

Improving clarity and style

1. Be clear

Your marker needs to be able to understand what you have written. You should write in an academic style (objective, formal), but avoid using big, fancy words to sound smart and make your writing difficult to understand.

2. Be consistent with your terminology

Switching between synonyms of keywords is confusing for your reader. Stick to one: e.g. Myocardial infarction - heart attack - coronary thrombosis - acute coronary syndrome.

3. Be concise

Waffle phrases dilute your argument. Add more evidence and strengthen your argument rather than just filling up your word count with empty words.

4. Avoid weak openers

Put the important information upfront, e.g. **There is** a relationship between a and b under x circumstances... → A relationship exists between A and B under x circumstances.

5. Remove redundancy

Look out for unnecessary modifiers e.g. round in shape → round; blue in colour → blue; extremely hot → hot.

6. Use affirmatives rather than negatives.

E.g. not sufficient → insufficient; not suitable → unsuitable.

7. Excessive hedging

We use hedging words when we are uncertain or the research is inconclusive e.g. suggests, possibly, probably, etc. It's ok to use hedging words, but try to avoid using more than one in a sentence. Excessive hedging weakens your argument.

8. Vary your sentence length.

Combine short, choppy sentences and break up overly long sentences.