## Contents

About the Author	
Acknowledgements	X
Introduction: The Aims of this Book and How to Use It	1
Writing at university	1
What's in this book?	3
Basic conventions of academic writing	4
Basic grammatical concepts	4
Putting sentences together	4
Putting paragraphs together	4
Critical thinking and referencing	4
Conciseness and clarity	5
Common mistakes and how to deal with them	5
Proofreading effectively	5
Notes on the text and the conventions I follow	6
Different subjects	6
Referencing	6
1 Basic Conventions of Academic Writing	9
Using acronyms	11
Establishing objectivity	11
Referencing correctly	13
Avoiding slang/colloquial language	14
Avoiding emotive language	19
Avoiding the first person	23
Avoiding the second person	24
Avoiding contractions	26
Simplicity, clarity and conciseness	27
Further reading	31

2	Basic Grammatical Concepts	32
	Types of words	33
	Nouns, proper nouns, concrete nouns, abstract	
	nouns and plurals	33
	Verbs	38
	Pronouns	43
	Articles	48
	Modifiers (describing words and phrases)	51
	Adjectives	55
	Adverbs	57
	Conjunctions	58
	Prepositions	59
	Summing up	61
	Further reading	61
3	Putting Sentences Together	62
	Subject-verb-object	63
	Active and passive	66
	Removing the subject of the sentence	68
	Emphasising the object of the sentence	69
	Varying your sentence structure	70
	Tense	71
	The most common tenses in academic writing	72
	Avoiding continuous tenses where possible	74
	Hedging	76
	Punctuation	78
	. The full stop	78
	? The question mark	79
	! The exclamation mark	81
	, The comma	81
	: The colon	82
	; The semi-colon	82
	() Brackets/parentheses	83
	[] Square brackets	84
	- The hyphen/dash	84
	'The apostrophe	84
	Further reading	88
4	Putting Paragraphs Together	89
	Signposting language	91
	Topic sentences and staying on topic	96
	What, why, when	105
	Further reading	106

		Contents
5	Critical Thinking and Referencing	107
	Referencing	108
	The different referencing systems/styles	111
	Harvard referencing/the author-date system	113
	Vancouver or numeric referencing	114
	Footnotes	114
	Modern Language Association (MLA) and American	
	Psychological Association (APA) referencing	116
	OSCOLA	116
	The 'p' word: plagiarism	116
	Critical thinking	117
	More complex referencing techniques	122
	Ellipsis	122
	Square brackets	123
	Summing up	124
	Further reading	125
6	Conciseness and Clarity	126
	Watch those word counts	128
	Redundant phrases	129
	Other redundant phrases	130
	Avoiding expletive constructions	133
	Using simple words instead of complex ones	134
	Simple sentences	136
	Does this belong here?	138
	Meaningless modifiers: 'very'/'really'/'extremely'/'severely'	4.40
	(and so on)	140
	The future tense/unnecessary signposting	142
	Avoiding repetition	143
	The active and passive voices	145
	Changing negatives to affirmatives	148
	Removing excessive 'nominalisation'	148
	Using the word 'this'	152
	More examples	153

Common Mistakes and How to Deal With Them

153

154

154

155

156

158

159

160

Example one

Example two

Example three

Example four

Example five

Mixed constructions

Further reading

7

## Academic Writing and Grammar for Students

Index

	Dangling modifiers	163
	Using 'It has been said that'	167
	Using 'I think/I feel'	169
	Avoiding the word 'interesting'	172
	Poor presentation of tables and graphs	174
	Comma splicing	176
	Using 'of' instead of 'have'	181
	The word 'of' and possessive replacements	183
	'Putting things off'	185
8	Proofreading Effectively	188
	Distance yourself from your work	189
	Proofread more than once	190
	Leave more time than you think you need	191
	Read your work aloud	191
	Read from your last sentence back	191
	Use technology but don't rely on it	192
	Be ruthless	193
	Proofread for you	195
	And keep things in context	197
	Do your own proofreading	198

199