

## HOW TO WRITE A RESEARCH PAPER

Generally speaking, poorly constructed essays and poorly written sentences reflect poor thinking and a lack of care. You will lose points for transgression of items on this list.

1. ALL PAPERS MUST BE EMAILED BEFORE THE START OF CLASS TO [cfbruno@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cfbruno@sbcglobal.net) .

### Formatting

2. Use APA formatting. Examples can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
3. Include a title page with the paper title, your name, the class title, and the date. This title page will not count toward the page requirement.
4. Use black ink, double spaced lines, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1" top and bottom, left and right margins, on white letter-size paper (8.5" x 11") paper with portrait orientation.
5. Include page numbers on the upper right corner of the page.
6. The running header title and page number go in the HEADER of the page. If you do not know how to place text in the header, see me.
7. Minimum paper length is strictly enforced. Short papers are always the result of lack of effort and research. Papers may be longer, but shorter papers will be penalized.

### Grammar / Tone

8. Do not write in the first person. Do not write "I think" or "I conclude" or "My opinion is" etc. The essay should be impersonal. Similarly, never write 'Our next move must be' or 'We must' to refer to something that must be done in the world or by a government (in particular, do not refer to the US government as 'we'). Maintain a neutral position.
9. Do not write 'you' either to make something impersonal or as if you are writing a letter to the professor. E.g. Do not write 'If you understand this theory, you can prevent crime' or suchlike.
10. Do not use slang.
11. Do not use abbreviations such as aren't and don't - spell them out (i.e. are not, do not).
12. Research papers should have a formal tone like a journal article rather than a chatty tone like a newspaper or an informal letter.

13. Be sure to write whole sentences rather than fragments of sentences.
14. Make sure that your grammar and syntax are correct.
15. If the piece of work is an essay, do not write a list of bullet-points.

### **Content / Substance**

16. Quality (rather than quantity) is the key to getting a good grade. A quality research paper makes sound arguments that are supported by research findings.
17. It is not appropriate to simply offer opinions or assertions unsupported by research. Express arguments based on logic, or conclusions based upon evidence, with references as appropriate.

### **Editing**

18. Before submitting your research paper, read it through, and pretend that you are somebody else - read it through their eyes. Then, clarify those sentences that made sense to you earlier but which may be less clear in meaning to someone else.
19. Use a spellchecker, but do not rely on it completely. Homonyms (words that sound alike but mean something different) can creep into your paper and will not be caught by the spellchecker.
20. Have someone else read through your essay to make comments on both substance and presentation/grammar. Then read through your essay again.

Much of the content on this page is adapted from the University of Cincinnati Department of Criminal Justice.