

Physical Preparation of Your Papers

Your **goal** in writing a paper in this class is the same as if you were writing one to be published in a high quality journal or to be read by an executive in your organization. You want to convey important information to the readers, to persuade them to see your point of view. You may be reporting facts or opinions, but you must ground them in the works of others, your experience, or in your knowledge.

The most important aspect of your paper is subject content. Given that, you must attend to the details of layout, format, and style. When you have all of these together, you should have an interesting paper that the reader will want to read. Neglect any part of it and you punish yourself and your reader.

Content is putting enough, and in the appropriate wording, in the paper to adequately, but concisely, explain your point. You must do this first, last, and always. I seek content rich papers, reports that convey a lot of information in a small amount of words, with good flow and style.

Figure 1 - Definition

References give your paper strength. If you anchor what you say in the published work of others, the readers see how your thoughts are not just your own but relate to others. You **must**, however, give them credit, e.g., an acknowledgment for their effort; you must reference their work as shown below. [1]¹

Layout is what the paper looks like to the eye. First it must be clean. Next, it must appeal to your and your readers' visual senses.

Format includes fonts, margins, bibliography, figures, etc. When possible, use a laser printer, with a 10 or 11 point, proportional, serif font. Times Roman, the font of this paper, is such a font. **Double (or 1.5) space the text.** I prefer you use double column, full justified text. You should have 3/4" to 1" left and right margins and 1/2" to 3/4" top and bottom margins. Be sure to include page numbers and **your name in the**

footer. Use section headings and put them in **bold** type, even **large bold type.** Underline to show emphasis. Use quote (") marks sparingly--try to not use them to emphasize words the reader will already know. Do not put the paper into a plastic binder; **only staple it in the upper left corner.** Colored or textured paper is nice, but totally unnecessary. Often, a cover page is unnecessary; however, your name is always required. Put your name, page number, and date in a footing.

Style is how you write. You should write at a ninth grade level for clarity. Try to not use gender specific wording, colloquial phrases that don't fit the situation, and long, run-on sentences. Use active voice in preference to passive voice. At a minimum, spell check your paper. **Grammar check** it if at all possible. If you do not feel comfortable about your writing style, have a colleague review your paper². The following is one way to organize a paper:

Title - Be concise and informative

Abstract - < 50 words

Table of Contents - Reminds you of major points

Introduction - Set the stage, gives background

Main topic heading - Divide paper with headings

Sub-topic heading

Sub-topic heading

Main topic heading

Sub-topic heading

Conclusions & Implications - Main point(s)

References

Glitz - This is your ~~tendency~~ to add cute **L stuff**⁷ Your paper should be of a quality you would be pleased to give to your company president. Clarity and neatness count, not glitz. (See Format).

Outlining - A closing thought... use the outliner feature of your word processor to determine what you plan to write, or outline it when you are finished to see if you have good flow. This will help content.

¹ Use a sorted, numbered bibliography at the end of the paper, referred to by numbers in brackets.

² The *English Center* in HC3183 is available to consult with you on your papers. They will not proofread them, but will offer advise on structure, flow, and clarity. I recommend their services after you have spell and grammar checked your paper. Phone: 844-5749