

# Ethical Writing Quick Reference Guide: A Blueprint for Special Education

## BLUEPRINT OF TRUST

Ethical writing in special education balances respectful, person-first language with rigorous academic integrity and cautious, evidence-based claims to protect vulnerable populations.

## FOUNDATIONS OF RESPECTFUL REPRESENTATION



### PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE



Prioritise the individual before the diagnosis to avoid reducing learners to their disability (e.g., "student with autism").



### BALANCED ACADEMIC CLAIMS



Avoid absolute terms like "always" or "never"; use cautious wording such as "research suggests" or "may experience challenges".



### PROTECTING PRIVACY



Ethical writing must secure sensitive medical/educational records and never include identifiable student names in reference lists.

## AVOID VS. BETTER ACADEMIC WRITING

AVOID (Weak) ❌	BETTER ACADEMIC WRITING (Strong) ✅
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The ADHD kid / Slow learners</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Student with ADHD / Students requiring additional support</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Inclusion never works</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Some studies report implementation challenges</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Wheelchair-bound children</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students who use wheelchairs</li></ul>

## MECHANICS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY



### THE SYNTHESIS MATRIX



Purposefully choose between paraphrasing (restating meaning), summarising (condensing ideas), or direct quotes (reserved for vital definitions).



### PROPER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Avoid "accidental plagiarism" by tracking references diligently during research and crediting every external idea or data point.



### APA STYLE ESSENTIALS



Use the standard author-date format (e.g., Smith, 2020) and alphabetical reference lists with consistent hanging indents for professional credibility.