

APSU Writing Center

Slang Expressions, Colloquialisms, and Clichés

Avoiding Informal Language in Academic Writing

- Academic writing requires a formal and professional tone. To maintain clarity and credibility, students should avoid slang, colloquialisms, and clichés.

Slang

- Slang consists of informal words and expressions that are common in casual conversation but inappropriate in academic writing. These phrases often change over time and may not be universally understood.
- Avoid using casual or non-standard words and contractions: (wanna, gonna, y'all, till, I'm blue, etc.)
 - **Examples & Formal Alternatives:**
 - Bounce ideas → Exchange thoughts or brainstorm
 - Level up → Improve skills or status
 - Low-key → Somewhat or subtly

Colloquialisms

- Colloquial language reflects everyday speech and informal expressions. In academic writing, it is important to maintain a more analytical and professional tone.
- Dictionaries often display colloquial words and phrases with the abbreviation *colloq.* as an identifier.
- Avoid conversational expressions and contractions: (frankly, got, can't, don't)
 - **Examples & Formal Alternatives:**
 - "Let's wrap this up." → Conclude the discussion.
 - "That checks out." → That is verified or logically sound.
 - "Pulling an all-nighter." → Staying up all night to study or work.
 - "Hit the books." → Study diligently.

Clichés

- Clichés are overused phrases that weaken the impact of writing by making it feel generic rather than insightful.
 - **Examples & Formal Alternatives:**
 - "Think outside the box." → Consider unconventional solutions.
 - "Actions speak louder than words." → Demonstrated behavior is more meaningful than promises.
 - "At the end of the day." → Ultimately or in conclusion.
 - "Only time will tell." → The results will become clear over time.
 - "Don't judge a book by its cover." → Assess based on substance, not appearance.



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References

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