

10 Principles of Academic Writing



1. All assigned academic papers must be typed, unless otherwise instructed. Type in 12-point font only, with standard 1" margins (standard default). Type in standard Times Roman or Courier font style.
2. Double space all academic papers.
3. Academic papers must include a "header" in the top left-hand corner that states your first & last names, class/teacher, and date.
4. Most papers require only a title one space above the essay; research papers will require a title page. Try to invent creative titles for your papers; it makes them more fun to read.
5. Use a single staple in the upper left-hand corner.
6. Do not use "I," "You," "In my opinion," or any related expressions. These personal pronouns do not belong in academic writing. We know the thinking is yours; your name is on the paper.
7. Proofread your paper carefully – it's glaringly obvious when you don't. Do not rely on the computer's spell-check; it will find words spelled incorrectly, but will not know if you have used the wrong word.
8. Watch your verb tenses. Do not change verb tenses in the middle of a sentence. Strive for consistency.
9. Do not use fanciful, dramatic language – it sounds silly and out of place. If there was no drama inherent in the subject already, you probably would not be writing about it. In addition, avoid slang or contractions; neither belongs in academic writing.
10. Avoid at all costs plagiarism! Credit and cite your sources. Use the current MLA style for in-text citations and Works Cited (formerly known as a bibliography).