The Effective Writer’s Toolkit
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Hello Golden Eagles!

We are so happy to have you at Spalding, and we want to do everything possible to ensure your success. Whatever your major is, becoming a confident writer will be an important skill in your future. According to a study conducted by The National Commission on Writing surveying 120 major American corporations (2004), 70% of employers reported that over 66% of their salaried employees were required to write for their job. Half of the companies answered that they consider writing skills in hiring and promotion decisions.

Luckily, Spalding is committed to giving you the education and resources necessary to be a strong writer. Use this handbook to hone your skills and find the writing process that works for you.

On behalf of the academic support team,

Welcome to Spalding!
Writing Resources

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Website
Here you can find online writing resources for students that were developed for our QEP: Writing through Revision. The information from this handbook can also be found on the website.

http://library.spalding.edu/qep

The Writing Center, Academic Commons (Library, 2nd Floor)
Writing consultants with backgrounds in various academic disciplines are here every weekday from 8:00am to 5:00pm to work with you on your projects at any stage of the process—even if you have not even started yet! Check in at the front desk and you will be matched with a consultant.

Call or email the University Writing Center to schedule an appointment. You can also email your writing project and a writing consultant will respond with feedback within two to three business days.

Contact Information: (502)-873-4494, writingcenter@spalding.edu

Success Coaching (Egan Leadership Center, Room 200)
Sometimes it is the lack of time—not the writing itself—that gets in the way of completing papers. If you want to discuss time management with a Success Coach, do not hesitate to reach out.

Contact Information: (502) 873-4160, jcross@spalding.edu

Accessibility Services (Library, 3rd Floor, Room 314)
Do not stay silent about your needs as a writer and a learner. If you have a diagnosed learning difference, our Accessibility Services can support you and communicate with instructors regarding your learning style and any accommodations you need.

Contact Information: (502)-873-4161, accessibility@spalding.edu

A fully-accessible, electronic version of this handbook is available at library.spalding.edu/qep
Section I: The Writing Process

Being aware of the writing process that works best for you is the most important step toward successful writing. You can see in the chart above that writing does not have to be a linear series of tasks; in fact, it is often a cycle with many different pathways to the final product. For example, you might want feedback before you even start drafting your paper if an assignment is particularly complex.

In Section I, you will see a series of tips to help you with each stage of the writing process. Then in Section II, you will learn more about the conventions—or set of common practices—within academic writing.
Prewriting

Before you can start drafting your paper, you will need to generate and develop your ideas. These techniques can help:

**Make sure you understand the assignment:** Highlight the verbs in the assignment description to see what you are being asked to do (analyze, report, evaluate, reflect, propose, etc.). Ask your professor if any part of the assignment is unclear to you. If you need more guidance, go to the Academic Commons and talk to a Writing Center Consultant.

**Brainstorm:** Make a list of possible paper topics. At this point, there are no bad ideas! Try to think of topics that are interesting to you, because your writing process will be much easier if you care about your subject. You can revisit the list later and mark the topics that seem most promising.

**Free write:** Either on paper or on a computer, simply start writing! Try to turn off your inner editor. Let the ideas flow in a stream-of-consciousness style as if you were journaling. Do not pay attention to transitioning ideas or using correct grammar or punctuation. If it helps, set a timer for 10–15 minutes so you can really lose yourself in thought.

**Talk it out:** Find someone (anyone!) who is willing to listen to your ideas about the assignment. Discussing the paper with another person will help you clarify your ideas and understand the assignment.
Drafting

Some people prefer to start with an outline or visual aid to organize their ideas before they begin to compose a paper. The basic template below is meant as an example, not a rule. Your number of body paragraphs and the amount of evidence in each paragraph will depend entirely on the complexity of the writing task and the number of pages required.

Introduction
The hook: think of a first sentence—directly related to your topic—that will establish the tone and get the reader interested.

Give context/background on your topic: Who, What, Where, When, Why?

Thesis: What is your stance on this topic? Don’t worry too much about perfecting your thesis; you will develop your thesis more as you draft and revise the paper.

Body
I. Key idea in support of your thesis
   A. Evidence
   B. Evidence
II. Key idea in support of your thesis
   A. Evidence
   B. Evidence
III. Key idea in support of your thesis
   A. Evidence
   B. Evidence

Conclusion
The conclusion restates your main points by emphasizing the connections between ideas in the body of the paper; it does NOT simply repeat information. What are your takeaways after exploring this topic? Why is this topic important?
**Mind Map:** When you need to break down large concepts into smaller topics. See Example 1.

**Venn Diagram:** When you need to synthesize several ideas, it can help to see where those concepts differ and where they overlap. See Example 2.

**Flowchart:** When you are writing about cause-and-effect relationships, sequential processes, or changes over time. See Example 3.

**Example 1: Mind Map**

```
Wellness
  - Mind
    - Meditation
    - Connection with others
  - Body
    - Physical exercise
```

**Example 2: Venn Diagram**

```
Islam

Judaism

Christianity
```
Elements Needed in Your Draft
In order to have a working draft, it needs to contain the parts of a formal academic paper that signal to the reader what the writer is trying to argue or explain.

**Thesis:** a sentence within the introduction summarizing the major discovery, insight, or claim you make in your paper.

The thesis reflects the writer’s interpretation of the material presented. It is not a statement of fact or a general observation. The thesis should speak to how you are connecting different sources/ideas to stake your own claim on a particular topic.

- **Too general:** Time management is a huge concern for college students.
- **Revised version:** Time management has become an even larger concern for college students in recent years due to the increase in students who work and have children before entering college.
**Topic Sentence:** the first sentence of each body paragraph that makes an assertion related to the thesis.

Strong topic sentences help your reader follow your logic as you explain the reasons for your thesis. Remember that the topic sentence needs to relate clearly to the thesis. The thesis is like an umbrella that has to cover all of your points.

**Transitions:** words or phrases that connect your ideas and help the paper read smoothly. They are useful in linking paragraphs and sentences to keep your thesis moving forward. The chart below gives examples of transitions grouped by purpose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compare</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Add/Continue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similarly also</td>
<td>to illustrate specifically for example for instance such as that is</td>
<td>in addition furthermore moreover besides first, second, etc. lastly finally given the fact that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the same way as shown likewise in similar fashion in like manner just as</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contrast</th>
<th>Emphasize/Explain</th>
<th>Cause/Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>However Nevertheless on the other hand yet nonetheless in contrast though otherwise But</td>
<td>Certainly undoubtedly of course in fact more important simply stated in this way it is evident that</td>
<td>Therefore as a result accordingly consequently hence on account of thus due to because of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Revising

Substantive Revision
Revision is more than switching a few sentences or words around. Substantive revision means that you have re-envisioned the ideas in your paper to improve clarity and ensure you have fully explored your topic. Writing can always be improved, even if it seems “good enough.” The process of revision is where the deepest thinking and real learning happens.

Giving and Receiving Constructive Feedback
One of your best writing resources is your peers. Fellow students have great insights because they can relate to the specific writing challenges you are facing. In addition, giving good constructive feedback to your peers can be just as helpful as receiving it; we really learn a skill when we have to explain it to someone else. Below you will find several strategies for peer feedback.

Positives
Readers should always start by telling the writer what they liked about the paper. This positive feedback should be specific (“This is an interesting topic and I can tell you are passionate about it” rather than something vague like “The paper is good” or “The paper is well-written.”) It helps to point to specific pages or paragraphs that are working well. It is also good practice to reemphasize the positive qualities of the paper at the end of a peer review session so the writer feels encouraged.

Questions
Readers tell the writer what questions they have about the content of the paper (this means the focus is on ideas, not on grammar or style). As with the “Positives” method, readers should point to the specific places that were hard to follow. The writer can also ask for the readers’ responses to certain elements of the paper.

Hear More About
After reading the entire paper, readers tell the writer what they would like to hear more about. This is an indirect way to show the writer how to focus the paper in the next draft.
Say-Back
Readers tell the writer in their own words what they understand to be the main points and takeaways of the paper.

Attention Grabbers
Readers reflect on which part(s) of the paper drew their attention or “pulled them in,” almost like a gravitational force. It is natural to lose attention span at some points while reading, but the parts that snap the reader back into focus are usually where the strong points are.

Reverse Outlining
With an outline, the writer is sketching out the main points of a paper before drafting the first version. With reverse outlining, the writer and readers look at a piece of writing together and determine the main point of each paragraph, writing notes in the margins summarizing what that paragraph states. This helps with the revision process by showing how the ideas in the paper are organized. If it is too difficult to summarize a paragraph, it is a good sign that the paragraph could use more focus.

“I” Language
This strategy involves readers narrating their experience of reading the paper. “I” statements are used to show that this is the reader’s own interpretation. Example: “I was surprised when the topic changed from study habits to pet ferrets... I couldn’t make the connection,” as opposed to, “The change of topic from study habits to pet ferrets was confusing.”

Playing the Yeasayer
Readers are as gracious as possible when trying to understand the writer’s argument, giving the writer the benefit of the doubt and assuming they have thought through their ideas. Readers suggest new evidence that the writer could use to strengthen their argument.

Questions to Ask Yourself and Your Readers:
• Am I fully meeting the requirements of the assignment?
• Do I have a clear thesis stated in my introduction? Is it too general or too specific?

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• Are my topic sentences clearly advancing my thesis? If someone could only read the first sentence of each body paragraph, would they have a good sense of my points?

• Do the sentences in each paragraph relate to the topic sentence?

• Is my paper jumpy or hard to follow? Should I reorganize paragraphs or add more transitions?

• Are all of the quotations introduced and explained properly? Do I underuse or overuse quotations?

• Am I citing my sources correctly?

• Would anything in this paper be confusing to a reader?

• Does my paper have a clear perspective? Do I contradict myself or understate my opinions?

• Is there any unnecessary repetition of particular points?

Revision Strategies:

• Try to explain your main points to someone else (or write a summary of your points) without looking at your paper. Then read your paper and see if it reflects the main points of your argument clearly.

• Reverse outline your paper as explained on page 12. You can make notes in the margin, on a separate sheet of paper, or on notecards summarizing what each paragraph is doing and saying. Notecards are helpful if you are visual because you can shuffle them around and see which order makes the most sense. You might want to move paragraphs around or add more transitions.

• Write down the questions you had in mind when you started the paper. Does the paper address those questions?

• Look at your assignment again and find the part of your paper that addresses each aspect of the assignment, placing check marks on the assignment sheet next to the items you addressed.

• Do not look at your paper for a day or two and then come back to it. Space is the best way to get a new perspective on your paper.
Editing

Editing, or proofreading, should be the final stage of your writing process. Try not to worry about editing before the revision stage, because you could waste your time editing a word or sentence that does not even end up in your final draft.

For those of us who are procrastinators, it is easy to neglect this phase of the writing process. When you are drafting and revising until the last minute, there is no time to proofread the document. However, proofreading will give your writing a polish that greatly affects the way a reader receives it. Spelling, formatting, and grammar issues can be distracting for readers, and they might miss your interesting ideas because they are fixating on minor errors. Below are some tips for proofreading.

Spelling/Grammar Check
Always run a spelling and grammar check in Microsoft Word (go to the “Review” tab and then click “ABC Check Spelling & Grammar”). It will show you each suggestion; it is wise to read each one carefully before clicking OK. Sometimes the grammar suggestions are incorrect because the program is reading your sentence incorrectly, so do not assume every suggestion is accurate. Usually, though, spelling and punctuation suggestions are correct.

Reading Aloud
One of the best ways to spot errors in your own work is by reading it aloud. Hearing it allows you to process the information in a new way, and you will hear grammar issues that you may not have noticed otherwise. Reading aloud will also help you find repetition in your writing. When you notice a repeated word, you can right-click on it and view the list of synonyms.

Ask Someone to Proofread
Having another person proofread your work is the best way to catch errors, because they have the benefit of being unfamiliar with the content. Once you have stared at a paper for too long, the words start blending and it is harder to spot issues. It helps if you can tell the person proofreading any common errors you make (example: “I always mix up it’s and its when I’m writing” or “Teachers have point-
ed out sentence fragments in my writing”). See definition of sentence fragments on page 56.

**Scan the Text Backwards**

One effective method of eliminating typos is to—believe it or not—read your text backwards! This allows you to focus on each word because you are not reading them in order. Place your finger at the end of the paper and run it along each line from right to left as you look for typos. You can also see capitalization errors or missing punctuation like end quotations or periods.
Section II: Academic Writing

What do your instructors expect from you as a college writer?

It might come as a surprise to you, but it turns out that it is often hard for college instructors to be precise about what it is they expect of you when they give you a writing assignment. Oftentimes, undergraduate writers will chalk this up to the fact that the instructor is being “arbitrary” or “idiosyncratic” in how they evaluate the writing their students produce.

Actually, though, it is simply very hard to put one’s finger on what “good” academic writing is. Partly this is because while there may be some broad principles that signal “good” academic writing, this does not mean that “good” academic writing follows a script – there really are as many ways to write “well” as there are writers, audiences, and things to write about! However, it is also the case that, beyond a small group of professional researchers, college instructors are generally not trained to think about either the process of writing or what they value about writing. Strange, but true!

Section II will focus on making the conventions of academic writing as transparent as possible. The following research summarizes what we mean:

In a 2006 study, Chris Thaiss and Terry Meyers Zawacki, both from George Mason University in Virginia, interviewed an instructor from each of fourteen disciplines (philosophy, English, anthropology, history, environmental sciences, dance, sociology, political science, media studies, psychology, nursing, mathematics, physics, and economics) about their expectations for “good” student writing.

They found that all of the instructors were initially very imprecise about those expectations: they would say, for example, that they expected that student writing be “clear,” “logical,” “well-reasoned,” “grammatically correct,” and so forth (Thaiss and Zawacki 58). But, what do terms like that actually mean? Putting all of the interviews together, Thaiss and Zawacki identified three broad expectations that could be said to be key to successful writing any time you sit down to write in college. They are (drum roll, please!):
1. Clear evidence in writing that the writer has been persistent, open-minded, and disciplined in study.

“Whether they are reading student papers or evaluating journal articles, academics are invariably harsh toward any student or scholar who hasn’t done the background reading, who isn’t prepared to talk formally or off the cuff about the subject of the writing, and whose writing doesn’t show careful attention to the objects of study and reflective thought about them. ... Persistent, disciplined study can be shown as well in a personal narrative as in a lab report, so this characteristic of academic writing is not restricted in style or voice” (Thaiss and Zawacki 5).

2. The dominance of reason over emotion or sensual perception.

“In the Western academic tradition, the writer is an intellectual, a thinker, a user of reason. This identity doesn’t mean that emotions or sensual stimuli are absent from academic writing: indeed, the natural sciences have always depended on acute sensate awareness, detection of subtle differences in appearance, fragrance, flavor, texture, sound, movement; moreover, the arts and humanities would not exist without the scholar’s intense and highly articulated sensual appreciation. As for emotion, every discipline recognizes at the very least the importance of passion in the ability to dedicate oneself to research, acknowledged as often tedious. But in the academic universe the senses and emotions must always be subject to control by reason” (Thaiss and Zawacki 6).

3. An imagined reader who is coolly rational, reading for information, and intending to formulate a reasoned response.

“The academic writer wants above all to inspire the intelligent reader’s respect for [their] analytical ability. The writer imagines the reader looking for possible flaws in logic or interpretation, for possible gaps in research and observation, and so tries to anticipate the cool reader’s objections and address them. ... all academic writing is ‘argumentative’ in its perception of a reader who may object or disagree” (Thaiss and Zawacki 7).
You have probably already perceived that these three broad “expectations” for academic writing are anything but straightforward, or easy to figure out how to achieve in a given assignment. But, do not despair! Learning how to think and write “academically” is a process— that’s why we don’t give you a degree until you have been here for a bunch of years! It is the job of your instructors and the academic support team here at Spalding to treat you like an apprentice to this “academic” way of thinking and writing. When in doubt, you should definitely seek out the advice of your instructor or a member of Spalding’s academic support team. We are a community of peers, we are here to help you, and we sincerely want you to enjoy your journey with us.

Reference

Conventions of Academic Writing

Aside from understanding expectations for academic writing, it is also important to know what the conventions are. Conventions can be defined as standard practices: kind of like a playbook. A writing genre is a category of writing defined by its particular form, style, and subject matter. Genre dictates the conventions that the reader expects to see.

However, understanding genre conventions can be tricky for new academic writers; when a writer attempts a new genre, there is cognitive overload because the brain is navigating unfamiliar territory. Writers make errors they would not normally make because they are focusing so hard on figuring out what their reader expects. You can alleviate this stress by researching the genre conventions and seeking out templates or samples of writing. This is called “modelling,” and it is how all writers learn their craft. Here you will find conventions for common undergraduate writing assignments.
Reflective Essays

This is a “write what you know” type of essay. You might be asked to give your personal response to a certain class reading or to describe your experiences related to a specific writing prompt. The style tends to be informal, but reflective writing still requires some attention to organization. Although you probably will not need an argumentative thesis, it is beneficial to have a central idea, theme, or insight that brings your observations into focus. As long as you keep coming back to your theme, a narrative or stream-of-consciousness style is appropriate. Be creative and have fun with the topic! The writing will be more interesting if you are engaged.

Analytical Essays

In liberal studies and humanities courses, many writing assignments will ask you to analyze particular sources and topics. You can analyze any “text,” including literature, music, theater, art, television, film, and other media.

To analyze means to examine in a methodical way, resulting in an interpretation of the text (or texts) and the integration of any other sources you read to gain a better understanding. Analytical essays should have an introduction (containing a thesis), a body, and a conclusion.

PRO TIPS:

1. Use present tense. A text is a living thing, not a historical event. It is as if the author or artist is communicating to you every time you read or view their work. Example: Hemingway shows the mundane realities of the elite in the early 20th century. (Not showed).

2. Avoid first person (“I” or “we”). This shows the reader your aim is objectivity. Example: The prose style paired with the chaotic thoughts of the narrator evoke a sense of disorientation for the reader. (Instead of “I felt disoriented by the prose style and chaotic...”)

thoughts of the narrator.

3. **Be creative with your title.** Do not simply use the title of the text, or a generic title like “Analytical Paper 1.” Create a title that reflects your point of view regarding the text.

4. **Create a narrative.** Show your reader the way you experience the text. When you are analyzing visual art, imagine that you are telling the story of viewing this piece for the first time. Where is the eye drawn? Use rich adjectives to describe the colors, shapes, figures, and textures. You can discuss the feelings that you think a certain image evokes for viewers.

5. **Describe the text fully.** For example, when analyzing music, describe the rhythm, melody, and vocal qualities as well as interpreting the lyrics. People tend to fixate on lyrics, but music creates a mood that affects the listener’s interpretation.

6. **Think about organization.** As you analyze a text, pick an organizational scheme. Maybe chronological order is the easiest way to walk a reader through the text you are analyzing. Or perhaps a thematic organization will make more sense. For visual mediums, consider describing the work spatially. Viewers tend to either focus on the center and move outwards or move their eye as if they were reading (for English speakers, typically from top left corner to right bottom corner).

7. **Do not write a book report.** Only summarize the parts of the plot that you are using as evidence of your claims; there is no need to summarize the whole text.

8. **Be critical.** You do not have to praise the text just because it was assigned reading. Your instructors will want you to critically engage with the text, meaning that you are thoughtful about what the text contributes to the world and where it falls short. It is not about whether you personally like or dislike it.

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**Annotated Bibliographies**

Annotated bibliographies are a great prep tool for any research project/paper. When you break it down, a **bibliography** is a list of resources (i.e. books, journal articles, websites, etc.) given in the proper citation format. Not
only do your readers need to easily find the source, but you also need to be able to find the source again when you write the actual research paper. An **annotation** is a short summary or evaluation of a source, usually only 1-3 paragraphs in length.

Therefore, when you put it together, an **annotated bibliography** is a list of resources with short summaries after each citation. The format of an annotated bibliography can vary depending on its purpose.

As for length of the annotations, it varies. If you are just writing summaries of your sources, you might keep it to one short paragraph. However, it can be helpful to **analyze** and **evaluate** your source in the annotation: How does this source relate to your topic? What does the source contribute? How is your analysis or viewpoint different from the author’s? How credible is this source? Evaluating your source will make your life a lot easier if you will be writing a literature review and/or paper on the same topic.

**Literature Reviews**

The purpose of a literature review is to create an overview of sources that you have used while researching a particular topic. Additionally, this writing allows you to demonstrate to your readers how your research may fit within a greater realm of a topic.

There are multiple types of literature reviews that you may be asked to write. The following are some examples of these potential reviews.

**Argumentative Review**
Evaluate research in order to support or debate an argument, assumption, or problem that is already known.

**Integrative Review**
Collecting literature on a topic so that you may create new perspectives or ideas about said topic.

**Historical Review**
Examining research that was conducted over a period of time. In particular, this type of literature review typically starts with discussing when your topic first became prevalent and then traces its evolution to present day.

Once you have settled on a topic and gathered your literature to review, how do you actually go about putting all of this information
together? Keep some of the following tips in the back of your head:

**ALWAYS** back up your interpretation with evidence to show your readers what you are saying is valid.

Choose **only the most important points** from each source to highlight in your review.

Do **not** use large quotes from your research to back up your points—your readers want to hear **YOUR** point of view! However, short quotes are perfectly fine. Make sure ANYTHING that you report from a specific author is properly cited (see page 25 for “Citation Practices”).

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**Experimental Reports**

Anytime you conduct a study or experiment, you will need to know the format for reports. Picture it:

You must complete an experiment for one of your science classes. You did a lot of research for background information about what you are studying, you designed and completed an effective experiment, got a lot of useful data, and are now ready to draw conclusions about what you have discovered. How do you put this into writing?

Basically, your readers will have two goals in mind when reading your report:

1. They want to gather and understand the information you are presenting.
2. They want to know that your findings are legitimate.

**Basic Format**

Experimental reports use the **IMRAD** format (Introduction, Methods, Results, And Discussion).

**Introduction**

The purpose of the introduction is for you to state your hypothesis—what is the purpose of your research? Why should the reader be interested in your paper? Do not just rely on telling your audience your hypothesis; show your readers what led you to research this
topic. Make sure to include your background information on what you already know about this topic, and then explain what you hope to gain from this experiment. Show that you know your topic!

When writing your hypothesis, try to be as specific as you can about the relationship between the different factors you are studying. For example:

**Less Clear hypothesis:** It was hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between the amount of hours a student spent studying for an exam and their final grade in a class.

**Clearer Hypothesis:** It was hypothesized that as students spent increased time studying for an exam, their chances of receiving an A at the end of the semester would increase as well.

**Methods**
The methods section is where you, as the writer, show your readers how you plan to test your hypothesis. This is your opportunity to explain to your readers why you chose the process you chose.

As you are writing up your methods section, try to be as precise as possible in your descriptions. Think about if a fellow student, a professor, or another reader were trying to replicate your work—they should be able to replicate your experiment based on how you describe your work in your paper. Consider asking yourself some of the following questions:

**How much detail is too much detail? Is this factor important for someone to know if they were to replicate my experiment? Did this impact my ability to complete my experiment?**

**Results**
Results...time to show what you found in your experiment! This section is typically the shortest of your paper, however, it is also the most important. This is not the place to draw conclusions (save that for the next section of your paper). Instead, show your readers what you were able to find that is relevant to your hypothesis.

**PRO TIP:** Get creative with how you display your results. Results can be displayed as a table, graph, chart, etc., whatever you find to be the clearest way to display your data.
Discussion
The discussion section...the very end! This section is for you to explain your results to your reader for them to understand. If your reader is not a data person, the discussion section is where they are able to grasp if your research supported your hypothesis. Here you can explain any limitations you may have had when completing your experiment for others to consider if they would like to replicate your research. Besides explaining if your research supported your hypothesis, make sure you explain anything regarding the following in this section:

Report any “strange data” or results you were not expected to find in your research.

Make conclusions based on your findings. How do these results relate to that earlier work you discussed back in your introduction?

Is there any practical use for the results you found? Can these results be generalized to the public?

Abstracts
An abstract is the first section of a report and can be tricky to write. It is called a “summary” in some papers. The purpose of an abstract is for a reader to be able to get enough information about your study to decide if they want to read your entire report. In some cases, an abstract may be only 250 words long.

When writing an abstract, consider organizing it based on the IMRAD format (scaling it down to as little as two or three sentences per section).

Remember, the main point of an abstract is to be brief. Keep it short and sweet!
Common Assignment Language

You will find that college writing assignments become easier to understand as you progress in your college career, because you learn to look for certain words/tasks that are common. Understanding that common language can help you take a new and intimidating writing task and compare it with ones you have completed before.

That being said, it is important that you understand from your instructor how they are defining the tasks they are asking you to perform. Tasks like analysis take on more specific meanings in disciplinary contexts. For example, an English class might ask you to analyze a text by going into careful detail, while a business class might ask you to analyze a company’s branding strategy by focusing on major elements and being as concise as possible in relaying the details.

Take notes while your instructor explains the assignment in class, and do not be shy about asking for clarification on writing tasks that are unfamiliar to you. Also, think about the context of the class: why do you think your instructor would choose this as a learning task, and what course-related knowledge are you demonstrating with your paper?

Common Words

Some words and definitions will seem similar, but their subtle differences make them useful in determining the tone and desired goals of an assignment.

**Define:** identify and state the essential traits or characteristics of something, differentiating it clearly from other things.

**Describe:** tell about an event, person, or process in detail, creating a clear and vivid image of it.

**Illustrate:** show the reader how your subject works by using detailed examples.

**Explain:** make a topic as clear and understandable as possible by offering reasons, examples, and so forth.
Summarize: state the major points concisely and comprehensively.

Research: gather material from outside sources to determine the conversation already occurring around a subject, and then draw your own conclusions as the researcher.

Compare and/or Contrast: demonstrate similarities or dissimilarities between two or more topics.

Apply: take knowledge you already have on one subject and use it to explain another subject that may be new to you.

Relate: explore the connections between two or more subjects or ideas.

Assess: weigh the importance or validity of.

Evaluate: formulate an opinion on given information.

Support: provide evidence for an opinion.

Synthesize: find the connections/relationships between two or more subjects and your reasoning for bringing those subjects together in a specific way.

Analyze: divide an event, idea, or theory into its component elements, and examine each one in turn.

Argue: take a strong and persuasive stance on a subject and defend your stance against others whose ideas conflict with your own.

Citation Practices

Now that we have explored different genres of academic writing, we will discuss a topic that relates to most of those genres: citation. No one is expected to memorize all of the rules of citation. What is important is learning when and why we cite our sources and what resources to use. Citing sources makes your argument stronger and removes the risk of plagiarism.
What is plagiarism?
Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional act of submitting work with another writer’s ideas or words without giving them credit.

Ways to Avoid Plagiarism

**Paraphrase:** explain the writer’s ideas using your own words. A paraphrase will contain all of the same information of the original passage but it needs to be completely reworded.

**Summarize:** write a shortened version of an author’s main ideas. You can summarize part of a piece of writing, a whole piece, or several pieces by the author. You will not necessarily need page numbers, but make note of any specific page numbers and article titles you are summarizing.

**PRO TIP #1:** When you are taking notes, use quotations when you are using the author’s exact words. That way you can be sure that you know which ideas are your own when you look back on your notes.

**PRO TIP #2:** When paraphrasing, make sure you change the words AND the word order. It helps to read one or two sentences at a time and then put the document out of sight as you try to recall the ideas. Write the page number(s) down for future reference.

Common Terms

**In-text Citations:** providing parenthetical information on sources within your essay anytime you use another writer’s ideas or words in your paper.

**References/Works Cited:** a list at the end of your paper indicating all of the sources you cited in the paper plus any other sources you used for background knowledge.
Incorporating Quotations Effectively

The suggestions on quoting and the sentence templates below are adapted from *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. Graff and Birkenstein encourage students to use their templates (you do not have to quote or cite *They Say/I Say* when using them). The concept of *They Say/I Say* is that a writer needs to put their own opinions (I Say) in context with what others have written on this topic (They Say).

**PRO TIP 1: Watch out for “Hit-and-Run” quoting.** This is a term for dropping a quote into the paper without giving any context or explaining the quote to your reader. It is very disorienting, and should be avoided.

**PRO TIP 2: Always Use the Quote Sandwich.** To effectively incorporate a quote, there are three steps: introduce the quote (who said it?), insert the quote (what did they say?), and then explain the quote (what does it mean and how does it relate to your argument?)

### Sentence Templates

**Introducing “standard views”**

1. Americans today tend to believe that _______.
2. The standard way of thinking about topic X has it that _______.
3. Many people assume that _______.

[Image of a sandwich with layers labeled “Introduce Quote,” “Explain Quote,” and “Quote”]
Showing who is saying what

1. Adding to X’s argument, I would point out that _______.
2. According to both X and Y, _______.
3. My view, however, contrary to what X has argued, is _______.
4. X overlooks what I consider an important point about _______.
5. I wholeheartedly endorse X’s point that _______.
6. X’s conclusions add weight to the argument that _______.

Introducing something implied or assumed

1. One implication of X’s treatment of _______ is that _______.
2. Although X does not say so directly/explicitly, he/she apparently assumes that _______.

Disagreeing, with reasons

1. While X raises good points on the topic of _______, he/she overlooks _______.
2. X’s claim that _______ rests upon the questionable assumption that _______.
3. I disagree with X’s view that _______ because, as recent research has shown, _______.

Establishing why your claims matter

1. Although X seems trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today’s concern over _______.
2. Ultimately, what is at stake here is _______.
3. My discussion of X is in fact addressing the larger matter of _______.
4. Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of ______, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about ______.

Entertaining objections

1. Of course, many will probably disagree with this claim that ______. (Note: When possible, try to provide more information about whom “many” refers to. Does it refer to many people in general? Most Westerners? Many religious scholars? Many feminists?)

2. Yet is it always true that ______? Is it always the case, as I have been suggesting, that ______?

3. Some readers might challenge my view that ______. After all, many believe that ______. Indeed, my own argument that ______ seems to ignore ______ and ______.

Making concessions while still standing your ground

1. Although I agree with X up to a point, I cannot accept his overall conclusion that ______.

2. Although I disagree with much of what X says, I fully endorse his final conclusion that ______.

3. X is right that ______, but she seems to be on more dubious ground when she claims that ______.

4. Whereas X provides ample evidence that ______, Y and Z’s research on ______ and ______ convinces me that ______ instead.

5. Proponents of X are right to argue that ______. But they exaggerate when they claim that ______.

6. While it is true that ______, it does not necessarily follow that ______.
Writing in the sciences

1. Experiments showing _______ and _______ had led scientists to propose _______.

2. Although most scientists attribute _______ to _______, X’s result _______ leads to the possibility that _______.

3. X and colleagues evaluated _______ to determine whether _______.

4. Because _______ does not account for _______, we instead used _______.

5. We measured _______ (sample size) subjects, and the average response was _______ (mean with units) with a range of _______ (lower value) to _______ (upper value).

Incorporating Sources

Research assignments will ask that you include several sources in your paper. As you try to accomplish that task, it is easy for the sources to take over the paper. You might think, “What could I possibly add to this topic? I am not an expert like these other researchers/scholars.”

However, any assignment should have your ideas as the focal point. Your readers want to know your stance on a topic, not just a report of other people’s ideas. You are guiding the reader along and showing them how you interpret your sources and connect them to your central claim.

Proper citation format shows your reader how to find your sources. The documentation style—i.e., the set of rules dictating how sources are cited and referenced—depends upon the purpose and context of the writing task. In academia, the most commonly used are the styles known as “APA” (American Psychological Association), “MLA” (Modern Language Association), and “Chicago Style.” In this section, you will find basic practices for citing and referencing sources in these three styles.
APA Format

APA stands for the American Psychological Association. This is the documentation style used most commonly in behavioral and social sciences, as well as business and nursing.

APA Conventions

In the sciences, the year a study was published is very important for understanding the context and significance of its findings. You need to include the year in every single citation in APA. That means every time you mention someone’s name, you need a year.

The sciences are focused on eliminating bias. That is one way to remember that you never use a scholar’s first name in APA—only last name and sometimes initials. The reader will not know the gender of the person being cited. Gendered pronouns (he/she) are also avoided in APA.

APA is all about being accurate, concise, and direct. Keep summaries short and to the point. With APA, you can easily “name drop” scholars within the same citation by separating with semicolons. Example: Many studies have shown that ice cream is awesome (Roberts, 1984; Jones, 2001; King, 2006).

Requires a title page with title of paper, student name, and institution name centered on the page. Page numbers should be on the right side of the heading and paper title on the left. The header on the title page should read “Running head:” followed by an abbreviated version of the title in all caps (on subsequent pages, the header will be the abbreviated title in all caps without the words “Running head”). See the title page example below from Purdue Online Writing Lab:
APA In-Text Citation Guidelines from Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

Note: APA style requires authors to use the past tense or present perfect tense when using signal phrases to describe earlier research, for example, Jones (1998) found or Jones (1998) has found...

APA Citation Basics

- When using APA format, follow the author-date method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the year of publication for the source should appear in the text, for example, (Jones, 1998), and a complete reference should appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

- If you are referring to an idea from another work but NOT directly quoting the material, or making reference to an entire book, article or other work, you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication and not the page number in your in-text reference. All sources that are cited in the text must appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

- Capitalize the first word after a dash or colon: "Defining Film Rhetoric: The Case of Hitchcock's Vertigo."

- Italicize the titles of longer works such as books, edited collections, movies, television series, documentaries, or albums: The Closing of the American Mind; The Wizard of Oz; Friends.

- Put quotation marks around the titles of shorter works such as journal articles, articles from edited collections, television series episodes, and song titles: "Multimedia Narration: Constructing Possible Worlds;" "The One Where Chandler Can't Cry."
APA Sample Title Page

Running head: APA SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

APA Sample Title Page:
Subtitle
Catherine Spalding
Spalding University

Short Quotations

If you are directly quoting from a work, you will need to include the author, year of publication, and page number for the reference (preceded by "p."). Introduce the quotation with a signal phrase that includes the author's last name followed by the date of publication in parentheses. Note: page numbers are almost always recommended in APA, but they are only necessary when using direct quotes or statistics from a source (usually not for summaries).

According to Jones (1998), "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (p. 199).

Jones (1998) found "students often had difficulty using APA style" (p. 199); what implications does this have for teachers?
If the author is not named in a signal phrase, place the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number in parentheses after the quotation.

She stated, "Students often had difficulty using APA style" (Jones, 1998, p. 199), but she did not offer an explanation as to why.

**Long Quotations**

Place direct quotations that are 40 words or longer in a free-standing block of typewritten lines and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented 1/2 inch from the left margin, i.e., in the same place you would begin a new paragraph. Type the entire quotation on the new margin, and indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation 1/2 inch from the new margin. Maintain double-spacing throughout. The parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark.

Jones's (1998) study found the following:

Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help. (p. 199)

**Citing an Author or Authors**

**A Work by Two Authors:** Name both authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses each time you cite the work. Use the word "and" between the authors' names within the text and use the ampersand in parentheses.

Research by Wegener and Petty (1994) supports...

(Wegener & Petty, 1994)
A Work by Three to Five Authors: List all the authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses the first time you cite the source. Use the word "and" between the authors' names within the text and use the ampersand in parentheses.

(Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993)

In subsequent citations, only use the first author's last name followed by "et al." in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

(Kernis et al., 1993)

Six or More Authors: Use the first author's name followed by et al. in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

Harris et al. (2001) argued...

(Harris et al., 2001)

Organization as an Author: If the author is an organization or a government agency, mention the organization in the signal phrase or in the parenthetical citation the first time you cite the source.

According to the American Psychological Association (2000),...

If the organization has a well-known abbreviation, include the abbreviation in brackets the first time the source is cited and then use only the abbreviation in later citations.

First citation: (Mothers Against Drunk Driving [MADD], 2000)

Second citation: (MADD, 2000)
Unknown Author: If the work does not have an author, cite the source by its title in the signal phrase or use the first word or two in the parentheses. Titles of books and reports are italicized; titles of articles, chapters, and web pages are in quotation marks.

A similar study was done of students learning to format research papers ("Using APA," 2001).

Personal Communication: For interviews, letters, e-mails, and other person-to-person communication, cite the communicator's name, the fact that it was personal communication, and the date of the communication. Do not include personal communication in the reference list.


A. P. Smith also claimed that many of her students had difficulties with APA style (personal communication, November 3, 2002).

Sources without Page Numbers: When an electronic source lacks page numbers, you should try to include information that will help readers find the passage being cited. When an electronic document has numbered paragraphs, use the abbreviation "para." followed by the paragraph number.

(Hall, 2001, para. 5)

If the paragraphs are not numbered and the document includes headings, provide the appropriate heading and specify the paragraph under that heading.

According to Smith (1997), ... (Mind over Matter section, para. 6).
APA Reference List Guidelines from Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

In the below citation guidelines, note that every line after the first is indented. This is called a “Hanging Indent” and should be used for all References. In Microsoft Word, highlight all of your cited sources and right-click to select “Paragraph,” then click the drop-down next to “Special” and select “Hanging Indent.” Click OK and all of your entries should be formatted correctly.

Single Author: Last name first, followed by author initials.


Two Authors: List by their last names and initials. Use the ampersand instead of “and.”


Three to Seven Authors: List by last names and initials; commas separate author names, while the last author name is preceded again by ampersand.


More Than Seven Authors: List by last names and initials; commas separate author names. After the sixth author’s name, use an ellipses in place of the author names. Then provide the final author name. There should be no more than seven names.
Miller, F. H., Choi, M. J., Angeli, L. L., Harland, A. A., Stamos, J. A.,
blind and low-vision user. *Technical Communication, 57*, 323-
335.

**Organization as Author:**

**Unknown Author:**
*Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary* (10th ed.). (1993). Spring-
field, MA: Merriam-Webster.

**Two or More Works by the Same Author:** Use the author's name for
all entries and list the entries by the year (earliest comes first).


For more examples of APA citations or references, go to
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html
MLA Format

MLA stands for Modern Language Association. This is the documentation style used most commonly in the liberal arts and humanities.

MLA Conventions

The liberal arts and humanities focus on the text itself rather than the year of publication. In-text citations do not include the year of publication, but you always need the author’s name and page number(s) whether you are paraphrasing, summarizing, or quoting.

There is less attention on bias in MLA as opposed to APA. Use first and last name when an author/scholar is introduced and last name thereafter. It is okay to use gendered pronouns he and she.

No title page is required. The first page of the paper will contain student’s name, professor’s name, class name, and date in the upper left corner and the title of the paper will be centered above the first paragraph. Page numbers are to appear in the upper right corner. Page 1 does not need the student’s last name in the header (since it is already provided in the left heading), but every subsequent page should have the student’s last name and the page number (Miller 5).
When writing in MLA, you are more likely to have to quote someone indirectly because primary sources such as literary and historical texts will often be quoted in secondary sources (articles that interpret those primary texts). When quoting indirectly, use the phrase “qtd. in” followed by the author of the secondary source. Example: (qtd. in Johnson 17).

Papers should be written in Times New Roman, 12 point font, double-spaced.

MLA In-Text Citation Guidelines from Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

Basic In-Text Citation Rules
In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what is known as parenthetical citation. This method involves placing relevant source information in parentheses after a quote or a paraphrase.

General Guidelines
The source information required in a parenthetical citation depends (1.) upon the source medium (e.g. Print, Web, DVD) and (2.) upon the source’s entry on the Works Cited (bibliography) page.

Any source information that you provide in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. More specifically, whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited List.

Short Quotations
To indicate short quotations (four typed lines or fewer of prose or three lines of verse) in your text, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks. Provide the author and specific page citation (in the case of verse, provide line numbers) in the text, and include a complete reference on the Works Cited page. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and semicolons should appear after the parenthetical citation. Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are a part of the quoted passage but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your text. For example, when quoting short passages of prose, use the following
examples:

According to some, dreams express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184), though others disagree.

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (184).

Is it possible that dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184)?

When short (fewer than three lines of verse) quotations from poetry, mark breaks in short quotations of verse with a slash, ( / ), at the end of each line of verse (a space should precede and follow the slash). If a stanza break occurs during the quotation, use a double slash ( // ).

Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all I remember" (11-12).

Long Quotations

For quotations that are more than four lines of prose or three lines of verse, place quotations in a free-standing block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented ½ inch from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. Your parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks. (You should maintain double-spacing throughout your essay.) For example, when citing more than four lines of prose, use the following examples:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)

When citing long sections (more than three lines) of poetry, keep formatting as close to the original as possible.
In his poem "My Papa's Waltz," Theodore Roethke explores his childhood with his father:

The whiskey on your breath
Could make a small boy dizzy;
But I hung on like death:
Such waltzing was not easy.
We Romped until the pans
Slid from the kitchen shelf;
My mother's countenance
Could not unfrown itself. (qtd. in Shrodes, Fine stone, Shugrue 202)

When citing two or more paragraphs, use block quotation format, even if the passage from the paragraphs is less than four lines. If you cite more than one paragraph, the first line of the second paragraph should be indented an extra 1/4 inch to denote a new paragraph.

In "American Origins of the Writing-across-the-Curriculum Movement," David Russell argues,

Writing has been an issue in American secondary and higher education since papers and examinations came into wide use in the 1870s, eventually driving out formal recitation and oral examination. . . .

From its birth in the late nineteenth century, progressive education has wrestled with the conflict within industrial society between pressure to increase specialization of knowledge and of professional work (upholding disciplinary standards) and pressure to integrate more fully an ever-widening number of citizens into intellectually meaningful activity within mass society (promoting social equity). . . . (3)

Adding or Omitting Words in Quotations
If you add a word or words in a quotation, you should put brackets around the words to indicate that they are not part of the original text.

Jan Harold Brunvand, in an essay on urban legends, states, "some individuals [who retell urban legends] make a point of learning every rumor or tale" (78).
If you omit a word or words from a quotation, you should indicate the deleted word or words by using ellipsis marks, which are three periods ( . . . ) preceded and followed by a space. For example:

In an essay on urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand notes that "some individuals make a point of learning every recent rumor or tale . . . and in a short time a lively exchange of details occurs" (78).

When omitting words from poetry quotations, use a standard three-period ellipses; however, when omitting one or more full lines of poetry, space several periods to about the length of a complete line in the poem:

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration . . . (22-24, 28-30)

**In-text Citations for Print Sources with Known Author**

For Print sources like books, magazines, scholarly journal articles, and newspapers, provide a signal word or phrase (usually the author's last name) and a page number. If you provide the signal word/phrase in the sentence, you do not need to include it in the parenthetical citation.

Human beings have been described by Kenneth Burke as "symbol-using animals" (3).

Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).

**In-Text Citations for Print Sources by a Corporate Author**

When a source has a corporate author, it is acceptable to use the name of the corporation followed by the page number for the in-text citation. You should also use abbreviations (e.g., nat'l for national) where appropriate, so as to avoid interrupting the flow of reading with overly long parenthetical citations.
In-Text Citations for Print Sources with no Known Author
When a source has no known author, use a shortened title of the work instead of an author name. Place the title in quotation marks if it’s a short work (such as an article) or italicize it if it’s a longer work (e.g. plays, books, television shows, entire Web sites) and provide a page number if it is available.

We see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has “more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change . . .” ("Impact of Global Warming").

MLA Works Cited Guidelines from Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

In the below citation guidelines, note that every line after the first is indented. This is called a “Hanging Indent” and should be used for all Works Cited. In Microsoft Word, highlight all of your cited sources and right-click to select “Paragraph,” then click the drop-down next to “Special” and select “Hanging Indent.” Click OK and all of your entries should be formatted correctly.

Basic Book Format
The author’s name or a book with a single author’s name appears in last name, first name format. The basic form for a book citation is:

Last Name, First Name. Title of Book. City of Publication, Publisher, Publication Date.

*Note: the City of Publication should only be used if the book was published before 1900, if the publisher has offices in more than one country, or if the publisher is unknown outside North America.

Book with One Author


Book with More Than One Author
When a book has multiple authors, order the authors in the same way they are presented in the book. The first given name appears in last name, first name format; subsequent author names appear in first name last name format.


If there are three or more authors, list only the first author followed by the phrase et al. (Latin for "and others") in place of the subsequent authors' names. (Note that there is a period after “al” in “et al.” Also note that there is never a period after the “et” in “et al.”).


A Work in an Anthology, Reference, or Collection
Works may include an essay in an edited collection or anthology, or a chapter of a book. The basic form is for this sort of citation is as follows:

Last name, First name. "Title of Essay." *Title of Collection*, edited by Editor's Name(s), Publisher, Year, Page range of entry.


Two or More Books by the Same Author
List works alphabetically by title. (Remember to ignore articles like A, An, and The.) Provide the author's name in last name, first name format for the first entry only. For each subsequent entry by the same author, use three hyphens and a period.

Book by a Corporate Author or Organization
A corporate author may include a commission, a committee, a government agency, or a group that does not identify individual members on the title page. List the names of corporate authors in the place where an author's name typically appears at the beginning of the entry.


Book with No Author
List by title of the book. Incorporate these entries alphabetically just as you would with works that include an author name.


Article in a Reference Book (e.g. Encyclopedias, Dictionaries)
For entries in encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other reference works, cite the piece as you would any other work in a collection but do not include the publisher information. Also, if the reference book is organized alphabetically, as most are, do not list the volume or the page number of the article or item.


A Multivolume Work
When citing only one volume of a multivolume work, include the volume number after the work's title, or after the work's editor or translator.


An Introduction, Preface, Foreword, or Afterword
When citing an introduction, a preface, a foreword, or an afterword, write the name of the author(s) of the piece you are citing.


*If the writer of the piece is different from the author of the complete*
work, then write the full name of the principal work's author after the word "By."


**Book Published Before 1900**
Original copies of books published before 1900 are usually defined by their place of publication rather than the publisher. Unless you are using a newer edition, cite the city of publication where you would normally cite the publisher.


**The Bible**


**A Government Publication**
Cite the author of the publication if the author is identified. Otherwise, start with the name of the national government, followed by the agency (including any subdivisions or agencies) that serves as the organizational author. For congressional documents, be sure to include the number of the Congress and the session. US government documents are typically published by the Government Printing Office.


For more examples of MLA citations or Works Cited, go to

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)
Chicago Style

*The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)* is used by some disciplines within the humanities, such as history, art, literature, anthropology, religious studies, and philosophy. It is sometimes referred to as the “Editor’s Bible” because there are many style conventions for grammar and usage that are followed religiously by publishers and writers. Chicago Style uses two different styles: “author-date” (similar to APA) and Notes-Bibliography (NB). Here are some terms to know:

**Footnote:** Numbered notes at the bottom of a page—usually only a few sentences—that further explain sources cited on that page.

**Endnote:** Numbered notes at the end of an article, chapter, or book that provide lengthy details and descriptions of a source.

**Bibliography:** an alphabetical list of full citations for works referenced within a text. A bibliography might not be necessary if all of the source information needed is provided in the footnotes or endnotes.

You can insert footnotes or endnotes using the “References” tab in Microsoft Word.

Here is an example of how a footnote or endnote should look:

Footnotes can be tedious, but they are kind of fun once you get used to them! Some writers have used them in very innovative ways.¹

---

¹ Dave Eggers and Mark Z. Danielewski are both known for experimenting with self-referential footnotes.
Guidelines for Formatting and Documenting sources in Chicago Style from Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

General CMOS Guidelines

- Text should be consistently double-spaced, including block quotations, notes, bibliography entries, table titles, and figure captions.
- For block quotations, which are also called extracts:
  - A prose quotation of five or more lines, or more than 100 words, should be blocked.
  - CMOS recommends blocking two or more lines of poetry.
  - A blocked quotation does not get enclosed in quotation marks.
  - A blocked quotation must always begin a new line.
  - Blocked quotations should be indented with the word processor’s indentation tool.
  - Page numbers begin in the header of the first page of text with Arabic number 1.
  - Subheadings should be used for longer papers.
  - CMOS recommends you devise your own format but use consistency as your guide.

Major Paper Sections

Title Page:
According to Chicago style, class papers will either include a title page or include the title on the first page of the text. Use the following guidelines should your instructor or context require a title page:

The title should be centered a third of the way down the page.
Your name, class information, and the date should follow several
lines later.

For subtitles, end the title line with a colon and place the subtitle on

Chicago Style:

Sample Title Page

Andy Dwyer

Religious Studies 236: Women and Religion

July 31, 2018
the line below the title.

Double-space each line of the title page.

**Main Body**

Titles mentioned in the text, notes, or bibliography are capitalized “headline-style,” meaning first words of titles and subtitles and any important words thereafter should be capitalized. Titles in the text as well as in notes and bibliographies are treated with quotation marks or italics based on the type of work they name.

Book and periodical titles (titles of larger works) should be italicized.

Article and chapter titles (titles of shorter works) should be enclosed in double quotation marks.

The titles of most poems should be enclosed in double quotation marks, but the titles of very long poems should be italicized.

Titles of plays should be italicized.

Otherwise, take a minimalist approach to capitalization.

For example, use lowercase terms to describe periods, except in the case of proper nouns (e.g., “the colonial period,” vs. “the Victorian era”).

A prose quotation of five or more lines should be “blocked.” The block quotation should match the surrounding text, and it takes no quotation marks. To off-set the block quote from surrounding text, indent the entire quotation using the word processor’s indentation tool. It is also possible to off-set the block quotation by using a different or smaller font than the surrounding text.

**References**

Label the first page of your back matter, and your comprehensive list of sources, “Bibliography” (for Notes and Bibliography style) or “References” (for Author Date style).

Leave two blank lines between “Bibliography” or “References” and your first entry.

Leave one blank line between remaining entries.

List entries in letter-by-letter alphabetical order according to the first word in each entry.

Use “and,” not an ampersand, “&,” for multi-author entries.
For two to three authors, write out all names.

For four to ten authors, write out all names in the bibliography but only the first author’s name plus “et al.” in notes and parenthetical citations.

When a source has no identifiable author, cite it by its title, both on the references page and in shortened form (up to four keywords from that title) in parenthetical citations throughout the text.

Write out publishers’ names in full.

Do not use access dates unless publication dates are unavailable.

If you cannot ascertain the publication date of a *printed work*, use the abbreviation “n.d.”

Provide DOIs instead of URLs whenever possible.

If you cannot name a specific page number when called for, you have other options: section (sec.), equation (eq.), volume (vol.), or note (n.).

For more examples of CMOS citations or references, go to

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html
Grammar & Style
Everyone has a unique voice in their writing. Writing in academic style does not mean erasing your voice. However, learning to effectively control grammar and style will make you a more effective and persuasive writer. Below you will find some guidelines on topics Writing Center Consultants discuss with students regularly.

Common Spelling Misusages
Homophones: Words that sound alike and are often unconsciously misspelled. See charts below for examples. If you are consciously aware of these when writing, you will make fewer errors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Than</th>
<th>Then</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Makes a comparison</td>
<td>Refers to a time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Its</th>
<th>It’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shows Possession</td>
<td>Contraction for it is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verb form</td>
<td>Noun form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accept</th>
<th>Except</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To receive or agree</td>
<td>Preposition meaning “all but” or “other than”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lose</th>
<th>Loose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opposite of win</td>
<td>Opposite of tight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commas

Punctuation

Commas can be a tricky form of punctuation. Most of us were taught to put a comma whenever there is a “natural pause,” but that is not always correct. We all pause at different points when we are speaking or thinking; that does not necessarily mean you need a comma there. Here are some guidelines to determine when you need to use a comma.

1. Use commas to separate words and word groups with a series of three or more. Example: He went to the market and bought milk, eggs, butter, and sugar.

2. Use a comma to separate two adjectives when the word and can be inserted between them. Example: She is a strong, healthy woman.

3. Use a comma in a compound sentence when connecting two independent clauses (complete grammatical units of subject-verb-object) with coordinating conjunctions For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So (FANBOYS, for short). For example, the two independent clauses I have cleaned almost the entire house and Alex is still cleaning the kitchen can be combined into a compound sentence by adding a comma and one of the coordinating con-
junctions (FANBOYS):

I have cleaned almost the entire house, but Alex is still cleaning the kitchen.

*Note: The comma can be omitted if the two independent clauses are both very short. Example: I sing and he dances.*

4. Use a comma to set off an interjection. Examples:

Wow, I can’t believe those gas prices.

The rise of reality shows, for example, speaks to the breakdown of public and private spaces in a globally connected culture.

5. Use a comma to insert a detail or description into a sentence. Note that the sentence is still complete and makes sense without the detail or description set off by the commas. Example:

The price of the bucket, $24.99, seemed exorbitant.

6. Use a comma after an introductory phrase. Anytime you start a sentence with a preposition, like *if, when, or while,* you probably have an introductory phrase. Example:

If you are unsure about the assignment, ask your professor.

7. Use a comma between a month and year and—if the year is within the middle of a sentence—use a comma after the year. Examples:

I was born in May, 1980. Stephanie began classes on August 22, 2009, at Spalding University.

8. Use a comma at the opening and after the close of a letter or email. Example:

Dear Ms. Donovan,

Thank you again for giving me an extension on the paper assignment. I will submit it by noon tomorrow.

Best,
Billy Zane
Semicolons (;)
The semicolon is a common form of punctuation in academic writing. A semicolon allows you to **connect two complete sentences** that are closely related. Usually the second sentence is an elaboration on the first.

Writing papers can be mentally taxing; some students take naps to help their minds recuperate.

Semicolons can ONLY take the place of a comma when items within a list contain commas.

Patients were excluded from the study if they had a family history of heart, liver, or kidney issues; were pregnant or nursing; or were taking medications for psychiatric treatment.

Colons (:)
Colons are often used to give a list of examples.

There are several stakeholders when it comes to school safety: students, teachers, parents, administrators, campus security officers, and staff members.

Colons are sometimes used in place of semicolons (connecting two complete sentences) if the second sentence defines or explains the first sentence.

There is one rule of fight club: don’t talk about fight club.

Em Dash (—)
An em dash is formed by using two hyphens with no spaces immediately before or after the hyphens (or by hitting Ctrl, Alt, and the hyphen key in the number section of the keyboard). Em Dashes are used for interjections. Commas or parentheses can also be used for interjections, and it is a good idea to alternate punctuation symbols to avoid repetition. Overuse of em dashes can make writing seem choppy or jumpy, whereas overuse of commas or parentheses for interjecting thoughts can seem too long-winded.
En Dash (–)
An en dash is a slightly elongated hyphen formed by hitting Ctrl then the hyphen key in the number section of the keyboard. An en dash is used to replace the words “through” or “to” when showing a period of time. Example: February–March. En dashes are also used for prefixes such as “pre–World War I.”

PROTIP: You can remember that the Em dash is longer than an en dash because an “m” has two humps and an “n” only has one.

Hyphen (-)
Hyphens are used for compound words or two words working together as one adjective. Example: “Did you watch that eye-opening documentary?” Not needed if used at the end of a sentence because it does not affect clarity: “That documentary was eye opening.”

Italics
Used for titles of larger works like books, films, and magazines. They can also be used to show inner monologue in creative writing:

Jane covered her face and ducked into the cereal aisle.

What is Mom doing here? She should be at work.

Single and Double Quotations
Double quotations (”) are used to indicate dialogue in a story, cite someone’s words, or represent the title of a shorter work such as an article, television episode, or chapter title.

Single quotes (’) are used to show a quote within a quote:

“What we mean we say ‘I Do’: An Exploration of Marriage Vows in America.”

For both types of quotations, all end punctuation—periods, commas, question marks—goes inside the quotes for nonacademic writing. However, in academic writing, periods and commas will appear after the in-text citation. Question marks are still inside quotes in academic writing and a period is used after the in-text citation. See below:

“Here is an example” (Meijers 2003, p. 3).

“Does that make sense?” (Meijers 2003, p.5).
Style Tips

Active Voice

For most types of writing, audiences prefer active voice because the actor and their actions are clear.

Active: Destiny searched the article until she found useful quotes for the assigned paper.

   Subject: she
   Actions: searched, found

In passive voice, the object precedes the verb instead of the subject preceding the verb. Sentences can become unclear or wordy because the action is indirect.

Passive: The article was searched by Destiny until useful quotes were found for the assigned paper.

In the example above, the sentence is unnecessarily wordy and makes the subject or actor in the sentence less obvious.

When using active voice, alternating active verbs makes for less repetitive sentence structures. Instead of using the same verb every time you quote an author ("Jones says..."), consider substituting these verbs:

   states, remarks, notes, proclaims, observes, writes, comments, criticizes, argues, proposes, questions.

Avoid overuse of “Be” verbs (is, am, are, was, were) because they often indicate passive voice. When you want to use one of these verbs, ask yourself: What is the relationship between the two elements I am linking? Can I use an active verb to better communicate the nature of that relationship?

PRO TIP: In certain situations, passive voice may be more useful because you need to remove the actor and focus on the effect. This can be beneficial in the sciences wherein the emphasis is on remaining objective. Therefore erasing the “actor” who performed the study is
a persuasive move.

**Example:** The test tubes were examined at three weeks, six weeks, and nine weeks to determine growth of probiotic cultures.

Passive voice occasionally helps in business communications as well, when you need to remove the actor to reduce blame in a situation.

**Example:** Orders were delayed and the computers were not shipped within the allotted time.

**Sentence Variety**

Writing can sound repetitive if sentence structures are too similar. One way to avoid this is by alternating short and long sentences to break up the rhythm. See below example from Purdue OWL:

**Example:** The Winslow family visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some Native American art. In Anchorage stores they found some excellent examples of soapstone carvings. But they couldn’t find a dealer selling any of the woven wall hangings they wanted. They were very disappointed when they left Anchorage empty-handed.

**Revision:** The Winslow family visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some Native American art, such as soapstone carvings and wall hangings. Anchorage stores had many soapstone items available. Still, they were disappointed to learn that wall hangings, which they had especially wanted, were difficult to find. Sadly, they left empty-handed.

Another way to vary your sentences is to make sure they do not start with the same word, since that can cause repetition. Be especially aware of overusing these words at the start of a sentence: *The, There, I, It, This.*

**Sentence Fragments (from Purdue OWL)**

Fragments are incomplete sentences. Usually, fragments are pieces of sentences that have become disconnected from the main clause. One of the easiest ways to correct them is to remove the period between the fragment and the main clause. Other kinds of punctuation may be needed for the newly combined sentence.
Below are some examples with the fragments shown in red. Punctuation and/or words added to make corrections are highlighted in blue. Notice that the fragment is frequently a dependent clause or long phrase that follows the main clause.

**Fragment**: Purdue offers many majors in engineering. *Such as electrical, chemical, and industrial engineering.*

**Possible Revision**: Purdue offers many majors in engineering, such as electrical, chemical, and industrial engineering.

**Fragment**: Coach Dietz exemplified this behavior by walking off the field in the middle of a game. *Leaving her team at a time when we needed her.*

**Possible Revision**: Coach Dietz exemplified this behavior by walking off the field in the middle of a game, leaving her team at a time when we needed her.

**Fragment**: I need to find a new roommate. *Because the one I have now isn't working out too well.*

**Possible Revision**: I need to find a new roommate because the one I have now isn't working out too well.

**Fragment**: The current city policy on housing is incomplete as it stands. *Which is why we believe the proposed amendments should be passed.*

**Possible Revision**: Because the current city policy on housing is incomplete as it stands, we believe the proposed amendments should be passed.

**Run-On Sentences**
The term run-on sentences is often misused; a run-on sentence is not just a long sentence. It is perfectly fine—and even expected—to have longer sentences in academic writing. A run-on is a sentence is actually defined as two complete sentences that are fused together and lack the required comma and coordinating conjunction (remember the FANBOYS: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So). A comma splice is
when a comma is added, but the conjunction is missing.

**Run-on Sentence (no comma or conjunction):**
Many believe Salinger was a reclusive man most people do not know how he behaved in his private life.

**Comma Splice (no conjunction)**
Many believe Salinger was a reclusive man, most people do not know how he behaved in his private life.

**Revised Sentence:**
Many believe Salinger was a reclusive man, but most people do not know how he behaved in his private life.

**Parallelism**
In writing, parallelism means that lists of words or phrases should have the same grammatical structure. It unifies and clarifies ideas for the reader.

**Example:** Political activism can mean volunteering, advocacy for a cause, or you can engage in political dialogues with friends and family.

**Revision:** Political activism can mean volunteering at an organization, advocating for a cause, or engaging in political dialogues with friends and family.

Notice in the revision that all items in the list start with a verb ending in –ing followed by a prepositional phrase (like at an organization), which makes the similarities between those items clearer.

**Usage of Relative Pronouns That, Which, Who, and Whom**
Relative pronouns serve similar functions in a sentence, but they are used in different situations.

**That** is used for a clause containing identifying characteristics.

**Example:** He stole the shoes that his brother had just purchased.

**Which** sets off a clause providing extra details unnecessary to the topic. There is always a comma before a “which” clause because it is
an interjection, not a main part of the sentence.

**Example:** Most teens think they should look like actors on television, which is an unrealistic standard.

**Who** is used for identifying a human subject, the one performing the action in a sentence.

**Example:** The staff member who approached me said the library would be closing soon.

**Whom** describes the human object of the sentence, or the one receiving the action. Usually a preposition like to or for comes before whom.

**Example:** She had to invite her real estate agent for whom she was very grateful. She chose not to invite acquaintances whom she disliked.

**PRO TIP:** In formal writing, it is common to avoid ending a sentence in a preposition. The reason for this, in theory, is that it is unclear what the preposition is modifying if it comes at the end of a sentence. The solution? Usually, a relative pronoun (that, which, who, or whom) is contained within a sentence ending in a preposition. Move the preposition in front of the relative pronoun and make sure you using *which* or *whom* (object forms), not *who* or *this* (subject forms).

**Incorrect Sentence:** I do not remember who this quotation came from.

**Corrected Sentence:** I do not remember from whom this quotation came.

Sometimes it is better to avoid wordiness and completely rewrite the sentence as shown below.

**Alternate Correction:** I cannot remember the exact origin of this quotation.

**Avoiding Contractions**

In general, academic writers opt to spell out words rather than using contractions, since contractions can seem informal (example: *they are* instead of *they’re*). However, contractions can be used in reflective, professional, or creative writing in which the tone is not supposed to be overly formal.
Using *i.e.* and *e.g.*

These terms are abbreviations of Latin words that are often used in academic writing as shorthand.

The term *i.e.* is an abbreviation of “id est,” which translates as “that is.” You can use it when you want to clarify a point. It is the equivalent of saying “in other words” (you can remember that *i.e.* and *in other words* both start with *i*). You always put a comma before and after *i.e.* because it is like an interjection.

**Example:** Gatsby is a man of his time, *i.e.*, he is a product of “new money” and disillusionment in the modernist era.

The term *e.g.* is an abbreviation of *exempli gratia*, which translates as “for example.” Like *i.e.*, *e.g.* is used as an interjection and requires a comma before and after.

**Example:** Some Americans who teach English in Korea only learn “survival Korean,” *e.g.*, *hello*, *thank you*, and *goodbye*.

**Other Grammar Resources**

The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation:  
[https://www.grammarbook.com/grammar/cnt_gram.asp](https://www.grammarbook.com/grammar/cnt_gram.asp)

Purdue Online Writing Lab (Click on “General Writing” Tab):  
[https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)
Conclusion

In this handbook, we have walked you through the phases of the writing process, guidelines for academic writing, genres, citation styles, and the mechanics of formal writing. As you practice writing in your student career and later in your professional career, you will continue to gain confidence and control over your craft.

Good writing is not a birthright; it is a practice. Every book you have read has gone through multiple stages of feedback and revision. Check the acknowledgment page of your favorite book and see all of the readers whom the writer has thanked for their feedback. Writers need an audience to make sense of their ideas. Learning how to accept and give feedback is a necessary skill for writing, and for life!

Your instructors, peers, family, and friends are all readers who can help you reach your goals, but there are also people here on campus who are trained to give specialized one-on-one feedback on your writing. The Writing Center, located on the second floor of the Spalding library, is a place where you can talk to a Writing Consultant at any stage of the writing process. Consultants are undergraduate and graduate students who have been hand picked and trained to work with students, faculty, and staff on their writing projects. You can contact The Writing Center at 502-873-4494 or email them at writingcenter@spalding.edu to schedule an appointment. Visit their website at library.spalding.edu/writing-center.

Happy writing!

Write now.
Works Cited


The Writing Lab, The Owl at Purdue, and Purdue University (1995-2018).