

Writing Guide

Outline:

1. Types of academic papers
2. Paper structure
3. Plagiarism
4. Writing Tips
5. Writing Presentation
6. Useful links

Purpose of this guide:

This guide has been created in order to help freelance writers quickly and easily find answers to various questions about writing. The guide is a compilation of links and short definitions that will give you a brief overview of various aspects of academic writing. In order not to overburden this guide with unnecessary data it will be gradually updated to include answers to most frequently asked questions and provide resolutions to common mistakes we find during evaluation of your work. Feel free to leave your feedback and share your ideas about this guide at our forum gradelancer.com

1. Types of Academic Papers

In the course of getting their grades the students are tasked with writing multiple types of academic papers. Every type of academic writing has specific requirements and rules that the writer needs to follow.

See more about types of academic writings at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/3/>

- **Research paper.** A research paper is writer's study of the subject and the data already known about this subject. A research paper is built upon the knowledge and facts previously studied by the scholars and attempts to utilize personal and adopted experience to provide the author's own insight and interpretation of the material being researched. Writing a research paper presumes focusing, assembling and sorting out information; and requires serious, gradual and steady approach.

- *Argumentative research paper* - consists of an introduction in which the writer clearly introduces the topic and informs his audience exactly which stance he intends to take; this stance is often identified as the thesis statement. An important goal of the argumentative research paper is persuasion, which means the topic chosen should be debatable or controversial.

- *Analytical research paper* - often begins with the student asking a question (a.k.a. a research question) on which he has taken no stance. Such a paper is often an exercise in exploration and evaluation .

See more at: <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~bioslabs/tools/report/reportform.html>

- **Annotated bibliography** - An annotated bibliography is a list of citations from books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

See more at: <http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill28.htm#what>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/>

- **Report.** A report is a systematic, well organised document which defines and analyses a subject or problem.

See more at: <http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/quickrefs/15-report-writing.xml>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/703/1/>

- **Literature Review** - An extensive search of the information available on a topic which results in a list of references to books, periodicals, and other materials on the topic.

See more at: <http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/general/lit-reviews/index.xml>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/704/01/>

- **Dissertation/Thesis.** A dissertation (sometimes called a 'thesis') is a document that presents the author's research and findings and is submitted in support of candidature for a degree or professional qualification.

See more at: <http://www.essaycoursework.com/howtowriteadissertation/index.php>

<http://www.learnerassociates.net/dissthes/>

- **Speeches** - Speeches are oral presentations of ideas or findings.

See more at: <http://www.write-out-loud.com/howtowritespeech.html>

- **Case study** - Research performed in detail on a specific case.

See more at: <http://www.essayforum.com/grammar-usage-13/to-write-case-study-366/>

- **Creative writing.** Creative writing is writing that expresses the writer's thoughts and feelings in an imaginative, often unique, and poetic way. Creative writing is guided more by the writer's need to express feelings and ideas than by restrictive demands of factual and logical progression of expository writing.

See more at: http://www.ehow.com/how_2305516_write-creative-writing-story.html

- **Application essay** - is a personal statement required by many graduate programs, internships, and special academic programs.

See more at: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/application.html>

- **Personal statement** - A statement of purpose, or personal statement, is a brief and focused essay about one's career or research goals, and is frequently required for applicants to universities, graduate schools, and professional schools

See more at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/642/01/>

- **Compare/Contrast essay** - A common task intended to help the writers develop argumentative skills by means of finding similarities or differences between two or more given subjects.

See more at: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?category_id=2&sub_category_id=2&article_id=55)

[category_id=2&sub_category_id=2&article_id=55](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?category_id=2&sub_category_id=2&article_id=55)

<http://www.bookrags.com/articles/5.html>

2. Paper Structure

A well-organized, grade-A paper should have perfect structure. Every part of your essay should have its purpose, be coherent and correctly formatted. The following are the inevitable constituents of any essay:

- Introductory sentence

In a typical essay, that first sentence leads into two or three sentences that provide details about your subject. All of these sentences build up to your thesis statement.

- The thesis statement is that sentence or two in your text that contains the focus of your essay and tells your reader what the essay is going to be about. The entirety of your paper hangs on that sentence. But its function is to be informative and direct.

To get your paper off to a great start, you should try to have a first sentence that engages your reader. Think of your first sentence as a hook that draws your reader in.

- Body part

Body should consist of several paragraphs (usually not shorter than 3), each talking/discussing different fact or point of view. Each paragraph should have a **topic sentence** which expresses a controlling idea. A topic sentence has several important functions: it substantiates or supports an essay's thesis statement; it unifies the content of a paragraph and directs the order of the sentences; and it advises the reader of the subject to be discussed and how the paragraph will discuss it.

- Conclusion

It is a good idea to recapitulate what you said in your thesis statement in order to suggest to your reader that you have accomplished what you set out to accomplish. **Do not, in any case, simply restate your thesis statement in your final paragraph.** The conclusion is no place to bring up new ideas. The conclusion should contain a definite, positive statement or call to action, but that statement needs to be based on what we have provided in the essay.

- Paragraph structure (should resemble an essay)

Most paragraphs in an essay have a three-part structure—introduction, body, and conclusion. You can see this structure in paragraphs whether they are narrating, describing, comparing, contrasting, or analyzing information. Each part of the paragraph plays an important role in communicating your meaning to your reader.

3. Plagiarism

its consequences for students

Academic communities, demand that writers credit others for their work, and that the source of their material clearly be acknowledged. Not to do so is to plagiarize, to intentionally or unintentionally appropriate the ideas, language, key terms, or findings of another without sufficient acknowledgment that such material is not one's own.

Plagiarism encompasses a range of errors and violations. Though the charge of plagiarism can be leveled against writers who incorrectly or neglect to cite borrowed materials, it most often tempts students who find themselves in the dire straits of having to complete a written assignment without previously having undertaken the laborious and time-consuming process of research, reading, note-taking, interpretation, and analysis.

Plagiarism is a serious offense that can result in a variety of sanctions like failure of the course in which the plagiarism occurred and suspension from the University.

A. Types of plagiarism:

Plagiarism.org gives an interesting and comprehensive list of types of plagiarism. We decided to take this marvelous classification due to its versatility and humorous style.

Sources Not Cited:

- **The Ghost Writer** - The writer turns in another's work, word-for-word, as his or her own.
- **The Photocopy** - The writer copies significant portions of text straight from a single source, without alteration.
- **The Potluck Paper** - The writer tries to disguise plagiarism by copying from several different sources, tweaking the sentences to make them fit together while retaining most of the original phrasing.
- **The Poor Disguise** - Although the writer has retained the essential content of the source, he or she has altered the paper's appearance slightly by changing key words and phrases.
- **The Labor of Laziness** - The writer takes the time to paraphrase most of the paper from other sources and make it all fit together, instead of spending the same effort on original work.
- **The Self-Stealer** - The writer "borrows" generously from his or her previous work, violating policies concerning the expectation of originality adopted by most academic institutions.

Sources Cited (But Still Plagiarized):

- **The Forgotten Footnote** - The writer mentions an author's name for a source, but neglects to include specific information on the location of the material referenced. This often masks other forms of plagiarism by obscuring source locations.
- **The Misinformer** - The writer provides inaccurate information regarding the sources, making it impossible to find them.
- **The Too-Perfect Paraphrase** - The writer properly cites a source, but neglects to put in quotation marks text that has been copied word-for-word, or close to it. Although attributing the basic ideas to the source, the writer is falsely claiming original presentation and interpretation of the information.

- **The Resourceful Citer** - The writer properly cites all sources, paraphrasing and using quotations appropriately. The catch? The paper contains almost no original work! It is sometimes difficult to spot this form of plagiarism because it looks like any other well-researched document.
- **The Perfect Crime** - The writer properly quotes and cites sources in some places, but goes on to paraphrase other arguments from those sources without citation. This way, the writer tries to pass off the paraphrased material as his or her own analysis of the cited material.

See more at: http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_types_of_plagiarism.html

B. How to avoid plagiarism:

- Citing - always cite with in-text citations and follow formatting requirements
- Think, read the sources, summarize, write from your head
- Avoid paraphrasing and always cite the original source whenever you paraphrase
- Never paraphrase or borrow big portions of text. After all, you are the writer, not someone else.

See more at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/1/>

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/college-success/10314.html>

4. Writing Tips

- Avoid Colloquialisms

See more at: <http://www.wikihow.com/Avoid-Colloquial-%28Informal%29-Writing>

- Do not misuse colon and semicolon:

- **Colon [:]** is used before a list or an explanation that is preceded by a clause that can stand by itself. Think of the colon as a gate, inviting one to go on.

- **Semicolon [;]** is used to connect two independent clauses together into one sentence, or serves as a super-comma.

See more at: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/marks/colon.htm>

<http://www.essortment.com/use-semicolon-properly-33063.html>

- Capitalization:

- Capitalize personal, geographical, company names, days of the week, the names of the months and holidays, (World War II, the Coca Cola Company, the United States, Spanish class , First National Bank);

- Capitalize titles when they are accompanied by proper names. (Major Smith, President Jones);

- Capitalize the first word of a direct quotation;

- Capitalize "east," "west," "north," and "south" when they refer to particular sections of the country but not when they merely indicate direction. (The South has produced many excellent writers, including William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor. ["South" here refers to a section of the country.])

- Abbreviation:

- Abbreviate the titles "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Ms.," "St.," and "Dr." when they precede names;

- Abbreviate titles and degrees when they follow names. (David Hall, Ph.D).

You may abbreviate the following in even the most formal writing: A.M. (ante meridiem, before noon), P.M. (post meridiem, after noon), A.D. (anno Do- mini, in the year of our Lord), B.C. (before Christ), C.E. (common era), etc. (et cetera, and others), i.e. (id est, that is), and e.g. (exempli gratia, for example);

- In formal writing, do not abbreviate the names of days, months, centuries, states, countries, or units of measure. Do not use an ampersand (&) unless it is an official part of a title.

- Do not abbreviate the words for page, chapter, volume, and so forth, except in footnotes and bibliographies, which have prescribed rules of abbreviation.

- Avoid pronouns:

The convention in much academic writing is to write with minimal reference to yourself as an author. The reason for this lies in a tradition of needing to present your work "objectively", as the work of a dispassionate and disinterested (that is, unbiased) researcher. So, one of the features of academic writing is a general absence of the first person pronoun "I".

One way is to let the assignment "speak for itself": for example:

- "I show..." becomes "The report shows..."

- "I interpret the results as..." becomes "The results indicate..."

Another way to avoid the first person is to use the passive voice construction:

- "We administered the questionnaire..." becomes "The questionnaire was administered..."

- "I surveyed the literature" becomes "The literature was surveyed"

- Avoid generalizing:

If you cannot come up with specifics or be clear, the generalization may not be obvious, it may be worse, it could be inaccurate. Use of the words always, all, every, everyone, many, never, nobody, none can create inaccurate statements, and even factual errors. These inaccuracies could produce false statements about people, places or things. (e.g. "Marketing will solve the problem for an organization." - that does not tell the reader anything about the solution - be more specific about your statements.)

See more at:

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/213807/increasing_pageviews_generalizations_pg2.html?cat=15

- *Use credible resources:*

Resources must be identified from *reliable sources* - nothing from Helium, Wikipedia or businessballs. Sources must be less than 10 years old. Do not use outdated references of 1980s etc. In most cases, you should stay away from Internet information that doesn't list an author. While the information you find may be true, it is more difficult to validate information if you don't know the credentials of the author.

Also do not use blogs, forums and likewise web-pages as a reference for an academical paper.

See more here: <http://homeworktips.about.com/od/researchandreference/a/internet.htm>,
<http://homeworktips.about.com/od/paperassignments/a/badsources.htm>

Most educators these days will absolutely check the Web sites that you choose to include, and if these sites do not meet the minimum requirements of credibility, you might lose crucial points on an assignment (or even have to do it over again). Trustworthy sources that stand up to healthy criticism are essential.

See more here: <http://websearch.about.com/od/howtoevaluateawebsite/a/citing.htm>

- Create an *outline* if you have difficulty hitting all your points - missing points is obvious to the teachers - many use outlines to grade their students.

- Carefully *proofread* your papers several hours after completion. It will help you identify mistakes and parts that need to be fixed. While urgent papers need to be completed within a very short deadline, most of writing assignments that you will work on have extensive deadlines. We suggest switching to other than writing activities. After a break you will be able to give a fresh look to your writing and easily spot mistakes, unclear statements or awkward phrases.

- "I ran out of things to write so I just sort of *babbled* to get past the last half of the page."

Try summarizing, try increasing your introduction, but do not babble. *Coherent language*, even if a little bit of repeating, is better than nonsense.

- "Well, I was sick of people telling me they couldn't figure out what my paper is talking about, so I tell them. This paper is about how to prevent social stress from interfering with your family." If you are being told that your reader does not understand the "point" of your paper, then you are not writing clearly, you are able to explain your point without telling your reader - "HEY! In case you don't get it, this is what you should understand when we are done." You aren't a teacher, you are a student, you are not repeating your lessons, you are demonstrating that you learned something in class. In our case, we are demonstrating that someone learned something at some given point in time.

- Turnitin and other companies have started developing resource checking tools - students using made-up resources will begin to have points taken from their work, this means that you will start hearing back from your customers if you use resources that they cannot verify.

This means ALL resources that would not be found available to people in the US, Canada, or Europe. Don't use unknown or made-up resources.

- use this link for checking yourself when citing: <http://citationmachine.net/>
- At least 1 source per paragraph - When you are required to use reference materials, one source per paragraph is the best combination. Do not put couple of arguments in the same paragraph.
- Stick to your topic - the process of writing may lead the writer to exploring various aspects of a topic. This is good as long as you are not diverging from your topic too much. Print out your topic at a separate sheet of paper and keep it in front of you in order not to roam astray.

See more at: <http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/jbednar/writingtips.html>

5. Writing Presentation

- Choose the key points that you need to present and be sure to back up each point with example or story, statistics, endorsement from a person the audience knows and respects.
- Start presentation with an interesting fact, statistics or an anecdote, which will catch the attention of the audience.
- Remember that a presentation is not a notes for the speaker, but a visual aid for the audience.
- Do not put bullet-points in each slide, it'll become boring.
- Put a diagram, scheme or a picture where possible, to visualize the example you are giving and to simplify the meaning.
- Chunking - chunk ideas/factors/items that have a commonality together. Show what they have in common. Show where they differ.
- Sequencing - Put the items in an order that makes sense. The order could be chronological, or it could be going from a 30,000 ft view to a microscopic view of your topic.
- Venn diagrams – A Venn diagram is great for visually demonstrating the overlaps and differences between items.
- Flowcharts - construct a flowchart that enables your audience to see the process and clearly identify the decision points.”

See more at: <http://speakingaboutpresenting.com/content/presentation-simplicity/>

6. Useful Links

Formatting and sample papers:

- APA guide - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- MLA guide - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
- APA sample paper - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090212013008_560.pdf
- MLA sample paper - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090701095636_747.pdf
- Useful guide on various aspects of writing - <http://www.wikihow.com/Category:English>
- Forum for writers working in our company - <http://gradelancer.com>
- Common mistakes about English - <http://esl.about.com/od/grammar1/a/cmlist.htm>