

Guidelines for Written Assignments

Appearance:

1. Use standard paper and the customary margins of 1” at the top, sides, and bottom of each page. You will need to adjust the default margin on many computers. Perfect 1” margins result from setting the margin at .9.
2. Papers must be typewritten, double-spaced and have a font size **no larger than 12 points**. You must use **Times New Roman** font. With the correct font, there will be 22-23 lines of type per page... and yes, your instructor **WILL** count the lines. If you are assigned to write a 3-page paper, that means no less than 3 pages with 22 lines of information on each page. In most classes you will be allowed to go slightly over the page limit. There may be situations and classes where the maximum is truly the maximum and you cannot type one line over. Read your directions carefully.
3. Papers are to be error free. Proof read for spelling, grammar, usage, and mechanics. Have someone else read it for these things as well, before turning your paper in.
4. When beginning a new paragraph, indent 5 spaces. You will need to adjust the default paragraph spacing when using Office 2007 (installed on all MPHS school computers). Mrs. Seward will show you how to do this and you are expected to make this adjustment on any paper/project you turn in for this class.
5. Place your name, the name of the course, the assignment title, and the date in the upper right-hand corner of your paper **as a header**. Page numbers should be placed in **a footer** on your paper.

Content: The Research Paper Writing Process

1. Decide on a topic that you are interested in relating to the assignment. This may be assigned to you or you may choose, depending on the assignment. If in doubt, double check your topic with your instructor before beginning your research.
2. Decide on the audience – determine who your readers will be, i.e. your instructor, students, parents, etc. The assignment may specify this. Read the assignment directions carefully.
3. Determine the purpose of your writing – to inform, to persuade, to entertain. Again, the assignment may specify this. Read the assignment directions carefully.

4. Develop questions that you want your paper to answer – what questions do you have about the topic, what questions do you think your readers would have? You should have a minimum of 4-6 questions for your 3-page research papers.
5. Research the topic - Read reputable articles, books, journals, or other sources to carry out the research. What are the main points, conclusions, and facts gleaned from the source? Are there specific facts or quotations you may want to include in your paper? Take notes or copy the articles you are reading and highlight the important issues you read in each one. If you find things you will want to quote or cite, make sure you have the full reference information recorded. Highlight quotes in a different color or have them written on a separate sheet of paper or note card. Most papers, including the research papers for this class, require a minimum of three references. Acceptable references include journals, articles, books and appropriate internet sources. Textbooks are NOT considered to be acceptable sources. The intent of writing assignments is to learn what other literature in the field says about the topic. Encyclopedias may provide helpful background material in the research phase of your paper. However, encyclopedias, including are not acceptable references for papers. Use discretion when selecting references from the internet. Anyone can post information so be sure to check the source carefully for reliability. While it may provide valuable information, Wikipedia is not acceptable as a primary resource.
6. Develop an outline – this helps you plan your writing in a systematic way by giving you a time sequence, space sequence, managing complexity, and determining important points.
7. Key your research notes to your outline – number or color code your note cards/ notes and include the important notes in your outline. The better and more thorough your outline, the easier your paper is to write. This is an excellent use of time!
8. Begin writing – High school and college level papers should be written in the third person unless the instructor specifies otherwise. Follow the recommended order below to compose your paper:
 - Introduction – capture the readers attention, supply the central idea, lead the reader into the paper. This should be a strong paragraph or two long and should prepare the reader for what they are going to learn about. DO NOT state this in an elementary/middle school way, like “In this paper I am going to tell you about Chicken Pox.” That is what the title page is for.
 - Body – Use your outline extensively! Summarize what you have read. Winnow it down to the important ideas that fit the focus of your paper. Use new paragraphs to introduce new ideas or concepts. Incorporate transitional phrases such as ‘also’ and ‘along with’ to link thoughts together in a logical format. The body is the meat of your paper where you are communicating

with the reader what you have learned and what you think is important to know about this topic. Be sure to develop a balanced treatment of your topic. If there is controversy about a particular aspect of your topic, be sure to include it as long as there are reputable sources of information to back up both sides. **ANY TIME YOU USE A DIRECT QUOTE OR THE IDEAS OF SOMEONE ELSE; YOU MUST CITE THE SOURCE WITHIN YOUR WRITING.** Refer to the sample writings from class as examples, ask for help, but do not fail to cite your sources within your paper as well as on the references page at the end of your paper.

- ❑ Conclusion – Your conclusion needs to relate to the introduction. Emphasize the most important points and conclusions but refrain from simply restating what you just said in the body. You may include your reaction or opinion on the subject. Do you agree? Why or why not? Is there another opinion or aspect to be considered? What did you learn? How will this information be useful in a professional setting? This is where you relate the content to the field of Early Childhood. What is the significance of the information to the teacher, parent, or child? How does it impact what occurs in childcare and in the early childhood classroom? In the family?
- ❑ Title Page – help the reader to know what you are writing about. It is important to be accurate, attractive and concise. This page creates the first impression of your paper.
- ❑ References – You must properly cite all direct quotations and references to a specific fact, thought, or idea of another author. You may use the APA or MLA formats. Citation of authors work should be included within the text of your paper and an alphabetical reference list should be included at the end of your paper. Suggested formats follow:

References within the paper:

Smith (2005) compares reaction times... OR In a recent study of reaction times (Smith, 2005).

Direct Quotations should be handled with quotation marks:

He stated “direct quotation” (Smith, 2005, p. 245) OR Smith (2005) found that “quotation” (p. 245)

Books:

Marotz, Lynn R.; Cross, Marie Z.; Rusch, Jeanettia M (2005) Health, Safety and Nutrition for the Young Child, Albany N.Y, Delmar Publications, Inc.

Magazines or Journal Articles:

Williams, Connie; Kamii, Constance (Nov, 1986) “How Do Children Learn by Handling Objects?” Young Children.

Internet Sources:

To cite files available from the internet, give the author's name (if known), the full title of the work in quotation marks, the title of the complete work, if available, in italics, the document date (if known and is different from the date accessed), the full http address, and the date of the visit.

Bruckman, Amy "Approaches to Managing Deviant Behavior in Virtual Communities." <http://ftp.media.mit.edu/asb/papers/deviance> - chi = 94 (4 December 2008) OR

Burka, Lauren P. "A Hypertexted History of Multi-User Dimensions" *Mud History*. 2006 <http://www.ccs.neu.edu/home/lpb/mud-history.html> (5 December 2006)

9. Set writing aside and evaluate all components later with a fresh eye – finish your paper in time to set it aside for a few days or a week. Come back to it and read it again, looking at the ideas, purpose, title, introduction, body, conclusion, composition, and GUMS (grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling). Use spell check BUT don't trust it completely, i.e. their/there, know/no, or cast/caste.
10. Revise – ALL good and excellent papers are taken through several drafts in the writing process. Nothing excellent is whipped out the weekend or night before.
11. Final Proofreading – it is critical to revisit your work one last time for GUMS. It is highly recommended that you have someone with strong writing skills proofread your paper as well.