

Language focus: the vocabulary shift

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LANGUAGE FOCUS: THE VOCABULARY SHIFT A distinctive feature

of academic writing style is choosing the more formal alternative when selecting a verb, noun, or other part of speech. Verbs English often has two (or more) choices to express an action or occurrence. The choice is often between a phrasal or prepositional verb (verb + preposition) and a single verb, the latter with Latinate origins. Often in lectures and other instances of everyday spoken English, the verb + preposition is used; however, for written academic style, the preferred choice is a single verb wherever possible.

This is one of the most dramatic stylistic shifts from informal to formal style. Researchers looked at the way strain builds up around a fault. (less formal style) Researchers observed the way strain accumulates around a fault. (academic style) Choose a verb from the list that reduces the informality of each sentence. Note that you may need to add tense to the verb from the list. assist reduce create investigate raise establish increase determine fluctuate eliminate

1. Expert Systems can help out the user in the diagnosis of problems. . This program was set up to improve access to medical care.
3. Research expenditures have gone up to nearly \$350 million.
4. The use of optical character readers (OCRs) should cut down the number of problems with the U. S. mail service.
5. Researchers have found out that this drug has serious side effects.
6. Building a nuclear power plant will not get rid of the energy problem completely.
7. Researchers have been looking into this problem for 15 years now.
8. This issue was brought up during the investigation.
9. Engineers can come up with better designs using CAD.
- 10.

The emission levels have been going up and down. Reduce the informality of each sentence by substituting a single verb for the one in italics. 1. The implementation of computer-integrated-manufacturing (CIM) has brought about some serious problems. 2. The process should be done over until the desired results are achieved. 3. Plans are being made to come up with a database containing detailed environmental information for the region. 4. Subtle changes in the earth's crust were picked up by these new devices. 5. Proposals to construct new nuclear reactors have met with great resistance from environmentalists.

Nouns and Other Parts of Speech English has a very rich vocabulary derived from many languages. Because of this, there may be more than one way to express an idea. You should strive to choose words that are less informal in nature and also precise. In lectures, you will likely hear less formal speech; however, in writing you should use a more formal form if one exists. Which of the underlined words would be more suitable for an academic paper? 1. The government has made good | considerable progress in solving environmental problems. 2. We got | obtained encouraging results. . The results of a lot of | numerous different projects have been pretty good | encouraging. 4. A loss of jobs is one of the things that will happen | consequences if the process is automated. Supply a more academic word or phrase for the one underlined in each sentence. 5. The reaction of the officials was sort of negative. 6. The economic outlook is mighty nice. 7. The future of Federal funding is up in the air. 8. America's major automakers are planning to get together on the research needed for more fuel efficient cars.

Language Focus: Formal Grammar and Style The followings are some nonvocabulary-related recommendations for maintaining a formal academic writing style.

1. Avoid contractions. Export figures won't improve until the economy is stronger. > Export figures will not improve until the economy is stronger.
2. Use the more appropriate formal negative forms. not . . . any —; no not. . . much —; little not . . . many —; few The analysis didn't yield any new results. —> The analysis yielded no new results. The government didn't allocate much funding for the program. ; The government allocated little funding for the program. This problem doesn't have many viable solutions. — > This problem has few viable solutions.
3. Limit the use of "run on" expressions, such as "and so forth" and "etc." These semiconductors can be used in robots, CD players, etc. —> These semiconductors can be used in robots, CD players, and other electronic devices.
4. Avoid addressing the reader as "you" (except, of course, if you are writing a textbook). You can see the results in Table 1. -> The results can be seen in Table 1. . Limit the use of direct questions. What can be done to lower costs? —> We now need to consider what can be done to lower costs, or We now need to consider how costs may be lowered.
6. Place adverbs within the verb. Adverbs often are placed midposition rather than in the initial or final positions. In informal English, adverbs often occur as clauses at the beginning or end of sentences. Then the solution can be discarded. —* The solution can then be discarded. The blood is withdrawn slowly. —* The blood is slowly withdrawn.