How to write in an academic style

Academic writing is formal, impersonal, cautious and often references other writers work.
Writing in an academic style...

➔ ... is expected for assessments in some subjects

➔ ... shows you can step back from a topic and write about it in a more neutral or formal manner

➔ ... shows your understanding of academic practices such as paraphrasing and referencing
Why write in an academic style?
Why is this non-academic writing?

The following example shows an excerpt from a student’s essay which is written in an inappropriate style with non-academic language that is too personal, too informal, and not technical.

**Example 1: a non-academic style / too casual**

Most people seem to think the immunization section of the record was okay, but you often hear people complain about how they use the vaccination record. As I said before, the Personal Health Record is currently being looked at by many health professionals as an immunisation record. Some time in the future, the law’s going to change so that you’ll have to show proof that the immunisation has been done, and then this has gotta be presented before you enrol your child in school which is what they are proposing, and then this immunisation section of the record may shoot up in importance.

*Note the inconsistency of spelling here. Sometimes with ‘s’, sometimes with ‘z’.*
Here is the same passage in a more academic style

Example 2: same piece redrafted for an academic style

The immunisation section of the record was generally well received and utilised, although the location of the vaccination record was a common complaint. As previously mentioned, the Personal Health Record is currently being regarded by many health professionals as an immunisation record. In the future, when legislation is ‘enacted’ that will require proof of immunisation status (or of conscientious objection) to be presented prior to school enrolment (Smithson & Greg 2013, Xiao & Robson 2013). Therefore, this section of the record may increase in importance, as well as increase in utilisation within ….
Exercise: making your writing less personal

http://writeitright.uelconnect.org.uk/pages/test_yourself/145/depersonalising_your_writing.html

8 questions
Exercise: identifying an academic style

http://writeitright.uelconnect.org.uk/pages/test_yourself/146/other_areas_of_style.html

4 questions
Video: RMIT Academic style

https://emedia.rmit.edu.au/learninglab/sites/default/files/videos/Academic-style.m4v
Summary

➔ Academic writing is more formal than normal speech.

➔ Lecturers want writing that shows you have researched the topic.

➔ Unless they have specifically stated otherwise, they do not want your opinion on the issue; rather, they are interested in how well you can explain the issues involved.

➔ Always be guided by the actual wording of the assessment itself.