

GAC008 Academic English II: Reading and Writing Skills

GAC Academic English

What this module is, and how it is marked

GAC008 is Academic English II, reading and writing. Where GAC002 built the paragraph, this module builds the researched text: reading critically, avoiding plagiarism in practice, and citing sources properly.

Assessment is written and continuous, and the final piece is usually a short researched essay with a **reference list** rather than a personal one.

- **Information literacy** 信息素养 is a named outcome here: selecting appropriate research material and referencing it accurately.
- △ Referencing is now marked directly, not merely expected. An essay with good ideas and no citations loses marks it cannot recover.

People and society: features of academic text types

- Academic writing has recognisable **features** 特征: an impersonal voice, hedged claims, defined terms, evidence before conclusion.
- **Nominalisation** 名词化 turns a process into a noun — *we investigated* becomes *the investigation* — which is why academic prose feels dense.
- Identify the **genre** 体裁 before you write: a report, an essay, a case study and a review each have a different shape and a different reader.

Places where people live and work: reading for argument

- Distinguish a **claim** 论断 from the **evidence** that supports it. Most weak reading treats both as facts.
- Find the author's **stance** 立场: what do they want you to accept, and where do they hedge?
- Mark the **counter-argument** 反驳 if there is one. A text that never concedes anything is usually persuasion rather than analysis.

Worked example. "Although early trials were small, three subsequent studies found the same effect, which suggests the result is robust."

Claim: the result is robust. Evidence: three studies replicating. Concession: the early trials were small. Hedge: *suggests*.

Reading a sentence this way — four labels, one sentence — is the skill the unit is built on.

Doing business: vocabulary and idiom

- **Decode unknown vocabulary and idiom** from context, word parts and grammar, as in GAC002 but now in denser text.
- **Collocation** 词语搭配 matters as much as meaning: you *conduct* research, *draw* a conclusion, *raise* a question. The wrong partner word reads as non-native even when the meaning is right.
- Record new terms with a real sentence, not a translation. The sentence carries the collocation.

Human health: sentences and cohesion

- Level II expects **complex sentences** used deliberately: subordination to show which idea matters, not to sound advanced.
- **Cohesive devices** 衔接手段 join sentences: reference words, substitution, ellipsis, and connectives that fit the logic.
- △ A paragraph stuffed with *however*, *moreover* and *furthermore* is not cohesive. It is signposting relationships that are not there, and a marker notices.

Human progress: research and synthesis

- **Synthesis** combines several sources into one argument of your own.
- The test of synthesis: could a reader tell which sentence came from which source? If yes, you have summarised in sequence rather than synthesised.
- Group sources by **idea**, not by author. One paragraph per idea, citing whoever supports it.

Worked example. Two sources agree that street trees cool a city; one adds that the effect needs irrigation in dry months.

Not synthesis: "Li (2020) says trees cool cities. Chen (2021) says the same. Wang (2022) says they need water."

Synthesis: "Street trees measurably cool a city (Li, 2020; Chen, 2021), although the effect depends on irrigation in exactly the dry months when cooling matters most (Wang, 2022)."

One sentence, three sources, and a relationship between them that no single source stated.

Man-made environmental issues: referencing and information literacy

- A **citation** points to a full entry in the **reference list**. Both are marked.
- Use one **referencing style** 引用格式 consistently. Which one matters far less than consistency.
- **Evaluate** a source before citing it: authority, currency, and whether it is primary or secondary.
- △ Citing a source you have not read, because another author cited it, is a **secondary citation** 转引, and it must be labelled as one.