

Writing Tips

Getting Down to The Writing

1. Decide what form your writing will take (essay, report, research paper, book review), or be very clear what form your assignment requires and write consistently with that form.
2. Develop your thesis — after researching the broad area of your topic, or thinking about what you want to address, you need to define EXACTLY the point your writing is going to make.

- What is the purpose of your paper?
- What question are you addressing?

Answering these questions will point you toward your thesis. Your thesis statement should be in the first sentence, paragraph or introduction of your project, and the rest of the paper should be addressing it in one way or another.

Helpful Hints

You must have a good dictionary close at hand; a good thesaurus is very handy as well.

When researching, always note the source of your information so that when you use it in your paper, you can easily and accurately cite it.

Be very familiar with the definition of plagiarism, and DON'T DO IT! Make sure you follow your instructor's specific requirements for works cited.

Grammar Hints

Keep your verb tense and voice consistent; generally the active voice is the stronger one to use.

If you're bored with your topic, the person reading your paper may be as well. Spice up your paper with varied sentence structure and style, quotations and relevant, but perhaps less well-known, facts. Be specific; don't use "this" as a subject. Define what "this" is and use that as your subject!

Avoid:

1. sentence fragments
2. run-on sentences
3. awkward sentences or words
4. informal language or slang
5. repetition of your points or research
6. trite, empty sentences (even when you're trying to get to the minimum word count the instructor has required)
7. the misuse of commas.

Revise, Revise, Revise

All writing requires revision. It is as essential as the preliminary writing, just as doing the research is a step you can't skip. Read what you've written aloud; does it make sense, does it flow, does it sound awkward or boring?

Ask yourself if your thesis is clearly put forth in the introduction. Make sure that the sentences follow each other logically, and that the same is true for the paragraphs.

Make sure that you have supported all your statements with facts (correctly cited).

Make sure the conclusion ties all the important points together, and that it connects to your original thesis put forth in your introduction.

Use, BUT DO NOT RELY ON, your computer's spell and grammar check function. You could have spelling mistakes/typos that the computer doesn't pick up because your spelling mistake is actually a real word—not the right one, but not a spelling mistake either.

Ask a friend, a writing tutor or your instructor for feedback.

