

Professor Healy Elgin Community College Paper Guidelines

1) Length: Unless stated otherwise, I generally assign a four to six page paper or a five page paper.

Note: By page, I mean a full sheet of text, double-spaced, with no headers or footer, no extra line breaks between paragraphs, and using 12 point font (Times New Roman is standard and nearly universal). Use that.) with one inch margins.

I DO NOT mean simply "a piece of printer paper with writing on it." See below:

A) Student thinks this is a four page paper because it is on four pieces of paper.

B. After re-formatting, it turns out that the paper is less than three and a half pages of text.

The image shows a grid of four screenshots of a document. The top-left screenshot shows the document with a large header area containing the title 'East Asia' and author information. The top-right screenshot shows the document with a large footer area containing a list of references. The bottom-left screenshot shows the document with a large header area containing the title 'East Asia' and author information. The bottom-right screenshot shows the document with a large footer area containing a list of references. The grid illustrates how a document can be formatted to appear longer than it is by adding extra space to the header and footer areas.

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To summarize: if I ask for 4-6 pages, I expect at the very LEAST 4 full pages of text. Not 3 1/2, not 3 and 3/4. Note that if you do the bare minimum the assignment requires, that may get you a passing grade, but if you want an A, it's best to do more than simply meet minimum requirements.

2) Style: Please write in complete sentences using standard English. You should run a spell check (do I REALLY need to tell you this?), but make sure you proof read as well to catch errors such as their/there/they're, its/it's, to/too/two, etc. Do not make rookie errors like that. Yes, I do it all the time when I'm farting out Facebook status updates. Even then I feel foolish, but hey, that's Facebook. I would be horrified to let mistakes like that get through on work I am submitting for review. You won't get an interview if your cover letters show sloppy writing like that.

Colloquial: Look it up. It's how you probably speak 99% of the time. That's how we all speak. It's unacceptable for writing a college paper, however. Don't use colloquial language. If I see it, I will simply circle it, write "colloquial" next to it, and consider your use of colloquialisms when grading your work (which is to say, it will hurt your grade).

For the love of all that is sacred, do not use texting phrases, like "b4," "cuz," "UR." I beg you. If I see that, I might just jump off a bridge with an anchor tied around my chest. But not before I bathe your paper in red ink, record your grade and leave my grade book behind for people to find.

Avoid extra words and phrases that clutter up your sentences but you think they sound good:

Bad writing: "Personally, I think that it's really, really cruel to kick a defenseless little puppy just because it happened to do something that made you angry."

Better writing: "It's cruel to kick a puppy because it made you angry."

Why? If you think it, you don't have to say personally. In fact, if you simply declare it, I would expect it's your belief unless you said something to the contrary (Nine out of ten vets believe that it is cruel to kick a puppy). You don't need to use really twice; in fact, doesn't the word "cruel" make your point already? Show me a puppy that isn't defenseless (that's redundant) and little is also unnecessary in this instance. Finally, the phrase "just because it happened to do something that made you angry" is just plain wordy. So with that in mind, please write as concisely as possible. If you are writing your memoirs or the great American novel, then be as wordy and poetic as you like. This is not creative writing 101. Just the facts please.

To Summarize: I expect you to write at the college level and to show that you have pride in your work.

3) Content: For my extra credit assignments and optional papers, unless I give you a specific topic, your charge is to research a topic of your choosing that is relevant to the course material we cover. You may do further research that goes beyond what was covered in the textbook or you may choose a topic that we didn't cover in class but is nevertheless related to our coursework. When in doubt, ask me if the topic is appropriate.

To Summarize: If you are in an anthropology class, write me an anthropology paper.

4) Citations: Do you have to cite your work? This is another question that might make me leap off a bridge some day. Go to your boss and say "Is it okay if I steal from the supply room?" OF COURSE YOU HAVE TO CITE YOUR WORK! This is college. Don't bother asking. If you don't cite your work, that is called "plagiarism." Plagiarism is the worst thing you can do in academia, apart from bribing your teacher or

accepting a bribe from your student. Plagiarism is the theft of intellectual property, and that's what Academia is all about, so, yes, you DO have to cite your sources. Really, I don't care what format you use- MLA or APA format s are common and fine by me, although my discipline uses a variety of formats depending upon the professional journal. I just need to be able to look up the source if I choose to, so make sure your citation points be to a source I can recover if I go looking.

To Summarize: Cite your work. Always, always, always.