Guidelines for Writing a Research Paper

Reading the Text

- Though it might seem obvious: read the text to be discussed, concentrating especially on the topic given and your focus
- Make notes while you read: make sure to put down the source and relevant page(s)
- Roughly outline your thoughts on the topic with reference to the text

Establishing the Context

- Look for critical material on the author's work in general, the text under discussion (avoid taking all information from one source only; different critics are likely to come up with different points of view – think of yourself as the discussion leader)
- If there is a lot of critical material, make a selection of what seems relevant; you cannot be all-inclusive (stick to recent publications)
- Relate your own research to the results of your investigations in the critical material
- Organise your notes and draw up an outline of your paper; always keep the topic in mind: the results of your analysis and the study of critical material should be integrated into your paper according to a meaningful outline

Writing Your Paper

- Stick to the outline of your paper (or modify your outline if necessary)
- Make sure to indicate any sources used (style sheet/MLA), whether they are given in direct or indirect quotation; anything else is plagiarism, which is unnecessary as you are not expected to know everything about the text discussed and its author yourself; on the contrary, having looked up other people's opinion on a certain topic shows that you are already working as an academic; but also try to give your own interpretation
- Structure of paper (in our case 3,000 to 4,000 words; but structure applies to all forms of academic papers, irrespective of their actual length)

   1. **Title Page** (see example given)
   2. **Table of Contents** including page numbers (see example given)
   3. **Introduction:** here you give your topic/central idea, probably an explanation for it and a thesis statement, which means that you state something which you are then trying to prove in your paper
   4. **Main part (structured into subchapters):** your analysis of the topic
   5. **Conclusion:** here you sum up the main points/findings of your paper and point out whether your thesis proved right or wrong; give answers to (implicit) questions raised in your thesis statement/introduction
   6. **Bibliography/Works Cited**

- If you think that your paper is – for whichever reason – not as good/long/elaborate as it should be, talk to the course instructor about it but DO NOT write this into your paper

Title Page and Table of Contents

A Natural State of the Mind?

The Concept of Androgyny in Virginia Woolf's "A Room of One's Own"

PS: Conceptions of Art and the Artist in English Literature: A Panoramic View

Mag. Andrea Strolz

Alexandra Avram

0815639

WS 2010/11

Table of Contents

Introduction

- The introduction should provide a "map" of the structure and content/focus of the paper
- The thesis statement should address the following questions: "**What**" is the paper about? "**How**" do I approach the topic? "**When**" in the course of the paper are you dealing with which issues?
- Mention the "state of the art" in critical material/the academic world (by referring to the secondary sources that you used)

Writing the Introduction	
DOs	**DON'Ts**
present relevant background or contextual material	avoid presenting results of your analysis in the introduction
explain the focus of the paper and your specific purpose	avoid giving irrelevant information that does not relate to your central idea
define terms or concepts when necessary	avoid giving endless information on the author
reveal your plan of organisation	avoid giving summaries of the plot

Main Part

- Every subsequent paragraph or section should be a self-contained argument that develops one particular aspect of the overall topic
- Transitions from one paragraph to the next help to ensure the required inner coherence of the paper

Paragraph Structure

- A paragraph is a group of sentences about a single topic/idea/argument, which normally consists of around five to seven sentences
- An ideal paragraph contains:
  - **a topic sentence**: introduces the main idea of the paragraph
  - **supporting sentences**: providing explanation (developing, supporting and explaining the main idea), examples (giving [textual] evidence for the main idea, quoting from primary and/or secondary texts), analysis (how is the point of this paragraph relevant to your overall argument?)
  - **a concluding sentence**: summarises the main point and restates the topic sentence OR presents the conclusion of the paragraph's argument OR provides a transition to the next paragraph
- Indent every paragraph (unless at the beginning of a new chapter)

Conclusion

- At the end of the essay, a conclusion should summarise the most important results of your discussion of the topic
- Do not be afraid to tell the reader once again what the main points of your argument were
- The reader likes to be reminded of the central issues of your paper to make sure that the main points have been grasped correctly and to help remember them
- Your conclusion should answer the (implicit) questions raised in your thesis statement/introduction

Writing the Conclusion
If the argument or central idea of your paper is complex, you may need to summarise the argument for your reader
If prior to your conclusion you have not yet explained the significance of your findings or if you are proceeding inductively, use the conclusion
Add your points up, explain their significance
Move from a detailed to a general level of consideration that returns the topic to the context provided by the introduction
Perhaps suggest what about this topic needs further research
New aspects of analysis DO NOT GO INTO YOUR CONCLUSION!

- The best way to check if your introduction and conclusion are efficient is to read only these two parts of your paper

- If your introduction and conclusion address all central questions (concerning your thematic focus, methodology and structure) as well as provide a summary of the major results, then they fulfil their functions (i.e. these two sections should put in a nutshell the information about content, methodology, and results)

Referencing

Writing an academic research paper not only means structuring your ideas, developing them, and relating them to your overall topic, it also implies that one has to follow certain conventions regarding the documentation of sources. In the field of English and American literary studies, the rules of documentation are particularly strict and have to follow the guidelines laid down in the *Modern Language Association* (*MLA*) *Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (2009), 8th edition.

Bibliography/Works Cited

An academic paper must contain a bibliography, i.e. a list of all the sources that have been used. It is placed at the end of the paper. The items listed are ordered alphabetically by the author's last name. The relevant bibliographical facts about a book are taken not from its cover, but from its title page (inside the book) and, if necessary, from the small print on its half-title page (the reverse side of the title page). The following information is required in the following order:

- **Author's last and first name**; if a source has three or more authors or editors, only the first appears with the addition "et al." ("and others"); if the author's name is not given, begin the entry with the work's title; authors do not have to be individuals but can be associations, such as "United Nations"
- **Title and subtitle of the source**; a title is placed in quotation marks if the source is part of a larger work (e.g. an essay, story or poem) and italicised if the source is self-contained and independent (e.g. books, films or collections); capitalise all words in titles except articles (*a, an, the*), prepositions (*as, against, between* etc.), coordinating conjunctions (*and, or, but, for, yet* etc.) and the *to* in infinitives; always capitalise the first and the last word
- **(Title of container)**; if the source is included in a larger container, such as a collection or journal, the italicised title of the container follows next
- **(Other contributors, if named in addition to author)**; editors or translators are usually recorded in documentation if they are credited in the source
- **(Version)**; if it is indicated that the source has been released in more than one form, identify the version in your entry, e.g. "revised ed.", "2nd ed."
- **(Number)**; include volume and issue number of journals (e.g. "vol. 128, no. 1"); if a book has been issued in multiple volumes, refer to volume number
- **Publisher**; the publisher that produced the source or made it available to the public; if two or more organisations are named that seem equally responsible, cite each of them, separating them with a forward slash (/); for academic presses, replace "University Press" with "UP" (or "U of Chicago P"; omit business words like "Company" or "Ltd."
- **Publication Date**; usually, the year alone is given for books or films (look for the date of publication on the title or copyright page and select the most recent one, i.e. the date of the edition you used), and a full date is given for newspaper articles or entries on websites

- **(Location)**; for texts included in containers such as collections or journals, cite page numbers (preceded by "pp."); the location of an online work is indicated by its URL

Basic Forms for Print Sources

Book by a single author

Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. Oxford UP, 2011.

Two or more works by the same author (list books alphabetically)

Palmer, William J. *Dickens and New Historicism*. St. Martin's Press, 1997.

---. *The Films of the Eighties: A Social History*. Southern Illinois UP, 1993.

Book by two or more authors

Dorris, Michael, and Louise Erdrich. *The Crown of Columbus*. HarperCollins Publishers, 1999.

Burdick, Anne, et al. *Digital_Humanities*. MIT P, 2012.

Anthology or collection

Holland, Merlin, and Rupert Hart-Davis, editors. *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*. Henry Holt, 2000.

Work in an anthology

Harris, Muriel. "Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers." *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One*, edited by Ben Rafoth, Heinemann, 2000, pp. 24-34.

Article in a magazine or newspaper

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." *Time*, 20 Nov. 2000, pp. 70-71.

Article in a journal with continuous pagination

Allen, Emily. "Staging Identity: Frances Burney's Allegory of Genre." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, no. 31, 1998, pp. 433-451.

Article in a journal that pages each issue separately

Duvall, John N. "The (Super)Marketplace of Images: Television as Unmediated Mediation in DeLillo's *White Noise*." *Arizona Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 3, 1994, pp. 127-153.

Translation

Pfister, Manfred. *The Theory and Analysis of Drama.* Translated by John Halliday, Cambridge UP, 1988.

Basic Forms for Electronic Sources

When citing a website, you should try to identify an author, the title of the page and a date of publication. The title of the page is not to be confused with its URL; it can usually be found somewhere at the top of individual web pages. Include the URL and the date when you last accessed the source at the end of the entry.

A web project as a whole

Eaves, Morris, et al., editors. *The William Blake Archive*. 1996-2014, www.blakearchive.org/blake/.

A scholarly journal

Chan, Evans. "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema." *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 10, no. 3, May 2000. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/pmc.2000.0021.

(When possible, citing a DOI [digital object identifier] is preferable to citing a URL.)

A periodical publication in an online database

Goldman, Anne. "Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69-88. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41403188/.

Magazine or newspaper article published online

Deresiewicz, William. "The Death of the Artist – and the Birth of the Creative Entrepreneur." *The Atlantic*, 28 Dec. 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-death-of-the-artist-and-the-birth-of-the-creative-entrepreneur/383497/.

A tweet

@persiankiwi. "We have report of large street battles in east & west of Tehran now - #Iranelection." *Twitter*, 23 June 2009, 11.15 a.m., twitter.com/persiankiwi/status/2298106072.

An e-book

Gikandi, Simon. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. Cambridge UP, 2000. *ACLS Humanities E-book*, hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.07588.0001.001.

Basic Forms for audio and video recordings

A film or television series

When documenting a work in film or television, you should generally cite the organisation/individual that had the primary overall responsibility for it.

Morris, Chris, director. *Four Lions*. Film4 Productions, 2010.

If your discussion of a work focuses on the contribution of a particular person (e.g. an actor or the screenwriter), begin the entry with his/her name.

Whedon, Joss, creator. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Mutant Enemy, 1997-2003.

If you are not focusing on an individual's contribution, begin with the title and, if relevant, include information about the director and other key participants.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, Mutant
    Enemy, 1997-2003.

If you wish to refer to a particular episode of a series, begin the entry with the episode's title.

"Hush." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar,
    season 4, episode 10, Mutant Enemy, 1999.

A musical performance

Schubert, Franz. *Piano Trio in E Flat Major D 929*. Performance by Wiener Mozart-Trio, Preiser
    Records, 2011.

A song from an album

Beyoncé. "Pretty Hurts." *Beyoncé*, Parkwood Entertainment, 2013.

Documenting Sources in Your Paper

For documenting the sources in your paper you have two possibilities at your disposal:

1. Documentation within the text is called **parenthetical documentation**. In this case, either the name of the author and the page reference or the title of the work and the page reference are directly cited after the quotation within the text.

2. **Footnotes** and **endnotes** are also used. Footnotes are positioned at the bottom of the page, endnotes at the end of the entire paper. Footnotes and endnotes are not only used to document the sources, but more often so, they are used for additional information, i.e. information, further sources etc. that you do not wish to integrate into the paper as such.

Short, direct quotes of less than four lines are generally integrated in the text and placed in quotation marks (direct quotation). You can also use paraphrases, i.e. indirect quotations.

Longer quotations of more than four lines are set off from the text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch from the left margin, and without adding quotation marks. Maintain 1.5-spacing (NB: you should maintain 1.5-spacing throughout your essay); parenthetical citation after the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks.

If a sentence or a passage is not quoted as a whole, the omitted parts are indicated by three periods ([...]).

Basic rules for in-text citations

A typical in-text citation is composed of the element that comes first in the entry in the works-cited list and a page number. The author's name may appear in the text itself or before the page numbers in the parenthesis.

> According to Naomi Baron, reading is "just half of literacy. The other half is writing" (194).

OR

> Reading is "just half of literacy. The other half is writing" (Baron 194).

If you borrow from works by more than one author with the same last name, add the author's first initial or full first name.

> Reading is "just half of literacy. The other half is writing" (N. Baron 194).

If you cite more than one work by the same author in your list of works cited, include a short form of the source's title.

> Reading is "just half of literacy. The other half is writing" (Baron, "Redefining" 194).

When an entry in the works-cited list begins with the title of the work, your in-text citation contains the (abbreviated) title.

> Despite an apparent decline in reading during the same period, "the number of people doing creative writing [...] increased substantially between 1982 and 2002" (*Reading* 3).

When a source has no page numbers or any other kind of section/paragraph/chapter number, no number should be given in a parenthetical citation.

> "As we read we [...] construct the terrain of a book" (Hollmichel), something that is more difficult when the text reflows on a screen.

For audio and video recordings, cite the relevant time or range of times.

> Buffy's promise that "there's not going to be any incidents like at my old school" is obviously disingenuous (*Buffy* 00:03:16-17).

When a single fact or paraphrased idea is attributable to more than one source, list all the sources and separate them with semicolons.

> Reading may be the core of literacy (Baron 194; Jacobs 55).