

## ACADEMIC STYLE 2

### LEVEL of FORMALITY

It is important to maintain a formal tone in your academic writing. Although it is not wrong to use “I” or “you” occasionally, over-use will make your writing seem too personal and unprofessional. The following five sentences are examples of the use of **personal pronouns** which you can easily avoid.

#### For example:

- 1 In this research paper, **I** will try to describe the present situation in the light of current legislation.
- 2 **I** think that this is the best course of action.
- 3 **You** might say that this clause is unnecessary.
- 4 What **I** think is that private enforcement is superior to public enforcement.
- 5 **We** can analyse other areas of the law in a similar way.

#### There are a number of ways of achieving a more appropriate style:

- 1) **This paper / chapter / essay** focuses on / is concerned with / examines / discusses
- 2) **Impersonal clauses (often with the passive)** e.g. It is thought that ...
- 3) **One (for generalisations)** e.g. One might say that ...
- 5) **Passives** e.g. Other areas of the law can be analysed in a similar way.
- 6) **Use of nouns instead of verbs** e.g. Analysis of this area of law ...

## IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE:

1)

Referring to yourself as “the author” can seem clumsy.

- a) The author has presented the case for private enforcement of competition law.
- b) Although it does not seem likely, the hope of the author is that these measures will be implemented.

*These sentences could be expressed in another way:*

**e.g.**

- a) This paper has presented the case for private enforcement of competition law.
- b) It seems unlikely that these measures will be implemented.

2)

Occasional use of “I” and “my” is acceptable, and is appropriate in academic legal writing when giving a strong individual view, evaluating ideas or giving a personal analysis.

- e.g.**
- a) A similar analysis could be performed in relation to other spheres of the law, and **I believe** the result would be the same.
  - b) **In my view**, three main conclusions can be drawn from this previous work.
  - c) **To the best of my knowledge**, there has been little research into this area of law.
  - d) Regarding this last point, **I believe** that it has little relevance in this case.

### 3) Consistency

Be careful that you are consistent in the impersonal style that you use.  
Don't mix *I, we, the author, one, etc.*

- e.g.** Therefore, in the view of **the author**, **we** will be liable for contempt of court if **one** has not produced all relevant documents.