

HOW TO WRITE A TERM PAPER

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I. Formal Outline

1. Title Page

- Upper section: university, semester, title of class, instructor's name
- Middle section: title of paper
- Lower section: author's name, course of studies, semesters studied, address, e-mail, date of submission, student registration number

2. Table of Contents or Index

- may be counted either as page 1 or as page 0 (either way, the number doesn't show)
- Example:

1. Introduction	2
2. Main Part I	3
2.1 First Argument	3
2.2 Second Argument	5
3. Main Part II	7
3.1 First Argument	8
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4. Conclusion	12
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- Hint: Word can automatically produce a table of contents for your paper if you follow the heading rules (see Einfügen > Referenz > Index und Verzeichnisse)!

NOTE: Please note that this is merely an example. You may structure your paper in many different ways, but please remember

- ✓ to avoid over-fragmentation (one or two paragraphs hardly constitute a chapter)
- ✓ to make clear connections between chapters
- ✓ to explain at the beginning of each chapter what its main argument is and to draw intermediary conclusions at its end
- ✓ to justify the choice of and actively use in you analysis theoretical or historical concepts (should you write a historical or theoretical chapter in which you introduce such concepts)

3. The Actual Paper

Length:

Module 201: approx. 3500 words

Module 203: approx. 4000 words

Master and pre-master modules (B.EP.50a/b and higher): approx. 7500 words

NOTE: Please consult the module catalogues for your module and for updates.

Layout:

- font: Times New Roman or Arial
- size: 12 for main text, 12 for indented quotes (indentation: 2,54 cm)
- spacing: 1,5-space for the main text, 1,5 for indented quotes
- margins: 2,5 cm on the left, right, top, and bottom; though many lecturers will ask you to leave 4-5 cm either left or right

[NOTE: the page of your document already has default margins, so please do not add additional margins to those]

4. Bibliography or Works Cited

You have to include a list of each work cited in your paper. If you want to include sources you have consulted but not actually cited, you may list them under the heading “Works Consulted”.

The entries are listed alphabetically by the author’s last name, works by the same author are sorted by title. (For details see “Documentation of sources”)

II. Deciding on a Topic and Drafting a Thesis Statement

Choose your topic according to individual preferences (interests, abilities, knowledge) and the topic of the seminar (general topic, in-class discussions, questions raised, critical and theoretical texts discussed, notes taken during the seminar).

You need to know what you want to write about and be as specific as possible. If you decide on a specific text, for example, you do not need to include all the information you consider relevant about the work in general, but rather narrow down or limit your scope in a practical and specific sense, meaning only include information that is relevant to your thesis. Move away from the holistic *Referat* approach to developing your own thesis with which you read the text.

If you wish to write about Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, it would not make a lot of sense to call the paper simply “Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*” because it would be much too unspecific and you would never be able to cover all aspects that can be found in the novel. Instead, think about aspects or elements in a text that you find relevant and interesting OR: a theoretical approach with which you want to read the text.

Examples:

“Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* as a Godwinian novel”

“The family ideal in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*”

“Education in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*”

“Mirroring and *Doppelgänger* in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*”

If you are not sure whether you have sufficiently narrowed down your topic, the following three questions may help:

- a) **What?** – What is the topic of your paper? What are you dealing with?
- b) **How?** – What methods do you use for your analysis?
- c) **In what order?** – In what order do you present the main arguments of your paper?

III. Structure and Argumentation

A term paper should adhere to logical argumentation and be consistent in its structure which follows a certain scheme:

1. Abstract / Introduction

- Gives the reader a clear idea of what the paper is about
- Length: 1-2 pages
- Includes (suggestions)
 - a) your topic and thesis statement, i.e., what you intend to examine in your paper
 - b) your method: i.e., how you intend to conduct your analysis (approach, selected aspects for discussion and analysis, theoretical background, etc.)
 - c) short overview of the main trends of criticism relevant to your topic
 - d) your position in relation to b)

You may begin your paper like this (example!):

Criticism of Margaret Laurence's novel *The Diviners* includes essays and books on a large variety of topics, such as metafiction, ethnicity, myth, history, the author's Scottish background and its influence on her work, autobiographical elements, regionalism, as well as feminist readings of her work. This paper expands on the topic of memory and imagination as it emerges from the novel. I maintain that in *The Diviners* memory is presented as an active process of recreation of past events and feelings, on the one hand, and as a process of reconstruction of place and identity, on the other.

In her memoir *Dance on the Earth* Laurence makes the distinction between those memories of her childhood of which she is herself aware and which she can actually remember experiencing, and those memories which were transmitted to her by other people (24). This distinction, however, does not allow for the claim of accuracy and objectivity in connection with either of these two kinds of memories. In *The Diviners* Morag revises her childhood with the aid of photographs. She calls the events evoked by them "totally invented memories" (Laurence, *Diviners* 18) and qualifies them as "quite untrue. Or maybe true or maybe not" (Laurence, *Diviners* 16). She can paradoxically remember composing her memories even though she is no longer able to identify the facts that have generated them. [etc.]

2. Main Part (this is not a title)

The main part of your paper contains the actual development of your line of argumentation. Here you bring arguments to demonstrate the thesis of your introduction and elaborate on the aspects you have mentioned in your introduction.

The Paragraph

What is a PARAGRAPH?

- a unit of meaning in a longer essay
- essential unit of an essay
- consists of several sentences: topic sentence and explanatory sentences

- **One-sentence paragraphs are a no-no.**
- contains and elaborates on one main idea (the gist of the paragraph) expressed in the topic sentence
- the other sentences contain arguments, examples, descriptions, explanations, illustrating the topic sentence
- the place of the topic sentence in the paragraph may vary
- the topic sentence is rather general, whereas the other sentences are meant to make its meaning more concrete, illustrating the topic sentence
- a paragraph has to be coherent in itself, but it also contributes to the coherence of the entire essay; paragraphs have to follow one another logically and apparently “naturally”
- if you find that the link between two paragraphs is missing, insert a transition (a sentence, a connective, another paragraph) to make the reader understand the connection
- see also use of connectives below
- an essay consists of (an) introductory paragraph/s, body paragraphs and (a) concluding paragraph/s; in longer papers, these are the introduction, main part, and conclusion, in which each section or chapter has the structure of an essay
- please always **indent** (“einrücken”) paragraphs

CONNECTING paragraphs

In order to make sure that your essay reads fluently and that your argument is well structured, use connectives or transitions to show how your ideas connect and derive logically from one another. You may also use connectives within a paragraph. Here are some of the most common connectives and conjunctive adverbs:

- accordingly, as a result, consequently, subsequently, in conclusion, therefore, hence, thus, in this way, likewise
- besides, furthermore, moreover, even more, what is more, in addition, first(ly)/second(ly), etc., finally, in the first place, next, then, also
- still, nevertheless, nonetheless, however, now, even so
- for example, for instance, similarly, in other words, that is, specifically
- on the contrary, on the one hand, on the other hand, conversely, instead, otherwise
- as a matter of fact, indeed, certainly, actually, in fact, after all
- anyhow, anyway, at any rate, of course
- at the same time, meanwhile

HOW should I use connectives?

- they are used to join independent clauses within a paragraph and to create a connection between two different paragraphs, i.e. to ease the transition from one set of ideas to the other
- they help to set emphases, create contrasts, add further information, express cause and effect, describe similar situations in relation to each other, give examples for a specific purpose, or draw conclusions
- they have the same meaning and function as the coordinating conjunctions *and*, *but*, *for*, *nor*, *or*, *so*, and *yet*
- they are used instead of these in order to avoid repetition and ensure the harmonious flow of the text
- they tend to become tedious / annoying and lose all above functions if used in each and every sentence

NOTA BENE: Generally, **connectives** have to be separated from the rest of the sentence by a **comma**.

Avoid

- **one-sentence paragraphs**
- **too many subheadings:** over-fragmentation
- **summaries:** summarize the plot only if this is indispensable to your argumentation.
- **lives and works:** include only thesis-related information
- **excessive** use of connectives

3. Conclusion

- Repeats the thesis and topic statement but should not just rehash the various arguments
- Summarizes the main arguments of the paper and adds the results of the main part to the thesis of the introduction
- Is an analytical recapitulation of your main arguments, showing what conclusions you derive from what you have written so far

Checklist: editing the paper

Form:

- ✓ Spelling
- ✓ References (MLA standard)
- ✓ Paragraphing and transitions / connectives
- ✓ Correspondence Introduction – Conclusion

Content:

- ✓ Have I actually used the methodology introduced in the Introduction?
- ✓ Has my working thesis changed in the meantime?
- ✓ Is my paper coherent and cohesive?
- ✓ Do I need to re-write Introduction?
- ✓ Have I acknowledged all my sources?

IV. Documentation of Sources

Plagiarism is an academic crime, practically the academic equivalent of stealing someone else's car. Authors of plagiarized papers will be automatically excluded from the class and will not receive either credits or a second chance to write another paper for that class. For this reason, you are obliged to sign the statement of authorship available online on the website of the SEP and attach it to your paper:

<https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/plagiarism/199048.html>

The following website offers a self-test which allows you to test your knowledge of various types of direct and indirect plagiarism: <http://abacus.bates.edu/cbb/quiz/index.html>

Also read this document available on the website of the SEP:

<https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/plagiarism/199048.html>

For the documentation of sources, please observe the MLA standards. Always refer to the latest edition. For a summary of the most frequent entries, please see below or consult the website of the SEP (“MLA Merkblatt”): <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/term-papers/199044.html>

1. Citing within the Text

All references to primary and secondary sources should be included in the text. You must include all the information necessary for finding the quotation using parenthetical reference and the bibliography at the end of your paper!

Formal Aspects of Quotations:

If you are quoting short passages up to three lines of text, try to integrate them into your own sentence. Use English quotation marks. If your quotation is longer than four lines, indent it 2,54cm, use 12 point font size and 1,5 spacing, and leave out the quotation marks.

Ellipsis:

If you omit words, phrases or sentences or paragraphs from a quoted passage, you have to mark the omission by using “...”. Remember that the final sentence must still be grammatically correct and that the omission should not change the meaning of the original source. However, if you quote only one or two words, it is obvious that you left out something and you don’t need to mark it.

Basic Structure of Parenthetical References:

Bibliographical information is added at the end of your sentence in brackets (author’s name page). The same applies if you are only alluding to a secondary source without actually citing it (author’s name page). The abbreviation p. is not required before the page number.

If your works cited contains more than one author with the same name, add the first initial in your reference. If you cite more than one work by the same author, include the shortened titles of the respective works.

Parenthetical reference functions according to a principle of economical information. For example, if you include the author’s name in the sentence, you do not have to repeat it in the following parenthesis. Place the reference where a natural pause would occur (usually at the end of a sentence) and as near as possible to the quotation it belongs to. Place the full stop behind the parenthesis, not within.

Citing Poetry:

When citing poetry, cite the line(s) including the word line (line 24) in the first reference and afterwards only the line number (33).

Citing Drama

When citing drama, include information concerning the act, scene and line(s): *Hamlet* I.5.35-37.

Citing a Multivolume Work:

If you are using several volumes, give the name of the author/editor, then the volume and page number separated by a colon. (2: 24-26). If you are using only one volume and state the volume number in your bibliography, you need to give only the page numbers in your reference.

Citing a Work with an Unknown Author (listed by title in the bibliography):

These works might for instance be articles from reference books. In this case, you give the title of the article (full if it is short, abbreviated to the first one or two words if it is longer) in quotation marks.

Citing from a Web Source:

Apply the same rules as for printed sources: If you have an author, name him or her. If not, give the (abbreviated) title of the article you are citing. If your source does not have page numbers, you have to give the author's name/title even if you have already mentioned it in the text.

Examples:**Citing a Work by a Single Author with the Author's Name in the Reference:**

At first, the audience is given a hint that a crisis occurred, or that "something happened" (Phelan 634). OR:

Their narratorial pact is, on the one hand, one with the reader (cf. Rimmon-Kenan 248), but also with the other characters and their own conscience.

Citing a Work by a Single Author with the Author's Name in the Text:

Austen describes Sir Walter Elliot as "conceited" and "silly" (6).

Citing a Work by Several Authors:

"Is it crazy, neurotic, splenetic, to want to be a writer?" (Gilbert and Gubar 61).

Citing a Work by an Author with More than One Work

The distinction of several levels of responsibility emerges from the identification of four "ethical locations" (Phelan, *Living* 23, and "Rhetorical" 632-3).

Citing a work Listed by Title (unidentifiable author):

As a reviewer remarks in *The Spectator*, "Michael Ondaatje's legion of admirers will not expect a novel constructed around a linear narrative, or even cohering in the developing consciousness of a central character" ("Patterns from the Past").

Citing a Multivolume Work:

This anthology contains English literature from Sir Thomas More's "Utopia" (Greenblatt A: 521-590) to Salman Rushdie (F: 2854-2863).

Citing Indirect Sources:

Samuel Johnson admitted that Edmund Burke was “an extraordinary man” (qtd. in Boswell 2:450).

Citing from a Web Site without Page Numbers:

At least one account of the life of Mary Shelley depicts a child who was “treated as if she were born beneath a lucky star” (Bridges).

2. Bibliography or Works Cited

The following is a selection of some of the most frequent types of entries. For all other entries, please consult the latest edition of *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

Basic Structure for Books:

Last Name, First Name. “Part of Book” [e.g., chapter, a story in an anthology, etc.]. *Title of the book*. First Name Last Name (ed.). Edition. Volumes Used. Place of Publication [only the first one is necessary]: publisher [not necessary with books pub. Before 1900] Year of Publication. Page Numbers. Print or Web.

Introduction, Preface, Afterword, etc. are not set within inverted commas.

Basic Structure for Journal Articles:

Last Name, First Name. “Title of the article.” *Name of periodical/journal*. Volume Number.Issue Number (Year of Publication): Page Numbers. Print or Web. Date of access.

Basic Structure for Web Sources:

Last Name, First Name [rules for anonymous or multiple authors same as for printed sources]. *Title of work*. [if it is an independent work, otherwise: “Title of article.” *Title of Website*.] Version or edition. Publisher of the site [if nothing is available: N.p.] Date of publication [if not available: n.d.]. Web. Date of access.

Do not include the URL unless you think it would be very hard to find the site otherwise. In this case, give it after the date of access, embraced by < >.

Examples:**A Book by a Single Author:**

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *The Remains of the Day*. London: Faber and Faber, 1989. Print.

A Book by Two or Three Authors:

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1979. Print.

A Book by more than Three Authors:

Plag, Ingo, et al. *Introduction to English Linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton, 2007. Print.

Two or More Books by the Same Author:

Austen, Jane. *Emma*. Ed. Alistair M. Duckworth. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2002. Print.
---. *Persuasion*. Ed. Gillian Beer. London: Penguin, 2003. Print.

A Scholarly Edition:

Austen, Jane. *Persuasion*. Ed. Gillian Beer. London: Penguin, 2003. Print.

A Introduction to a Scholarly Edition (if you mainly cited the editor):

Beer, Gillian, ed. Introduction. *Persuasion*. By Jane Austen. London: Penguin, 2003. Print.

A Work in an Anthology:

Bronfen, Elisabeth. "Silencing Voices." *Dichotonies. Gender and Music*. Ed. Beate Neumeier. Heidelberg: Winter, 2009. 23-28. Print.

An Article in a Reference Book:

"Orchestra". *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. 4th ed. 1989. Print.

An Introduction:

Beer, Gillian. Introduction. *Persuasion*. By Jane Austen. London: Penguin, 2003. xi-xxxiv. Print.

A Translation:

Dostoevsky, Feodor. *Crime and Punishment*. Trans. Jessie Coulson. Ed. George Gibian. New York: Norton 1964. Print.

An Article in a Scholarly Journal:

Wald, Christina. "'But of Course the Stage has Certain Limits?'" The Adaption of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Shakespeare's Plays. *Anglia. Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie*. 127 (2009): 425-458. Print.

A Work Cited Only on the Web:

Antin, David. Interview by Charles Bernstein. *Dalkey Archive Press*. Dalkey Archive P, n.d. Web. 21 Aug 2007.

A Work on the Web with Print Publication Data:

Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol. In Prose. Being a Ghost Story of Christmas*. London, 1858. *Google Book*. Web. 16 January 2012.

A Periodical Publication in an Online Database:

Tolson, Nancy. "Making Books Available: The Role of Early Libraries, Librarians, and Booksellers in the Promotion of African American Children's Literature." *African American Review* 32.1 (1998): 9-16. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 June 2008.

Source:

All information is based on Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009. Print.

VI. Appendices

1. Online Resources

Evaluating Internet Resources:

<http://library.georgetown.edu/internet/eval.htm>

E-text sources:

Please note the impressive link collection available on the website of the Göttingen University Library:

http://rzblx10.uni-regensburg.de/dbinfo/dbliste.php?bib_id=subgo&colors=15&ocolors=40&lett=f&gebiete=12

Note: Generally, please use the text edition recommended by the course instructor. If you wish and are allowed to use electronic versions of primary texts, please make sure that they are authoritative, i.e., that they are provided by an institution with scholarly credentials, that the editor of the text is clearly specified and is an individual / an institution with scholarly credentials, that all the information about the respective edition is provided.

Some examples:

University of Virginia Library: <http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/etext/index.html>

Gutenberg Project: <http://www.gutenberg.org/>

Representative Poetry Online: <http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/display/index.cfm>

Modern American Poetry: <http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/>

Google Books: <http://books.google.com/books/>

Also remember to use the sources available on the website of the University Library for your research:

MLA Bibliography

JSTOR

Oxford English Dictionary Online (for which the SEP pays 50% of a rather costly subscription for the benefit of its students and staff)

2. Useful Words and Phrases

- maintain, illustrate, demonstrate
- emphasize, highlight
- scrutinize, investigate, examine
- accordingly, as a result, consequently, subsequently, in conclusion,
- therefore, hence, thus, in this way, likewise
- besides, furthermore, moreover, even more, what is more, in addition,
- first(ly)/second(ly), etc., finally, in the first place, next, then, also
- still, nevertheless, nonetheless, however, now, even so
- for example, for instance, similarly, in other words, that is, specifically
- on the contrary, on the one hand, on the other hand, conversely, instead,
- otherwise

- as a matter of fact, indeed, certainly, actually, in fact, after all
- anyhow, anyway, at any rate, of course
- at the same time, meanwhile

3. How to Cite Titles

Capitalize the following words in titles and subtitles:

- 1) The first word and the last word
- 2) Nouns
- 3) Pronouns
- 4) Verbs
- 5) Adjectives
- 6) Adverbs (e.g. *Only Slightly Corrupt, Go Down, Moses*)
- 7) Subordinating conjunctions (*after, although, as if, as soon as, because, before, if, that, until, unless, when, where, while*)

Do NOT capitalize the following parts of speech when they fall in the middle of a title, i.e. if they are neither the first nor the last word in a title

- 1) Articles
- 2) Prepositions (against, between, in, of, to, etc.)
- 3) Coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet)
- 4) The *to* in infinitives

Use italics for or underline titles of

- 1) books: *The Awakening*
- 2) plays
- 3) long poem published as a book, i.e. separately
- 4) pamphlets
- 5) newspapers
- 6) magazines
- 7) films
- 8) television programmes
- 9) compact discs, audio-cassettes, record albums
- 10) ballets
- 11) operas
- 12) long musical compositions identified by name
- 13) paintings
- 14) sculptures
- 15) ships
- 16) aircrafts
- 17) spacecrafts

Use quotation marks for titles of:

- 1) newspaper articles
- 2) magazine articles
- 3) encyclopaedia articles
- 4) essays in books

- 5) short stories
- 6) poems
- 7) chapters in books
- 8) episodes of television programmes
- 9) songs
- 10) lectures

Titles and Quotations within Titles

- 1) an article about a play: "*Romeo and Juliet* and the Renaissance Politics"
- 2) an article about a novel: "Language and Childbirth in *The Awakening*"
- 3) a poem about a poem: "Lines after Reading 'Sailing to Byzantium'"
- 4) an article about a short story: "The Uncanny Theology of 'A Good Man Is Hard to Find'"
- 5) an article with a quotation in its title: "Emerson's Strategies against 'Foolish Consistency'"
- 6) a book of short stories: "*The Lottery*" and *Other Stories*
- 7) a book about a poem: *New Perspectives on "The Eve of St. Agnes"*
- 8) a book about a novel: *Approaches to Teaching Murasaki Shikibu's The Tale of Genji*
- 9)

Exceptions: Do not underline, write in italics or place within quotation marks the following titles:

- 1) Sacred writings: Bible, Gospels, Old Testament, Koran, etc.
- 2) Laws, acts, and similar political documents (Magna Carta, Bill of Rights)
- 3) Series (Bollingen Series, The New Critical Idiom)
- 4) Buildings and monuments
- 5) Conferences, Seminars, Workshops, and Courses

(Source: Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers and Research Papers*. 5th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999. 73-9.)

4. Abbreviations

cf.	compare (in references)
ed.	editor, edition, edited by, plural: eds.
e.g.	for example (Latin: <i>exempli gratia</i>)
et al	and others (Latin: <i>et alii/aliae</i>)
introd.	Introduction (by)
n.d.	no date of publication
n.p.	no place of publication/no publisher
n. pag.	no pagination
p., pp.	page, pages
qtd.	quoted
rev.	revised (by), revision, review, reviewed (by)
rpt.	reprinted by, reprint
trans.	translation, translated, translator
UP	University Press