Academic Writing Worksheet

1. Getting Started
Write for 1 minute on the subject: “The most difficult aspect of academic writing”
2. What is academic writing?

Read the following article from the Irish version of the Sun newspaper.

Pongy foods break-through in fat war
Author: AOIFE BANNON

TUBBY calorie-watchers may be able to shed the pounds quicker if they stick to food that's high on WHIFF.

Sense scientists have found that the more pungent a plate of chow, the sooner we feel full.

And the discovery has raised hopes that ODOUR ADDITIVES in our dinners could help to win the war against obesity.

Dutch boffins have already shown that the texture of food affects how much people consume, with "thick" tasting spuds a top hunger-beater.

They tested their latest theory by feeding volunteers custard slices while pumping out different smells - and found bite-sizes got smaller when the tasty dessert was served with a waft of fish, cheese or garlic.

The study, by Food & Biobased Research at Wageningen University, showed that downing modest mouthfuls actually satisfies the appetite quicker.

It's also claimed stronger aromas might fool the brain into thinking the food is richer and higher in calories. By tinkering with smells in our food, report author Dr Rene de Wijk reckons it should be possible to cut portion sizes down by as much as a tenth.

He said: "It could be that with a more intense odour we take instinctively smaller bites to avoid strong sensations.

"Our concentrations were very low, hardly detectable, so the effect is quite subtle."

Consider what would need to change to make it a piece of academic writing.

Which language is unsuitable?

What is missing?
Follow-up Activity
Read the abstract for the study from the journal article on which this newspaper report was based (see http://www.flavourjournal.com/content/1/1/3).

Is there anything about the abstract that surprises you?

3. Writing concisely
Improve the following text:

The interviews were carried out in the library, which provided a central meeting place, and is commonly known to all students, so this suggested they could find it easily. The researchers disputed how to recruit people and after long arguments, settled on using email and a poster in the Students’ Union. On the first afternoon, 3 students attended followed by 2 students the next day. One of the students kept receiving calls from his friends on his mobile, and this disturbed his interview as he kept leaving the room to answer the phone.

(This activity was adapted from www.learnhigher.ac.uk)