

Paper Guidelines
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All papers for my classes should be argumentative in nature. That is, they should present a thesis that requires an argument to support it, rather than merely summarizing part of a text. Papers should follow the traditional structure of introduction, body, and conclusion.

Introduction:

The introduction for short papers should be a brief paragraph that establishes the context of the paper, states the topic of the paper, and states the thesis. The topic statement should be *italicized*, and the thesis should be in **bold**.

The topic statement should be a neutral statement of the issue or question that you will address in the paper. It does not state the position on the issue that you will defend, but merely states the issue itself. The topic statement should not merely be the first sentence of the paper, or a general descriptive statement that fails to specify a definite issue.

The thesis is a statement of the position on the issue that you will seek to defend. It is essentially the conclusion of the paper, stated at the outset. It should be non-obvious enough to require an argument, yet sufficiently narrow and modest so that it can be supported in a brief (though well crafted) argument.

Body:

The body of the paper should contain the argument and evidence that supports the thesis. The whole body of the paper should be devoted to advancing the argument of the paper. This is, the argument should not be left to the end of the body, with most of the paper being devoted to merely summarizing or describing. Any summary that takes place should be in the service of the argument being presented. The body should be composed of several paragraphs that flow naturally and that relate to the thesis of the paper. Appropriate evidence and citations should be provided. Any generally accepted method of citation may be used, as long as it is used consistently.

Conclusion:

The concluding paragraph should briefly summarize the argument and state the conclusion. The conclusion should be the same as the thesis presented at the outset of the paper.

Style:

The writing in the paper should be appropriate for an academic work. The following should, in general, be avoided: excessive first-person references; contractions; and colloquial expressions. Also, at the university level students should no longer be making many grammatical errors, such as: sentence fragments; run-on sentences; misusing apostrophes or failing to use them when required; and confusing "then" and "than", "their" and "there," etc. The paper should be carefully proofread for any grammatical or spelling errors, as well as for style and clarity.

Format:

Papers should be typed and double-spaced, using normal fonts and margins. A word count should appear at the end of the paper.