

GAC008 Academic English II: Reading and Writing Skills

GAC Academic English

What this module is, and how it is marked

This GAC008-aligned guide develops reading and researched writing beyond the paragraph: recognising text types, evaluating arguments, joining ideas accurately and citing sources. Follow the centre's current assessment brief for required tasks, dates, weights, authorship rules and **referencing style** . This guide does not set official marks or grade guarantees.

Information literacy includes selecting relevant material, evaluating what it supports and keeping a traceable research record. A **citation** identifies the source of borrowed material; a **reference list** gives its full details. Good ideas do not remove the obligation to credit borrowed words or ideas. Missing citations must be repaired against the actual sources, not guessed afterwards.

People and society: features of academic text types

Academic writing has useful **features** : precise terms, evidence, appropriate certainty and clear reasoning. An impersonal voice may suit a task, but some disciplines permit first person. Claims may appear before their supporting evidence. Follow the genre and brief rather than treating one sentence order or voice as a universal law.

Nominalisation turns a process into a noun: "We investigated the samples" becomes "the investigation of the samples". The latter is a noun phrase, not a complete sentence. Unpack dense prose by finding who did what; nominalisation is one source of density, not the only one.

Identify the **genre** : a report often organises findings into sections; an essay develops an argument; a case study examines one case in depth; a review evaluates existing work. Check the actual assignment's requirements rather than assuming one fixed format for each genre.

Places where people live and work: reading for argument

A **claim** is an assertion; **evidence** is what supports it. Identify the author's **stance** , the strength of the evidence and any **counter-argument** . A concession acknowledges a limitation or opposing point. A hedge limits certainty. The absence of a concession alone does not establish that a text is dishonest or lacks analysis.

Worked example (authored practice). "Although early trials were small, three subsequent studies found the same effect, which suggests the result is robust." Claim: the result is robust. Reported evidence: three later studies. Concession: the early

trials were small. Hedge: “suggests”. The sentence reports evidence; it does not give enough study detail to verify the claim independently. Ask about methods, samples and what effect was actually measured.

Practice. In “Although the sample was small, two later surveys found a similar pattern, which may support the conclusion”, identify the concession, reported evidence and hedge. Explain why “may” does not erase the need to inspect those surveys.

Doing business: vocabulary and idiom

Decode unknown vocabulary and idiom from context, word parts and grammar. Treat clues as hypotheses and check the meaning in the whole sentence. **Collocation**

concerns usual word partners: conduct research, draw a conclusion, raise a question. “Give a question” can be appropriate when a teacher gives students a question; it does not mean the same as raising an issue. Judge a phrase in its intended context.

Record a term with a sentence, its meaning and useful partners. “The students demonstrated the process to the class” records a verb pattern. “The students gave a demonstration” is also possible. A translation can help, but does not by itself supply the grammar or register.

Human health: sentences and cohesion

Use **complex sentences** to express relationships accurately. In “Although the first trial was small, later studies found a similar effect”, the subordinate clause concedes a limit while the main clause reports the later evidence. Complexity alone does not improve accuracy.

Cohesive devices include reference, substitution, ellipsis and connectives:

- Reference: “The trial was small. It involved one class.” Here “it” refers to the trial.
- Substitution: “The first trial failed; the second one succeeded.” “One” replaces “trial”.
- Ellipsis: “One group used notes; the other did not [use notes].” The omitted words are recoverable.
- Connective: “The trial was small, so the conclusion needs caution.” Explain the actual link.

Worked repair. “The sample was small. Moreover, the result may not generalise” names an addition but leaves the reasoning implicit. “Because the sample was small, the result may not generalise” states the proposed reason. Check whether the sampling method also matters. Many connectives do not automatically make a paragraph incoherent; inaccurate relationships do.

Human progress: research and synthesis

Synthesis combines sources through agreement, difference, qualification or a gap to develop your argument. Sources must remain identifiable. Several sentences with separate citations can synthesise; one sentence with many citations can still be unsupported. Organise around the question or idea and explain how the sources relate.

■ Supplied fictional practice source pack

These extracts and references are written for teaching, not actual published studies. Use them only in this exercise; do not present them as real research.

Li (2020), Shade at street sites, practice source A. “At the sites observed, shaded pavement had lower midday surface temperatures than nearby unshaded pavement.”

Chen (2021), A second set of shaded sites, practice source B. “At a different set of sites, shaded pavement also had lower midday surface temperatures. We did not measure whole-city average air temperature.”

Wang (2022), Water for planted trees, practice source C. “Some planted trees needed summer irrigation. We did not measure the total water cost or compare it with the cooling benefit.”

Worked synthesis. “Both illustrative reports describe lower midday surface temperatures at shaded sites (Li, 2020; Chen, 2021). Wang (2022) adds an irrigation requirement for some planted trees. Together they suggest that a planting proposal should consider cooling and water needs; these extracts do not establish a whole-city temperature change or an affordable water cost.”

The relationship is agreement plus a practical qualification. Citations remain traceable. Keep the distinction between surface temperature and air temperature. Do not add “exactly when cooling matters most” or a measured city-wide effect absent from the extracts.

Practice. Write two or three sentences comparing the cooling evidence with the water issue. Retain all source identities and name one question the pack cannot answer.

Man-made environmental issues: referencing and information literacy

Use the style required by the centre consistently. In an author-date exercise, “Li (2020)” points to the full Li entry above. For real work, record the actual author, date, title and required publication details while taking notes. Match in-text citations to reference entries; a bibliography may have a different scope if the brief permits further reading.

Evaluate a source for relevance, methods, evidence, authority, date where it matters, and whether it is primary or secondary. A recent primary source is not automatically strong; an older review is not automatically weak. Limit a claim to

what the material actually supports.

A **secondary citation** is needed when you know an original source through a later source. For example, if you read a 2024 review describing a 1998 study, identify the finding as reported in that review using the required style's secondary-citation form. Do not pretend you read the original. Follow the style's rule for the reference list; do not invent a direct-source entry.

Review. Name one claim, its evidence and a limit. Write a synthesis relationship with traceable citations, then check that each cited claim matches what its source actually says.

Vocabulary card meanings

referencing style: The required way of recording sources, such as author and year. Information literacy: The skill of finding, judging and using sources honestly. features: The noticeable parts that make a text or a chart recognisable. Nominalisation: Turning a verb or an adjective into a noun, such as decide into decision. genre: A type of text with its own usual shape, such as a report or a letter. stance: The writer's or speaker's attitude towards the topic. counter-argument: An argument raised against a stated claim, rather than any reply made to another person. Collocation: Words that commonly go together, such as make a decision. complex sentences: Sentences that join a main idea to a dependent idea. Cohesive devices: Links that make sentences and paragraphs hold together. secondary citation: Naming a source that you found quoted inside another source.