
50 Steps to Improving Your Academic Writing

Review by Rachel Ishiguro

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Mastering academic writing can be a daunting task for a novice. *50 Steps to Improving Your Academic Writing* breaks the process down into fifty manageable lessons, which can be used for self-study or integrated into an English for Academic Purposes course. The book is designed for students at the Upper-Intermediate level and above who are new to writing academic texts. Each lesson is designed to take about an hour of self-study, but this timing could vary considerably if adapted for classroom use.

The fifty lessons are very comprehensive. Grouped into ten units, they cover topics ranging from effective research and time management skills to text organization and grammar. They take students from the basics (starting with the difference between oral and written English) through the entire writing process. Included are many essential skills which students find particularly challenging, such as critical thinking and strengthening an argument. Students can work through the text in order or choose the material most relevant to their needs.

With just four pages of material per step, the lessons are accessible. The text is visually appealing, with a clear layout. In each lesson, students are encouraged to reflect on previous knowledge and analyze brief writing samples before reading the explanations and doing application, personalization, and extension activities. An answer key is included, and there is also a glossary with clear references to sections of the text. The appendices include materials for the activities, as well as further explanations for some lessons.

There are a few minor issues which students and teachers should be aware of when choosing to work with this text. Although there is some sample writing in the appendices, students who prefer learning through examples may find a shortage of such material in this book due to its pared down format. Teachers using it in class may want to supplement. In addition, although it is ostensibly for self-study, students who struggle with reflection and practical application of concepts may do better with a teacher's guidance. Finally, the book is published in the UK; the

book is broadly applicable across international contexts, but there are references to the British university system throughout.

Overall, this is an excellent supplemental text for a course in English for Academic Purposes and a useful self-study text for students who learn well from reflection. Its thorough examination of the steps to successful academic writing makes it a helpful resource for teachers and students alike.

About the Reviewer:

Rachel Ishiguro holds an MA in International Education from the SIT Graduate Institute. She currently teaches in the ESL Department at Grossmont College in San Diego, California. She has also taught in a variety of ESL and EFL environments in the US, Canada, and Japan. Her recent focus areas include academic writing, and the development and assessment of Cultural Student Learning Objectives.