The difference between the kind of opinion expressed in an academic argument and biased opinion is that academic thesis statements must be supported by evidence considered authoritative in the academic community. The evidence must come before the analysis. So in academic writing, the ideal writer is someone who, after careful examination of all available evidence, comes to an impartial position.

The “impartial judge” is the idealized model of how an academic writer goes about his/her business. As a result, in academic writing, the convention is that arguments should imply impartial and sound judgment through the use of rational, impersonal and unemotional language, however passionate the author is about the position he/she is arguing.

To achieve an impersonal, objective tone in your writing, it is essential to avoid:

- **Judgmental Language**
  
  Definition: Language that reveals that the writer is making a personal judgment. Using judgmental language makes the writer appear as if she coming to her conclusions based on previously-held beliefs and values, rather than letting the evidence be support for the argument. For example, a thesis would not be considered judgmental if accompanied by a justification based on evidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I believe</th>
<th>I feel</th>
<th>I conclude</th>
<th>it seems</th>
<th>I think</th>
<th>should</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>need to</td>
<td>It is good</td>
<td>It is bad</td>
<td>It is right</td>
<td>It is wrong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Emotive Language**
  
  Definition: Language that appeals to the reader’s emotions or values to make an argument. While this type of language might be persuasive, it does not ask the reader to consider the evidence on its own merits, but rather loads the argument with emotion in an attempt to incite an emotional reaction in the reader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History has provided us with great heroes.</th>
<th>The brave man risked his life to save the orphan.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The abandoned children were found on the street.</td>
<td>The intelligent woman was successful in her career.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Judgmental and Emotive Language Examples

I strongly believe that a true hero never thinks of his/herself before others. I feel that Jessica Lynch definitely had to endure tough times but I also feel that her rescuers and the men and women who have died in Iraq are the ones who should be called heroes, not her. Her rescuers received little to no credit for her getting Pfc. Lynch home in one piece, but it is this everyday courage we can see here that makes our armed forces what they are today.

Impersonal and Objective Example

While Jessica Lynch has been portrayed by the news media as a hero, comparatively little media attention has been given to her rescuers and to others who have died in Iraq, many of whom have arguably endured more hardship and contributed more to American military efforts than Pfc. Lynch. If a “hero” is defined as one who endures hardship for the benefit of others, these soldiers might arguably be more deserving of the title than Lynch.

Exercises for Judgmental and Emotive Language

Rewrite the following sentences (taken from student papers) to eliminate the judgmental and emotive language.

1. I think that the film does correctly portray Bush and his tactics. The facts shown are indisputable and cannot be pushed aside. I believe that everyone should see this film and take a hard look at the facts. You can’t dismiss it.

2. People’s opinions are so malleable and easily influenced by the media that misrepresentations of certain concepts or individuals are very dangerous and damaging. Unfortunately, many times the newspapers, films, and books people are exposed to are indoctrinating and therefore misrepresent concepts by depicting them in a prejudiced manner. The most blatant medium of biased writing is propaganda literature.