

# Guidelines for Academic Writing

## and Formatting a Term Paper and Bachelor/Master Thesis

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## 1. Basics

All term papers in EFL Education must be written in English. They must be submitted on time, in printed and electronic form. Form and contents must meet the guidelines specified below. Term papers must be accompanied by a signed declaration of originality (*Versicherung an Eides Statt*, see 3.9).

Including footnotes, but not counting the cover page, table of contents, references and appendix, term papers must meet the requirements specified in the examination regulations. Papers which are too short or too long will not be accepted. The general guideline for papers in the new B.A. LA/M.Ed. programmes is explained below:

- M.Ed. Thesis: 50 pages / 150,000 characters (incl. space characters)
- B.A. LA Thesis: 20-30 pages / 50,000-75,000 characters (incl. space characters)
- Term Papers in B.A. LA: 8-10 pages / 12,000-15,000 characters (incl. space characters)

## 2. Form

Before you start writing on a word processor, format your document according to the following guidelines.

TIP

If you print your paper elsewhere, e.g. at a copy shop, save it as a PDF to avoid undesired alterations in other programme versions.

### 2.1 General formatting

- Paper size: DIN A4, one-sided.
- Page margins: 3 cm each left and right, 2.5 cm each top and bottom.
- Font: 12 pt Times New Roman for the text, 10 pt Times New Roman for footnotes.
- Line spacing: in running text 1.5, in footnotes 1.0
- Spacing before and after headings: same spacing for headings of the same text level, e.g., two 12 pt spaces before chapters 2, 3, 4, ... but only one 12 pt space before subsections such as 2.1 and 2.2.
- No page break between chapters.
- The choice of text format must be justified (*Blockatz*). If needed, use a hyphenation programme or hyphenate manually at the right-hand margin to avoid loose lines.
- Indentation: the first paragraph after a heading is not indented; all other paragraphs begin with a 0.5, 0.75 or 1.0 cm indentation which sets them apart from the previous paragraph (use 'tab stops').
- Remember that paragraphs are sense units and typically consist of more than one sentence. Start a new paragraph to introduce a new aspect, idea or perspective.
- Avoid leaving the first line of a new paragraph at the bottom of a page, or the last line of a paragraph at the top of a page.
- The page count starts with chapter 1; there are no page numbers on the cover page, the table of contents or the declaration of originality.

## 2.2 Italics, quotation marks and brackets

Use the correct style and typographical conventions right from the start.

### USE OF ITALICS

- Foreign words  
The *Abitur* is the highest graduation from school in Germany.
- Titles of independent publications (books, reports, webpages, and other stand-alone works, see 3.7)  
Müller-Hartmann, A. & Schocker-v. Ditfurth, M. (2015). *Introduction to English Language Teaching*. Stuttgart: Klett.
- Titles of periodicals (but not articles in journals or edited volumes, see 3.7)
- English letters used as statistical symbols or algebraic variables, e.g. M, SD, Cohen's *d*
- anchors of a scale (but not the associated number), e.g. ranged from 1 (*poor*) to 5 (*excellent*)

Please use English (“...”), not German („...“) quotation marks. Use double quotation marks for short verbatim quotations (shorter than three lines, see 2.4).

### USE OF SINGLE QUOTATION MARKS

- Quotations within quotations  
“In the process the learner does not lose this competence, but ‘becomes plurilingual and develops interculturality’” (The Council of Europe 2001, p. 45 in Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-v. Ditfurth, 2015, p. 18).

## 2.3 Citation practices

All sources must be specified clearly, not just at the end of your paper in the bibliography, but by a reference in the body of the text. However, do not insert a reference after each sentence. Bear in mind that using information without acknowledging it is **plagiarism**, which is intellectual theft and a criminal offence. Any student found guilty of it will automatically fail the course in question, with possible further punishments as stated in the *Versicherung an Eides Statt* (see sections 1 & 3.9).

Short verbatim (direct) quotations (fewer than 40 words, as in example (1a)) are set in double quotation marks and are incorporated in the running text. They are accompanied by a short reference in the form: (author(s), date of publication, page number). **Do not put these references in footnotes.** Footnotes are reserved for additional information<sup>1</sup>. Reformulated and paraphrased ideas (indirect quotations) must also be indicated by giving the reference (as in (1b)). Here, including page numbers is not necessarily required, however, it is best practice to do so when referring to part of a work.

1 A brief note on footnotes: footnotes are numbered consecutively. You do not have to have footnotes in your paper, but if you do, they should contain additional information which is too long to include in the running text, e.g. further aspects, arguments or references that might interest the reader.

## SHORT QUOTATIONS

- (1a) “In creative writing, students rather produce texts that have an aesthetic value” (Kirchhoff, 2018, p. 127). or: According to Kirchhoff (2018), “[i]n creative writing, students rather produce texts that have an aesthetic value” (p. 127).
- (1b) Teachers have certain expectations of what constitutes a good language learner (Müller- Hartmann & Schocker-v. Ditfurth, 2015, p. 34).

Longer quotations are separated from the text and indented 0.5 inches from the left margin, without quotation marks, as seen in (2a). Continue to use double-line spacing.

## LONG QUOTATIONS

- (2a) The claim that monolingualism is the norm is wrong, not least because all humans possess the capacity to learn several languages. An adequate theory of language competence, use and acquisition must be able to account for this, treating multilingualism, rather than monolingualism, as the default cause. (Hammarberg, 2010, p. 92)

If you quote the same source repeatedly in the same paragraph, always give a complete in-text reference, as seen in (2b). If the source is the same but the page is different, indicate the new page number as seen in (2c).

## QUOTING FROM THE SAME SOURCE

- (2b) In second language learning, there are differences between children and adults (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 38). There are cognitive, attitudinal as well as cultural differences between young and adult learners (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 38).
- (2c) The students' learning preferences have an influence on the strategies that learner will use in an EFL setting (Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-v. Ditfurth, 2015, p. 36). There are differences between “affective strategies, social strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, compensatory or communicative strategies” (Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-v. Ditfurth, 2015, p. 37).

Sometimes you might want to adapt the quoted text to make it fit into your own text. Any changes or omissions have to be marked with square brackets, as seen in example (3), including any insertions you make.

## ADAPTATIONS

- (3) Original text: Teachers need to be aware of these context factors and have to find ways to create a relaxed, supportive, low stress atmosphere where students are not afraid...  
Adapted text, for example: Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-v. Ditfurth (2015) state that “[t]eachers need to [...] find ways to create a relaxed [...] atmosphere” (p. 63).

Always try to quote from the original source. If there is an English original that you can get hold of, do not quote from a translated version. Quotations from languages other than English can be included. If you do so, make sure that you provide a translation.

To denote incorrect or unconventional spelling or grammar in the original source, you can insert [sic] (i.e. Latin 'so/like this') in order to show that you did not make a mistake (as in (4)).

#### INDICATING MISTAKES

- (4) “The Monitor Model been [sic] challenged by [...] researchers and theorists”  
(Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 107).

## 2.4 Examples, tables and figures

Similar to quotations, the source must be specified for all examples, tables and figures. Examples (especially longer ones) should be separated from the running text, numbered consecutively and aligned with spaces or tabs; the same applies to listings, as seen in (5).

#### QUOTING LISTS

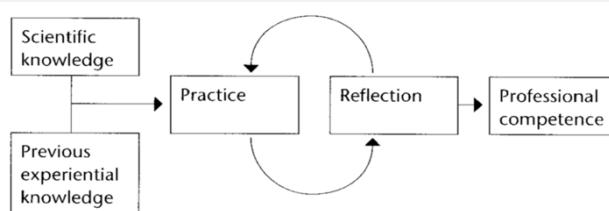
- (5) According to Freitag-Hild (2018), transculturality has a number of characteristics:
- Inner differentiation
  - Polyphony
  - Cultural complexity
  - Hybridity
  - External networking
  - Entanglements with other cultures (p. 166).

Tables and figures are numbered consecutively and formatted alike. The number of each figure appears in bold type at the top. Insert a descriptive title including the source below. Use a double-spaced line to separate the figure title from its number. Capitalise the figure title in italics.

#### QUOTING FIGURES/TABLES

### Figure 1

*The Reflective Model* (Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-v. Ditfurth, 2015, p. 14)



## 2.5 Abbreviations

Please make sure to use the abbreviations common in English:

ch., chs.	chapter, chapters
cf.	compare (i.e. Latin <i>conferre</i> )
ed.	editor, edition, edited by
e.g.	for example (i.e. Latin <i>exempli gratia</i> )
et al.	and others (i.e. Latin <i>et alii</i> )
i.e.	that is/that means (i.e. Latin <i>id est</i> )
n.d.	no date of publication
n.p.	no place of publication/no publisher
n. pag.	no pagination
vol., vols.	volume, volumes

TIP

Please note that the abbreviation “ibid.” (to indicate that you are quoting the same source as before) is not used in APA Style.

## 3. Contents and structure

The main goal of a term paper is to show your ability to work scientifically. In other words, you should show that you

- Understand and are able to reflect academic literature, facts and approaches;
- Make the topic your own, setting your own priorities, focus and guiding questions or hypotheses;
- Are able to apply the knowledge gained from the literature and transfer this knowledge to other fields or aspects, including your own examples and analyses;
- Demonstrate the ability to criticise your sources (constructively and in proper academic style) and to position yourself in relation to them.

When you are reflecting on what you have read or collected, make sure to ask yourself why something is the case, do not just say that it is so. For instance, you might state that language acquisition is quick and thorough for the first language and slower and less perfect for the second language later in life. Having said this, you must then ask yourself the question: why is this so? Try then and offer a principled explanation in a fashion acceptable in foreign language education.

A term paper must contain the following parts: a title page, a table of contents, an introduction, a main part, a conclusion, and a bibliography (references). If needed, e.g. in advanced papers, it may also contain a list of abbreviations, a list of tables and figures, and an appendix.

Regarding the contents, every term paper is, of course, different. However, there are some general guidelines, which will help you write a good paper.

- Build your paper around a concise and precise research question; make your main topic clear in the title already, so that the reader knows what the paper is about; in the text, stick to this

topic, providing arguments to support or dispute your thesis, or to discuss your topic from different perspectives.

- Do not just report what you have read in the secondary literature, do not simply sum up your sources; a term paper has to include your own research, assessments and critical thinking.
- Do not accept what you read too readily; question your sources; if you do not agree with what you read, state how your views differ from it and criticise constructively.
- Make use of your teaching knowledge; look at everything you read, and your own writing too, through a teacher's lens, and apply the teaching knowledge you have acquired.

### 3.1 Title page

#### Top left

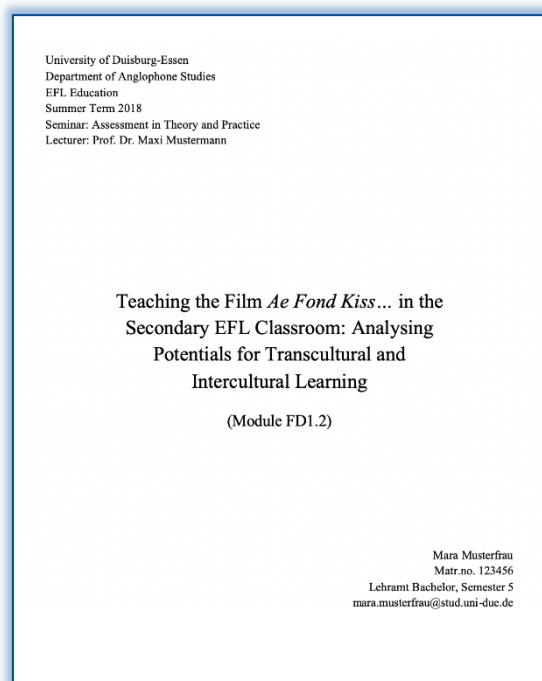
- Name of the university and department
- Term when the seminar took place
- Title of the seminar
- Name of the lecturer

#### Centre

- Title (and subtitle) of the paper (clearly stating the central topic)
- Module and text type (e.g. Module FD1.,2 term paper)

#### Bottom right

- Your name and matriculation number
- Course of studies and semester (when you took the seminar)
- University e-mail address



### 3.2 List of abbreviations, tables or figures

In case you use many specific abbreviations or various tables, figures or even maps in your paper, you might want to include an overview which the reader can turn to. (Do not include standard abbreviations such as 'e.g.'. ) Such lists are found in most monographs and edited volumes. Since they precede the first chapter of the paper, they get small Roman numerals as page numbers (see Appendix B). If you decide to use abbreviations in the text, make sure that you place it in parentheses after the full version of a term the first time it appears.

### 3.3 Table of contents

The table of contents contains the headings of the different chapters and subchapters of the paper plus the corresponding page numbers, as seen in Appendix B (no page ranges; dot leaders are optional). Both the chapter and page numbers are written in Arabic numerals (except the lists discussed in 3.2).

Watch out for these common mistakes:

- The headings in the table of contents must be identical with the headings in the text.

- You can choose to capitalise the content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) or not, but whatever your choice, be consistent.
- If you subdivide a chapter into subchapters, you must have at least two subchapters; i.e. if you subdivide chapter 3 into 3.1 you must at least also have 3.2.
- Avoid more than three structural levels (be reader-friendly); for example, 3.2.2 is still ok, but not 3.2.2.1.
- Avoid too many subchapters (the shorter the paper the fewer subchapters), and avoid very short subchapters (each should be more than 0.5 pages long).
- Do not put a dot after the numbers of subchapters: 1. is correct, but 1.1., 1.2.1., etc. is not.

### Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
2. Principles of EFL education at secondary level I.....	2
3. The potential of films in secondary EFL education .....	3
4. Intercultural & transcultural learning in the secondary EFL classroom.....	5
5. Analysing the potential for inter-/transcultural learning with the film <i>Ae Fond Kiss</i> 7	
5.1 The film <i>Ae Fond Kiss</i> in secondary EFL education.....	8
5.2 Potential for inter-/transcultural learning through <i>Ae Fond Kiss</i> .....	8
5.3 Exemplary teaching sequences for <i>Ae Fond Kiss</i> .....	9
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### 3.4 Introduction

As a rule of thumb, the introduction should not be longer than 1/10 of the paper. In this part, you introduce the reader to your topic. Explain what the object of your study is and how you will approach it (including the theories and methods applied). What are your main research questions, and why should these questions be asked, or: what knowledge and insights can be gained? Why is this topic relevant to EFL education? You can already hint at the results which you hope to achieve by the end of the paper.

### 3.5 Main part

After the introduction comes the central part of the paper, divided into chapters (if necessary with subsections, see 3.3). In this part, you offer a comprehensive treatment of the topic of your paper and the different aspects related to it. You may include a summary or critical interpretation at the end of each major section. At the very latest, this summary and critical interpretation must be included in the conclusion at the end of the paper, see 3.6.

The exact structure of the main part varies depending on the topic and, thereby, on the kind of paper you deliver. In the field of EFL Education, you can decide between two different kinds of papers:

- an empirical paper comprises a (1) theoretical context, (2) description of the methods used for collecting and analysing data, (3) presentation and discussion of your findings related to your research question.
- a conceptual paper which does not require you to collect data yourself. Instead, it focuses on the proposition and discussion of new relationships amongst (already existing) concepts. Therefore, the structure of the main part follows the logical flow of your argument.

If you are not sure about the structure or which aspects to include, ask your fellow students for their opinion and, then, discuss the issue with your lecturer.

Even though you should show that you have read and understood the literature available for your topic, use quotations sparingly to enhance your own arguments. If you directly quote passages from a book, or include pieces of literature, it must be clear why you are doing so, i.e. it must be justified by the discussion you are engaged in at that point in your paper. You should not just include quotations for the purpose of filling pages. Do not string them together but integrate them into your writing. After all, this is your text, and the reader (i.e. your lecturer) wants to hear what you have to say in your own words (also see 2.3 Citation practices). This will show that you have processed the information mentally for yourself.

### 3.6 Conclusion

In this section you should try to summarise and give a final judgment on your major findings (briefly), drawing together the various findings and threads of arguments developed in the paper. A critical evaluation of the material should be offered to the reader and you should try to express your own views on what you have read and presented in your own words. The conclusion should be at least half a page long. You can also call this section ‘Summary’.

You may decide to pick one or more of the following ways to conclude your paper.

- Review your initial research question and summarise your results.
- Consider the relevance of your results and whether you can make any suggestions on the basis of your findings.
- Embed your findings in a wider context of present, past or future research or school-based EFL education.

At the very end of the paper, it is always good to add an outlook. In the outlook you can mention questions which still need to be looked into and any interesting issues related to your topic which you could not cover but which would be worth investigating in the future.

### 3.7 Bibliography/References

This section must include all references mentioned in the body of the text (not including secondary sources mentioned in quotations from other authors). Do not put books or articles in the references section which you did not quote in the body of the text. References are listed in alphabetical order (by name of author, or by title in case of sources without author). In the appendix, you will find a detailed description of citation conventions. Please make sure that the

reference format is used consistently according to the rules of APA Style (6th edition). For a more detailed description of citation conventions according to the APA Style, please refer to the official pocket style guide from the American Psychological Association which can be found in our university library.

You can use Internet sources in a term paper, but must specify them as precisely as possible. In order to pick and choose from the incredible amount of information found online, you must already master your topic, which is why you should first check the sources available in the library before searching for additional material online. Make sure that you only use materials from university departments or reputable sources, such as a publisher or a government department or agency. Be sceptical about anything you read in the Internet, and try and confirm information you take from it by consulting at least two independent sources.

An overview of the most important quotation conventions can be found in the appendix.

### 3.8 Appendix

The appendix is not part of the running text, i.e. it does not count towards the total number of pages or words that you are expected to write. You do not need to have an appendix but it can be useful if you want to add information that you consider important but too long to show in the running text (e.g. teaching resources, longer tables, additional graphs, maps, or primary data in the form of transcripts, etc). If you need to subdivide your appendix (which will only be the case in longer papers), use the section title 'Appendices' instead, then subdivide into A, B, ... If you want to attach audio or video files, you can hand in a CD-ROM, together with your paper.

### 3.9 Versicherung an Eides Statt

At the end of the paper, the following text must be included and signed. Since this is not part of your paper, it does not have a page number and you need not mention it in the table of contents.

#### VERSICHERUNG AN EIDES STATT

Ich, (Vorname, Name, Matr.-Nr.)

versichere an Eides Statt durch meine Unterschrift, dass ich die vorstehende Arbeit selbstständig und ohne fremde Hilfe angefertigt und alle Stellen, die ich wörtlich oder annähernd wörtlich aus Veröffentlichungen entnommen habe, als solche kenntlich gemacht habe, mich auch keiner anderen als der angegebenen Literatur oder sonstiger Hilfsmittel bedient habe.

Ich versichere an Eides Statt, dass ich die vorgenannten Angaben nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen gemacht habe und dass die Angaben der Wahrheit entsprechen und ich nichts verschwiegen habe.

Mir ist bekannt, dass im Falle von Zu widerhandlungen diese Zu widerhandlungen aktenkundig gemacht werden, die vorgelegte Arbeit mit 5,0 bewertet wird, ich von der Teilnahme an weiteren Prüfungen des Instituts ausgeschlossen oder exmatrikuliert werden kann, und gem. § 92 Abs. 7 Satz 3 des Hochschulgesetzes NRW eine Geldbuße von bis zu 50.000 € verhängt werden kann.

Ebenfalls ist mir die Strafbarkeit einer falschen eidesstattlichen Versicherung bekannt, namentlich die Strafandrohung gemäß § 156 StGB bis zu drei Jahren Freiheitsstrafe oder Geldstrafe bei vorsätzlicher Begehung der Tat bzw. gemäß § 161 Abs.1 StGB bis zu einem Jahr Freiheitsstrafe oder Geldstrafe bei fahrlässiger Begehung.

Ort, Datum

Unterschrift

### 4. Style of writing

Present your contents in precise and clear words, avoid too many repetitions and apply the correct terminology. Imagine a reader (not your lecturer) who has a certain background knowledge of EFL education, but who is reading about this particular topic for the first time. Use an argumentative matter-of-fact style; it is great to be enthusiastic about a topic, but your emotions (positive or negative) must not be reflected in the text.

**TIP** When reading literature, try to notice and learn from the academic style used by published authors. How is this style new or different; which traits or formulations could you adopt?

Use transition words. These are often used to show different types of connections between sentences and paragraphs. You can find explanations about how to use linking expressions in most grammar books.

A few common formal transitional expressions are as follows:

- Introducing/Concluding: The main goal if this paper is to..., the main question addressed is..., in conclusion...
- To add information: Additionally, in addition, furthermore, moreover, similarly.
- To contrast: However, on the one hand... on the other hand, nevertheless, in contrast.
- To show results: Consequently, in consequence, for this reason, as a result, therefore.
- Time references: Then, at this/that stage, finally.

TIP

This style sheet is far from being comprehensive. In case you have questions on any issue not covered above, please consult one of the following sources:

- <https://apastyle.apa.org>
- [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)

## Appendix

	In the text	In the bibliography
Monograph (1 author)	(Busch, 2017, p. 112)	Busch, B. (2017). <i>Mehrsprachigkeit</i> . Wien: utb.
Monograph (2 authors)	(Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 2)	Butzkamm, W. & Caldwell, J. A. W. (2009). <i>The Bilingual Reform: A Paradigm Shift in Foreign Language Teaching</i> . Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag.
Monograph (3 or more authors)	In the first citation: (Dehn, Oomen-Welke, & Osburg, 2012, p. 68)  In all following citations: (Dehn et al., p. 75)	Dehn, M., Oomen-Welke, I., & Osburg, C. (2012). <i>Kinder &amp; Sprache(n). Was Erwachsene wissen sollten</i> . Seelze- Velber: Klett Kallmeyer.
Collections	(Caspari et al., 2016, p. 3)	Caspari, D., Klippel, F., Legutke, M. K., & Schramm, K. (Eds.) (2016). <i>Forschungsmethoden in der Fremdsprachendidaktik. Ein Handbuch</i> . Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag.
Contributions to collections	(Volkmann, 2016, p. 234)	Volkmann, L. (2016). Hermeneutische Verfahren. In D. Caspari, F. Klippel, M. K. Legutke & K. Schramm (Eds.), <i>Forschungsmethoden in der Fremdsprachendidaktik. Ein Handbuch</i> (pp. 229-242). Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag.
Several works by the same author	(Mehlhorn, 2011a, p. 203) (Mehlhorn, 2011b, p. 130)	Mehlhorn, G. (2011a). Russisch und Mehrsprachigkeit. Implikationen für den Fremdsprachenunterricht. In G. Mehlhorn & C.. Heyer, (Eds.), <i>Russisch und Mehrsprachigkeit. Lehren und Lernen von Russisch an deutschen Schulen in einem vereinten Europa</i> (pp. 199-219). Tübingen: Stauffenberg Verlag.  Mehlhorn, G. (2011b). Slawische Sprachen als Tertiärsprachen – Potenziale für den Sprachvergleich im Fremdsprachenunterricht. In B. Rothstein (Ed.), <i>Sprachvergleich in der Schule</i> (pp. 111-136). Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren.
Article in a journal	(Polinsky, 2015, p. 10)	Polinsky, M. (2015). Heritage languages and their speakers: state of the field, challenges, perspectives for future work, and methodologies. <i>Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung</i> , 26(1), 7-29.
Newspaper article	(Kerstan, 2008)	Kerstan, T. (2008). No Murks, please. Stoppt den Fremdsprachenunterricht an Grundschulen! <i>Zeit Online</i> (17.12.2008). Retrieved from <a href="http://pdf.zeit.de/2008/52/C_Seitenhieb-52.pdf">http://pdf.zeit.de/2008/52/C_Seitenhieb-52.pdf</a>
Electronically published article (URL)	(Schmelter, 2010, p. 20)	Schmelter, L. (2010). (K)eine Frage des Alters - Fremdsprachenunterricht auf der Primarstufe. <i>Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht</i> , 15(1), 26-41. Retrieved from <a href="http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-15-1/docs/Schmelter.pdf">http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-15-1/docs/Schmelter.pdf</a>
Movie		Cheadle, D. & Haggis, P. (2004). <i>Crash</i> [motion picture]. USA: Lionsgate Films.