# **Academic Reading – Week 2 – Recognizing academic texts**

**Part 1 – Presentation Reading Skills for Academic Study**

**Part 2**

Text from Week 1**:**  <https://time.com/7295195/ai-chatgpt-google-learning-school/>

Compare your answers. What is a topic sentence?

Is this text academic? Why, why not?

Original paper:

Abstract: <https://www.media.mit.edu/publications/your-brain-on-chatgpt/?utm_source=chatgpt.com>

Draft: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2506.08872>

| **Feature** | **Time.com article** | **Academic article** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Source type** | Popular media (magazine / news website) | Peer-reviewed journal or conference paper |
| **Audience** | General readers | Scholars, students, researchers |
| **Purpose** | To *inform* or *summarize* research findings in accessible language | To *present* original research and contribute to academic debate |
| **Tone & style** | Engaging, simplified, sometimes uses quotes | Formal, impersonal, dense with technical terminology |
| **Evidence** | Refers to a study but doesn’t present full data or references | Includes detailed methodology, data, and citations |
| **Structure** | Journalistic (headline, lead, quotes, conclusion) | Academic (abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, references) |

**However:**

* Reputable news sources **can be used as secondary or contextual material** in academic writing (e.g., to illustrate a case, show recent developments, or provide examples).
* For *academic reading practice*, newspaper texts can serve as a **bridge** to more academic writing — useful for vocabulary building, critical reading, and summarising practice.

**Compare extracts from the two text types: What differences can you see? Underline 3.**

**Sample 1**

Does ChatGPT harm critical thinking abilities? A new study from researchers at MIT’s Media Lab has returned some concerning results.

The study divided 54 subjects—18 to 39 year-olds from the Boston area—into three groups, and asked them to write several SAT essays using OpenAI’s ChatGPT, Google’s search engine, and nothing at all, respectively. Researchers used an EEG to record the writers’ brain activity across 32 regions, and found that of the three groups, ChatGPT users had the lowest brain engagement and “consistently underperformed at neural, linguistic, and behavioral levels.” Over the course of several months, ChatGPT users got lazier with each subsequent essay, often resorting to copy-and-paste by the end of the study.

The paper suggests that the usage of LLMs could actually harm learning, especially for younger users. The paper has not yet been peer reviewed, and its sample size is relatively small. But its paper’s main author Nataliya Kosmyna felt it was important to release the findings to elevate concerns that as society increasingly relies upon LLMs for immediate convenience, long-term brain development may be sacrificed in the process.

“What really motivated me to put it out now before waiting for a full peer review is that I am afraid in 6-8 months, there will be some policymaker who decides, ‘let’s do GPT kindergarten.’ I think that would be absolutely bad and detrimental,” she says. “Developing brains are at the highest risk.”

**Sample 2**

This study explores the neural and behavioral consequences of LLM-assisted essay writing. Participants were divided into three groups: LLM, Search Engine, and Brain-only (no tools). Each completed three sessions under the same condition. In a fourth session, LLM users were reassigned to Brain-only group (LLM-to-Brain), and Brain-only users were reassigned to LLM condition (Brain-to-LLM). A total of 54 participants took part in Sessions 1-3, with 18 completing session 4. We used electroencephalography (EEG) to assess cognitive load during essay writing, and analyzed essays using NLP, as well as scoring essays with the help from human teachers and an AI judge. Across groups, NERs, n-gram patterns, and topic ontology showed within-group homogeneity. EEG revealed significant differences in brain connectivity: Brain-only participants exhibited the strongest, most distributed networks; Search Engine users showed moderate engagement; and LLM users displayed the weakest connectivity. Cognitive activity scaled down in relation to external tool use. In session 4, LLM-to-Brain participants showed reduced alpha and beta connectivity, indicating under-engagement. Brain-to-LLM users exhibited higher memory recall and activation of occipito-parietal and prefrontal areas, similar to Search Engine users. Self-reported ownership of essays was the lowest in the LLM group and the highest in the Brain-only group. LLM users also struggled to accurately quote their own work. While LLMs offer immediate convenience, our findings highlight potential cognitive costs. Over four months, LLM users consistently underperformed at neural, linguistic, and behavioral levels. These results raise concerns about the long-term educational implications of LLM reliance and underscore the need for deeper inquiry into AI's role in learning.

# **Part 3 - Recognizing Academic Texts – Text Comparison Separate Worksheet**

## **Part 4 - Identification Challenge**

In pairs, decide: *Academic or not? Why?*

1. Several recent studies have indicated a strong correlation between students’ frequency of academic reading and their overall performance at university, though causality remains contested.
2. I’ve noticed that when I read more novels during the semester, I tend to relax better, which also helps me concentrate on my studies.
3. As Smith (2020) has argued, the development of intercultural competence is not merely advantageous but essential in the context of contemporary academic mobility programmes.
4. During my Erasmus stay, I kept a blog to share my daily experiences in Spain. It was informal, fun, and mostly about the people I met rather than my studies.
5. The results suggest that participants engaged in bilingual education display enhanced metalinguistic awareness and problem-solving abilities compared with monolingual peers.
6. Many learners say language apps make the process easier, but in my opinion they can’t really replace the experience of speaking face-to-face with native speakers.

**Part 5 - Types of academic texts**

<https://www.mwediting.com/types-of-academic-texts/>

**Part 6 - Where to find academic texts?**

<https://ufar.ff.cuni.cz/cs/knihovna/informacni-zdroje/>

**Part 7 – Assignment 1:**

Find a text from your field of study. Read it for gist. Make a list of 10 new words or expressions. Bring the text and your notes to class (an electronic copy is OK). Get ready for a 3 minute oral presentation of the text to a partner.

**Part 8 – Assignment 2:**

Write a short paragraph (120–150 words) comparing the two texts. Use linking phrases such as *in contrast, while, however, unlike, both texts, similarly*.
Upload your paragraph to Moodle by October 13.

**Text A – BBC News (Journalistic)**

*(approx. 200 words)*

**BBC News — “More people in cities walking or cycling to work, study finds”**

A new study by the University of Leeds has found that the number of people walking or cycling to work in major UK cities has increased by 15% in the past decade. Researchers say the change is linked to improvements in cycling infrastructure and growing environmental awareness. However, some campaigners argue that public transport options remain too expensive for many. The study also highlights gender differences, with women less likely to cycle regularly due to safety concerns. Local councils have welcomed the findings and plan to expand bike lane networks further over the next five years.

**Text B – Academic Abstract (Academic)**

*(approx. 180 words)*

**Journal of Urban Mobility — “Active Transport Patterns in UK Metropolitan Areas (2010–2020)”**

This study examines longitudinal trends in active transport—specifically walking and cycling—across ten major UK metropolitan areas between 2010 and 2020. Using national transport survey data (N = 12,438), we identified a statistically significant increase (p < .05) in the proportion of daily commuters engaging in active travel modes. Multivariate regression analysis suggests that infrastructural investment, particularly in segregated cycling lanes, is the strongest predictor of participation. Gender disparities persist, with women reporting lower rates of cycling primarily due to perceived safety risks. The findings underscore the importance of sustainable mobility policies and targeted urban design interventions to promote equitable access to active transport.