

# Guide to Research, Writing, and Citations

Adapted from Rachel Harvey's "Style 101", Alana Lynch's "List of Paper Dos and Don'ts", Crete's JSTOR instructions, and Purdue's "*OWL resource* MLA Formatting and Style Guide" (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/03/>)

## I. Research

### USING JSTOR AND OTHER ACADEMIC DATABASES

Identifying a topic of interest and finding the relevant literature is the first step in a research paper assignment. You can begin by searching various databases for key words that interest you, such as "African-Americans and HIV" or "female circumcision". Before settling on the six required sources for the research paper, you will need to browse the literature, narrowing those six sources down from a vast body of work. Select the six articles most pertinent to your topic.

To begin:

1. Go to the UF library website (<http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/>)  
(if the page displays multiple libraries, choose Smathers)
  2. If you are off campus, on the upper right, click on "**remote logon**". You **don't** have to remote log-in if you are using a campus computer.
  3. Log in using your gatorlink or UF id info.
  4. This should take you to a page that says  
**"You have SUCCESSFULLY LOGGED ON to the LIBRARY PROXY."**  
Choose "Smathers" again  
On this page, there will be a list of resources:
    - Books
    - Articles
    - Journals
    - Databases
- Click on **Databases**.
5. This should take you to the "Finding Databases" page.  
"Project starters" takes you to a list of various databases, with descriptions.  
"Databases A-Z" is a list of databases.  
For JSTOR, click **Databases A-Z** and scroll down to JSTOR.  
Enter a search term—try "female circumcision", for example—and you get a list of articles on that subject, which you can read through the JSTOR browser, or download.
  6. Citing articles from JSTOR  
Look at the MLA guide for citing journal articles. Articles from JSTOR and other databases should be cited like journal articles, **NOT like webpages**.
  7. **UF page of full-text & journal index databases:** <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/cm/anthropology/>

## II. Writing

### Introduction

- In the first paragraph clearly and gracefully introduce the *topic* and present the *thesis*.
- The thesis statement should set forth an *argument* not a *statement of fact*. Could someone potentially disagree with your thesis? If not, you have probably set forth a statement of fact.
- Make your argument *specific* not general. Avoid all sweeping generalities, about human beings, about civilization, about “our society,” about anything “through the ages,” etc.
- Does your thesis matter to you? Would it matter to other members of the class? Does your thesis address important issues that the course has raised? Does it pass the “So what?” test?
- The thesis should give the reader a sense of what the *structure* of the paper will be. What are your points?

### Paper Body

- Keep things together that belong together.
- Be sure you do not change the subject in the middle of a paragraph
- Make the paragraph the unit of composition. Each paragraph should have a theme and a key idea. The topic sentence must provide a clear and explicit transition from the point of the preceding paragraph to the point of the present paragraph.
- Use subject headers.
- Use transitions (repetition of key words and ideas) to connect paragraphs together. Give your reader some clues, some guide-signs, as to where you are going.
- Remember argument and facts then analysis.
- Offer specific evidence or examples that support your point.
- Offer your own voice and perspective on the matter.

### Conclusion/ Analysis

- Pull ideas together, restate a key idea in a new way, and/or suggest how your reading relates to larger issues of interest to you and your readers. Do not be merely repetitive?
- What does this research tell us?
- Attend to the “So what?” factor.

### OVERALL Checklist:

- Does the essay successfully address the specific subject it sets out to analyze?
- Does the essay *interpret* the text, or merely paraphrase and/or summarize? Have you merely translated what the text says, or have you analyzed *how* the text says what you think it says?
- Does the essay *fully develop* the thesis it sets forth in the beginning?
- Are there alternative ways the paper could be structured in order more effectively to argue the thesis?
- Does the thesis need to be changed to reflect the actual argument of the paper?
- Leave time to revise and rewrite. Proof read and use spell check.
- Do not get attached to your own words. Fear not the delete key.
- Take some time away from your draft before editing.

## **Common problems with SENTENCE STRUCTURE**

- Most importantly, avoid short, bumpy sentences and long straggling sentences with more than one main idea.
- Write with nouns and verbs.

### **Locate Primary Nouns**

*A participle phrase at the beginning of a sentence must refer to the primary subject.*

**(IN the following is examples, no. 2 is the more correct sentence.)**

1. Walking slowly down the road, he saw a woman accompanied by two children.
  2. He saw a woman, accompanied by two children, walking slowly down the road.
- 
1. Young and experienced, the task seemed easy to me.
  2. Young and experienced, I thought the task easy.

### **Avoid Run-on Sentences**

*Use a comma to separate two dependent clauses.*

- I went to the store, and John went fishing.

*Avoid superfluous commas.*

- I went to the store and then went fishing.

### **Avoid Fragments**

*Each sentence should have an obvious subject and an active verb.*

### **Use the ACTIVE voice.**

*Avoid past tense when possible. In summaries, keep to one tense. Utilize the literary present when possible. The second option is the correct one.*

1. It has been researched that there is no cure for HIV/AIDS.
  2. Research shows no viable cure for HIV/AIDS.
- 
1. Intimate couples have been shown to enjoy lower stress lifestyles.
  2. According to Blake, intimate couples benefit from lowered stress.

### **Be direct, concise, and positive.**

1. He was not very often on time.
2. He often came late.

### **Avoid Wordy phrases**

1. There were a great number of dead leaves lying on the ground.
2. Dead leaves covered the ground

### **Do not be afraid to omit needless words.**

“The question as to whether” can be simply “whether” or “the question whether”

There is no doubt that...TO...No doubt

He is a man who...TO...He

This is a subject that...TO...This subject

The reason why is that...TO...Because

### **Avoid weak, unspecific phrases.**

*Avoid vague language. Whenever possible, be specific.*

Look out for and avoid these buzzwords:

"certain," "specific," "different," "various," "many," "true," etc.

“There is...”

“Some people...”

“Nowadays...” “In our society...”

### **Avoid being informal.**

- Do not use contractions, colloquialisms, figures of speech or exclamations.
- If it sounds cute and cheesy, it probably is. Find a better way to creatively say what you mean in a scholarly, professional manner.

### **A word about evidence:**

- Remember this is a research paper. Use the steps of critical thinking to check out facts, texts, and authors.
- If you make a statement, back it up. How do I know it is valid?
- Do not present useless statistics or information. Tell me, or better SHOW ME, why each tidbit is important to your thesis.

### **The basic DO NOTs**

- No contractions (don't is **do not**, shouldn't is **should not**)
- No rhetorical questions; i.e., no questions that do not expect an answer (e.g., “Is the sky blue?”)
- In black ink
- Can use textbook or dictionary if need a definition - but NOT an on-line dictionary (and be sure to cite both the textbook and/or the dictionary)
- One hard return between paragraphs, not two (or 1.5). You need to consult the formatting menu in Word or WordPerfect to fix this.

### III. Citations

#### Incorporating quotes

- *You must introduce your quotations and integrate them into your sentences. Free-standing quotations -- quotations that stand on their own as complete sentences -- are unacceptable.*
- Use colons and enclosed “QM” for formal quotes:  
The US Coast Pilot made this statement about the place: “Bracy Cove is exposed to Southwest winds, has a rocky coast line, and is unfit for anchorage” (Smith 78).
- Use commas for informal quotes.  
Mark Twain writes, “A classic...read” (45).  
Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).

#### Block quotes

- If a quotation is more than 4 lines, make it a block quote. Begin longer quotations on a new line and indent the entire quotation (i.e., put in block form), with no quotation marks at beginning or end.
- Like regular quotations, block quotations may not be free-standing; *introduce and integrate them into your writing.*
- Only quote material that you will discuss or that is indispensable to the clarity and spirit of the quotation. Eliminate any unnecessary passages from block quotations with *ellipses* (...).
- *Do not* begin a new paragraph immediately following your block quotation. You must perform close reading of your quotations (a summation sentence) before moving on.

#### In-text citations

Immediately following a quotation from a source or a paraphrase of a source's ideas, you place the author's name followed by a space and/or the relevant page number(s).

- Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).
- Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).
- Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

#### Works Cited page

- Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page at the end of your research paper. It should have the same one-inch margins and last name, page number header as the rest of your paper.
- Label the page Works Cited (do not underline the words Works Cited or put them in quotation marks) and center the words Works Cited at the top of the page.
- Double space
- all citations, but do not skip spaces between entries.

**Watch citations**

- Check MLA style guide for proper listing of books, articles, authors' names.

Check out: <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLA.html> OR other on-line guides