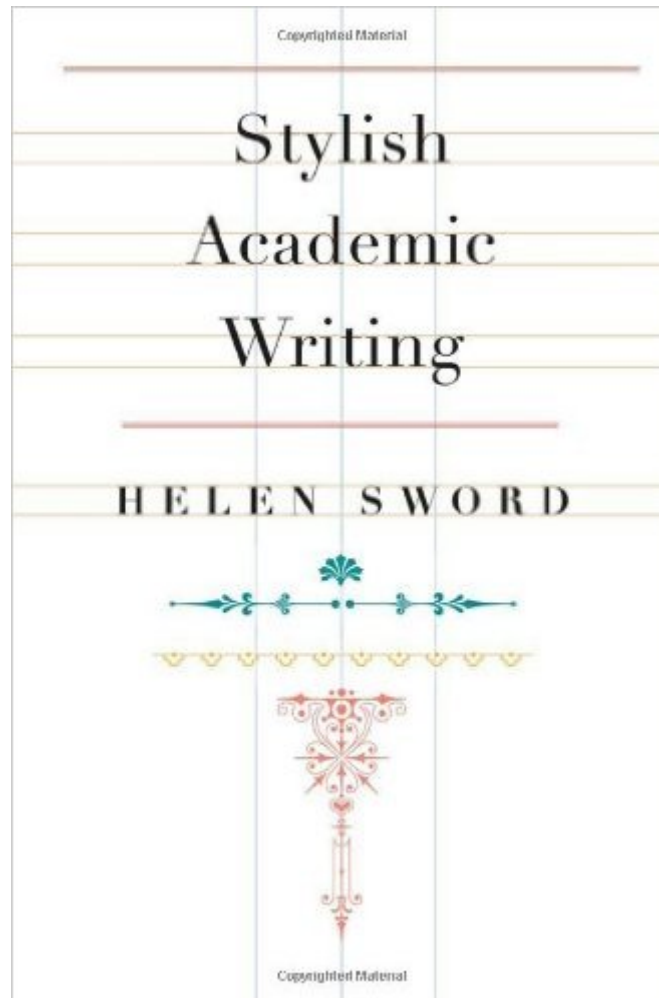# Stylish Academic Writing

Stylish
Academic
Writing

HELEN SWORD

Synopsis

Elegant data and ideas deserve elegant expression, argues Helen Sword in this lively guide to academic writing. For scholars frustrated with disciplinary conventions, and for specialists who want to write for a larger audience but are unsure where to begin, here are imaginative, practical, witty pointers that show how to make articles and books a pleasure to readâ •and to write.Dispelling the myth that you cannot get published without writing wordy, impersonal prose, Sword shows how much journal editors and readers welcome work that avoids excessive jargon and abstraction. Swordâ ™s analysis of more than a thousand peer-reviewed articles across a wide range of fields documents a startling gap between how academics typically describe good writing and the turgid prose they regularly produce.Stylish Academic Writing showcases a range of scholars from the sciences, humanities, and social sciences who write with vividness and panache. Individual chapters take up specific elements of style, such as titles and headings, chapter openings, and structure, and close with examples of transferable techniques that any writer can master.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Harvard University Press (April 2, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0674064488

ISBN-13: 978-0674064485

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 0.8 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (37 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #50,835 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)   #81 inÂ Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Publishing & Books > Authorship   #94 inÂ Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Reference   #169 inÂ Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Rhetoric

Customer Reviews

Author Helen Sword read and analyzed 1,000 articles published in academic journals in 10 disciplines to determine what constitutes stylish academic writing. She also studied 100 recently-published style guides to see where they agreed and differed on points of academic writing style. In Stylish Academic Writing she shares what she's learned about what makes a good article. In fourteen chapters she discusses voice, sentence construction, titles, hooks, jargon, article

structure, citation style, creative academic writing, and more.Two of the chapters speak most to me: the one on voice, and the other on citation style. They both speak to pet peeves of mine. The first is when an author has to mangle their writing to avoid using the first person. Much of the writing in library science is reporting on a project or case study, in which the author is simply telling a story about how a project was launched, carried out or successfully completed. It makes no sense to not be able to use the first person when telling this story. But if you look at much of the library science literature, you'll see many of these stories told in a way that puts a distance between the reader and what's being shared. This makes the article harder to read, and less interesting. Articles should be written in a way that conveys all of the important information that the author is trying to share, but in a way that will increase readership. Writing in the first person can help with that goal. Sword advocates for the use of the first person when possible.My second pet peeve has to do with citation styles that require the author to put names, dates, and sometimes page numbers in parentheses right in the text.

This is a much-needed book for academia. The problem that the author describes about academic writing is very true and so commonly practiced by everyone. I also try to use impersonal passive sentences to achieve an objective tone in my writing. I also try to avoid using any first person pronouns. I also try to limit my verbs to the weak ones such as "be", "show", "indicate" and etc. So I can definitely relate to all the problems with academic writing that the author points out. Her solutions are also very useful. Before reading this book, in some of my "less-academic" writings, I had already used many of the techniques that the author proposes. So her solutions are also very relatable. All in all, I think this is an excellent book and it does remind us that the quality of academic writing does not have to be negatively correlated with linguistic creativity.But of course I think there are practical reasons for not following the author's advice in many cases as well. For example, most of us read papers to find information that we need. Thus a predictable structure of writing and very little figurative language or very little use of "unnecessary literary flare" are definitely very welcome. If we can just glance at a 50-page paper and figure out where we can find the information we need, and finish reading those paragraphs in the least amount of time possible, we are making good progress. The kind of stylish writing that the author proposes is sometimes "verbose" and not straight to the point. Second, using too much creative writing for academic purposes might not present the academic ideas correctly. Sometimes academic writing has to be very precise. Using literary techniques sometimes brings about unnecessary vagueness.

Stylish Academic Writing Writing : Novel Writing Mastery, Proven And Simple Techniques To Outline-, Structure- And Write A Successful Novel ! - novel writing, writing fiction, writing skills - Youdunit Whodunit!: How To Write Mystery, Thriller and Suspense Books (Writing Skills, Writing Fiction, Writing Instruction, Writing a Book) Guidelines: A Cross-Cultural Reading/Writing Text (Cambridge Academic Writing Collection) Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success, Second Edition (Chicago Guides to Academic Life) Non Fiction Writing Templates: 44 Tips to Create Your Own Non Fiction Book (Writing Templates, Writing Non Fiction, Kindle Publishing) Fiction Writing Templates: 30 Tips to Create Your Own Fiction Book (Writing Templates, Fiction Writing, Kindle Publishing) Love Writing - How to Make Money Writing Romantic or Erotic Fiction (Secrets to Success Writing Series Book 5) Amy Butler's In Stitches: More Than 25 Simple and Stylish Sewing Projects The New Silk Flower Book: Making Stylish Arrangements, Wreaths & Decorations Dried Flowers: Stylish Arrangements to Decorate Your Home (Quick and Easy) How to Hang a Picture: And Other Essential Lessons for the Stylish Home Shrink! Shrank! Shrunk!: Make Stylish Shrink Plastic Jewelry Garden Mosaics Project Book: Stylish ideas for decorating your outside space with over 400 stunning photographs and 25 step-by-step projects Step-by-Step Mosaics & How to Embellish Glass & Ceramics: 165 Original And Stylish Projects To Decorate The Home And Garden, Illustrated With More ... Templates And Easy-To-Follow Instructions Picture Perfect Parties: Annette Joseph's Stylish Solutions for Entertaining Ultimate Wrap Bracelets: Make 12 Easy, Stylish Bracelets Step-by-Step (Downloadable Material Included) Doll Days! Sew an Everyday Wardrobe for 18" Dolls: Stylish Patterns to Mix, Match & Embellish Origami Furniture: Decorate the Perfect Doll's House with 25 Stylish Projects Gardenista: The Definitive Guide to Stylish Outdoor Spaces