

Tips and Tricks for Formatting and Editing Writing Assignments

- Use 12-point font. (If you are accessing Google Docs the default is 11. Change it to 12!)
- Use an easy-to-read, standard font (such as Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial).
- Double-space throughout (no extra space after the title or between paragraphs).
- In the upper right corner, insert your page numbers, making sure your last name is on the left side of the page numbers. (Last Name 1)
- In the upper left corner of the page, complete the following:
 - Your First and Last Name
 - Teacher's Last Name
 - Course Name
 - Due Date
- Center your title.
- Set the margins of your paper to one inch on each side.
- Indent each paragraph one-half inch.
- Academic writing should always be formal in tone and vocabulary. Do not use exclamation points and “convincing your best friend” language. For example, **do not** do the following: “Who doesn’t like football? Well, we will discuss the highlights of the game here!”
- No contractions in formal writing. (Don’t write “don’t”; write “do not” instead.)
- No personal pronouns: No “you”, “we” or “I” point of view in formal papers. Avoid: “I think”, “I believe”, and “I will prove” (except in direct quotations).
- Use questions sparingly: They weaken your argument.

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THINK, PONDER, AND CONSIDER WITH ME



- Avoid repetition. Substitute words with synonyms while using academic vocabulary whenever possible. (Example: “benefit” is better than “do good”).
- Use a thesaurus to find fresh words. Some words are overused. (Examples: very, good, a lot) I recommend the Google Add-on: One Look Thesaurus.
- Never use “thing”. Instead, tell what the “thing” is.
- Limit “Be Verbs” (is, am, was, were, be, being, been). Instead, use strong action verbs.
- Use transitions.
- Always check for CUPS. (**C**apitalization, **U**sage, **P**unctuation, and **S**pelling.)
- Avoid unclear pronouns (ie: it, they, them, this).
- CITE ALL SOURCES (even if it is not a direct quotation). Any information or idea from another source must be cited with the exception of general knowledge or knowledge that is specific to the class.
- Use helps like Easy Bib Bibliography Creator to generate bibliographies on Google Docs. You can choose from MLA, APA, or other formatting styles depending on the specific assignment.
- Use italics for titles of longer works that you are referencing like *book titles*, *magazines*, *web pages*, and *court cases*.
- In titles of works, capitalize all the words except articles (*a, an, the*), prepositions (*to, from, between*, and so on), coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet*) and the to infinitives.
- Number formatting:
 - spell out single-digit whole numbers (zero-nine).
 - Use numerals for numbers greater than nine (10, 25, 635, etc).
 - Always spell out simple fractions and use hyphens (one-half).
 - Write out a number if it begins a sentence.
 - Write percentages and decimals with numerals (50%), especially when given from a source (cite the source of course).

