

Academic Writing Guide

Author Voice – Stage 3, Part 1

Compare the original with the revised paragraphs, noting the additions **in bold** to the revised paragraphs that highlight the author’s voice.

Essay title: ‘Critically consider psychological explanations for the acquisition of phobias. Justify your answer with reference to theoretical and empirical evidence from relevant literature.’

Original Paragraph	Revised Paragraph
<p>1. There may be an underlying, genetic predisposition for phobias which makes it easier to condition the fear of certain stimuli, such as snakes, in comparison to other stimuli (Öhman, 2000). Mineka & Cook (1986, cited in Cohelo & Purkis, 2009, p. 336) found that rhesus monkeys learned fear responses from watching videos of monkeys displaying fear reactions to items such as snakes, but did not learn fear responses to non-threatening stimuli (e.g. flowers).</p>	<p>1. Although there is evidence to support the behaviourist perspective on the acquisition of phobias, there is also counter evidence against this, in the form of the biological perspective. Öhman (2000) proposes that an underlying, genetic predisposition for phobias is evident in that it is easier to condition the fear of certain stimuli, such as snakes, in comparison to others. This biological perspective is supported by Mineka & Cook (1986, cited in Cohelo & Purkis, 2009, p. 336) who found that rhesus monkeys learned fear responses from watching videos of monkeys displaying fear reactions to items such as snakes, but did not learn fear responses to non-threatening stimuli (e.g. flowers). Therefore, such evidence suggests that phobias may originate from innate fears linked to evolutionarily relevant dangers rather than learned behaviours.</p>
<p>2. Merkelbach, Muris & Schouten (1996) have outlined the results of their interviews with 22 children between 9-14 years old (and their parents) on the onset and intensity of their spider phobias. The findings strongly suggest that a critical learning experience is required for</p>	<p>2. A number of studies have been used to support the behaviourist perspective that phobias arise from a critical incident or modelling the behaviour of others. One such study is that by Merkelbach, Muris & Schouten (1996) outlining the results of their interviews with 22 children between 9-14 years old (and their parents) on the onset and intensity of their spider phobias. The findings strongly suggest that a critical</p>

the development of spider phobias in children. This could be in the form of a negative experience with spiders, or in the form of 'modelling' a fear response of another individual (i.e. if a parent shows a fear response to spiders, the child could learn this fear response). However, DiNardo et al. (1988) found that 50% of individuals with dog phobia had no negative experience with a dog.

learning experience is required for the development of spider phobias in children. This could be in the form of a negative experience with spiders, or in the form of 'modelling' a fear response of another individual (i.e. if a parent shows a fear response to spiders, the child could learn this fear response). **However, such findings cannot be generalised given the relatively small sample size and possibility of inaccuracy in asking participants to recall past events** (Cohelo & Clarke, 1993). **Furthermore, there is evidence to support the perspective that a critical learning experience is not always necessary for the onset of a phobia.** DiNardo et al. (1988), for example, found that while 50% of individuals with a dog phobia had had a prior negative experience with a dog, the other 50% had not.