

Departmental Style Sheet

Writing Skills Center

Department of English Language and Literature

University of Haifa

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When: by appointment

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Formatting

- Page Margins: use default margins on Microsoft Word.
- Text Direction: Left to right — ¶ (Home→Paragraph) shortcut: control + arrow.
- Align Text: Left to right (under Paragraph section on Home tab of Microsoft Word document).

- Font: Times New Roman or Garamond 12 pt.
- Color: Black
- Use 2.0 (double) space between lines, including quotations.
- Put your own name on the essay.
- Paginate your paper.
- Indent new paragraphs.
- Do not place an extra space between paragraphs.
- Title your essay. Here is an example: Female Mischief in *The Crucible*.
- When you first mention an author's name, always use their first and last name, including any initials or middle names (such as Bjorn A. Payne Diaz). After the first reference, the author's last name is enough (such as Diaz).
- If the assignment specifies a word limit, adhere to it.
- Here is a standard [MLA title page](#).

Please use the following [checklist](#) before submitting papers.

For more information on essay formatting, please look over the Purdue Online Writing Lab site: [Purdue OWL // Purdue Writing Lab](#)

Mechanics

Essay Structure and Argument

Introduction – Body Paragraphs – Conclusion

[See this file for more on essay structure.](#)

Also, visit [OWL Purdue here](#) for even more information on essay structure.

Thesis statements should be interpretations of a text that are contestable, literary, and supportable by textual evidence. They do not merely describe or summarize a text; they should advance, in brief, a larger argument about what makes some aspect of the text significant.

The thesis and the essay need to match; that is, the essay's argument and structure must follow from the thesis statement. If they do not, then either change the thesis to be consistent with the essay (the path of least resistance) or change the essay to match the thesis.

Topic sentences must appear at the beginning of every body paragraph, following the introduction with the thesis statement.

Do not start paragraphs with quotations or plot summary.

Avoid generalities (sweeping statements). Your discussion, the development of ideas, must be grounded in the text being analyzed.

Punctuation

- Comma [,]: separates words, ideas, phrases, or pauses within a sentence. For more helpful information: [Commas: Quick Rules // Purdue Writing Lab](#)
- Oxford comma: the final comma in a list of things. Please use them. *Example:* Please bring me apples, plums, and figs.
- Comma splice: when two main (or independent) clauses are incorrectly combined using only a comma between them. This is a common grammatical mistake. *Example:* The girl, bought pears near the mountain. For guidance and exercises: [Run On Sentences // Purdue Writing Lab](#)
- Semicolon [;]: links two independent clauses with no connecting words. This form of punctuation indicates that the second clause expands, explains, or otherwise has a close relationship with the first. *Example:* I am going home; I hope that my parents are welcoming.
- Double hyphens [—]: do not use them in essays instead of commas or full stop periods. Use them sparingly. *Example:* We loved the beach—its soft sand was divine—and tried to swim there as often as possible.

Grammar

- Dangling modifiers are common errors. They occur when a word or a phrase's placement in a sentence gives it an unclear role.
 - *Example:*
Driving to work, the building was far away.

See: [Dangling Modifiers and How To Correct Them // Purdue Writing Lab](#)

- Keep words or phrases that are meant to be parallel structures as such.
 - See: [Parallel Structure // Purdue Writing Lab](#)
- Watch for sentence fragments (incomplete sentences with no main verb and/or subject). They are grammatical mistakes.
 - See: [Sentence Fragments // Purdue Writing Lab](#)
- Watch for run-on sentences, comma splices, and fused sentences. These are very common errors in sentence construction. They are grammatical mistakes.
 - See: [Run On Sentences // Purdue Writing Lab](#)
- Subject/verb agreement.
 - See: [Subject/Verb Agreement // Purdue Writing Lab](#)
- Verb tenses need to be consistent throughout the essay (and certainly within an individual sentence). Use the present tense in your essays. Finally, refrain from passive verbs. Keep your writing dynamic with active verbs.
 - *Examples:*

The best American regional writing tends to be less about a place than of it, with a writer's central nervous system immersed in the local ecology, subcultures, hidden history, and spoken idioms of a given location (Kowalewski 7).

Morrison integrates folktales alongside the traumatic events that happen along the river in Sula, shifting our focus from the dangerous uncertainty of the landscape to something more predictable and familiar (Gooch 94).

See the tables below for an explanation on the "Proper Use of Prepositions":

PREPOSITION	USAGE	EXAMPLE
Under	Lower than / covered by something	It is under the table. / The engine is under the car's hood.
Below	Lower than (but above ground)	Below our offices on the fourth floor is a legal firm.
Above	Higher than (but not necessarily directly over)	This light fixture would look wonderful above the table.
Across	'To the other side' (=over)	We couldn't go across / over the bridge because...
Through	'From one side to the other and inside'	There was a delay before we went through the tunnel.
Into	Enter a room / building	He went into the kitchen / office and...
Towards	'In the direction of'	Go about three miles towards the center, then turn left.
Onto	Movement to the top of something	I got onto the horse / bicycle / table.
From	'Source / origin'	We received it from a friend. / It comes from Germany.
By / Next to / Beside	Left or right of a person / thing	Do you see the person by / next to / beside Peter / the coffee machine?

PREPOSITION	USAGE	EXAMPLE
	Days of the week	On Monday
	Calendar dates	On May 17
	'Special' days	On my birthday / on my wedding anniversary
In	Months / Seasons	in January / in winter
	Year / Decade	In 2012 / in the 1980s
	Period of the day	In the morning / afternoon / evening
	After a certain period ('when')	In two hours / in a few minutes (literally – two hours / a few minutes from now)
At	'Night'	At night, we... (not 'in the night')
	'Weekend'	At weekends, I normally... ('on weekends' is also correct)
	A precise time	The staff meeting is at 9:30.
(From...) to	Marking a period of time	From Monday to Wednesday
	Telling the time	Twenty (minutes) to five
Past	Telling the time	Half past eight
Until	Marking a period of time	From Monday until Wednesday
	Marking How long	We are working on this until June.
By	'At the latest'	I will finish it by Monday.
	'Up to this point'	By December 2011, we had completed half...
Since	'From then to now'	I've been working here since 2004. (= for six years)
For	'Over this period of time'	The project was for four years.
Ago	'At this past point'	It started three years ago. (= in 2009)
Before / Prior to	'Earlier than this point'	Before / prior to this policy, no such mechanism existed.

OWL Purdue is an invaluable resource: [To, On \(to\), In \(to\) // Purdue Writing Lab](#)

Style

- No contractions.
- Avoid wordiness. Limit sentence length to 10-15 words.
- No slang.
- No clichés.
- Avoid language that assumes the gender of a narrator, speaker, or author.
- “They” as a singular subject is permissible and preferable to “he/she.”
- Avoid sexist language and generalizations.

Advice

- Proofread your essay multiple times for typos, spelling and grammar mistakes, awkward language, correct citation practices, etc.
- Give yourself enough time—to pre-write, write a first draft, revise at least 2 or 3 times, proofread 2 or 3 times—before sending the paper in.

Citation and Quotation

Our department uses the latest edition (currently the 9th) of the Modern Language Association’s (MLA) guidelines. There are other guidelines within the discipline of literature and other systems used in other disciplines as well.

Titles: Italicize book title, play, epic poem, film, academic journal, and/or newspaper titles.

Use quotation marks for essay, short poem, and/or short story titles. Place punctuation inside the quotation marks.

Example: In “Morning Song,” the speaker’s mood is grim.

Quotations: Use quotation marks when quoting exact language written by someone else.

[Prose \(click to view\)](#)

[Drama \(click to view\)](#)

[Poetry \(click to view\)](#)

Works Cited List

Alphabetize by author’s last name (if there is no name, then alphabetize by first letter of title).

Double-space between lines.

Author last name justified left to starting margin and indent second and subsequent lines of each entry.

[Rules and Examples \(click to view\)](#)

Plagiarism

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

All written work submitted for a course, except for acknowledged quotations, must be expressed in the student’s own words. It must also be constructed upon a plan of the student’s own devising. Work copied without acknowledgement from a book, from another student’s paper, from anywhere on the internet, from Artificial Intelligence sources, or from any other source is plagiarized. Plagiarism can range from wholesale copying of passages from another’s work to using the views, opinions, and insights of another without acknowledgement, to paraphrasing another person’s original phrases without acknowledgement.

The policy of the Department of English Language and Literature is to treat any act of plagiarism with severity. A student’s ignorance of plagiarism, either in general or in any of its particular aspects, is no excuse or defense. Neither are a student’s

benign intentions an acceptable excuse.

A student caught plagiarizing automatically receives a failing grade for the work in question or for the entire course. **A repetition of plagiarism at any time during the student's studies in the Department is grounds for permanent dismissal from the English Department.** The department may decide to refer you to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for a hearing that could result in expulsion.

The following constitute acts of plagiarism:

1. Absence of quotation marks around any idea or observation – whole or in part—not your own and from an article, a book, a website, or a person (including the person's notes, articles, and oral help). If the exact words of a source are used, both a footnote and quotation marks around the quotation exactly must be used. Simply giving a citation in the bibliography, or even only a footnote, even if it is precise, is not sufficient.

Although the use of a single word which another source suggests need not usually be quoted or footnoted, significant phrases or clauses borrowed verbatim from another source must be identified as such. Changing a word or a few words in a sentence or paragraph, paraphrasing, or rearranging the order of the words in a sentence or paragraph, does not alter the fact that both idea and words have been taken from another source in a significant manner. The passage must be footnoted, and all the words borrowed from the source must be put in quotation marks to avoid plagiarism.

2. Absence of acknowledgement of one or more sources being paraphrased or patchwritten.

3. Any use of AI assistance such as ChatGPT. This technology is strictly forbidden.

If you have any questions about citation conventions, consult section 3 of the department's Writing Resources page, found

Other Resources

Yale's Poorvu Center for Writing and Learning, writing handouts and model papers:

[Writing handouts and model papers | Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning \(yale.edu\)](http://poorvucenter.yale.edu/)

Harvard Writing Center:

[Strategies for essay writing | \(harvard.edu\)](http://writingcenter.harvard.edu/)

North Carolina State University's tips for first-year student writing:

[First-year writing program resources for students – Department of English – NC State \(ncsu.edu\)](http://writingcenter.ncsu.edu/)