

A Short Dictionary of Feedback

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Introduction

This dictionary arose from the Higher Education Academy-funded Collaborative Teaching Development Grant 'Closing the Loop: Bridging the Gap between Provision and Implementation of Feedback'. While the original project was aimed at the markers providing feedback, the dictionary is the result of the realisation that students need to be able to access the resources directly themselves.



These materials were created with the help of Dr Bettina Renz (University of Nottingham), Dr Nicola Smith (University of Birmingham) and Dr Hardeep Basra (Loughborough University). They have also had input from 100 unknown undergraduate students, whose feedback to us was very helpful in building our understanding of the communication gaps in our provision of feedback on assessed work.

As with everything, this is a work in progress. I welcome your thoughts and suggestions. If you find definitions that are confusing or an entry that is missing, please let me know, and I will be happy to make changes for the next edition! I would also love to hear from you if you find this resource helpful. It's nice to know if someone's using it!

Best wishes,
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Using the Dictionary

This short dictionary of feedback is a resource to provide you with explanations and examples (most are politics-based but should be clear to all readers) to help you understand some of the most common feedback given to students. You should use it alongside the feedback provided by your tutors to help you understand how to improve future submissions.

This resource is compiled in alphabetical order by keyword, just like a regular dictionary. There is an index at the back that also lists some of the keywords under thematic headings. The index is very useful if you're not sure what you're looking for.

Good luck!

Academic literature

Non-academic sources are usually written for a more general audience. They may use more informal language and usually have limited or no referencing. They are not subjected to the peer review process, so the information is less reliable. Examples of non-academic sources are mass-produced books, newspapers, magazines, and most websites. If you search on Google Scholar for sources, most of the results will be scholarly sources, but not all (such as lecture slides), so be careful. If you're unsure, try using an academic search tool like Web of Knowledge or the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences; all results from these sources are academic. If you're ever unsure, ask an academic!

Alphabetisation

Bibliographies should be alphabetised by author surname (or organisation, if the author is unknown). Sources should not be sorted by type, only alphabetised, unless otherwise directed. To alphabetise your bibliography in Microsoft Word (and many open-source word processors), highlight all of the text of the bibliography (not including your title of Bibliography or Works Cited), go to Home > Paragraph > click the AZ with a down arrow. Press ok. Your sources should now be sorted.

Analysis

Analysis moves beyond description, which simply summarises what other people have said. Analysis means subjecting an argument to questions to see how it holds up; testing it against evidence to see whether it can be applied to other cases; and evaluating the

coherence and logic of the argument itself. This does not necessarily mean that the arguments won't withstand the tests, but you need to show the process of testing and application of those ideas or theories to other contexts. Analysis can also come from noticing where scholars agree and disagree, for example: 'While Dahl's definition of power is widely cited (Sources A, B, C), it is not entirely problem-free (Sources D and E).'

Answer clarity

Your overall answer to the question is not clear to the reader. Make sure that you take a position, and summarise it in 1-2 sentences in the conclusion (and, in many cases, in the introduction) so that the reader is absolutely clear what you think all of your evidence shows. The simplest way to do this is simply to rephrase the question in your answer. For example, if the question you chose asks, 'To what extent has the theory of Realism dominated the study of security?', your answer could be phrased, 'The theory of Realism has heavily dominated security...'. This gives the reader a very clear signal what your position on the question is.

Apostrophes

Apostrophes are only used to indicate possession or contraction (in place of is/has, e.g. she's at the store; contractions should never be used in academic essays). Although it is common to see apostrophes after acronyms/initialisations/years, this is wrong, i.e. it should be MPs, 1800s, etc., *not* MP's, 1800's, etc.

Argument

Your overall answer to the question should be clear to the reader from the start. Make sure that you take a

position, and summarise it in 1-2 sentences in the conclusion (and, in most cases, in the introduction) so that the reader is absolutely clear what you think all of your evidence shows. The simplest way to do this is simply to rephrase the question in your answer.

Argument clarity

Having a clear argument means making sure that the link between the information presented and your answer to the question is explicit. Make sure you always know why you have given this information and why it belongs where you have placed it. Don't assume that the reader understands why it is there. If you want to make a point but aren't sure that its relevance is immediately obvious, take 1-2 sentences to explain to the reader why this point is important for your argument.

Awkward phrasing

When a sentence is expressed clumsily, it can be difficult for the reader to make out your meaning, or the reader might misunderstand you completely. Sometimes this can be corrected through simplifying the grammar of the sentence. Compare these formulations of the same idea:

- 1) I think that, far from being an unimportant idea, because of the fact that Kant is referred to frequently in modern political philosophy, the categorical imperative is still relevant today.
- 2) Proof of the continuing relevance of Kant's categorical imperative is its frequent appearance in modern political philosophy.

- 3) The frequent references to Kant's categorical imperative in modern political philosophy prove it is still relevant.

Sometimes the awkward phrasing arises from trying to express too many thoughts at once or from confusion about what point you are trying to make. As with all academic writing, simple and clear is more important than 'sophisticated' and confusing.

Bibliography spacing

The bibliography should be single-spaced with either a gap between entries or hanging indents (this means the first line of each entry aligns with the margin of the page any lines after it are indented, the opposite of a normal paragraph indentation). For instructions on how to create a hanging indent, see:

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-gb/word-help/create-a-hanging-indent-HA104061514.aspx>.

Block quotes

Quote needs to be separated from the main body of the text (it's over two lines long). Every line of a long quote should be indented from the margin, including the bracketed citation at the end of the quote. Indented block quotes should not have inverted commas/speech marks unless they occur within the source you're quoting. The bracketed citation and punctuation should be included at the end of the indented quote.

Colons

Colons are used to introduce long lists, explanations, and quotations as well as to separate a clause for emphasis. Colons can also come before information

that could be prefaced by 'for example'. Compare these uses of colons:

- 1) Many countries have prime ministers as heads of government: the UK, Germany, and Jamaica are three examples of this.
- 2) There are several things you should do before submitting an essay: proof-read it to check for errors, make sure that you have clearly answered the question, and confirm that your formatting adheres to departmental guidelines.
- 3) Rawls proves this point about the 'veil of ignorance': 'The natural distribution is neither just nor unjust; nor is it unjust that persons are born into society at some particular position. These are simply natural facts. What is just and unjust is the way that institutions deal with these facts' (Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*). (**Note:** Such a long quote should normally be formatted as a block quote.)

Comma splice

A sentence must have both a subject and a main verb in order to be complete, but it cannot have more than one subject or main verb. A comma splice is a variety of run-on sentence that occurs when two complete sentences, each with its own subject and verb, are joined mistakenly by a comma. There are generally three methods of correcting this problem:

- 1) Replace the comma with a stronger mark of punctuation such as a period or semicolon,

- 2) Use a coordinating conjunction ("and," "but," "or," "nor") to join the two constructions, or
- 3) Make one of the two sentences a dependent construction by linking it to the other with a subordinating conjunction ("if," "when," "so that," "although," "because") or relative pronoun ("that," "which," "who," "whom," "whose").

Common knowledge

Facts, dates, events, and information that are widely known by those studying/working in a given field are referred to as 'common knowledge', e.g. the UK is a parliamentary democracy; Tony Blair was prime minister from 1997 to 2007. However, this same information may not be common knowledge to you because you have not yet encountered it from a variety of sources. When trying to decide whether you need to reference a piece of information, answer two questions: Did you know this before starting your course? Did this information come from your own thoughts, or did it come from someone else? If you did not know this information prior to starting your course or did not come up with the idea on your own, you need to find a reference for it.

Comparison

When comparing sources or cases, it is usually better – though more difficult – to structure your argument thematically rather than by source/case. Structuring according to each case tends to deplete the word count with description, leading to a weaker argument. Instead, spend more time planning your argument, thinking about what the sources/cases have in common

and what is different. Then spend each section addressing each of these themes.

Concise

Being concise will leave you more space to make your points. This is a skill that has to be developed. Start by trying to re-write a single paragraph in fewer words. What really matters? Have you repeated yourself unnecessarily? Do you really need as many quotes as you have, or could you paraphrase the point in fewer words? Wordy sentences are often also awkward sentences. Compare these formulations of the same idea:

- 1) As a matter of fact, in order to redraw each and every constituency boundary in a fair manner, this has to be done by means of an impartial committee that looks at the impact.
- 2) The fairest way to redraw constituency boundaries is through an impartial committee.

Contractions

You should usually avoid contractions (shouldn't, won't, don't, couldn't, haven't, etc.) in academic writing. Although this convention is growing more flexible, avoiding contractions signals more formal writing. It is also easier for non-native speakers to understand so is encouraged when your work might be read by someone whose first language is not English. Avoiding contractions can also help to avoid some of the word confusion that comes with them. For example, if you frequently confuse *its* and *it's*, avoiding contractions means that you will never use *it's* because this is the short form of *it is*.

Critical

Criticality is the difference between simply accepting/describing what other people have said and probing the validity/coherence of their arguments. Criticality means approaching the topic with an open mind, weighing up the evidence, and recognising both the strengths and the weaknesses of the arguments presented. The first step to developing criticality is to read more, as this will help you develop an idea of the differences of opinion on the topic. Then, spend some time thinking: who agrees with whom? Whose arguments are more convincing? Is there something you think they missed? Are their conclusions plausible and logical? Are they supported by good evidence? If you tested their ideas in a different context, would you get different results? A lack of criticality is frequently linked to the need to do more reading on the topic.

If you are struggling to critique the arguments, try using other sources to help you. Find your main source on Google Scholar or Web of Science, for example. Then click 'Cited By'. This will show you people who have published later works that have referred to the source you're trying to critique. Read through the abstracts or introductions to get a feel for whether the source would be helpful. Articles with phrases like 'A response to...' in the title are very likely to be critical of the original source.

Definition

You need to define your key terms in the opening sections of your essay before launching into your analysis. To define your key term(s), you should work with the literature. For example, words like 'globalisation' are contentious and require a clear

definition. How do different authors define this? How do we know it when we see it? Develop a definition that best suits your purposes before launching into the core of your argument. Identify some criteria that the reader can look for in the rest of the essay.

Depth

If your writing mainly summarises what other people have said, it is descriptive and lacks depth. To create greater depth in your argument, you might try using more examples, recognising different interpretations of the same event or idea, looking at the major arguments in the literature more critically. When a marker asks for more depth, they are usually asking for more critical analysis that shows you have understood more than just the basic arguments.

Sometimes, even if you have understood the material well, your writing may lack depth because you have tried to make too many points within the confines of time and space. If this is the case, try to make fewer arguments in greater detail. You should check with your tutor, but in most cases, markers will not mind if you concentrate on fewer points but make it clear in the introduction why you are doing so. This shows that you are aware that there are other arguments that you could make but that you are trying to focus more deeply on what you have prioritised as the most important points.

Description

Descriptive writing means that you summarise what other people have said, but you don't build a critical argument. Criticality means developing your understanding to the point that you recognise multiple

sides to arguments and can identify both the strengths and weaknesses of those arguments. Description simply summarises what other people have said, for example: 'Dahl defines power as "...'" (Dahl 1957). He supports his definition with examples (Dahl A, B, C). Overall, I think it is a very good definition and applies well to my research.' A critical approach would mean questioning how well Dahl's argument holds up. You can do this by identifying strengths and weaknesses yourself; by using case studies or supporting examples to apply an argument in another context; or by incorporating other author's evaluations of the source you're trying to critique. Beyond the basic dates of historical events, academics tend to disagree about nearly everything, so you're likely to be able to find someone who can help you critique your source.

Examples: choice

Make sure that you choose examples that are a fair representation of the point you're making: don't choose an extreme case unless you're specifically trying to use that as an example of an outlier, the so-called exception that proves the rule. You also want to choose examples that best illustrate the point you're trying to make.

Examples: detail

Make sure you provide enough detail when you mention examples. It's otherwise not always immediately clear why the examples chosen are the best to illustrate your points. Remember to make the reasons why you're including this information explicit.

Examples: quantity

Examples and evidence can help you explain and illustrate your arguments. Judicious use of examples or evidence allows you to show that you understand how to apply the ideas in other circumstances than those used in the literature itself. Evidence could come from demographic statistics, public opinion polls, speeches, and government reports, for example.

First person

Be very cautious in using 'I think', 'I feel', etc. If you can take it out and the meaning of the sentence remains the same, it's not necessary. Including it frequently waters down your ideas and conveys an idea of lack of confidence.

Formatting

Use a semi-colon to separate two sources in the same set of brackets, e.g. (Smith 2002: 20; Jones 1999: 30). You can trim your word count by putting the bracketed citation directly after mentioning the organisation/author, eg 'The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2014: 2) has found...'.

Fragment/incomplete sentence

Fragment: A sentence fragment is a phrase or clause that is in some way incomplete. Such fragments become problematic when they attempt to stand alone as a complete sentence. The most common version of this mistake occurs when a writer mistakes a gerund (a verb that acts like a noun) for a main verb, as in the following sentence: "In bed reading Shakespeare from dusk to dawn."

Hanging indent

Second-line needs to hang, (this means the first line of each entry aligns with the margin of the page any lines after it are indented, the opposite of a normal paragraph indentation). For instructions on how to create a hanging indent, see:

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-gb/word-help/create-a-hanging-indent-HA104061514.aspx>.

For older versions of Word:

Go to Format in Word. Select Paragraph; go to the Special drop-down menu. Select Hanging.

For Word 2007 and later:

On the Home tab, select the small arrow icon in the bottom right-hand corner of the Paragraph box. This brings up a menu. Under Indentation, go to the box where it says Special. Select Hanging.

Alternatively, if you have the ruler visible in your regular view, you should see two triangles that align to look like an hourglass and a small rectangle under them. If you hover over the bottom triangle, the words Hanging Indent will appear. Click carefully on the bottom triangle and drag it over to about 1.5cm, then release.

Hyphenation

A compound adjective occurs when two or more words are used as a single modifier before a noun. Such compound adjectives require hyphens in order to clarify how the terms are to be grouped, as in "a not-for-profit organization" or "twentieth-century life." You do not

need a hyphen, however, when one of the words in the compound is an adverb, as in "a thinly veiled insult."

Ibid.

Don't use *ibid* with Harvard (bracketed/author-date) referencing. *Ibid* is only for use with footnote-based referencing systems.

Introduction structure

The structure of the essay should be clear from the introduction. Make sure that you give a brief outline of where you're headed so that readers know what to expect. You can start with a simple structure, such as, 'This essay first defines..., then it analyses... before examining...' Without a strong, explicit structure, it can be difficult for the reader to follow the development of the argument, and it also means the relevance of some of the information presented to your answer to the question is not clear.

Its versus it's

Confusing "it's" with "its" may be the single most common grammar problem in student writing. Apostrophes can either indicate possessive constructions (showing that something "belongs to" something else) or they can indicate a contraction (used to stand for missing letters). In most words, the role of an apostrophe is clear. With it's/its, however, the two functions easily become confused. In "it's" the apostrophe indicates a contraction of "it is" or "it has." "Its," on the other hand, is a possessive personal pronoun, meaning "of it" or "belonging to it." Whenever you write the word "it's," ask yourself if you mean to say, "it is." If not, then choose "its."

Logical

If markers complain that your writing is unclear, that some sections are irrelevant, or that the argument is illogical, you need to think about your structure and evidence. Logic in writing means constructing a clear argument that is well-supported by your evidence. To create a logical argument, you need to identify each sub-argument clearly, provide evidence to support it, and connect each of the parts back to your overall argument. If some parts of your argument build on previous points, you need to make sure that you have provided the information in the appropriate order. If you have several points that build your overall argument but do not necessarily build on each other, you need to make the link to the overall argument especially clear in each section.

Building a logical argument means showing the reader evidence and explaining how that evidence supports your position. Sometimes, this needs an extra sentence of explanation because the information you are presenting *is* relevant, but it is not immediately clear *why*. The marker wants you to connect the dots for them to demonstrate that you understand the topic; you do not want the reader to have to guess why you are presenting the information.

Misplaced apostrophe

An apostrophe can function to indicate a possessive when accompanied by an -s ("the book that belongs to Roy" = "Roy's book"). For words that already have an -s at the end, just adding the apostrophe will do ("the team belonging to the boys" = "the boys' team"). Certain exceptions to this rule apply, and possessive personal pronouns ("like ours," "yours," "hers," "his,"

"its") are possessive already and therefore do not take an apostrophe. It is always wrong to use a possessive apostrophe to simply make a word plural.

Misunderstood sources

If you struggle to understand a source, conduct a literature search to see how other people have summarised and interpreted that person's ideas. This is particularly helpful with philosophical and literary texts that can be very difficult to understand without consulting other sources.

Nuance

Nuance is linked to depth and criticality. It means demonstrating that you are aware of the finer points of an argument. For example, you might show that, in an ethical dilemma about just war, there is no clear right or wrong answer. Instead, you present evidence that shows the trade-offs between any of the possible options that were available to the actors. This demonstrates that you have a more thorough understanding of the topic than a simple black-and-white judgement.

Number of sources

A limited number and range of sources in the bibliography indicates to the marker that you need to get more comfortable with keyword searches to expand your range of sources. You can find sources three main ways: by consulting your reading list; by following up sources in the bibliography of anything relevant you've read; and through keyword searches. Databases like Google Scholar and Web of Knowledge will allow you to type in key words or phrases to find sources. You can

then follow up suggestions provided through the 'relevant sources', citations, and 'cited by' links.

Numbering/bullet-pointing

Do not number or bullet-point your bibliography unless specifically instructed to do so.

Originality

Originality does not mean that you have to re-invent the wheel or come up with an idea that has never been published before. Originality can come from applying a theory to a new example or current event; from testing a theory using data; from combining two arguments or fields of literature that have not been combined before. Reading beyond the core reading that everyone will have done is more likely to help you provide a fresh perspective.

Overall structure

Even if you have fantastic ideas, a weak structure will really limit your ability to convey your ideas because it makes it difficult for your reader to follow you and can lead to haphazard presentation of information. Having a clear structure involves spending time planning before writing or spending extensive time editing after writing, depending on your writing style. After you have done some reading on the topic, decide what you want to say. Then think about the structure. What are your main points? Do these points build on each other? If so, which order makes the most sense? You should generally aim to have one key point per paragraph (or section, in longer works). Each paragraph should begin with a sentence that gives an idea of the point you're going to develop in that paragraph, and you should

make sure that all the content you introduce after that sentence really does support that point.

Over-quotation

At times you would benefit from using fewer direct quotes. Using too many quotes leaves the reader unclear about your level of understanding of the topic and frequently indicates that you need to read more so that you reach a level where you can summarise a variety of arguments in your own words instead of relying on others. Use quotes as seasoning, only including them when they particularly encapsulate what you want to convey or when the specific choice of words is key to your argument. Otherwise, focus on paraphrasing.

Page break

Your bibliography should start at the top of a new page. A hint: if you hold down CTRL and press Enter, you'll create a page break, and your bibliography will start at the top of the next page, regardless of where your writing finishes on the previous page.

Page number

Direct quotes and paraphrases on content found on specific page(s) in a source should have the pages included in the reference. The only exception is when the source itself does not have page numbers, e.g. websites.

Paraphrase

Paraphrasing means putting someone else's ideas in your own words, accompanied by a reference to the original source.

If you do not directly quote someone's words but use their ideas and/or arguments, then this must be acknowledged by a citation in the text and a bibliographical entry. Paraphrasing usually means rewording a particular segment of text and should be accompanied by precise page references. If you do not include appropriate page references, your reader/examiner will find it very difficult to follow up the source of your argument.

Citation of specific page numbers is only unnecessary if you are summarising the argument of the entire book/article, in which case you should reference the author and year but should not include the page range of the entire source.

To paraphrase, you need to re-word the idea substantially, not just change out a couple of words. All paraphrases should be accompanied by a bracketed reference that identifies the precise page(s) where the idea appears. If you struggle not to copy the author's words, try reading the section that you want to paraphrase, then set the source aside and, without looking at it, try to write down what the key idea was. If you really struggle not to use a particular author's words, this may indicate that you haven't read widely enough yet. You will find that, the more you have read on the subject, the easier it gets to put things in your own words because you have read different formulations by several different authors. If you really can't say it better yourself and the quote is very concise or uses particular words that make your point forcefully, this is the right time to use a direct quote.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking or using another person's thoughts, writings or inventions as your own. Plagiarism can be **intentional or unintentional**. Unintentional plagiarism usually arises from insufficient citations, either from an incomplete understanding of what information requires citations or from a failure to take adequate notes about sources of information whilst researching a topic. Whether intentional or unintentional, however, it is still plagiarism.

Using other people's work without acknowledgement is a form of intellectual dishonesty. It is often a breach of copyright and usually constitutes plagiarism.

To avoid plagiarism you must make sure that quotations, facts and ideas from whatever source, even if paraphrased, are clearly identified and attributed at the point where they occur in the text of your work by using one of the standard conventions for referencing. It is not enough just to list sources in a bibliography at the end of your essay or dissertation if you do not acknowledge the actual quotations or paraphrases in the body of your essay. Neither is it acceptable to change some of the words or the order of sentences if, by failing to acknowledge the source properly, you give the impression that it is your own work.

Presentation standards

Good presentation standards make your work look tidy and professional. They give the reader a good first impression and give space for the marker to comment.

Components included in presentation standards are, for example: font, spacing, indentations and page breaks,

title, page numbers, cover sheets, and appropriate section headings.

Quote punctuation

Unless the quoted material ends with a question mark or exclamation point, the punctuation at the end of the quote should be dropped, and you should place your punctuation (normally a full stop or a comma, according to the requirements of the sentence) after the bracketed citation.

When the sentence is a paraphrase, any punctuation (including question marks or exclamation points) should be placed after the brackets.

Relevance

Make sure the relevance of all of the information you present is clear. To do this, make your thought process explicit to the reader. Why does this information matter? How is it connected to your answer to the question? Is it in the most logical place? You might have a really good point to make, but if it's not immediately obvious how it connects to the overall argument, you need to make the link clear to the reader.

Second person

Avoid using 'you' in essays, as it is very informal and chatty and frequently lowers the tone. 'I' and 'we' have become more acceptable in academic writing (when used carefully and in such a manner that the argument is not weakened), but 'you' is still generally unacceptable.

Semi-colons

Semicolons are commonly used to join closely related, complete sentences that do not contain coordinating conjunctions or commas as connectors. Semicolons are also placed before words like "however" and "therefore" when such words are used to join sentences.

Sign-post

The essay are strengthened by sign-posts at the beginning of each new section to indicate to the reader where you are in the argument and how the next part builds on the previous part. Sign-posts are structured phrases at the beginning of new paragraphs that give readers a hint about how far through your argument you are, for example, 'Having defined..., this essay will now apply it to the case of...'.

Spacing

Please remember to double-line space your essay. If you have any doubts regarding the proper formatting rules, please see me, or refer to the departmental guide which specifically mentions formatting rules.

Split bibliography

Do not separate your sources unless you have been explicitly instructed to do so by your lecturer. This is almost never seen in academic work. All sources should be listed in one bibliography, alphabetised by the surname of the first author.

Superficial

Superficial arguments only engage with the basic evidence or points of contention between authors. It might mean that you have presented an argument that

lacks nuance, that you have tried to cover too much material, or that you have not read widely enough. See analysis, critical, depth, and nuance for further information.

Synthesis

In most beginning student writing, the majority of essay paragraphs engage with only one source at a time, giving the impression that you have picked 1-2 key arguments from each source rather than highlighting some of the similarities and differences between the sources and letting your argument lead. Synthesising literature means identifying common arguments or disputes in the literature and letting them 'talk' to each other as part of weighing up the merit of the arguments. For example: 'While Dahl's definition of power is widely cited (Sources A, B, C), it is not entirely problem-free (Sources D and E).' Synthesising arguments also allows you to address the topic in greater depth and fewer words.

Understanding

Incomplete understanding of the topic frequently arises from not allowing enough time to read and digest your sources. If you struggle to understand a source, conduct a literature search to see how other people have summarised and interpreted that person's ideas. This is particularly helpful with philosophical and literary texts that can be very difficult to understand without consulting other sources. You will know you have read enough when you can identify the major positions in the literature and have begun to recognise who the most influential researchers on the topic are.

URLs

URLs should never be used in in-text references. Instead, you should cite the author or, failing that, the organisation name and year (if known) in the bracketed citation and place the URL in the bibliographical entry for the source, e.g. (Nottingham County Council 2014).

Writing style clarity

An unclear writing style can arise from not entirely understanding the topic yourself but can also be from an attempt to sound 'academic'. It's more important to use simpler words and sentence structure but to be able to make a clear point than to sound sophisticated but have your points muddled. Don't worry about using complicated vocabulary. It is actually a greater skill to be able to explain your point in simple language that any educated reader could understand.

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Clarity 25
Writing style clarity See Clarity
You See Grammar/Second person