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Part 1

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The challenge of writing at university

Going to university should be an exciting time, especially when you have chosen to study in another country. With so many experiences to enjoy, dealing with your academic workload may be a low priority. But as the assessment of many courses depends on your performance as an academic writer, it's not a topic that can be ignored. That's why this book is designed to help you cope more effectively with your writing tasks.

There are several reasons why some first-year university students find it difficult to meet their lecturers' requirements for writing essays and reports:

- University students are expected to work more independently, with less supervision than at school. For instance, you may be required to find your own sources.
- Another issue can be the expectation that students should approach their sources in a critical fashion and be ready to question them if necessary. This means that you are expected to evaluate everything you read, asking whether it is reliable and relevant.
- There is also the question of vocabulary, since in most academic subjects students are expected to use a semi-formal vocabulary which is different from normal idiomatic language.
- In addition, you need to be familiar with the conventions of academic writing such as referencing, as well as adopting an appropriate style. Following these conventions will allow you to express yourself clearly, and your tutor will find it easier to assess your work.