

Stylish Academic Writing

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THINGS TO TRY

- Choose a piece of your own writing and rate it according to the following chart. Circle one item per column (A, B, C, D):

	A (Pronouns)	B (Voice)	C (Perspective)	D (Register)
1.	/ or we	Personal	Subjective	Informal
2.	No / or we	Impersonal	Objective	Formal

What happens if you change one or two of these variables?

For example, if you usually write in a third-person, impersonal, objective, formal mode, introduce *I* or *we* and see how you feel about the results.

- Play around with *you*. For instance, you could start your opening paragraph with a direct exhortation to your reader ("Picture the following scene") or add a conversational aside ("You might wonder why"). Even if the second-person pronoun sounds too informal for your everyday writing, you can keep this trick up your sleeve for occasions when you especially need to establish a rapport with your audience, such as a conference presentation or a public lecture.
- Write down the names of at least *five real people* and tape the list to your computer screen. The list should include:
 - A top expert in your field (someone whom you would really like to impress)
 - A close colleague in your discipline (someone who would give you a fair and honest critique of your work)
 - An academic colleague from outside your discipline
 - An advanced undergraduate in your discipline
 - A nonacademic friend, relative, or neighbor.

Read your writing aloud and try to imagine each person's response to your words. Depending on discipline and context, you might not necessarily aspire to write in a way that all of these readers will understand all the time. Nevertheless, it can be an interesting exercise to think about how far each person is likely to get. For example, will the advanced undergraduate make it past the first paragraph of your article, your abstract, your title?

constructions may even be allowed into their prose from time to time. They follow no set formula or rule book; but nor do they throw grammar and coherence to the wind. Whatever their stylistic choices, they always make us feel that every word counts.

THINGS TO TRY

- For a playful insight into what ails a sagging paragraph, go to the Writer's Diet Web site (<http://www.writersdiet.com>) and paste a sample of your writing (one thousand words maximum) into the online WritersDiet test, a free diagnostic tool designed to tell you whether your sentences are "flabby or fit."⁸ The test automatically highlights words in five grammatical categories commonly associated with stodgy academic prose—*be* verbs, nominalizations, prepositions, adjectives/adverbs, and *it*, *this*, *that*, *there*—and indicates whether those words occur in unusually high quantities. By the time you have tested three or four samples of your writing, you will have become aware of your signature usage patterns—for example, a predilection for abstraction (translation: too many spongy abstract nouns) or a tendency to begin every sentence with *this*.
- Replace at least a few *be* verbs in every paragraph with active, unusual verbs. A sentence powered by vivid verbs (*sway*, *shun*, *masquerade*) will speak to your readers more effectively than one that contains only forms of *be* ("The experiment *was*") and predictable academic verbs ("This proposition *shows*").
- Identify all your *passive verb constructions*, which are usually signaled by the presence of a *be* verb plus a past-tense verb (*are signaled*, *can be shown*, *is affected*). Passive constructions can be employed by stylish writers for a number of reasons; in the first part of this sentence, for example, the phrase "Passive constructions can be employed by stylish writers" places *passive constructions*

front and center, whereas an actively worded phrase such as "Stylish writers employ passive constructions" would have put more weight on the author's role. A few passive phrases can provide welcome syntactical variety. Too many passive constructions in one paragraph, however, will add up to lifeless, agentless prose.

- If you are like most academic writers, your writing sample probably contains a high percentage of *nominalizations*, which are abstract nouns formed from verbs or adjectives through the addition of a suffix such as *-ance*, *-ence*, *-ity*, *-ness*, *-ion*, *-ment*, or *-ism*. To reduce their stultifying effect:
 - Make sure that at least one sentence per paragraph includes a concrete noun or a human entity as its subject, immediately followed by an active verb ("Merleau-Ponty argues," "Students believe," "International banks compete").
 - Animate abstract nouns with active verbs ("Nominalizations *suck* the energy out of your sentences").
 - Cut down on prepositional phrases, especially where they string together long sequences of abstract nouns ("the representation of female desire *in* an era characterized by the objectification of personal experience"). When in doubt, limit the number of prepositional phrases to no more than three in a row.
 - Where possible, explain abstract concepts using concrete examples.
- Measure the distance between nouns and their accompanying verbs. When agent and action become separated by more than about a dozen words, readers quickly lose the plot. (Example: "The *knowledge* that criminalization of marijuana use can lead to a wide variety of other social ills, including an increased risk of addiction to more dangerous and expensive drugs such as heroine and cocaine, *has not prevented* lawmakers. . .") Ideally, a noun and its accompanying verb should pack a quick, one-two punch: "Lawmakers know . . ."

- If your WritersDiet test results reveal a weakness for adjectives and adverbs, ask yourself whether you really need them all. Can you supply the same descriptive energy using concrete nouns and lively verbs?
- Is your prose overly dependent on *it*, *this*, *that*, and *there*? If so, try adhering to the following principles next time you write something new:

- Use *this* only when accompanied by a modifying noun (“*This argument shows*” rather than merely “*This shows*”). Writers often slip *this* into their sentences to avoid stating their ideas clearly (“Some have seen *this* as conclusive evidence that . . .”).
- Use *it* only when its referent—that is, the noun *it* refers to—is crystal clear. For example, in the sentence “The woman threw the lamp through the window and broke *it*,” what did the woman break, the lamp or the window?
- Avoid using *that* more than once in a single sentence or about three times per paragraph, except in a parallel construction or for stylistic effect. Sentences that rely on subordinate clauses that in turn contain other clauses that introduce new ideas that distract from the main argument that the author is trying to make . . . well, you get the idea.
- Use *there* sparingly. There is no reason why you should not employ *there* every now and then. But wherever *there* is, weak words such as *this*, *that*, *it*, and *is* tend to congregate nearby. Example: “*There are a number of studies that show that this is a bad idea because it . . .*”

Do you find all of this editorial polishing and tweaking laborious and slow? Remember, stylish academic writers spend time and energy on their sentences so their readers won’t have to!

6 CHAPTER

TEMPTING TITLES

Like a hat on a head or the front door to a house, the title of an academic article offers a powerful first impression. Is the title dry, technical, straightforward? Most likely, the author’s main goal is to transmit research data as efficiently as possible. Does the title contain opaque disciplinary jargon? Perhaps the author unconsciously hopes to impress us, whether by appealing to a shared expertise (“You and I are members of an exclusive club”) or by reminding us of our ignorance (“If you can’t even understand my title, don’t bother reading any further”). Is the title amusing, intriguing, provocative? Here is an author who is working hard to catch our gaze, engage our interest, and draw us in. In many disciplines, however, such a move goes against the academic grain and even contains a significant element of risk: a “catchy” title might well be regarded by colleagues as frivolous and unscholarly.

Several years ago, I attended a higher education research conference at which a presentation titled “Evaluating the E-learning Guidelines Implementation Project: Formative and Process Evaluations” was offered at the same time as one called “‘Throwing a Sheep’ at Marshall McLuhan.” Guess which session drew the bigger audience? “Throwing a sheep” is a method of getting someone’s attention on the popular social-networking Web site Facebook; Marshall McLuhan is the educator and media theorist who

THINGS TO TRY

- What first impression do you want to make on your chosen audience? Remember, your title announces your intention to be serious, humorous, detailed, expansive, technical, or accessible—possibly several of those things at once. Double-check that your title matches your intention.
- Take a look at the publication list on your curriculum vitae. How many of your past titles contain colons? In each case, can you clearly articulate your reason for needing both a title and a subtitle?
- If you use colons frequently, try crafting a colon-free title. As an extra challenge, see if you can come up with a colon-free title that is both engaging and informative.
- If you seldom or never use colons, or if your titles are informative but not engaging, try out the “catchy: descriptive” trick. First, formulate a snappy but appropriate title (for example, “Snakes on a Plane”) to go with your not-so-snappy descriptive subtitle (“Aggressive Serpentine Behavior in a Restrictive Aeronautical Environment”). Next, ask yourself whether your title would still make sense without the subtitle. In some situations—for instance, a disciplinary conference or a special issue of a journal, where the context may supply all the extra information that is needed—you might find you can get away with just “Snakes on a Plane” after all.
- Identify some typical titles in your discipline and analyze their grammatical structure: for example, “The Development of Efficacy in Teams: A Multilevel and Longitudinal Perspective” becomes “*The Abstract Noun of Abstract Noun in Plural Collective Noun: An Adjective and Adjective Abstract Noun*.” Now see if you can come up with a title that does *not* use those predictable structures.
- For inspiration, find an engaging title from a discipline other than your own and mimic its structure. No one in your discipline need ever know.

- A few more tricks for constructing an engaging (or at least better-than-boring) title:
 - Make sure your title contains no more than one or two abstract or collective nouns. (Many academic titles contain seven, eight, or more!) Abstract nouns (*analysis, structure, development, education*) and collective nouns (*students, teachers, patients, subjects*) have a generic, lulling quality, particularly when they occur in journals where the same noun is used frequently, as in a criminology journal where most of the titles contain the nouns *crime* and *criminology*.
 - Avoid predictable “academic verbs,” especially in participle form: for example, *preparing, promoting, enforcing* (law); *engaging, applying, improving* (higher education); *rethinking, reopening, overcoming* (history); *predicting, relating, linking* (evolutionary biology).
 - Include one or two words that you would not expect to find in any other title in the same journal. Concrete nouns (*piano, guppy, path*) and vivid verbs (*ban, mutilate, gestate*) are particularly effective. Proper nouns (*Wagner, London, Phasianus colchicus*) can also help individualize your title and ground your research in a specific time and place.

Foucault's own writings.⁹ When literary critic Peter Brooks imports the Russian formalist terms *fabula* and *sjuzet* into his book *Reading for the Plot*, he deftly glosses both terms and explains how they contribute to a deeper understanding of stories and plots.¹⁰ When philosopher Jacques Derrida coins a new word, *différance*, to signify semantic differences that lead to an endless deferral of meaning, he explains at length the thinking behind his neologism.¹¹ These authors hand their readers complex tools—but always with instructions attached.

Academics turn to jargon for a wide variety of reasons: to display their erudition, to signal membership in a disciplinary community, to demonstrate their mastery of complex concepts, to cut briskly into an ongoing scholarly conversation, to push knowledge in new directions, to challenge readers' thinking, to convey ideas and facts efficiently, and to play around with language. Many of these motivations align well with the ideals of stylish academic writing. Wherever jargon shows its shiny face, however, the demon of academic hubris inevitably lurks in the shadows nearby. Academics who are committed to using language effectively and ethically—as a tool for communication, not as an emblem of power—need first of all to acknowledge the seductive power of jargon to bamboozle, obfuscate, and impress.

THINGS TO TRY

- If you suspect that you suffer from jargonitis, start by measuring the scope of your addiction. Print out a sample of your academic writing and highlight *every word* that would not be immediately comprehensible to a reader from outside your own discipline. (Alternatively, you can ask such a reader to do the highlighting for you.) Do you use jargon more than once per page, per paragraph, per sentence?
- Next, ask yourself some hard questions about your motivations. Do you employ jargon to:

- impress other people?
- signal your membership in a disciplinary community?
- demonstrate your mastery of complex ideas?
- enter an academic conversation that is already under way?
- play with language and ideas?
- create new knowledge?
- challenge your readers' thinking?
- communicate succinctly with colleagues?

Retain only those jargon words that clearly serve your priorities and values.

- For every piece of jargon that you decide to keep, make sure you give your readers a secure handhold: a definition, some background information, a contextualizing word or phrase. By the time you have clarified your usage, you might even find that you can let go of the word itself.

Compare the above examples with the following abstract, which appeared in a leading higher education research journal:

Policy in higher education suggests that curriculum should be more responsive to economist arguments than was the case in the past. Although some guidance has been given to how to develop more work-integrated curricula, little attention has been given to interactions in meetings between workplace and academic representatives in which issues of curriculum development are discussed. As such there appears to be a gap in current curriculum theory. The author suggests that such interactions may be fruitfully examined using concepts derived from studies in the sociology of science and organizational dynamics. Such analyses may contribute to understanding what conditions enable productive interactions, which may be the development of hybrid objects and languages which speak to both groupings.

The article addresses a topic that could presumably be of interest to academics from many different disciplines: how can faculty, especially those in professionally oriented fields, engage in more productive conversations about course and curriculum design with the people who will eventually hire their students? The author, however, makes no attempt to invite such readers to the table. The abstract is dry, impersonal, wordy, and vague, filled with agency-free claims ("some guidance has been given"—by whom?), hedging maneuvers ("appears to be," "may be," "may contribute"), and syntactically fuzzy sentences ("Such analyses may contribute to understanding what conditions enable productive interactions, which may be the development of hybrid objects and languages which speak to both groupings"—the first *which* has no clear referent, and the second *which* should be *that*). Aside from "the author," no human beings appear anywhere in the abstract, unless we count the shadowy "workplace and academic representatives" whose interactions "*may* be fruitfully examined"—but *will* they be examined here, or will the article merely circle around them, as the abstract does? Rather than rendering complex ideas clear and comprehensible, the author

has taken a rather simple idea—sociological concepts can teach us how to run better meetings—and twisted it into a discursive pretzel.

The purpose of a scholarly abstract is not merely to *summarize* an article's content but to *persuade* one's discipline-based peers that the research is important and the article is therefore worth reading.³ In the higher education abstract quoted above, the author makes plenty of insider moves, including the obligatory claim that his article, like a thumb artfully inserted into a leaky dike, will plug a "gap" in the existing scholarship. Yet the abstract lacks persuasive power—not in spite of, but precisely because of, its adherence to disciplinary conventions. The art of persuasion necessarily involves human conversation; indeed, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines persuasion as "the addressing of arguments or appeals to a *person* [my emphasis] in order to induce cooperation, submission, or agreement."⁴ Authors who adopt an impersonal, "academic" tone are neglecting one of the most powerfully persuasive tools at the stylish writer's disposal: the human touch.

In the social sciences and humanities, researchers can draw readers into their argument by giving a voice and presence to human subjects: for example, the performance artists discussed by Banes or the students involved in Carnahan and McFarland's psychology experiments. Scientists who study nonhuman subjects can make their research accessible in other ways, such as by using first-person pronouns ("*we* approached") to signal the researchers' presence in the work:

All birds dropping hard-bodied prey face a trade-off. It is likely that the impact damage to the prey increases as drop height increases, as this will influence the speed at which the prey hits the ground, and so the energy it experiences on impact. However, the time and energy costs of flight also increase with increasing drop heights. Furthermore, if a bird drops a prey item more than once, it incurs additional time and energy costs while landing, retrieving the prey item and

taking off again. The main aim of this paper, therefore, is to examine how this trade-off influences decisions taken by birds dropping hard-bodied prey. We approached this problem in two ways.⁵

Note the many ways in which the authors of this article—titled “The Economics of Getting High: Decisions Made by Common Gulls Dropping their Cockles to Open Them”—engage and inform their readers. They begin by clearly defining the problem that motivates their research: “All birds dropping hard-bodied prey face a trade-off.” In verb-driven sentences filled with concrete nouns, they vividly describe the gulls in flight and the hard-bodied objects they drop from on high. If we are persuaded to read beyond the abstract, it is because the authors have conveyed not only the arc of their research but its essence. Rather than taking elementary concepts and spinning them out in complex language, they have achieved the stylish writer’s nirvana: “complex ideas clearly expressed.”

The following grid, adapted from one developed by higher education researcher David Green, offers one way to visualize the various registers into which academic writing typically falls:⁶

	Simple Ideas	Complex Ideas
Clear Language		
Difficult Language		

While some academics may stray between two or more sections of the grid—for example, writing a simple and clear abstract followed by a complex and difficult opening paragraph—the stylish academic writers quoted throughout this book mostly gravitate toward the top right-hand corner: complex ideas communicated in clear, comprehensible language. There is, of course, a

SPOTLIGHT ON STYLE

STEPHEN K. DONOVAN

The libraries of universities and other research institutions are home to an abundance of academic journals, published in multifarious sizes, thicknesses, languages, and formats, with covers varying from black to psychedelically patterned and covering every subject imaginable. More uniformity of format would favour the author, who would no longer have to tailor style to wherever the latest contribution is being submitted, but the current diversity of formats is aimed at the reader. Long may it so remain.

Paleontologist Stephen K. Donovan—whose publications include books with titles like *Jamaican Rock Stars, 1823–1971: The Geologists Who Explored Jamaica*—brings both a scientist’s clarity and a stylish writer’s panache to this compact yet engaging three-sentence abstract, the teaser for an article in the *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*.

In the first sentence, Donovan teleports us into the physical space of the university library and invites us to picture what we will find there: academic journals of various sizes and thicknesses, with covers ranging from “black to psychedelically patterned.” Despite its concrete imagery, however, this opening line also conveys an abstract argument: the diversity of the journal covers, Donovan implies, mirrors the diversity of their intellectual coverage.

In the second sentence, Donovan sets up the conflict that his article will explore at length: uniformity of format favors the author, he argues, while diversity of format favors the reader. He ends by forthrightly declaring his own allegiance to the diversity camp. A less-confident author might have spun out a laborious, jargon-studded thesis sentence: “This article analyzes the conflicting claims of both the writerly and readerly paradigms, concluding that the readerly benefits of material and epistemological variety should be given precedence over the writerly convenience afforded by stylistic standardization.” Instead, Donovan ends by summing up in just five words his argument that diversity should be defended: “Long may it so remain.”

place in the world for simple ideas expressed in simple language—for example, in a primary school textbook or a government-issued voting manual—and academics in fields such as literary studies or philosophy may argue for the educational and intellectual value of complex ideas expressed in rich, challenging language. But can anyone justify expressing simple ideas in difficult language? Green's grid offers a useful starting point not only for evaluating other academics' writing, but for honestly assessing one's own.

Condensing a complex research project into a pithy abstract is no simple task, to be sure. An even greater challenge is to boil that abstract down into an "elevator statement": the seemingly off-the-cuff but in fact brilliantly polished single-sentence summary that you offer to the colleague who turns to you in the elevator at an academic conference and asks, "So what are you working on?" You have just a minute or two to respond: the time that it takes for the elevator to arrive at its destination floor. Stylish academic writers often offer an elevator statement of sorts at the start of their scholarly books or articles, as a means of engaging their readers' attention and inspiring them to continue reading:

This is a book about plots and plotting, about how stories come to be ordered in significant form, and also about our desire and need for such orderings.⁷

This book is about the impact of trauma both on individuals and on entire cultures or nations, and about the need to share and "translate" such traumatic impact.⁸

As I shall try to show in this book, human language has a complexity and creativity that is unmatched by any other form of animal communication, and probably depends on completely different principles.⁹

Note that each of these opening statements describes not only the book's subject but its argument, not only its *what* but its *why*. Literary scholar Peter Brooks promises to explain *why* we

SPOTLIGHT ON STYLE

JONATHAN CULLER

I began work on this topic for a conference at the University of London on style in philosophy. The organizers suggested that I address the question of what it is for a piece of philosophy to be badly written—no doubt thinking that as a reader of French philosophers, I would have special expertise on this question or at least a lot of relevant experience. In fact, I was happy to take up this question because I have been intrigued of late by claims made in the world of Anglophone philosophy about bad writing. The journal *Philosophy and Literature* . . . had for several years announced a Bad Writing Award, and since this award had recently been conferred on a sentence by Judith Butler that appeared in *Diacritics* during my stint as editor, I had a personal interest in the concept of bad writing in philosophy and the criteria of selection.

Literary scholar Jonathan Culler is a study in paradox: an apologist for "difficult" writing who himself is a master of determinedly lucid prose. Here, in the opening paragraph of an essay titled "Bad Writing and Good Philosophy," he engages his readers' attention and sympathy by establishing both his personal interest and his professional stake in the topic of "bad writing." Next, he provides an extended gloss of cultural theorist Judith Butler's prizewinning ninety-three-word sentence, which contains twenty-eight abstract nouns but no concrete language whatsoever, aside from invocations of "structure" and "structural totalities." Culler generously concludes that Butler's sentence is in fact "quite pedagogic writing. Key points are rephrased and repeated so that if you don't catch on the first time around, you have another chance when they come by again." In Culler's evocative phrasing, Butler's disorienting syntax becomes a spinning merry-go-round with a gold ring held out to the persistent reader.

tell stories; cultural theorist E. Ann Kaplan investigates *why* we feel compelled to share and transform traumatic events through literature and art; and psycholinguist Michael Corballis explores *why* human language has evolved to be so complex and creative.

The secret ingredient of an effective elevator statement—or, for that matter, of a persuasive abstract, article, or book—is a strong *thesis* or *argument*. Both words are frequently heard in the freshman composition classroom but seldom in the research laboratory. However, identical principles apply in both venues: writers who put forth a bold, defensible claim are much more likely to generate engaging, persuasive prose than those who offer bland statements of fact with which no one could possibly disagree. In the sciences and social sciences, a strong thesis follows naturally from a compelling *research question*, as when a group of behavioralists ask how seagulls solve the height versus energy problem when dropping cockles onto the rocks below. Some academics may resist the notion that a complex argument can always be reduced to a single sentence; with poet and literary critic Charles Bernstein, they might even decry the “epistemological positivism” of an academic environment in which “one’s work is supposed to be easily summed up, definable, packaged, polished, wrinkles and contradictions eliminated, digressions booted” and in which “dissertations must not violate stylistic norms because that might jeopardize our young scholar’s future.”¹⁰ Yet it is worth noting that even Bernstein’s polemic against academic conformism (which contains plenty of wrinkles, contradictions, and digressions of its own) can be summed up, elevator-style, in a persuasive thesis statement: Prevailing stylistic conventions, Bernstein argues, inhibit scholarly inquiry and stifle innovation.

For stylish academic writers, clarity and complexity are bedfellows, not rivals. Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, who for more than a decade held the post of Professor for Public

Understanding of Science at Oxford University, offers the following advice to scientists:

Do not talk down. Try to inspire everybody with the poetry of science and make your explanations as easy as honesty allows, but at the same time do not neglect the difficult. Put extra effort into explaining to those readers prepared to put matching effort into understanding.¹¹

Dawkins’s formula can be adapted by academics in any field. Researchers who master the art of abstraction—the ability to express complex ideas clearly—will enlighten and persuade not only nonspecialist audiences but their discipline-based colleagues well.

THINGS TO TRY

- Use David Green’s grid to rate examples of academic writing that you particularly admire or dislike. (For “clear” and “difficult,” you can substitute “easy to read” and “hard to read,” “lucid” and “opaque,” “illuminating” and “bewildering,” or any other oppositional adjectives that you find helpful). Most likely you will find that the best writers in your field inhabit the “complex but clear” box, whereas those whose work you find hard to digest employ convoluted language either to express complex concepts or, more problematically, to obfuscate simple ideas. Be honest with yourself: Which grid does your own work fall into?
- Answer the following questions in simple, conversational language, avoiding disciplinary jargon:
 - What is the *main point* of your article, dissertation, or book? (Why is it important, whether to you or to anyone else?)
 - Who is your intended *audience*?
 - What *research question(s)* do you aim to answer?

- What new *contribution(s)* does your research make to theory? to practice?
- What is your overarching *thesis* or *argument*?
- What *evidence* do you offer in support?

Keep your responses close at hand as you construct your summary statement, which should answer most if not all of these questions, especially the first one (“What’s the point?”).

- Make sure your abstract contains the following:
 - Clear, well-structured sentences in which nouns and their modifying verbs sit close together.
 - At least a few concrete nouns and/or verbs.
 - A touch of humanity: for example, first-person pronouns (*I/we*), real people (research subjects, other researchers), or language that grounds abstract ideas in human experience.
 - A contestable thesis or argument.
- Show your abstract to a few trusted friends or colleagues, both from within and outside your discipline. Ask them to give you candid answers to the following questions:
 - Do you understand what my research is about and why it’s important?
 - Does my abstract make you want to keep reading?

14

CHAPTER

THE CREATIVE TOUCH

Take a gamine teenager, dress her in a sheath frock and elbow-length gloves, thrust a cigarette holder into her hand, and still she will not look like Audrey Hepburn. Some elements of stylishness defy definition or imitation, no matter how hard we try. As novelist Willa Cather puts it:

The qualities of a first-rate writer cannot be defined, but only experienced. It is just the thing in him which escapes analysis that makes him first-rate. One can catalogue all the qualities that he shares with other writers, but the thing that is his very own, his timbre, this cannot be defined any more than the quality of a beautiful speaking voice can be.¹

Nonetheless, this chapter investigates that elusive *je ne sais quoi* of stylish writing: the cluster of special qualities that make certain writers stand out from the crowd. These include passion, commitment, pleasure, playfulness, humor, elegance, lyricism, originality, imagination, creativity, and “undisciplined thinking”—attributes that are easy enough to recognize (perhaps because they occur so rarely in academic writing) but difficult to define or emulate.

Passion and commitment are stylistic qualities that academic writers often praise in other people’s writing but suppress in their own. Most academics would describe themselves as passionate, committed researchers; they love what they do and undertake