

## The Guide on Academic Levels

4writers.net offers Customers papers of different academic levels such as High School, College, University, Undergraduate, Master's, and PhD. Each academic level has its distinctive features that writers should take into account while working on orders. Nevertheless, there are some requirements that writers should comply with while completing any assignment regardless of the level.

1. **Do not plagiarize** – quote every idea that is not common knowledge:
  - a) when directly taking information from the source;
  - b) when using data & statistics;
  - c) when paraphrasing/summarizing the information taken from the source;
  - d) when reprinting any tables, charts, diagrams, pictures, illustrations, or other visual materials;
2. **Use reliable sources** published within the last 5 (rarely 10) years:
  - a) do not use Wikipedia, personal blogs, and sites like About.com, answers.com, ehow.com, SparkNotes, study.com, etc.
  - b) do not use non-English sources.
3. **Avoid colloquial/slang language, phrasal verbs, and idioms.**
4. **Omit contractions.**
5. **Avoid too emotive or judgmental words** (unless required by the instructions).
6. **Use content-specific vocabulary.**
7. **Use passive voice reasonably.**
8. **Avoid 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns** (unless required by the instructions). Do not use **ambiguous pronouns** – if it might confuse the reader which noun you are referring to when using pronouns “it” or “they”, it is advisable to repeat the same noun.
9. **Ensure the flow of ideas is smooth and logical:**
  - a) use transitions to link ideas;
  - b) use synonyms to avoid repetition.
10. **Use diverse sentence structures** to include a mixture of compound-complex, complex, compound and simple sentences.

**11. Follow the rules of syntax:**

- a) do not use “Or, And, But” at the beginning of a sentence;
- b) do not end sentences with prepositions;
- c) do not use too long/short sentences;
- d) avoid incomplete sentences or sentence fragments;
- e) do not use rhetorical questions.

**12. Carefully proofread** your papers for grammar, spelling, punctuation, logical, stylistic etc. mistakes.Helpful Online Resources

1. Rules of Academic Writing, including the use of appropriate language, grammar, and punctuation (please use the menu (on the left side) to navigate easily throughout the site) - [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/academic\\_writing/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/index.html)
2. Guides on Academic Writing:
  - <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/academicwriting>
  - [https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/14011/writing/106/academic\\_writing](https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/14011/writing/106/academic_writing)
3. Common Grammar Mistakes - <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/grammar>
4. A Guide on Writing Concisely - <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/writingconcisely>
5. A Guide on Editing and Proofreading - [https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/14011/writing/111/revising\\_editing\\_and\\_proofreading](https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/14011/writing/111/revising_editing_and_proofreading)

The specific information on each academic level, including peculiarities relating to language and sources, is presented below.

## High School

High school assignments \*rarely require one to use their analytical skills by analyzing, comparing, synthesizing and evaluating various sources of data (see Note below). Usually, High School papers follow a five-paragraph structure – an Introduction, 3 main points and Conclusion. It is a simplified version of academic writing that requires one to state an idea and support it with evidence. High school essays aim to show what a writer understood from the studied material (for example, a summary, a book review, etc.).

The sources applicable to High school writing include:

1. Coursebooks, textbooks, class lectures;
2. Scholarly books;
3. Peer-reviewed journal articles;
4. News stories and feature articles from reliable magazines/newspapers/organizations;
5. Encyclopedias;
6. Websites ending in .edu and .gov;
7. Other sources required by the assignment.

High school academic level does not demand one to use professional language. The main point is to clearly communicate the ideas one presents in the paper to the audience.

1. **Be careful when using unknown words.** It is required to check how they are used in context and examine their dictionary definitions.
2. **Ensure that the right equivalent was found when utilizing the thesaurus.** Words listed as synonyms for the expression one is looking up may have unique shades of meaning and connotations.
3. **Do not try to impress readers or sound unjustifiably authoritative.** For example, which sentence is clearer: “a” or “b”?

- a. The statistics will showcase the outputs of the government’s undertaking to allocate more funds to the educational sphere.
  - b. The statistics will provide the results of the government’s decision to spend more on education.
4. **Avoid repetition.** In case there are such instances, it is necessary to determine whether it is “good” repetition (utilizing key terms that are vital and helpful to meaning) or “bad” repetition (redundancy or unwillingness to diversify vocabulary).

**Note!** Even though usually High School papers does not require one to develop an argument, Customers might order a High School level paper and choose such Order type that should present an argument. Please, always adhere to the rules outlined in the Types Guide to check which types of papers need an argument.

## College

College writing requires much more efforts. First and foremost, College papers require making an argument. It is a set of statements coherently arranged to offer three things that experienced readers expect in essays that they judge to be thoughtful:

- They expect to see a *claim* that would encourage them to say, “That’s interesting. I’d like to know more.”
- They expect to see *evidence*, reasons for the claim – evidence should encourage them to agree with the claim made or at least to think it is plausible.
- They expect to see that one thought about *limits* and *objections* to the claim. An interesting claim is one that can be reasonably challenged. Readers look for answers to questions like “But what about ...?” and “Have you considered...?”

As such, College assignments do require one to retell what they have just read; instead, they urge one to make critical judgment based on this information. After the argument has been stated, College essay writing requires one to support it throughout the rest of the essay by

evidence. Evidence can be taken from the assigned source (e.g. a quote from the novel one is discussing), or credible outside sources such as scholarly articles and books written on the subject.

The best sources to use in College papers are:

1. Scholarly books;
2. Peer-reviewed journal articles;
3. Articles in newspapers/magazines;
4. Textbooks;
5. Dissertations/Theses;
6. Websites of organizations & universities;
7. Other sources required by the assignment.

College level papers require one to use general vocabulary, but it is necessary to define terms whenever discipline-specific language is used. Good academic writing is concise; instead of using overly complex sentence structures or flowery language, which can shift the readers' attention from an argument, one should use simple language to make their ideas easily comprehensible.

## **University and Undergraduate**

Critical thinking is what will make a University essay stand out. It is an indication that one is not simply copy and pasting the ideas presented by other researchers, but engages with theories in an academic manner. A good way to practice this is to pay careful attention when reading literature reviews in published articles – one will see that authors do not simply summarize previous studies, but offer a critique leading to a gap for their own research. Synthesizing sources means more than summarizing them. When one synthesizes sources, they incorporate them into the body of their argument. Therefore, instead of reading sources for

quotes to insert into the paper, one needs to approach them as a whole and engage with their ideas and evidence.

University writing requires one to show that they are able to utilize the skills of critical reasoning in analyzing academic materials. What are the limitations of the theories one is drawing on? How have these been dealt with in the literature? How do they impact the quality of arguments presented, and to what extent do they limit the readers' understanding of what is being studied in the paper? What alternate explanations might offer additional depth? Those are the questions that need to be taken into account while completing University assignments.

Consequently, University essay writing expects one to present a strong central idea, while taking into account counter arguments, possible contradictions and the implications of the idea under discussion.

Talking about Undergraduate papers, they should follow the same requirements pertaining to University writing; however, Methodology is an integral part of each Undergraduate paper. This part describes the rationale behind the chosen research methods, including whether one is using quantitative methods, qualitative methods or a mixture of both. The paper can be non-empirical (if the resources come from previous studies) and empirical (if one collects data through questionnaires or other methods).

- Qualitative research is a type of research aimed at gathering qualitative data, i.e., data about relationships, interactions, and constraints related to the problem at hand. This research describes the issue and explores it in general.

The *methods* which can be used for this research type are:

- Direct observation;
- Participant observation;

- Not structured interviews;
- Reviews of personal/public documents;
- Case study;
- Focus group.

- Quantitative research is a type of research aimed at gathering quantitative/numerical/statistical data to demonstrate the relation between variables (e.g. gender and salary, race and education, academic performance and teaching styles used, etc.).

The *methods* which can be used for this research type are:

- Survey;
- Structured interview;
- Analysis of reports/company-related numerical data.

- Mixed methods research is a type of research where both quantitative and qualitative data are used because researchers want to see a whole picture (e.g. to find out what people think of a phenomenon and how the validity of their answers is supported statistically). The methods are combined (e.g. a review of public documents and a survey).

Sources that can be used in University & Undergraduate writing include:

1. Scholarly books;
2. Articles in scholarly journals;
3. Government documents such as books, reports, and web pages;
4. Documents posted online by reputable organizations such as universities and research institutes;
5. Dissertations/Theses;
6. Other sources required by the assignment.

While completing University and Undergraduate level assignments, one has to use technical vocabulary specific to the field, with no need to define these terms. Academic writing

should be more formal, concise, unbiased (based on facts and evidence and not influenced by personal feelings) and include good use of rhetoric.

## Master's

Master's essays need to demonstrate one's ability to think independently and critically, whilst showing understanding and deep knowledge of one's field through theory. One will have to define the scope of what they are researching, choose the most appropriate methods for the research, and clearly communicate the findings.

Below is the checklist of how a Master's piece of writing looks like:

1. It is **carefully planned**. Good planning clarifies what argument the paper presents and, therefore, makes it more digestible to the reader.
2. It is **literate**. Master's level is really not the place to be sloppy and to have 'forgotten' to proofread. The paper should be formatted – uniform font, appropriate spacing, use of sub/headings, page numbers. Language should be appropriate to the academic environment, and the work should demonstrate a coherent and strong structure.
3. It demonstrates **evidence**. Evidence of understanding and of research is imperative. The argument must be based on theory and have a theoretical framework. Theories should be critically analyzed in terms of their usefulness for the discussion, which demonstrates the breadth and depth of research. Thus, ideas should not be taken for granted but be subjected to critical examination.
4. It pursues the **argument**. The work should have a "coherent thread running through it" and pursue an idea. The writing should not try to say everything. Key to this is that the essay does not go off topic.



5. It is **accurate**. At this level of writing, inaccuracy is inexcusable. Generalizations and sweeping statements must be avoided, and all points and arguments made must be sufficiently supported with evidence or theory. Therefore, if one is unsure of a certain point, further research is required or the point should be omitted from the paper.
6. It demonstrates the writer's **ability**. Writing at this level should be demonstrative of one's breadth and depth of knowledge gained through extensive research and analysis. Sensitivity to the reader is also a must, and it is imperative to effectively target the writing to its audience (usually, course tutors at this stage).

Writing at Master's level requires one to be able to explain much more complicated ideas at a greater depth and length. However, this does not mean sounding 'more academic' and using complicated sentences to impress the readers. It does mean being able to communicate more developed ideas in a clear way.

The most appropriate sources for Master's papers are:

1. Scholarly books;
2. Articles in scholarly journals (periodic publications);
3. Government documents such as books, reports, and web pages;
4. Documents posted online by reputable organizations such as universities and research institutes;
5. Other sources required by the assignment.

Although Master's writing require the use of field-specific and professional vocabulary, preference should be given to simple, straightforward, and thoughtful words and sentences. It is crucial to avoid bias, incorporate evidence, and create a strong argument, while writing should be concise, precise, and clear.

## PHD

A PhD piece of writing should be a valuable contribution to the field of study since it should be the source of new and undiscovered knowledge. In other words, one has to contribute original knowledge to the subject. Consequently, one is expected to use the research of others to guide oneself in own research to come up with a completely new hypothesis.

Each university can have specific requirements as to the structure of the PhD thesis; however, the commonest sections of any PhD piece of writing are:

### 1. TITLE PAGE

Each university has specific formatting standards for the title page.

### 2. ABSTRACT

Although this chapter is positioned before the introduction in the printed dissertation, one will not write it first. It should encompass the main points of one's research and briefly expose the results. Naturally, this section will be written last.

### 3. OTHER PRELIMINARY PAGES

Some of these pages are optional, and they are also positioned before the actual content of the thesis:

- Acknowledgments
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- Definitions

### 4. INTRODUCTION

The introductory paragraph should cover a few aspects:

- Description of the main areas of concern;
- A theoretical basis for the study;
- Critical analysis of the most relevant literature;
- Stating the problem;
- Research questions and hypotheses.

## 5. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, one has to analyze and synthesize an exhaustive collection of relevant academic resources. Literature review should build a logical framework for the research, justify the study by addressing the existing gaps in the literature, and demonstrate which unique knowledge the study will contribute.

## 6. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, one will explain what research methodology was used to get to the results. It will be required to refer to the participants in the research, the measures, research design, procedures, and data analysis process. Errors might occur when data are presented vaguely; the study is not relevant to purposes, aims and objectives outlined in the introduction; and methods of gathering and analyzing data are inadequate or not clearly explained.

## 7. RESULTS/FINDINGS

In order to successfully compile Findings chapter, one has to clearly represent complete and valid data obtained as a result of the study. It is important to effectively utilize charts, graphs, and other visuals to illustrate the data. Findings should be presented in a solely objective manner (be unbiased).

## 8. DISCUSSION

In the chapter, one will interpret the results. The following sub-chapters are usually included under this section:

- Summary
- Limitations

Among the most frequent errors is too simple or shallow analysis. Other missteps include lack of synthesis; the absence of clear connection to other research literature, or theory. It is of high importance to ensure one's explanations are credible and/or plausible. The chapter should be effectively structured, presented, and articulated.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, one will clearly state concluding statements that will reflect an integration of the study findings, analysis, interpretation, and synthesis. It is important for recommendations to have implications for policy and practice as well as further research; they must be *doable*. Only that recommendation is reasonable which is clearly and logically derived from the findings; it should be content and context specific as well as practical and capable of implementation. One should avoid overgeneralizing the importance or relevance of the study. Another frequent error is the lack of a clear link to the literature review.

## 10. REFERENCES

## 11. APPENDICES

Appendices contain all research instruments used as well as any relevant additional materials such as sample interview transcripts, sample coding schemes, summary charts, and so forth.

Each item that is included as an appendix is given a letter or number and is listed in the Table of Contents.

PhD level papers are not designed to be entertaining. PhD **writing should be clear and free of ambiguity**. To do this well, one should prepare a list of keywords that are important to the research and use this set of keywords throughout the paper. It will be clear to the reader exactly what one is referring to. There is nothing that much frustrating to a reader as a manuscript that keeps using alternate words to mean the same thing.

The language in PhD papers must be formal and highly academic, while the terminology must be appropriate for one's field of study. One should ensure absolute clarity since a PhD thesis contributes new knowledge to the field. It is, thus, advisable to avoid elaborate sentences in order to impress readers but rather use a simple, precise style of writing to put one's points across effectively and accurately. Nevertheless, one should eliminate the use of too many short sentences in a row since they can make the text seem dull or abrupt. It is a good idea to use diverse length and complexity of sentences to avoid presenting the text as monotonous and fragmented.

Only highly credible and scholarly sources should be used in a PhD paper:

1. Scholarly books;
2. Articles in scholarly journals (periodic publications);
3. Government documents such as books, reports, and web pages.