

Guidelines for Writing a Research Paper

1. Introduction	1
2. General Formatting.....	1
3. Structure of the Research Paper.....	2
3.1. Title Page	2
3.2. Table of Contents	3
3.3. Main Text.....	3
3.4. Works Cited	3
3.5. Selbstständigkeitserklärung.....	4
4. Quotations and Sources	4
4.1. Format of Quotations	4
4.2. Indicating the Source of your Quotation (in Text).....	5
4.3. Omissions and Alterations	6
4.4. Quotation Marks and Use of Italics (in Quotes and Otherwise).....	7
5. Before You Hand In.....	8
Appendix A: Example Title Page.....	9
Appendix B: Bibliographic Format for References.....	10

1. Introduction

The purpose of a research paper in literary or cultural studies is to present your own critical approach to a topic and a persuasive presentation of your own argument, along with proof for the validity of that argument. This genre of writing does not primarily focus on gathering information (as an encyclopaedia entry would do), but rather on defending a certain understanding, reading or interpretation of particular texts/issues/events. This is done with the aim of uncovering aspects that might not be apparent at first sight or establishing connections that might enable you to present the material you discuss in your paper in a new light.

All research papers must be written in English. They need to be submitted on time, in printed and electronic form (for example *.doc, *.docx, *.pdf). If you encounter questions or problems not covered by this guide, please refer to the MLA Handbook (8th edition).

2. General Formatting

- **Paper Size:** DIN A4, one-sided
- **Page Margins:** 3cm on the left side, 2.5cm on all other sides (bottom, top, right)
- **Font:** 12pt Times New Roman (or any other comparable font and size) for the text, 10pt for footnotes
- **Line Spacing:** 1.5 in running text, 1.0 in footnotes and indented quotations
- **Spacing Before and After Headings:** same spacing for headings of the same text level, e.g., two 12pt spaces before 2, 3, 4, etc., but only one 12pt space before subsections (such as 2.1 and 2.2)
- Your paper must be written in justified print ('Blocksatz'). If needed, use a hyphenation programme or hyphenate manually at the right-hand margin to avoid loose lines; please 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
- **Indentation:** the first paragraph after a heading is not indented; all other paragraphs begin with a 1.5 cm indent which sets them apart from the previous paragraph (use 'tab stops')

- **Page Numbers:** The page count should start with the introduction (i.e., chapter 1); there are no page numbers on the cover page, the table of contents, or the declaration of originality ('Versicherung an Eides Statt und Selbstständigkeitserklärung')
- **Length of Paper:** Please refer to your specific 'Prüfungsordnung' which gives you the required number of pages
- 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

3. Structure of the Research Paper

3.1. Title Page

See Appendix A for an example title page.

The title page is a single page at the front of the research paper and includes the following information:

Top left:

- Name of the university and department
- Term when the seminar took place
- Title of the seminar
- Name of the lecturer (check website for correct spelling and academic titles!)

Centre:

- Title (and subtitle) of the paper (clearly stating the central topic)

Bottom right:

- Your name and matriculation number
- Course of studies
- University E-Mail Address
- Official Date of Submission (last possible date to hand in the paper, i.e. either March 31 or September 30)

3.2. Table of Contents

The table of contents is printed on a separate page and follows immediately after the title page. It lists all chapter headings with their corresponding page numbers, beginning with the Introduction. Capitalize the first, last, and all principal words in each chapter heading. Use Arabic numerals. Avoid more than three structural levels (e.g., 3.2.2 is still ok, 3.2.2.1 is not) and make sure that each subchapter is at least half a page long.

3.3. Main Text

The three principal parts of a research paper's main text are:

- **Introduction:** Explain what your object of study is and how you will approach it (including the theories and methods applied). What are your main research questions, why should these questions be asked, or: what knowledge and insights can be gained? You can already hint at the results which you hope to reach by the end of the paper.
- **Body:** The central part of the paper, divided into chapters (and subsections if necessary, see 3.2.). In this part, you offer a comprehensive treatment of the topic announced in the title of your paper and the different aspects related to it. The exact structure of the main part varies depending on the topic.
- **Conclusion:** Summing up results, mentioning what aspects you were unable to address in more detail, or pointing the way for further research on this or a related topic.

The body of your paper is by far the longest part. It constitutes about 80% of your text; introduction and conclusion should constitute about 10% of your paper each.

3.4. Works Cited

Start on a new page and list any books, articles. And other sources from which you quoted or mentioned in your paper. Put the citations in alphabetical order (by last name of the author); indent the second line of a citation and all additional lines of the citation (Sondereinzug: hängend). You do not have to divide your bibliography between "primary" or "secondary" sources. It is customary to capitalize nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in titles of books, poems, articles, etc.

Basic structure of a bibliographic entry using MLA (8th edition):

Author's last name, first name: "Title of a part of the book (i.e., short stories, articles, poems, etc.)." *Titel of the Book*. Name(s) of the editor(s), translator(s), and/or compiler(s). Edition used; Number(s) of the volume(s) used. Place of publication (only the first one is necessary): name of the publisher, date of publication. Page numbers.

For further information and examples of the reference format, see Appendix B.

3.5. Selbstständigkeitserklärung

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.

“Ich versichere an Eides Statt durch meine Unterschrift, dass ich die vorstehende Arbeit selbständig 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. Die Strafbarkeit einer falschen eidesstattlichen Versicherung ist mir bekannt, namentlich die Strafandrohung gemäß §156 StGB bis zu drei Jahren Freiheitsstrafe oder Geldstrafe bei vorsätzlicher Begehung der Tat bzw. gemäß §163 Abs. 1 StGB bis zu einem Jahr Freiheitsstrafe oder Geldstrafe bei fahrlässiger Begehung.”

4. Quotations and Sources

It is crucial to document your sources whenever you draw from another's work. Whether you quote from the text directly, paraphrase from it, or take an idea from it which you express in your own words, you must always indicate the original work (including page numbers). All direct quotations must correspond exactly to the original source in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

4.1. Format of Quotations

If a quotation runs no more than three lines, put it in double quotation marks (“...”) and incorporate it into the text.

If a quotation runs more than three lines, set it off from the text by beginning a new line, indent it (Sondereinzug: hängend) from the left margin and type it as you would a regular text without quotation marks. Please note that the line spacing in the indented quotation should be 1.0.

When quoting poetry, you can indicate where the line breaks fall via forward slashes (/). Verse quotations of more than three lines should also be set off from your text as a block. If the layout of the lines is unusual (indentation, spacing within and between lines), try to reproduce it as accurately as possible.

4.2. Indicating the Source of your Quotation (in Text)

Always give the page number of your quotation. According to the MLA style, this done in brackets after closing the quotation marks. Do not use footnotes for indicating your sources, they are only used for additional information that you wish to give to your readers. When the source of your quotation is apparent, only indicate the page number, otherwise indicate both the source and the page number.

- If your text makes it clear from which source by which author your quotation is taken, then you put only the page number of the quotation in brackets.
 - Thoreau believes that most governments are a burden. As he writes in “Civil Disobedience,” he considers them to be as useless as “a sort of a wooden gun” (713).

- If it is not clear from which source your quotation is taken, you need to indicate that source either through the name of the author, through a word from the source’s title, or through both. The first example is only used when only one text by that particular author is appears in your bibliography.
 - Several Transcendentalists believe that most governments are a burden. One of them writes that governments are as useless as “a sort of a wooden gun” (Thoreau 713).

The second example is used when it is clear from your text who the author of your source is, while the title of the source is unclear, since more than one text by that particular author appears in your bibliography.

- Several Transcendentalists believe that most governments are a burden. Thoreau, for example, writes that governments are as useless as “a sort of a wooden gun” (“Civil” 713).

The last example is used when neither the author nor the title of the quotation’s source is apparent from your text and when there is more than one text by that particular author listed in your bibliography.

- Several Transcendentalists believe that most governments are a burden. One of them writes that governments are as useless as “a sort of a wooden gun” (Thoreau, “Civil” 713).

Always try to quote from the original source. If that is not possible and you have to quote a passage from someone else who is quoting it in their text, you give the latter source after indicating “qtd. in” (for “quoted in”),

- As Toni Morrison once said, “a dead language is not only one no longer spoken or written, it is unyielding language content to admire its own paralysis” (qtd. in Harrington 421).

4.3. Omissions and Alterations

Any change to the original quotation must be indicated in your paper.

Omissions are marked by three spaced periods.

- In surveying various responses to plagues in the Middle Ages, Barbara W. Tuchman writes, “Medical thinking [...] stressed air as the communicator of disease [...]” (101-102).

Use square brackets to introduce additional information into a quotation.

- “That year [1850] he published his first novel.”
- Jan Harold Brunvand states in an essay on urban legends, “some individuals [who retell urban legends] make a point of learning every rumour or tale” (78).

Add “sic” to assure your readers that the quotation is accurate even though the spelling might seem incorrect to them. Any other alterations to the quotations should be kept to a minimum and clearly distinguished from the original.

- Shaw admitted, “Nothing can extinguish my interest in Shakespear” (sic).
- Lincoln specifically advocated a government “*for* the people” (emphasis added).

4.4. Quotation Marks and Use of Italics (in Quotes and Otherwise)

Use of “double quotation marks”:

- Short verbatim quotations (shorter than three lines, see 4.1.)
- Titles of articles in journals, edited volumes, handbooks
- Words or phrases used in a special sense or purposefully misused (Note: Using “so-called” makes quotation marks unnecessary => Their so-called friend brought about their downfall.)
 - A silver dome concealed the robot’s “brain.”

Use of ‘single quotation marks’:

- Quotations within quotations
 - In Chaucer’s *Tale of Melibee*, Prudence argues that, “[...] of swiche women seith Salomon that ‘it were better dwelle in desert than with a woman that is riotous’” (Chaucer, *Tale of Melibee*, 1087).

Use of *Italics*:

- Titles of independent publications (books or journals)
- Foreign words
- Words and letters referred to as words and letters
- For emphasis => Note: This is mentioned for the sake of completeness, but it is rarely used in research writing!
 - The Renaissance courtier was expected to display *spezzatura*, or nonchalance, in the face of adversity.
 - The word *albatross* derives from the Spanish word *alcatras*.

Translations

- Translations should immediately follow the quotation. Distinguish them by placing the translation in double quotation marks and parentheses or in single quotation marks and not in parentheses. Always indicate the source of your translation.
 - At the opening of Dante's *Inferno*, the poet in "una selva obscura" ("dark wood"; 1.2; Ciardi 28).
 - Sévigné acknowledges that "there is nothing stiff about them" 'pour figées, elles ne sont pas' (my trans.; 489).

5. Before you Hand In

- Run a spell-check and check your style. Make sure you did not mix up spelling standards, i.e., stick to either British or American English. If possible, ask a native speaker or a fellow student to proofread your paper.
- Check the format of your paper (be a real nitpicker!).
- The headings in the table of contents must be identical with the headings in the text.
- Please avoid superfluous 'background chapters' (e.g. containing plot summaries or the author's biography): assume that your audience already has the required knowledge about your material!
- Be transparent in your use of sources and always double-check your citations. Your paper will be thoroughly checked for any cases of plagiarism.
- When consulting online resources, please check their scholarly credentials, e.g., is the author of a specific text discernible?
- Do not forget to include and sign the "Versicherung an Eides Statt", otherwise your paper will not be accepted!
- Submit an electronic version of your paper to the E-Mail address specified by your lecturer and send it as one single file (e.g., *.doc, *.docx, or *.pdf).

Appendix A: Example Title Page

University Duisburg-Essen
Department of Anglophone Studien
Winter term 20../..
Seminar: A History of...
Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Patricia Plummer

Title of the paper

Module

Max Mustermann
Matr. Nr.
LA Bachelor Gym/Ge, 1. Semester

Musterstr.2
12345 Musterstadt
max.musterman@stud.uni-due.de

Appendix B: Bibliographic Format for References

Type of Entry	Listing in "Works Cited"	Citation in Text
Print		
A book by a single author	McConnell, Frank. <i>Storytelling and Mythmaking: Images from Film and Literature</i> . New York: Oxford UP, 1979.	(McConnell 32)
A book by more than one author	Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. <i>The Madwoman in the Attic</i> . New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1979.	(Gilbert and Gubar 9)
A book by three or more authors	Blocker, Clyde E., Robert H. Plummer, and Richard C. Richardson, Jr. <i>The Two-Year College: A Social Synthesis</i> . Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice, 1965.	(Blocker et al. 52)
A book in a series	Hinchcliffe, Arnold P. <i>Harold Pinter</i> . Rev. ed. Boston: Twayne, 1981. Twayne's English Author's Series 51.	(Hinchcliffe 62)
An edited collection	Rowe, John Carlos, ed. <i>A Concise Companion to American Studies</i> . Malden, MA: Wiley, 2010.	List and cite individual contributions.
A work in an anthology or collection of essays	Lowe, Lisa. "Reckoning Nation and Empire: Asian American Critique." <i>A Concise Companion to American Studies</i> . Ed. John Carlos Rowe. Malden, MA: Wiley, 2010. 229-44.	(Lowe 230)
An article in a journal	Sollors, Werner. "W.E.B. Du Bois in Nazi Germany, 1936." <i>Amerikastudien / American Studies</i> 44.2 (1999): 207-22.	(Sollors 221)
An article from a daily newspaper	Brody, Jane. "Heart Attacks: Turmoil beneath the Calm." <i>New York Times</i> 21 June 1983, late ed.: C1.	(Brody C1)
A newspaper article (unsigned)	"Give Georgia More HOPE." <i>Atlanta Journal-Constitution</i> 18 Dec. 1994: G6.	("Give" G6)
Web		
Please note: Indicating a URL might help your reader locate the source more easily. "If you present a URL, give it immediately following the date of access, a period, and a space" (<i>MLA Handbook</i> 182).		
A scholarly journal	Quellette, Marc. "Theories, Memories, Bodies, and Artists." Editorial. <i>Reconstruction</i> 7.4 (2007): n. pag. 5 June 2008.	(Quellette)
An article from an online database	Tolson, Nancy. "Making Books Available: The Role of Early Libraries, Librarians, and Booksellers in the Promotion of African American Children's Literature." <i>African American Review</i> 32.1 (1998): 9-16. <i>JSTOR</i> . 5 June 2008.	(Tolson 12)

An article from a web page	Green, Joshua. "The Rove Presidency." <i>The Atlantic.com</i> . Atlantic Monthly Group, Sept. 2007. 15 May 2008.	(Green)
	"The Scientists Speak." Editorial. <i>New York Times</i> . New York Times, 20 Nov. 2007. 15 May 2008.	("Scientists Speak")
...with URL	"Verb Tenses." Chart. <i>The OWL at Purdue</i> . Purdue U Online Writing Lab, 2001. Web. 15 May 2008.	("Verb Tenses")
	"Verb Tenses." Chart. <i>The OWL at Purdue</i> . Purdue U Online Writing Lab, 2001. Web. 15 May 2008. < http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/601/1/ >.	("Verb Tenses")
Other		
Film	<i>Unforgiven</i> . Dir. Clint Eastwood. Warner Brothers, 1992. DVD.	(<i>Unforgiven</i>) or (<i>Unforgiven</i> , 42:16) if relevant
Episode of a tv series	"Hush." <i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i> . Season 4, episode 10, Mutant Enemy, December 14, 1999. DVD.	("Hush"), ("Hush", 04:18) if relevant
YouTube Video	McGonigal, Jane. "Gaming and Productivity." <i>YouTube</i> , uploaded by Big Think, 3 July 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkdzy9bWW3E .	(McGonigal) or (McGonigal, 05:13) if relevant
Tweet	@persiankiwi. "We have report of large street battles in east & west of Teheran now – #Iraelection." <i>Twitter</i> , 23 June 2009, 11:15 am, twitter.com/persiankiwi/status/2298106072 .	(persiankiwi)

Identify a short, untitled message, such as a tweet, by reproducing its full text in place of a title.