

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THOUGHT PAPERS

1. Please submit your papers in Microsoft Word (.docx) format.
2. Proofread carefully and correct all typos. Watch your spellings! If you don't know how to spell a word, look it up (or use your spell checker, if you are using a computer).
3. Correct English usage is always appropriate.
 - a. Pay attention to the following:

it's, its	there, their, they're
too, to	apostrophes
would of have	
 - b. Make sure your subjects and verbs agree and that your pronouns have clear antecedents.
 - c. Watch your sentence structure. Avoid sentence fragments (without verbs) and sentence run-ons (multiple dangling clauses).
 - d. Watch your diction (choice of words).
 - e. All paragraphs should have a topic sentence. The main idea should then be developed in several sentences.
4. The argument of your essay should be well developed.
 - a. Your essay should begin with an introductory paragraph that states the problem you have chosen and your solution to it.
 - b. Your argument should then be developed consistently and logically in the body of your essay, which should consist of several paragraphs. Your essay should be analytical in nature and should defend your point of view, even if it is qualified or wishy-washy. Support your generalizations with specific data.
 - c. Write economically (don't use more words than you have to to express your idea). On the other hand, make sure your reader (an informed, reasonably intelligent person) has enough information to follow your argument.
 - d. You should have a concluding paragraph, which summarizes or crystallizes your thesis without merely repeating earlier statements.
5. References
 - a. When you copy (using quotation marks) or paraphrase material from any source, including books, magazine articles, encyclopedia articles, movie reviews, and *Cliffs Notes*, you should give a reference (citation) indicating its source.
 - b. You should use some reasonable reference form. References may be placed in parentheses, at the bottom of the page, or at the end of the essay.
 - c. It goes without saying that *plagiarism* (copying or paraphrasing from any source without giving a reference) is strictly forbidden. You are encouraged to use outside sources, but be sure to give credit for any material you use from them. If you plagiarize, you will receive a failing grade in that assignment.
 - d. Include on a separate page at the end of your essay a short bibliography of all sources used in writing your assignment.