

Academic writing skills practice

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A. Rewrite the sentences to make them more academic in style

1. Formality

i. this piece of writing	
ii. my essay's going to make it clear	

2. Impersonal language

i. Many of my friends and colleagues say that...	
ii. Dave said in 1992	
iii. I think that...	
iv. This is a bad idea.	
v. In my opinion Johnson has given a wonderful perspective.	

3. Precision

i. Ms Montessori got a prize in her university	
ii. around half of the group responded to the survey	

(Answer key on p. 3)

<http://eltforward.com/engforward.html>

B. Read the texts provided. Then write a paragraph about 'Building Home Literacy'.

**Source 1:** Morrow, M.L. & Gambrell, L.B. (2004). Using children's literature in preschool: comprehending and enjoying books. U.S.A.: International Reading Association.

'When families provide a rich literacy environment at home, teaching reading and writing becomes easier for both the child and the teacher at school. Schools need to take responsibility for sharing information in the community about activities that the families can implement at home before their children enter preschool. For example, family workshop can be held for parents of children who are not yet school age, and schools can distribute booklets about literacy development at home from birth to age 3.

**Source 2:** Leichter, H. J. (1984). Families as an environment for literacy. In H. Goelman, A. A. Oberg, & F. Smith (Eds.), *Awakening to literacy* (pp. 38–50). Portsmouth, NH: Heineman Educational Books.

The following factors affect the quality of literacy environment at home (Leichter, 1984):

1. Interpersonal interactions- the literacy experiences shared by children, parents, siblings and other individuals at home
2. physical environment-literacy materials in the home
3. emotional and motivational climate- family attitudes and aspirations for literacy achievement'

Try to cite some ideas of the two sources in your passage by using direct quotation or paraphrasing.

(Answer key on pp.4-5)

ANSWER KEY

A. Rewrite the sentences to make them more academic in style

1. Formality

i. this piece of writing	the present paper /this essay
ii. my essay's going to make it clear	the present paper will clarify that

2. Impersonal language

i. Many of my friends and colleagues say that...	It is commonly said that...
ii. Dave said in 1992	Robertson (1992) suggested
iii. I think that...	The present author believes that
iv. This is a bad idea.	This idea may not be accurate, because...
v. In my opinion Johnson has given a wonderful perspective.	In my opinion Johnson has given a valid/ useful perspective...

3. Precision

i. Ms Montessori got a prize in her university	Ms Montessori received an award in her university
ii. around half of the group responded to the survey	approximately 53% of the group...

B. Read the texts provided. Then write a paragraph about 'Building Home Literacy'.

### Examples of in-text citation

#### Example 1 Paraphrasing

Morrow & Gambrell (2004) **point out that teachers' responsibilities include 'sharing** information in the community about activities that the families can implement at home.'

- 'Point out' indicates a neutral attitude of the writer. The writer does not show support for the point by Morrow and Gambrell.
- The word in the text and the first word of citation are presented in grammatical structure.

#### Example 2 Paraphrasing

Morrow & Gambrell (2004) **rightly point out** that teachers' responsibilities include 'sharing information in the community about activities that the families can implement at home.'

- 'Rightly point out' indicates an affirmative attitude of the writer. The writer agrees with Morrow and Gambrell.

#### Example 3 Paraphrasing

**Suggestions such as** holding family workshop for parents of children who are not yet school age and distributing booklets about literacy development (Morrow & Gambrell, 2004) **are practicable and may be considered by teachers.**

- The writer shows a good skill to synthesize the cited content.
- The nature of the content is summarized in a key word 'Suggestions.'
- The writer also adds an evaluative comment: 'practicable' and makes a recommendation: 'may be considered by teachers.'

#### Example 4 Direct quotation

Morrow & Gambrell (2004) describes a need for building a rich literacy environment at home:

‘When families provide a rich literacy environment at home, teaching reading and writing becomes easier for both the child and the teacher at school.’(p.15)

- This is an accurate example of direct quotation.
- It is good for the writer to summarize the cited content in a key word: ‘a need.’
- Note the use of another action verb: describe. What other verbs can be used?

#### Example 5 Paraphrasing

- According to Leichter (1984), physical environment is related to literacy materials in the home
- According to Leichter (1984), physical environment refers to literacy materials in the home
- According to Leichter (1984), physical environment is built with literacy materials in the home

The three parallel versions show a variation of action verbs. All three phrases are similar in meaning and the difference is with the personal style and vocabulary.

#### Example 6 Paraphrasing

Leichte (1984) identifies three factors affecting the quality of literacy environment at home: Interpersonal interactions, physical environment, and emotional and motivational climate. Among these factors, the writer notices that parents in Hong Kong are more willing to spend time on Interpersonal interactions with their children.

- This is another example of good skills in in-text citation.
- The writer uses a neutral action verb ‘identifies’ and prefaces the cited content concisely: ‘three factors.’
- Besides, the writer builds on the citation and adds his /her personal idea ‘parents in Hong Kong are more willing to spend time...’

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