

Writing Objectively

This Worksheet is for use with the **Writing objectively** video, available on YouTube and Youku.

Video name: **Writing objectively: how to create an objective tone in academic writing**

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zUIP0vj58w>

Alternate link: https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNTgzMTE4OTQwOA==.html

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Worksheet

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Task 1: Before watching

Answer the following questions *before* watching the video.

- i) What does the word **objective** mean? What is the opposite? Use a dictionary if you need to.

Objective _____

- ii) Study the following pairs of sentences. For each pair, one is more academic, while the other is less suitable for academic writing. Identify which ones are more academic. An example has been done.

	Sentence A	Sentence B
Ex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>I believe it is a major problem.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>It appears to be a major problem.</i>
i	<input type="checkbox"/> First, the temperature of the flask was measured.	<input type="checkbox"/> First, I measured the temperature of the flask.
ii	<input type="checkbox"/> I have highlighted three problem areas.	<input type="checkbox"/> This report has highlighted three problem areas.
iii	<input type="checkbox"/> We can see how the rate increased in the graph.	<input type="checkbox"/> The graph shows how the rate increased.
iv	<input type="checkbox"/> There are two problems with this method.	<input type="checkbox"/> This is a really bad method.
v	<input type="checkbox"/> This policy will have many bad effects.	<input type="checkbox"/> This policy will have many adverse effects.
vi	<input type="checkbox"/> Kendrick (2020) advises against eating fatty food.	<input type="checkbox"/> We should avoid fatty food in our diet.
vii	<input type="checkbox"/> The rate of inflation decreased in 2019.	<input type="checkbox"/> The rate of inflation went down in 2019.
viii	<input type="checkbox"/> This hasn't always been the case.	<input type="checkbox"/> This has not always been the case.

- iii) Consider what is wrong with each of the sentences above that you marked with ✖.

Task 2: What is objective writing?

Complete the following notes for the first part of the video.

Objective writing

also called 1. _____ writing

places emphasis on 2. _____ and 3. _____

uses 4. _____ person pronouns (e.g. 5. ____/____/____/____/____)

Task 3: How objective is academic writing?

Complete the following notes for the second part of the video.

How objective is academic writing?

especially important for 6. _____

← these subjects deal with 7. _____ data

more acceptable in other subjects (e.g. 8. _____ research)

subjectivity essential for 9. _____ writing

Task 4: How to make writing objective

a) Complete the following notes for the final part of the video.

How to make writing objective

- use **10.** _____
- focus on **11.** _____
e.g. findings/ **12.** _____/ _____/ _____
- use **13.** _____
- use **14.** _____ (i.e. phrases with 'It' and '15. _____')
often uses **16.** _____ (to soften the language) +
17. _____ (to strengthen the language)
- **18.** _____ the writing

b) Study the academic sentences in Task 1 again (the *example* + sentences i-viii). Six relate to *objectivity* in academic writing. Which ones? Which method makes them objective?

Task 5: Identifying objective writing

Study the following sentences, which come from a scientific article on obesity (source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0031940621000353>). Underline the part which uses objective language, and identify the method used. An example has been done.

#	Sentence	Method
Ex	A total of 215 students <u>were interviewed</u> .	Use passive
i	Existing literature reports that physicians and other healthcare professionals perceive people with obesity as undisciplined, lazy, weak-willed and unlikely to comply with treatment or make lifestyle changes (Seymour et al, 2018; Phelan et al., 2015; Sabin and Nosek, 2012).	
ii	Rubino et al. (2020) show that these assumptions result in multiple negative encounters for patients living with obesity, one of which is experiencing weight bias and stigma at the hands of their healthcare providers.	
iii	All final year physiotherapy students in the Republic of Ireland were invited to participate. Each received a questionnaire, consisting of 72 questions.	
iv	Descriptive statistics and frequencies were used to analyse the data.	
v	A response rate of 83% (179/215) was achieved.	
vi	Fig. 1 illustrates the findings in relation to physiotherapy students' perceptions of weight bias expressed by peers, educators and healthcare professionals in the clinical environment.	
vii	These findings highlight the disparity between physiotherapy students' knowledge and beliefs relating to causes of obesity and current scientific knowledge regarding mechanisms of body-weight regulation.	
viii	This study provides preliminary findings to suggest that weight stigma-reduction efforts are warranted for physiotherapy students.	
ix	It is essential, going forward, that clinical educators make an intentional effort to be positive role models when it comes to the management of patients with obesity. Inclusion of a formal obesity curriculum should perhaps now be part of the contemporary physiotherapy students' education.	
x	However, it must be noted that changing the curriculum is only one important step towards changing the student physiotherapist's attitudes and beliefs towards patients living with obesity.	

Answers

Task 1: Before watching

i) What does the word **objective** mean? What is the opposite?

Objective not influenced by personal feelings or opinions. Opposite is **subjective**.

ii)

	Sentence A		Sentence B
Ex	<input type="checkbox"/> I believe it is a major problem.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	It appears to be a major problem.
i	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First, the temperature of the flask was measured.	<input type="checkbox"/>	First, I measured the temperature of the flask.
ii	<input type="checkbox"/> I have highlighted three problem areas.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This report has highlighted three problem areas.
iii	<input type="checkbox"/> We can see how the rate increased in the graph.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The graph shows how the rate increased.
iv	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> There are two problems with this method.	<input type="checkbox"/>	This is a really bad method.
v	<input type="checkbox"/> This policy will have many bad effects.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This policy will have many adverse effects.
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vii	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The rate of inflation decreased in 2019.	<input type="checkbox"/>	The rate of inflation went down in 2019.
viii	<input type="checkbox"/> This hasn't always been the case.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This has not always been the case.

iii) Answers vary. Detailed answer is given in Task 4.

Task 2: What is objective writing?

Objective writing

also called 1. impersonal writing

places emphasis on 2. information and 3. arguments

uses 4. third person pronouns (e.g. 5. it / he / she / they / them)

Task 3: How objective is academic writing?

Complete the following notes for the second part of the video.

How objective is academic writing?

especially important for 6. natural sciences *

← these subjects deal with 7. quantitative data

more acceptable in other subjects (e.g. 8. naturalist research)

subjectivity essential for 9. reflective writing

* Answer biology / chemistry / physics also OK, provided all three are given.

Task 4: How to make writing objective

a) Complete the following notes for the final part of the video.

How to make writing objective

- use 10. passive

- focus on 11. evidence

e.g. findings / 12. data / research / figures

- use 13. evidence from sources

- use 14. impersonal phrases (i.e. phrases with 'It' and '15. There')

often uses 16. hedges (to soften the language) +

17. boosters (to strengthen the language)

- 18. personify the writing

b) The example, and numbers i, ii, iii, iv, v and vii relate to objectivity. See below.

Sentence A		Sentence B	
Ex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Use impersonal phrases =></i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>It appears to be a major problem.</i>
i	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Personify =></i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i><= Use passive</i>
ii	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Focus on the evidence =></i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>This report has highlighted three problem areas.</i>
iii	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>The graph shows how the rate increased.</i>
iv	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <i><= Use impersonal phrases</i>
v	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>This is vocabulary, not objectivity</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>This policy will have many adverse effects.</i>
vi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <i><= Use evidence from sources</i>
vii	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <i>This is vocabulary, not objectivity</i>
viii	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>This is style, not objectivity</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>This has not always been the case.</i>

Task 5: Identifying objective writing

Study the following sentences, which come from a scientific article on obesity (source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0031940621000353>). Underline the part which uses objective language, and identify the method used. An example has been done.

#	Sentence	Method
Ex	A total of 215 students <u>were interviewed</u> .	Use passive
i	<u>Existing literature</u> reports that physicians and other healthcare professionals perceive people with obesity as undisciplined, lazy, weak-willed and unlikely to comply with treatment or make lifestyle changes (Seymour et al, 2018; Phelan et al., 2015; Sabin and Nosek, 2012).	Focus on evidence
ii	<u>Rubino et al. (2020) show</u> that these assumptions result in multiple negative encounters for patients living with obesity, one of which is experiencing weight bias and stigma at the hands of their healthcare providers.	Use evidence from sources
iii	All final year physiotherapy students in the Republic of Ireland <u>were invited</u> to participate. Each received a questionnaire, consisting of 72 questions.	Use passive
iv	Descriptive statistics and frequencies <u>were used</u> to analyse the data.	Use passive
v	A response rate of 83% (179/215) <u>was achieved</u> .	Use passive
vi	<u>Fig. 1 illustrates</u> the findings in relation to physiotherapy students' perceptions of weight bias expressed by peers, educators and healthcare professionals in the clinical environment.	Focus on evidence
vii	<u>These findings</u> highlight the disparity between physiotherapy students' knowledge and beliefs relating to causes of obesity and current scientific knowledge regarding mechanisms of body-weight regulation.	Focus on evidence
viii	<u>This study</u> provides preliminary findings to suggest that weight stigma-reduction efforts are warranted for physiotherapy students.	Personify
ix	<u>It is essential</u> , going forward, that clinical educators make an intentional effort to be positive role models when it comes to the management of patients with obesity. Inclusion of a formal obesity curriculum should perhaps now be part of the contemporary physiotherapy students' education.	Use impersonal phrases
x	However, <u>it must be noted</u> that changing the curriculum is only one important step towards changing the student physiotherapist's attitudes and beliefs towards patients living with obesity.	Use impersonal phrases

Teacher's Notes

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<u>Video length:</u>	8.46
<u>Learning</u>	(1) Understand what objective writing is [Tasks 1 and 2]
<u>Outcomes</u>	(2) Understand how objective academic writing is [Task 3] (3) Study ways to make writing objective [Tasks 4 and 5]

Suggested sequence/timings (for teachers)

The following is a possible sequence for a 60' lesson.

1. Warm-up (15')

- Ask students what *objective* means, and its opposite [Task 1 i].
- Students complete Task 1 ii. This will lead in to the video.

Alternative approach. Put students into A-A and B-B pairs and give A students the Sentence A sentences, and B students the Sentence B ones. They should identify ones which are not good academic style. Then, put into A-B pairs (or A-A-B-B groups) and ask to compare. In each case, one sentence is correct, one is incorrect.

- Go over answers. It is *not* necessary to explain answers in detail as they will be covered in Task 4 b). Some general ideas: avoid *I/we*; use full form of verbs (*has not* rather than *hasn't*); use formal vocabulary (*adverse* rather than *bad*, *decrease* rather than *go down*).

2. Video comprehension and exercises #1 (30')

- Students watch the video and take notes. Video is ~ 9', so two viewings ~ 18'
- Students complete Tasks 2, 3 and 4 a) to check comprehension.

Approaches. (1) Students watch the video all the way through once then complete Tasks 2, 3 and 4 a), then watch again to check. (2) Students watch the first section then complete Task 2, then the next section then Task 3, then the next section then Task 4 a).

Note. Check answers to Task 4 a) before proceeding to Task 4 b) and Task 5.

3. Video comprehension and exercises #2 (15')

- Students complete Task 4 b). Check answers.
- Students complete Task 5. Check answers.

4. Extension activities (if time)

- Have students look at their own writing (or a peer's) and identify: (1) good examples of objective writing; (2) writing would could be made more objective. The checklist below can be used.
- Find an authentic academic text. Have students identify objective writing, and what makes it objective.

Writer's name: _____

Peer editor's name: _____

Item	OK?	Comment
Writing uses passive to avoid personal pronouns (e.g. <i>The experiment was conducted</i>). Passive is not overused.		
Writing focuses on evidence (e.g. <i>The findings show...</i>).		
Writing uses evidence from sources and third person pronouns (e.g. <i>Newbold (2021) shows that...</i>).		
Writing uses impersonal phrases with <i>It</i> and <i>There</i> .		
Writing uses personification (e.g. <i>This report has shown</i>).		