COMMON MISTAKES GUIDE

YOUR TOOL TO START WRITING BETTER

Introduction	Should not:
	• Include too much background information.
	• Use a dictionary or encyclopedia definition unless required.
	• Announce your intentions.
	Explanation (Ex.) "In this paper, it will be analyzed/discussed/evaluated… The resources found on the Internet are used as references…"– this approach is good neither for an introduction nor for a thesis.
	Should:
	• Be directly connected to the point of discussion.
	Ex. If you need to discuss 3 communication strategies to be used in some situation, refer to these strategies and describe the situation. DO NOT tell what communication is, what strategy is, what communication strategy is, etc.
	• Be of appropriate size.
	Ex. A 3-pages long paper cannot have a 1-page long introduction, and, vice versa, an 8-pages long paper should not have the introduction that consists of 2-3 sentences.
	Useful Resources:
	- Writing the introduction:
	https://www.monash.edu/rlo/research-writing-assignments/assignment-types/writing-an-essay/writing-the-introduction
	Examples of bad introductions:
	http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mulready/Handouts/Bad%20Introductions.pdf
	- Introduction writing techniques with a good example at the end:
	https://www.mesacc.edu/~paoih30491/intropgph.html
Thesis Statement	Should not:
	• Restate the task.
	• Announce your intentions.
	Ex. Do not start a thesis with "This paper will discuss," "Within the framework of this paper, it will be discussed," "This essay analyzes…," etc.
	• Be a question.
	Should:
	• Be in all essay-like papers (Essay, Research paper, Coursework, etc.; but it is not required in Discussion Board Post, Questions-Answers, etc.).
	• Be at the end of the introduction.
	• Present idea, support, and order/Follow ISO rule.
	Ex. The thesis below follows ISO rule:
	"Donald Trump will be a good president because he is unconventional, has the expertise and hands-on experience in entrepreneurship, and keeps his promises."
	• "Donald Trump will be a good president" is the IDEA of the essay/report/research paper.
	• "He is unconventional, has the expertise and hands-on experience in entrepreneurship, and keeps his promises" is the SUPPORT of why the idea is true.

- The thesis shows that the body will have 3 paragraphs/sections, each of which will concern one argument in the **ORDER** as they are listed in this sentence.

The thesis below does not follow the ISO rule. It is wrong and weak:
"This paper discusses Donald Trump as a president" – a reader does not know the position/idea, how it will be proved, and cannot guess the structure/order of the paper.

- **Cover the entire paper**.

Ex. Having read a thesis, a reader should be able to predict what the structure of the paper will be like from the first until the last body paragraph.

- **Be supported throughout the paper**.
- **Correspond to the task type.**

Argumentative papers require argumentative thesis:

Ex. "Travelling abroad should be an inseparable part of one's life because it is a diverse learning experience, the opportunity to become more self-aware, and the possibility to look at own nation from a different angle" – the author is **TO ARGUE/PROVE** that the traveling is necessary.

Analytical papers require analytical thesis:

Ex. "New tax reforms in the US are likely to positively influence small businesses, educational system, and healthcare programs" – the author is **TO ANALYZE** the reforms from three perspectives.

Expository papers require expository thesis:

Ex. "The invention of the steam engine initiated a technological revolution, allowed people to travel further than they had ever been before, and became the foundation of globalization" – the author is **TO EXPLAIN** the importance/benefits of a steam engine in three different aspects.

Useful Resources:
- Types of thesis statements:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/the_writing_process/thesis_statement_tips.html
- Thesis generating tool:
https://writingcenter.ashford.edu/thesis-generator
- Examples of strong/weak thesis statements:
http://thesisstatement.org/strong-and-weak-thesis-statement-examples
- Easy ways to write a Thesis Statement:
https://owlcation.com/humanities/Easy-Ways-to-Write-a-Thesis-Statement-for-an-Essay

Body Paragraphs	**Should not:** • **Be extremely long or short.** **Ex.** *Too short* (1 or 2-sentence paragraphs) or *too long* (the entire page is one paragraph) paragraphs are not acceptable. It is a good idea to try to make all paragraphs of approximately the same size. • **Start or end with cited text.**

Ex. A paragraph should always start with *a topic sentence* (= presents the idea) and end with *a concluding sentence* (= sums up what was said). These two sentences are supposed to contain your ideas, not someone else's.

Should:
- **Concern one idea.**

Ex. One paragraph is always one idea. Another idea is another paragraph. If eventually there are too many short paragraphs, ideas are not well-discussed. Then, choose quality over quantity. Present few ideas but with sufficient details.
- **Support thesis.**

Ex. Each paragraph should be directly connected to a thesis since it is the core of any paper. In body paragraphs, it should be clearly visible how the thesis develops throughout the paper.
- **Have proper structure and five-six sentences, at least**.

Ex. It should **ALWAYS** have a topic sentence, a few supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence.
- A *topic sentence* is the first sentence of the paragraph that a) presents what the paragraph is to be about; b) shows the connection of the paragraph to the thesis.
- A *concluding sentence* is the last sentence of the paragraph that summarizes what the paragraph was about/restates its claim.
- In between these two sentences, there should at least 3-4 *supporting sentences* that *explain the claim, provide evidence/examples, and interpret the evidence/claim*.

A paragraph example:
"During the Great Depression, people all across the United States faced many hardships and life-changing adversity (*= a topic sentence; it is clear that the author will talk about difficulties in the paragraphs*). Many suffered from low incomes, poor living conditions, and mental anguish (*= explanation of the claim*). In fact, some men went the entire Depression without finding a job and found it very difficult to accept financial and material help from the government (*= example*). It means that their families lived below the poverty line (*= explanation of example*). African Americans and business owners were two groups particularly affected by the Great Depression; thus, the Great Depression affected all groups, ages, and races of people (*= evidence + explanation*). Every American shared similar Great Depression experiences (*= a concluding sentence; it simply restates the claim*)."

- **Properly arranged in the paper**.

Ex. Paragraphs should be arranged in a logical manner (*chronologically, spatially, from the least to the most important*) and follow the structure required by a professor/the task type.
- **Contain only relevant information.**

Ex. A paragraph, as the paper in general, should be focused on the point of discussion. There should be no senseless sentences such as "The questions raised in the book are very topical nowadays. Many people have the same problems in their lives. Therefore, it is important to discuss the issues the author shows in the book…" If you are to discuss the issues, discuss issues raised in a book, **DO NOT** tell the author's biography or explain their gravity/importance. **GO STRAIGHT TO THE POINT**.

	Useful Resources: - Topic sentence and how to create them: https://owl.purdue.edu/engagement/ged_preparation/part_1_lessons_1_4/index.html - Examples of good and bad topic sentences (1): http://www.bucks.edu/media/bcccmedialibrary/pdf/TopicSentences.pdf - Examples of good and bad topic sentences (2): https://blog.udemy.com/examples-of-topic-sentences/ - How to organize paper/arrange body paragraphs: http://open.lib.umn.edu/writingforsuccess/chapter/9-3-organizing-your-writing/ - Examples of good and bad paragraphs: http://colelearning.net/rw_wb/module5/page5.html
Conclusion	**Should not:** • **Be absent.** **Ex.** For some reason, conclusions are often omitted. This section is just as important as an introduction and body. • **Be a copy-pasted introduction**. • **Contain new information**. **Ex.** The aim of a conclusion is to recap/summarize everything that was said in the paper. It is a place to finish discussing ideas, not to introduce new ones. • **Contain in-text citations and quotes**. **Ex.** Quotes and cited pieces/in-text citations are used as evidence, i.e., to support a claim. In conclusion, you simply summarize. **Should:** • **Simply summarize the ideas of the paper**. **Ex.** It is necessary just to mention all main points. Usually, there is no need for the opinion, self-reflection, predictions, etc., unless it is specifically required by the task. • **Usually start with a restatement of a thesis**. **Ex.** It can repeat a thesis statement *in different words* in conclusions. It is the basis of an essay and a primary thing to remind of to a reader. **Useful Resources:** - Strategies to write a conclusion: http://www.time4writing.com/writing-resources/writing-a-good-conclusion-paragraph/ - How to write a conclusion: http://learninghub.une.edu.au/tlc/aso/aso-online/academic-writing/conclusion-paragraphs.php
Task Types and Structure	**You should:** • **Clarify with the customer when order type is different from what instructions require.** **Ex.** If a customer ordered 1-page long essay, but instructions require to rewrite the text below, which is 3 pages long, for instance, *contact the customer to clarify/contact Support*. • **Make sure the structure of paper corresponds to the task type.** **Ex.** Each task type has its own structure. If you do not know what the structure of the paper should be like, search for samples on the Internet/ask an editor to help.

Here are the most common task types and their structures/samples:
-   **Essay:**
http://bit.ly/1QouEed

-   <mark>**Argumentative essay:**</mark>
Ex. Usually, professors demand to write *a classical argumentative essay*. It should be organized in the way as explained here:
https://valenciacollege.edu/wp/cssc/documents/SampleArgumentOutline.pdf
Sometimes, however, you might be asked to write an argumentative essay using *Rogerian argument*. Follow this link to see its structure as compared to the classical one:
www.baylor.edu/nse/doc.php/236827.doc
-   **Research paper:**
Ex. Usually, its structure is as follows:

Introduction
  o   Purpose of the study
Main body
  o   Section 1 (subheading)
  o   Section 2 (subheading)
  o   Section 3 (subheading)
  o   Other sections if applicable
Conclusion

Sometimes, however, **complex research papers** are required. Its structure should be more extensive and include the sections described here:
http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/methodology

-   **Research proposal:**
http://www.meaning.ca/archives/archive/art_how_to_write_P_Wong.htm
http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchproposal
-   **Annotated bibliography:**
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html
http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/
-   **Literature review:**
https://libguides.ithaca.edu/c.php?g=863386&p=6190570
-   **Book/article review:**
https://wts.indiana.edu/writing-guides/pdf/writing-book-reviews.pdf
A helpful template for book/article review
-   **Abstract:**
Ex. It is not a separate task type, but it has a specific structure to be followed. It is not another introduction. It is a paragraph that should be 150-250 words long and tell about the paper itself/research made. It should contain research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/technical_reports_and_report_abstracts/index.html).

REMEMBER: Abstracts are **ALWAYS** included *in Research Papers of APA style* when the paper is *of 5+ pages*. If the paper is shorter, an abstract is required only if the customer specifically asks for it.
Consult our <mark>Types Guide</mark> for more examples and detailed explanations.

Word Count	**You should not:** • **Write a single word less that it was ordered**. **Ex.** If the customer paid for 1 page (double-spaced), you have to write 300 words (+10%)/ 1 page (single-spaced), you have to write 600 words (+10%). • **Write too much**. **Ex.** If an order is for *1-4 pages*, you may exceed the word count by *25%*. For instance, 600+25% = 750 words (= the maximum for 2-pages long order). If an order is for *5+ pages*, you may exceed the word count by *10%*. For instance, 1500+10% = 1650 words (= the maximum for 5-pages long order). • **Count additional/formatting elements as a part of word count**. **Ex.** A title page, table of contents, the title of the paper, reference page, appendices, an abstract, footnotes, tables, graphs and captions, questions in Questions-Answers, references in Annotated Bibliography are not the part of the word count. **You should**: • **Provide a specific number of words if indicated**. **Ex.** If a customer orders 2 pages double-spaced (600 words), but it is *strictly* required to write 500-550 words, the paper has to be 550 words maximum, not 555 or 600 words. If a customer orders 4 pages double-spaced (1200 words), but it is required to write 1300 words, you should write 1300 words. • <mark>**Clarify word count issues.**</mark> **Ex. ALWAYS** *clarify the word count with the customer/contact Support*: - if a customer wants much more/fewer words* than he/she has paid for; - **i**f to meet the requirements, you have to write much more words than it was ordered; - if there is a contradiction between the number of words ordered and required by the professor. *"much more/fewer" means at least 1 page (300 words) more/less than ordered.
<mark>**Plagiarism**</mark>	**You should not:** • **Use sources without citing them.** • **Translate articles/papers from other languages into English.** **Ex.** It is very conspicuous when such a "writing" method is used. Those who practice it will get a warning and have the order reassigned. • **Rewrite/Retell a source**. Ex. It is not acceptable to retell/rewrite a source that you have found, for instance, some journal article or an essay of another student. Even if the plagiarism percentage is not high according to checkers, it is still plagiarism. The paper should contain your ideas and rely on sources, not retell them. • <mark>**Copy/use the information from samples provided by a customer**.</mark> **Ex.** Samples are provided for you to see how the paper should look like, not to use them. Usually, customers ask their classmates, who have already completed a task, for the sample to help you. A professor will definitely notice two the same/similar papers. • **Practice self-plagiarism.**

Ex. DO NOT use the papers that you have written before as the basis for a new one. The professor may be the same/customers may know each other. Moreover, plagiarism checkers easily detect this unoriginality.

- **Use the sentences from the paper when making a PPT presentation or writing a summary/speaker notes.**

Ex. Creating a **PPT** based on the already completed paper, the same sentences should not be used. PPTs are also scanned for plagiarism and are considered a stand-alone assignment. **SPEAKER NOTES** must be original and different from PPT slides as well. A **SUMMARY PAGE** must be different from the paper itself. You must present the same ideas, not the sentences.

You should:
- **Properly paraphrase.**
- **Always add in-text citations after the cited text**.
- **Cite ALL the sources used to write the paper**.
- **Reference charts and pictures.**

Ex. All charts, graphs, tables, and images must **ALWAYS** be properly cited. Being unreferenced, they are considered plagiarism just as not cited text.

REMEMBER: **7%+ of valid plagiarism** (excluding direct quotes, parts of the task, names of sources, etc.) means **a full refund**.

Useful Resources:
Techniques for paraphrasing:
https://www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/slc/writing/sources/techniques-paraphrasing
- Quoting and paraphrasing:
https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/quotingsources/

Sources	Which Sources to Use

A source should not be:
- **Written in any language other than English.**
- **Irrelevant.**

Ex. The sources used should be directly relevant to the point of discussion. The fact that the title of an article, which you aim to use, contains a keyword does not make the source relevant. The information in the source should be indeed pertinent.
- **Falsified.**

Ex. DO NOT change the dates of publication of old sources to make them recent ones. Also, **DO NOT** indicate non-existent/invalid page numbers in in-text citations. **DO NOT** make up information about publisher or city of publication. These aspects are checked by editors/professors.

Sources should be:
- **Accessible.**

Ex. A reference list should contain only those sources that can be easily found if to search for them on the Internet.
- **Credible and reputable.**

Ex. You must use only scholarly and academic sources, i.e., books, textbooks, journal articles, official reports, governmental publications, newspaper articles, articles on

.edu and .org websites. About.com, answers.com, ehow.com, wikipedia.org, SparkNotes, study.com, etc. are NOT acceptable.

- **Up-to-date**.

Ex. ALWAYS use only up-to-date sources, i.e., those **PUBLISHED WITHIN THE LAST 5-10 YEARS**.

- **Compulsory used if provided by a customer**.

Ex. If a customer provided an article or a book, it should be obligatorily used in text and included in the reference list even if it is not explicitly stated to do it. If the source attached is irrelevant/does not contain pertinent information, *contact the customer to clarify/contact Support*.

<div align="center">

How to Use Sources

</div>

You should not:

- **Replace/add only in-text citations if asked to replace/add a source.**

Ex. Using different references automatically means that the **TEXT MUST BE CHANGED** as well.

- **Overuse direct quoting.**

Ex. Please, remember that **10%** is the maximum allowed percentage of direct quotes.

You should:

- **Cite ALL the sources listed on the reference page.**
- **Cite direct quotes/statistical data with page numbers.**

Ex. If page numbers are absent, indicate a paragraph number, e.g., (Johnson, 2015, para. 5).

- **Explain direct quotes.**

Ex. Direct quotes must be relevant and properly explained. They must support the idea of a paragraph, not just be placed no matter where to reach the word count limit. Please, follow a **SANDWICH** rule when using direct quotes:

Introduce It!
Before adding in your quote **introduce** it with a **signal phrase** and a **reporting verb** (See the following page for some examples).
Ex: Robin Lakoff **argues** that….

Quotation
After you have introduced your quote with a *signal phrase* or *reporting verb* add in your quote! **Ex:** Robin Lakoff argues that "[c]ultural bias was built into the language we were allowed to speak about, and the ways were spoken of" (152).

Explain It!
Now that you've added in your quote, **explain** why the quote is important. What do you think it means? How does it connect with your thesis? (Your explanation should be at least as **long**, or **longer** that the quote itself)

Useful Resources:

- In-text citations (APA 7th edition):
https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations
- How to incorporate a citation - a 'sandwich' rule:
https://woodward.libguides.com/englishpaper/quotesandwich#:~:text=A%20quote%20sandwich%20encourages%20writers,paraphrases%20and%20summaries%20as%20well.

Grammar	**You should avoid:** • **The first and second person pronouns** (I, we, you, my, our, your, me, etc.) unless required by a customer (for example, in a reflection paper). • **Incorrect usage of he/she vs they** (<mark>Singular "they"</mark> https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/grammar/pronouns/gendered_pronouns_and_singular_they.html; https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/grammar/singular-they) • **Contractions** (don't, isn't, aren't, It's, etc.). • **Idioms.** • **Phrasal verbs** (http://www.engvid.com/english-resource/formal-informal-english/). • **Colloquial/Informal language** (https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/reducing-informality-in-academic-writing). • **Bullet points in essays.** • **Conjunctions at the beginning of the sentence**, namely and, or, but. • **Rhetorical questions.** • **"This" and "that"** <mark>as a subject.</mark> • **Word repetitions** **Ex.** Please, use a thesaurus (http://www.thesaurus.com/) to search for synonyms. Avoid repetitions of transitions (http://www.smart-words.org/linking-words/transition-words.html). • **Wordiness** **Ex.** "It should be stressed that…," "It is of paramount importance to emphasize the fact that…," "It would be reasonable to add to the above-mentioned fact that…," etc. are not acceptable in academic writing. Learn to avoid wordiness: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/conciseness/index.html • **Incorrect usage of numbers** (http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar_tutorial/page_33.htm). • **Faulty parallelism** (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/mechanics/parallel_structure.html; http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/parallelism.htm). • **Incorrect punctuation with quotation marks** (http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/quotes.asp).
Formatting	Here is a list of aspects that are checked when formatting is assessed. To get a high grade, make sure that **EACH ELEMENT** on this list corresponds to the requirements of a specific formatting style (APA, MLA, Harvard, Chicago, etc.): o **Margins** o **Extra lines between paragraphs (they should be absent)** o **Font** o **Size of font** o **Indentation** o **Cover page** o **Table of contents** o **Abstract and keywords** o **Subheadings (always present in research papers/5+ pages long papers; sometimes even in 4-pages long papers)** o **Headers and footers**

- In-text citations and footnotes
- Reference page
- Appendices
- Captions accompanying tables, images, graphs, and charts (they should always be present).

Useful Resources:
- APA Guide 7th Edition (1):

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html
- APA Guide 7^h Edition (2):

https://apastyle.apa.org/
- MLA 8th Edition:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html
- Harvard US (the link/guide can be found in the Styles Guide):

Harvard UK version:

https://library.aru.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm
- Chicago 17th Edition:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html
- Vancouver:

https://guides.lib.monash.edu/ld.php?content_id=14570618

Consult our <mark>Styles Guide</mark> for more links and details.

Clarification	**Before you start writing you should clarify/write to the customer when**: - ***Description* section is empty, and there are no files attached.** **Ex.** A topic itself cannot be considered the complete instructions. **DO NOT** just write whatever matches the topic up until you meet word count limit. - ***Description* has some information, but it is not clear/lacks details.** - **Instructions in *Description* contradict those in the files attached.** - **Instructions require using certain materials, but the customer did not attach anything.** - **Instructions require personal information.** **Ex.** Some orders require clarifications about gender or area a customer resides in. For example, if an order has a topic "The Most Challenging Moment in My Life," and writer's focus is "giving birth to a child," such essay will be of no use for a male customer. - **Approval of choice is needed.** **Ex.** If you are allowed to choose an article/poem/book/company/anything else to analyze, **ALWAYS** write a message to the customer asking whether the choice is appropriate as soon as possible. Of course, he/she might not answer or reply, but **you have to try, at least**. Otherwise, if the customer is not satisfied, you will have to rewrite the paper. If the message is sent, the customer will have to compensate additional work.
Communication and Revisions	**You should:** - **ALWAYS reply to all messages.** - **Proofread your messages.**

Ex. It especially concerns the messages you send to customers. Avoid making the impression of an illiterate person.

- **Be polite**.

Ex. Do not insult editors or customers. Control your temper. If an editor insults you, contact Writer Complaint Manager at writers@4writers.net or your HR.

- **Follow instructions for revising from both editors and customers.**

Ex. Remember that editors do not have an aim to criticize you and offend you in any way. It is their job to make sure the paper meets the requirements and assist you to start writing better. Moreover, the exact following of revision instructions will help you improve your grades and reputation.

- **Make changes in the edited file, if it is available.**

Do corrections in the edited file if it is available.

You should not:

- **Use informal language in communication with customers**.

Ex. Even when a customer writes to you, "Hey bro, how's it goin? How's my paper?" you should reply, "Dear Customer, I am working on the paper. I will submit it on time. Best regards, Writer."

- **Argue with editors**.

Ex. If you disagree about something with editors, contact Writer Complaint Manager at writers@4writers.net. You may, of course, clarify revision instructions but, please, avoid useless correspondence to prove how perfect your work is and how unjust an editor's comments are. As a rule, it gets you nowhere.

- **Expect editors to increase your grades if you have not followed revision instructions.**

Ex. Let's imagine an editor asks you to add in-text citations or cite a source you have not cited. If you just chaotically add in-text citations without changing the content, your grade will not be increased much. Every additional in-text citation requires a new sentence.

- **Expect editors to increase your grades within minutes after you have uploaded the revised paper.**

Ex. Usually, editors have many orders to handle simultaneously. Moreover, just as you need time to revise, they need time to reread the paper with corrections. The grades will be correct for sure. If they are not corrected for a long time, contact your HR.