USEFUL TIPS FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

WHO IS THIS MANUAL INTENDED FOR?

- If you are about to start writing an academic paper or have already started writing it, this manual is for you!
- Even if you have already finished writing your paper, this manual is helpful to increase your knowledge and experience in the usage of other writing techniques that you have not used before.

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

- How to write an effective academic paper
- Useful tips for better and effective writing
- What aspects should researchers pay attention to while writing an academic paper

STEP BY STEP GUIDELINES

BEST TIPS

GRAPHICAL EXPLANATIONS AND EXAMPLES

NEAT, BRIEF AND ONLY IMPORTANT CONTENT

Dragutina Golika 32, Zagreb, 10000, Croatia

www.researchleap.com

editor@researchleap.com
THE THING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR READERS

SECTION 1. THE GOAL OF YOUR WRITING
  The main goal of your writing
  The purpose of your writing

SECTION 2. THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE STARTING WRITING
  Language
  Overgeneralization
  Signposting

SECTION 3. CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOPIC AND NARROWING IT DOWN
  Steps to follow while choosing a topic
  Funnel method for narrowing down a topic
  Small steps to follow when starting writing your academic paper

SECTION 4. BRAINSTORMING

SECTION 5. RESEARCHING
  Research sources
  List of reliable websites

SECTION 6. INTRODUCTION PART OF YOUR ACADEMIC WRITING
  Writing a good introduction
  Things that can be included into introduction
  Best tips

SECTION 7. THESIS STATEMENT
  Main objectives of a thesis statement
  Common types of a thesis statement
  Technique to formulate and narrow down a thesis statement
  Common errors when composing a thesis statement
SECTION 8. BODY PARAGRAPH
   Important aspects of all paragraphs in body part of the academic paper
   Sentence types and their distinct functions
   Writing a topic sentence
   Transition words
   Proper use of examples

SECTION 9. CONCLUSION PART OF YOUR ACADEMIC PAPER
   Functions of a conclusion

SECTION 10. FORMAT OF YOUR ACADEMIC PAPER
   The importance of formatting
   Formatting criteria

SECTION 11. REFERENCING
   The importance of referencing
   Referencing tips

SECTION 12. PROOF CHECKING
   The importance of proof checking
   Proof checking tip

ABOUT PUBLISHER

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Academic writing is a style of writing that makes your work easier to read and understand. No matter how well-versed you are with grammar, punctuation and other areas that come into play for writing papers, making a mistake with the content hurts your overall academic writing.

The purpose of academic writing is to make your work clear and understandable to whoever is reading and/or marking it. Another important part of academic writing is ensuring that your work is fully and correctly referenced.

You may have different names for academic writing assignments (essay, paper, research paper, term paper, argumentative paper/essay, analysis paper/essay, informative essay, position paper), but all of these assignments have the same goal and principles.
...ABOUT YOUR READERS

YOUR READERS ARE MOSTLY BUSY AND IMPATIENT
It is quite unlikely that the reader will ever read the whole article from start to finish.

INSTEAD THEY SKIM
Most readers want to know about your basic result. Although your writing should not follow a journalistic style, its structure can be organized like newspaper article. Notice how newspaper start with the most important part, then fill in the background later for the readers who kept going and want more details.

BEST TIP
Make your paper easy to skim. Use signposting and spacing (that will be discussed further).
The main goal of an academic writing is to achieve one of the following purposes:

- Persuasive purpose
- Analytical purpose
- Informative purpose
In an academic writing assignment, you will start by asking a good question, then find and analyze answers to it, and choose your own best answer(s) to discuss in your paper.
Your paper will share your thoughts and findings and justify your answer with logic and evidence. So the goal of academic writing is not to show off everything that you know about your topic, but rather to show that you understand and can think critically about your topic, analyze/synthesize, inform and persuade.
THE PURPOSE OF YOUR ACADEMIC WRITING

1. PERSUASIVE PURPOSE

In persuasive academic writing, the purpose is to get your readers to adopt your answer to the question. So you will choose one answer to your question, support your answer using reason and evidence, and try to change the readers’ point of view about the topic. Persuasive writing assignments include argumentative and position papers.

? THE QUESTION

1 CHOOSE ONE ANSWER

USE REASON AND EVIDENCE

TRY TO CHANGE THE READER’S POINT OF VIEW
In analytical academic writing, the purpose is to explain and evaluate possible answers to your question, choosing the best answer(s) based on your own criteria. Analytical assignments often investigate causes, examine effects, evaluate effectiveness, assess ways to solve problems, find the relationships between various ideas, or analyze other people’s arguments. The “synthesis” part of the purpose comes in when you put together all the parts and come up with your own answer to the question. Examples of these assignments include analysis papers and critical analyses.
In informative academic writing, the purpose is to explain possible answers to your question, giving the readers new information about your topic. This differs from an analytical topic in that you do not push your viewpoint on the readers, but rather try to enlarge the readers’ view.
02. THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE STARTING WRITING

Language

Overgeneralization

Signposting

Examples and a usage of signposting in different parts of an academic paper
THINGS YOU NEED TO CONSIDER
BEFORE STARTING WRITING

1. LANGUAGE

Along with the neat organization of your paper, you should write your article in the language that is easy for your reader to follow your ideas.

Express your opinion through plain language avoiding:
• Contractions
• Idioms, colloquial, expressions and clichés
• Emotional or strong language
• Overly simplistic language

2. OVERGENERALIZATION

Generalizations can create inaccuracies. Use of the words “always”, “all”, “every”, “everyone”, “many”, “never”, “nobody”, “none” can create inaccurate statements and even factual errors. Be specific when regarding a group of people. Who exactly is it while you are talking about? The more details you provide, the more credible your work is. You want people to believe what you are saying, so allow them to do that by justifying your statements.

Here’s the tip that accompanies “avoid overgeneralization”. When you make a general statement, make sure it’s true in EVERY case.

Some examples of overgeneralizing are as follows.
• “As everyone knows . . .”
• “She was always smiling.”
• “People loved her cooking.”
• “This is the most exciting movie.”
• “The stores in this town are no good.”
• “Textbooks are boring.”
• “People do this when they’re tired.”
• “It figures.”
THINGS YOU NEED TO CONSIDER
BEFORE STARTING WRITING

3. SIGNPOSTING

In the context of essays, signposting means using words to tell your reader about the content of your essay, rather than just telling them the content itself. This is done to help the reader understand the content as clearly as possible. Here are some (real) examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the writer wrote:</th>
<th>How it helps the reader:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In order to explain and understand the causes of this offence, it would be useful to apply the criminological theories.</td>
<td>The reader realises in advance that the writer is going to be using some theories to explain a criminal offence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are several ways in which the new style shopping centres seem attractive.</td>
<td>The reader knows that at least two elements of the attractiveness are about to be discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another issue close to the heart of the feminist is…</td>
<td>This reminds the reader that one such issue has already been written about, and another is about to be revealed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This essay explores theoretical and practical approaches to communication.</td>
<td>Straight away, and in advance, the reader knows that the writer will be covering two ways of thinking about communication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THINGS YOU NEED TO CONSIDER

BEFORE STARTING WRITING

SIGNPOSTING IN INTRODUCTIONS

The following provides just a small range of suggestions. You must be certain about the meaning of the verbs you use in your signposting, of course – do not use a word just because it appears here!

This essay will (first) examine... outline... address... demonstrate... argue... focus on... and will then/attempt to ascertain... establish... clarify... show... judge... prove...

SIGNPOSTING IN THE BODY PARAGRAPH

In the body of an academic writing (sentences like these would normally begin a paragraph):

Having established..., this essay will now consider...

In addition to..., As well as..., x, y must be... should be... needs to be...

... is one an important the key issue that has to be considered. Another A second Of equal importance is...
THINGS YOU NEED TO CONSIDER

BEFORE STARTING WRITING

SIGNPOSTING IN CONCLUSION PART

In signposting your conclusion, you might use similar verbs as you have in the introduction and body, but you would normally use the past perfect tense (sometimes in the passive form). For example:

- This essay has focused on three factors affecting...
- Each has been considered from the viewpoints of...
- It has been established that...
SMALL STEPS FOR YOU TO FOLLOW WHEN STARTING WRITING YOUR PAPER

1. Choose a topic
2. Think (brainstorm)
3. Research
4. Discover your thesis
5. Plan (outline)
6. Write
7. Revise
8. Edit
9. Proofread
03.

Choosing the right topic

And narrowing it down

Choosing a topic

Funnel method for narrowing down the topic
Choosing the Right Topic and Narrowing It Down

Picking the right topic for your paper can save any writer's time and can help set up the essay for potential success before beginning. A bad topic will do the opposite and can lead to a frustrating writing experience.

With this in mind, here are a few elements a writer should always consider when considering a potential essay topic:

1. Choose a topic that interests you and the reader. The more interested you, as the writer, are in the topic, the easier it will be to write about. If the paper requires research and the use of outside sources, pick a topic that you are interested in learning more about to make the research process more interesting.

2. Make sure the topic fits the guidelines for the essay. Even if your paper is interesting and well written, if it doesn’t fit the guidelines established by the instructor, the end result will not be successful. When in doubt, discuss the topic with the instructor and make sure it is appropriate before beginning.

3. If outside sources must be used, make sure there are enough credible sources available. If you must perform and incorporate research into your essay, do some of this research before committing to the topic. Starting to organize or write and later finding out that there aren’t enough sources to use can waste a lot of time. To avoid this, make sure that there are enough credible sources to use before committing to a topic and beginning the actual writing.
CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOPIC AND NARROWING IT DOWN

Topic choices generally start out too broad. We use the funnel to narrow our topics to more manageable ones.

**Theme**
Start by thinking about something general.

*E.g.: Exploration, Encounter, Exchange in History*

**1 STEP**

**2 STEP**

**3 STEP**

**4 STEP**

**5 STEP**

**Broad Topic**
What are some general topics connected to that area of history?

*E.g.: Voting Rights*

**General Interest**
Narrow down the theme to a general area of history that interests you.

*E.g.: Women’s History*

**Narrow Topic**
Narrow the broad topic to something more specific. Consider location, person or event.

*E.g.: Susan B. Anthony*

**Thesis**
Your thesis will address specific issues or ideas related to your topic.

*E.g.: Research Questions*
04. Brainstorming steps
When you have a topic, start brainstorming.

Write down:

- all the possible answers to your question
- all the information
- opinions
- questions you have about your topic

Writing things down also ensures that you will not forget your great ideas later.

Brainstorming will help you see:

- what you already know
- what you think
- what you think you know
- what else you need to find out about your topic
05. RESEARCHING

Research formats
List of reliable websites
Your paper should refer to a variety of current, high quality, professional and academic sources. You will use your research to support your own ideas; therefore, it must be integrated into your writing and not presented separately. This means that source material will be introduced, analyzed, explained, and then cited.

You can conduct a research through the following sources:
- Journals
- Books
- Newspapers
- Publications
- Primary sources
- The Internet
- Government

LIST OF RELIABLE WEBSITES

The following are some of the reliable reference sites available online; some are free and some charge a fee for information:

- www.isiwebofknowledge.com – a useful citations website with linked full-text articles
- www.emeraldinsight.com – a database dedicated to management research
- www.sciencedirect.com – a comprehensive multidisciplinary database with strong emphasis on sciences
- www.ebscohost.com – a multidisciplinary database
- www.jstor.org – social sciences coverage
- http://stardata.nrf.ac.za/star/ccrlogin.html - current and completed research including thesis and dissertations
- http://ajol.info – African journals
• www.hsrc.co.za – Human Sciences Research Council

• www.csir.co.za – Council for Scientific and Industrial Research

• www.gov.za – Government website, for government related information

• www.statsonline.co.za – South African statistics

• www.un.org – United Nations website

• www.unicef.org – United Nations Children’s Fund website

• www.merriam-websterdictionary.org – online dictionary

• www.wikipedia.org – free online encyclopedia

• www.encyclopedia.com – a free online encyclopedia with a general coverage

• http://www.Britannica.com – general coverage encyclopedia

• www.scholar.google.co.za – a search engine linked to the library’s e-resources

• www.sabinet.co.za – a search engine covering South African research papers

• http://journals.sabinet.co.za - The SA ePublications service with the most comprehensive, searchable collection of full-text electronic South- and Southern African journals in the world (available through SABINET)
INTRODUCTION OF YOUR ACADEMIC PAPER

Writing a good introduction

Things that can be included into introduction

Best tips
You can’t write a good introduction until you know what the body of the paper says. Consider writing the introductory section(s) after you have completed the rest of the paper, rather than before. Be sure to include a hook at the beginning of the introduction. This is a statement of something sufficiently interesting to motivate your reader to read the rest of the paper, it is an important/interesting problem that your paper either solves or addresses. You should draw the reader in and make them want to read the rest of the paper. In the introductory part you may include:

- The purpose why the study was undertaken (without repeating the abstract)
- Sufficient background information to allow the reader to understand the context and significance of the question you are trying to address
- Explain to the reader what will be discussed in the body part of your paper and what not
- The methods and techniques you are using
- A verbal “the table of contents” guiding the reader to what lies ahead

Do not refer to a dictionary while defining terms. While you should explain any terms that your audience needs to know to understand your paper’s content, avoid beginning a paper with a dictionary definition such as the following: ‘Webster’s Dictionary defines “joy” as great pleasure or happiness.’ This approach to an introduction is cliche.

Do not overuse facts without rendering an opinion or any analysis. Implementing too many facts will produce a dry, lifeless introduction and will overshadow your own voice as a writer.

Do not repeat similar ideas. Your audience will notice that you are not saying anything new or fresh.
Main objectives of a thesis statement
Common types of thesis statements
Common errors when composing a thesis statement
THESIS STATEMENT

In the end of your introductory part, you need to include a thesis statement. A thesis statement usually summarizes the main point or claim of the paper. It establishes the overall point of your essay, and it fulfills two main objectives.

1. The thesis must state your topic.

2. The thesis must convey what you will prove about your topic (your opinion about that topic).

The thesis statement should:
- Be declarative statement
- Be a complete sentence
- Use specific language, not vague generalities
- Be a single idea
- Reflect consideration of the audience

COMMON TYPES OF THESIS STATEMENTS

Your thesis statement will depend on what kind of paper you are writing. What is the paper’s purpose?—to convince? to explain? to analyze?

**Argumentative Thesis Statement.** An argumentative paper takes a position or makes an assertion or a claim and supports or justifies the position, assertion, or claim with reasons and evidence. An argumentative paper seeks to convince the reader that your position, assertion or claim is true. An argumentative thesis tells your reader what your argument is and what supporting evidence or reasons you will present.

For example, “Smoking should be banned in all public places.”

**Explanatory (Expository) Thesis Statement.** An explanatory paper explains or acquaints your reader with something (your topic). An explanatory thesis statement tells your reader what you will explain and what aspects or parts of the topic will be considered.

For example, ”Chinese labor played an important role in western railroad expansion.”
**THESIS STATEMENT**

**Analytical Thesis Statement.** An analytical paper evaluates an issue or idea, usually by considering its various aspects or parts, and presents this evaluation to the reader. An analytical thesis statement tells your reader what issue or idea you are analyzing, what aspects of the issue or idea you are evaluating and how you will be presenting your analyses.

For example, “An analysis of the ferruginous hawk reveals two kinds of flight patterns: patterns related to hunting prey and patterns related to courtship.”

Try this technique to develop and narrow a thesis statement. To write an effective thesis statement, start with a general idea and then sharpen your focus.

1. **Choose a topic.**
   E.g.: The film, Pulp Fiction

2. **Focus the topic.**
   E.g.: Excessive violence in Pulp Fiction

3. **Narrow the topic further by posing it as a question.**
   E.g.: Why does Quentin Tarantino employ excessive violence in Pulp Fiction?

4. **Answer the question. The answer is your thesis statement.**
   E.g.: In the film Pulp Fiction, Quentin Tarantino uses excessive violence to mock American social and cultural values.

Your thesis statement should be clear and direct and should entice your audience to read further. Each subsequent paragraph in the body of your paper should support your thesis statement and prove your claim.
THESIS STATEMENT

ERRORS TO AVOID WHEN COMPOSING A THESIS

Often researchers fall into common “traps” when writing thesis statements. These examples listed below illustrate how to shape a clear and effective thesis statement.

1. **A thesis cannot be a fragment; it must express a complete thought.**

   - **Unacceptable:** How students learn to write
   - **Acceptable:** The best means for teaching students to write is to have them focus on the steps of the writing process rather than the end product.

2. **A thesis must not be worded as a question. (Sometimes the answer to the question can be the thesis.)**

   - **Unacceptable:** Do Americans really need large refrigerators?
   - **Acceptable:** If Americans did their marketing daily, as do some Europeans, they could save energy and money because they could use smaller refrigerators.

3. **A thesis must not be too broad.**

   - **Unacceptable:** The literature of mythology contains many journeys.
   - **Acceptable:** In Greek mythology, the motif of the journey represents the internal struggles and eventual perseverance of mortals.

4. **A thesis should not contain unrelated elements.**

   - **Unacceptable:** All novelists seek the truth, and some novelists are good psychologists.
   - **Acceptable:** In their attempt to probe human nature, many novelists strive to reveal the intricacies of human relations.
**A thesis should not contain phrases as “I think” or “in my opinion” because they weaken the writer’s argument.**

**Unacceptable:** In my opinion, all cigarette smoking in public places should be banned because of the adverse effects of "passive smoking" on non-smokers.

**Acceptable:** All cigarette smoking in public places should be banned because of the adverse effects of “passive smoking” on non-smokers.

**A thesis should not be expressed in vague language.**

**Unacceptable:** Religion as part of the school curriculum should be avoided because it can cause trouble.

**Acceptable:** Religion should not be part of the public school curriculum because it is a highly personal commitment and can cause conflict with those who hold alternative beliefs.

**A thesis should not be expressed in figurative language (symbolic in any way).**

**Unacceptable:** The amazons of today are trying to purge all the stage words from the English language.

**Acceptable:** Today’s feminists are trying to eliminate the use of sexually-biased words from public use.

**A thesis should not simply state a fact.**

**Unacceptable:** Women have been repressed at different times and in different cultures.

**Acceptable:** The repression of women writers in America during the nineteenth century contributed to the idea that there were relatively few writers worthy enough to be included in anthologies.
08.

BODY
PARAGRAPH

Important aspects of body paragraphs
Sentence types and their functions
Writing a topic sentence
Transition words and the proper use of examples
Every paragraph (even every sentence) in your paper will support your thesis statement. There will be no unnecessary, irrelevant, unimportant, or contradictory information (your paper will likely include contradictory or alternative points of view, but you will respond to and critique them to further strengthen your own point of view). Each body paragraph will have sufficient and relevant support for the topic sentence and thesis statement. This support will consist of facts, examples, description, personal experience, and expert opinions and quotations.

Body paragraphs help you prove your thesis and move you along a compelling trajectory from your introduction to your conclusion. Each body paragraph has one main point to support the thesis, which is named in a topic sentence. Each point is then supported in the paragraph with logical reasoning and evidence. Each sentence connects to the one before and after it. The readers do not have to work to find the connection between ideas. The body of the assignment consists of one or more paragraphs structured to reflect your critical thinking about the question and the chosen order for presenting your argument. The order of your paragraphs can be a logical sequence, a chronological sequence, a clustering of closely related ideas, a juxtaposition of opposing ideas, or in terms of importance. Each paragraph will have a similar structure, and functions like a ‘mini-essay’. It should have an introduction (topic sentence), a body, and a concluding sentence.

**IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF ALL PARAGRAPHS IN THE BODY PART OF THE ACADEMIC PAPER:**

- A clear topic sentence
- Specific evidence or supporting detail
- Transitions between sentences and paragraphs
- Examples
- Unity and cohesion
- A concluding sentence that ties the evidence or details back to the main point and brings the paragraph to a close.
BODY PARAGRAPH
OF YOUR ACADEMIC PAPER

SENTENCE TYPES AND THEIR DISTINCT FUNCTIONS:

1. A topic sentence (usually the first sentence of the paragraph) states the key point of the paragraph. It is this point around which the rest of the paragraph is organized. The topic sentence is followed by the ‘body’ of the paragraph. This can contain explanations, evidence, and examples to support the key point of the paragraph. Supporting evidence is used to justify, explain or develop your argument.

2. A concluding sentence links the main idea of the paragraph back to your argument, and therefore to the assignment topic/question.

WRITING A TOPIC SENTENCE

When writing a topic sentence, try to state the main point of the paragraph as clearly and as accurately as possible. Do not make the topic sentence too general or too specific.

See the examples below and compare:

Too general. Studying overseas was deemed to be very difficult.

Too specific. Studying overseas was deemed to be very difficult for 63% of the people surveyed who cited a range of difficulties including homesickness, loneliness, difficulty making Australian friends, changes to diets, health problems, weight gain, and difficulties with money and jobs.

Good #1. Studying overseas was deemed to be very difficult in three main respects for 63% of the people surveyed.

Good #2. Studying overseas was deemed to be very difficult for 63% of the people surveyed due to the impacts of culture shock, financial concerns and health concerns.
Transition words help you guide your reader through your article, and to link sentences, paragraphs, and sections both forwards and backward. Good use will make what you have written easy to follow. There are numerous types of transition words. For the list of transition words and for its use visit the links provided below:


http://library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.33.htm

http://www.smart-words.org/linking-words/transition-words.html

http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Transitions.htm
Tip for Body Paragraph:
Support your statements with examples

PROPER USE OF EXAMPLES

1. Examples are important in your academic writing for proving your statements or providing a better understanding to the reader. You can provide statistics or quotations as examples.

2. Examples from your data (e.g. samples of text or discourse) should be numbered. The numbering of the examples should be continuous and marked in a systematic manner throughout the text.

3. If you use examples from published sources or a corpus, make sure you provide a clear reference to the source that will be discussed further. If your examples are from a data set collected for the purposes of your study (discourse data, interviews, field notes), use a clear system of reference that helps you locate the original text or event that the example is drawn from.

4. Examples should be separated from the body of the text with a blank line before and after. They should also be clearly indented from the inside margin (5-10 spaces). Font size and line-spacing in examples can be smaller than in the body of the text (font 10 or 10.5, single-spaced).
09. **CONCLUSION PART OF YOUR ACADEMIC PAPER**

- **Functions of a conclusion**
CONCLUSION
OF YOUR ACADEMIC PAPER

A conclusion is the last paragraph of your essay, or, if you’re writing a really long essay, you might need two or three paragraphs to conclude. A conclusion typically does one of two things—or, of course, it can do both:

**Summarizes the argument.** Some instructors expect you not to say anything new in your conclusion. They just want you to restate your main points. Especially if you’ve made a long and complicated argument, it’s useful to restate your main points for your reader by the time you’ve gotten to your conclusion. If you opt to do so, keep in mind that you should use different language than you used in your introduction and your body paragraphs. The introduction and conclusion of your paper should not be the same.

**Explains the significance of the argument.** Some instructors want you to avoid restating your main points; they instead want you to explain your argument’s significance. In other words, they want you to answer the “so what” question by giving your reader a clearer sense of why your argument matters.

For example, your argument might be significant to studies of a certain time period. Alternately, it might be significant to a certain geographical region. Alternately still, it might influence how your readers think about the future. You might even opt to speculate about the future and/or call your readers to action in your conclusion.
10. Format of Your Academic Paper

The importance of formatting
Format criteria
Formatting refers to the appearance or presentation of your essay. Another word for formatting is a layout. Most papers contain at least four different kinds of text: headings, ordinary paragraphs, quotations, and bibliography. You may also include footnotes and endnotes. You also have to consider the fonts that you use and page numbering.

**WHY IS Formatting IMPORTANT?**

Formatting is important for two reasons:

1. It makes your academic writing look like an academic paper (rather than a letter or a note to a friend).
2. It helps to make your academic paper more readable.

**FORMAT CRITERIA**

There are general rules to follow while formatting the paper:

1. **Font.** The recommended fonts are Book Antiqua or Times New Roman. Font size in the text must be 12. A larger font (14) can be used for headings.
2. **Spacing.** The recommended line spacing is 1.5. Longer quotations should be single-spaced and separated from the text.
3. **Margins.** The Master’s thesis is printed and bound for examination. When preparing the final draft of the Master’s thesis, make sure that the settings are set for 2-sided printing. Under page layout, choose ‘Mirrored’ Margins and set the ‘Inside’ margin at 4 cm. The other margins (top, bottom, outside) should be set at 2 cm. In research papers and theses that are not bound, use 2.5 cm margins on all sides.
Paragraphs. Paragraphs can be divided either by leaving a blank line between paragraphs or by indenting the first line of a new paragraph by five spaces. If the paragraph follows a new section heading, the first line is not indented.

Page numbering. Page numbering should be visible from the first page of the introduction. Previous pages such as the abstract and contents are counted but are not given visible page numbers. The title page is not counted. Page numbering continues until the end of the document, including the bibliography and appendices. Place the page number at the center on the top of the page.

Highlighting. For highlighting or emphasis, use italics. Bold print can also be used for clarity if necessary (for instance, if you use a lot of linguistic examples that require italics).

Footnotes. Endnotes and footnotes should be used sparingly. If you do use notes, they should be placed at the bottom of the page using smaller font size (10) and single-spacing.
Academic writing requires that you read and cite the work of others. Any material that is not your own must be sourced to the original author. Every book, article, thesis and all electronic material that has been consulted and cited should be included in the bibliography. Only material which is publicly available should be cited so lecture notes, for example, should not be referenced.

The use of quotations and references in the text is followed up by a list of references, alphabetically presented at the end of the work, which is known as the References.

There are specific guidelines that you must follow for referencing in the text and in the References section. There are different styles of referencing as Harvard or APA. Therefore, before starting referencing, follow the steps stated below:

1. **First**, you should identify the required or preferred referencing style.

2. **Second**, check whether you have included quotation marks and page numbers where it is appropriate.

3. **Third**, check whether you have included all the items you have cited in your text.
The importance of proof-checking
The best tip

most charming character
and how I was loved

The most important thing in life, was love

"The most important thing in life, was love."

Miguel Maestre on his home cooking. His first head chef - his mother - always kept love as a driving force in her life and it has helped me in my career as well.
The last thing you should do is PROOFREAD your paper. Even after spell checking the paper with your word processor, you should take the time to read it one last time before turning it in. Fix typographical errors, improve wording, and make sure the numbers make sense.

Ask someone who is not of your specialization to proofread and identify whether your paper is easy to understand.
VISIT NOW AND LEARN MORE

Research LEAP

“Network of Academic and Research Excellence”
• Referencing. Available from https://www.dit.ie/media/images/study/maturestudents/APAReferringGuide.pdf [5 August 2016]