

Writing Guide

Western Seminary professors may require that students complete their assignments according to the specifications of any one of the following three style formats. Please follow your professor’s instructions about which format to utilize in your course papers as requirements may vary between classes:

- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Modern Language Association (MLA)
- Turabian

The following represents the faculty’s attempt to help you avoid many of the errors we typically encounter in student papers. We recognize that communication and thinking styles vary significantly from culture to culture; the focus of this guide is on formal writing done at American seminaries (and at Western Seminary in particular). Incorporating these guidelines into your written work at Western will consequently enhance your communication effectiveness and allow professors to focus on your content when evaluating your work.

GENERAL TIPS

1. 12 point, in Times New Roman, Arial or Helvetica type face
2. Double space
3. 1-inch margins (File – Page Setup – Margins), 2-inch title
4. Indent paragraphs .5 inch (Format – Paragraph – Indent first line)
5. Staple (no clips, folders, fanfolds)

COMMON MISUSED OR MISSPELLED WORDS

its/it’s	compliment/complement	there/their
lead/led	site/cite/sight	we’re/were
prophecy/prophesy	peak/pique	to/too
(“prophesize[d]” is not a word)	than/then	deity, <i>not</i> diety
lose/loose	criterion/criteria	Baptist, <i>not</i> Babtist
verses/versus	affect/effect	millennium, <i>not</i> millenium
alter/altar	a part/apart	in spite, <i>not</i> inspite
canon/cannon	a while/awhile	a lot, <i>not</i> alot
rein/reign	imminent/immanent/eminant	ministry, <i>not</i> ministery
relay/convey	judgment, <i>not</i> judgement	oneself, <i>not</i> one’s self
	anoint, <i>not</i> annoint	“starts,” <i>not</i> “starts off”

- Avoid contractions (e.g., what’s, don’t, etc.)
- Avoid split infinitives: change “to really know” to “really to know” or “to know really”
- Limit use of first and second person (I, me, my, you, your, etc.)
- Ellipsis: sp-dot-dot-dot-sp (...)

- Dash (--) is punctuation; hyphen (-) is spelling
- No back-to-back parentheses; do not include a parenthetical biblical reference within quotation marks (it is not part of the quote; it tells reader where to find the quote)
- Use abbreviations only in parentheses or footnotes
- Write only in complete sentences (avoid sentence fragments and run-on sentences).
- Underline or italicize foreign words
- No '&'
- "Christ" is not his name (thus "Jesus Christ is the messiah" is actually redundant)
- Generic masculine ("he, him") is acceptable
- "Bible" not "bible"

PROPER PUNCTUATION

Use the Comma

1. After introductory adverbial clauses: If you want additional information, please feel free to write again.
2. After introductory verbal phrases: After interviewing the applicant, the manager made his decision. To buy wisely, one must examine closely.
3. After long introductory prepositional phrases: In spite of bad weather and wet slippery streets, he made the trip safely.
4. Before *and*, *but*, *for*, *yet*, or *nor* when they join the clauses of a compound sentence: The quality is excellent, but the price is right.
5. Between items in a series: The rugs, tapestries, and draperies are for sale.
6. Between coordinate adjectives modifying the same noun: Our offices are located in a tall, stately, white building. (Never use a comma between the last adjective and the noun).
7. To enclose non-restrictive (nonessential) adjective clauses and phrases: Our manager, who is a new man, has an excellent record. Why did Mr. Smith, knowing his excellent record, refuse to recommend him?
8. To enclose names and dates explaining the preceding names and dates: Armstrong college was founded in Berkeley, California, in June, 1918.
9. To enclose explanatory words in direct quotation: "I know," he said, "that you can do it." Also: He said, "I know that you can do it."
10. To enclose appositives: Dr. Armstrong, founder of the college, was there.
11. To enclose absolute phrases: I must, weather permitting, set a new record.
12. To enclose parenthetical expressions: I must however, do flawless work.
13. To enclose words of direct address: We know, Sir, that you are right.
14. To prevent incorrect reading: Soon after, Mr. Smith left.
15. After Yes and No: Yes, you are right. No, it is impossible.

Use the Semicolon

1. To separate clauses of a compound sentence when the conjunction is omitted: John attends Armstrong; Mary went to Stanford.
2. Between two independent clauses jointed by a conjunctive adverb (however, therefore, etc.): She has graduated; therefore, she should have the job.
3. Between complicated items in a series: The officers are John Nelson, president; Ken Smith, vice president; and Kate Jones, secretary treasurer.
4. Before *namely*, *that is*, *for instance*, etc: Armstrong College is conveniently located; for example, it is across the street from the library and next door to the post office.
5. Between independent clauses containing commas and joined by *and*, *but*, *for*, etc.: Ralph, a lawyer, lives in Berkeley; but John, his brother, does not.

Use the Colon

1. To introduce: (a) a long, direct quotation (b) a second clause that explains the first: His ambition is clear: he intends to be a success.
2. To separate hours and minutes: 12:30 p.m.
3. After the salutation of a letter: Dear Sir:
4. To accent appositives: He has one goal: success.

Use the Period

1. At the end of every declarative or imperative sentence.
2. After the initials of most abbreviations: Dr. E. D. Bell.
3. Between the dollars and cents and before cents when written alone: \$1.35 \$.03
4. In a series of three to indicate omission of words from a quoted passage.

Use the Exclamation Mark

1. After expressions of strong emotion: Wonderful! I can't believe it!

Use the Question Mark

2. After a direct quotation: Will you come? But not after an indirect question: He asked if you would come.
3. In parenthesis (?) to express uncertainty.

Use the Apostrophe

1. To show possession: Have you shipped Mr. Smith's order?
2. To indicate omission of letters in contractions: don't, can't she's.
3. In plurals of numbers, letters, and words: He uses too many *and*'s. She always crosses her *t*'s. His 7's look like 9's.

Use the Dash

1. To show a sudden break in thought: Kittredge College—I'll check the address—has ordered six new typewriters.
2. For emphasis to set off a repetitive word or phrase: We must see him at once—at once, not next week.
3. To set off a strong emphatic parenthetical element: These fine fabrics—they are the best money can buy—have just arrived from Scotland.
4. Before an appositive clause that explains preceding words: Industry, Integrity and Commerce—these words appear on the Armstrong College crest.

Use Parentheses

1. To set off supplementary elements: Our manager (he's a new man) is well liked.
2. To enclose figures used appositively: I enclosed twenty dollars (\$20).
3. To enclose references and directions: The chart (see page 9) will help you.

Use Brackets

1. To insert material into the quotation of another writer: He writes, and I quote: "In that city [Berkeley] business has improved steadily."
2. With *sic* to mark errors in quoted material: The letter ended "Respectively [*sic*] yours, Oscar Smith."

Use the Hyphen

1. To divide a word of more than one syllable at the end of a line.
2. To join compound words: father-in-law, know-it-all.
3. To join words used as a single adjective before a noun: We have a well-organized sales staff. No hyphen is used: (a) when the compound adjective follows the noun: The sales staff is well organized. (b) when the first word is an adverb ending in -ly: That is a neatly cut lawn.
4. With compound numbers and fractions used as adjectives: twenty-three orders, three-fourths majority.
5. With prefixes *ex-*, *self-*, *all-*, and the suffix *-elect*: *ex-president*, *self-confidence*, *all-Asian*, *senator-elect*.

BASICS OF WRITING A PAPER

1. Know why you are writing the paper.
 - a. Understand the instructor's purpose in assigning the paper.
 - b. Understand the expectations: format, number of pages, amount of research required.
 2. Choose a topic.
 - a. Know exactly what your topic is before you research.
 - b. Make sure the main topic is specific enough to research within established limits.
 3. Establish your time-frame for research and writing the paper. You do not have unlimited time to spend on it, so be realistic.
 - a. Assess how much of the grade the paper is worth and plan your time accordingly.
 - b. Time spent on the paper should be half research and half writing.
 - c. Write down your time table.
 4. Make an outline of the topic.
 - a. Write down main points and their sub points.
 - b. From the outline, make a list of specific questions that should be answered in your paper.
 5. Write a rough draft.
 - a. Begin with an introduction.
 - b. Present ideas in an orderly progression.
 - i. Generalization backed by specifics
 - ii. Specifics leading to a generalization
 - iii. Each paragraph should contain one idea
 - iv. Each paragraph should tie in with the preceding and following paragraphs.
 - c. Footnote all ideas and quotes from sources.
 - d. Use direct quotes wisely and sparingly.
 6. Correct the rough draft.
 7. Prepare the final draft.
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MINISTRY COURSES: (Turabian)

General Tips:

- Page numbers – lower center or upper right – not on first page; Arabic numbers only (e.g., 1, 2; not Roman numerals); no other header or footer
- Title page; then title again on page one (for formal papers. See final page for model).
- Use footnotes (not end notes or inline citations) Exception: biblical references inline, not in footnotes.

OUTLINES

Every A must have a B

Every line should have a biblical reference (if it is a book outline)

Coordination/Subordination of thought:

Start with macro-structure

Job

- I. Prologue: Job's double calamity (1—2, Prose)
- II. Body: Reflections on Job's situation (3—41, Poetry)
 - A. Dialogue between Job and his three friends (3—27)
 1. Job's opening lament (3)
 2. Dialogue round one (4—14)

3. Dialogue round two (15—21)
 4. Dialogue round three (22—27)
- B. Job’s hymn in praise of wisdom (28)
- C. Job’s challenge and God’s response (29—41 [42:6])
1. Job’s challenge (29—31)
 2. An interlude: Elihu’s speeches (32—37)
 3. God’s response (38—41 [42:6])
- III. Epilogue: Job’s doubled restoration (42 [:7-17], Prose)

SCRIPTURE ABBREVIATIONS

Old Testament:

Gen.	Genesis	Ezra	Ezra	Dan.	Daniel
Exod.	Exodus	Neh.	Nehemiah	Hosea	Hosea
Lev.	Leviticus	Esth.	Esther	Joel	Joel
Num.	Numbers	Job	Job	Amos	Amos
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Ps.	Psalms	Obad.	Obadiah
Josh.	Joshua	Prov .	Proverbs	Jonah	Jonah
Judg.	Judges	Eccl.	Ecclesiastes	Micah	Micah
Ruth	Ruth	Song.	Song of Solomon	Nahum	Nahum
1 Sam.	1 Samuel	Isa.	Isaiah	Hab.	Habakkuk
2 Sam.	2 Samuel	Jer.	Jeremiah	Zeph.	Zephaniah
1 Kgs.	1 Kings	Lam.	Lamentations	Hag.	Haggai
2 Kgs.	2 Kings	Ezek.	Ezekiel	Zech.	Zechariah
1 Chr.	1 Chronicles			Mal.	Malachi
2 Chr.	2 Chronicles				

New Testament:

Matt.	Matthew	Philip.	Philippians	James	James
Mark	Mark	Col.	Colossians	1 Pet.	1 Peter
Luke	Luke	1 Thes.	1 Thessalonians	2 Pet.	2 Peter
John	John	2 Thes.	2 Thessalonians	1 Jn.	1 John
Acts	Acts	1 Tim.	1 Timothy	2 Jn.	2 John
Rom.	Romans	2 Tim.	2 Timothy	3 Jn.	3 John
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians	Titus	Titus	Jude	Jude
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians	Philem.	Philemon	Rev.	Revelation
Gal.	Galatians	Heb.	Hebrews		
Eph.	Ephesians				

TURABIAN TITLE PAGE

Below is an example of a Turbain style title page. It is required for every paper written in ministry courses:

TITLE

A Paper

Presented to

Dr. Gary Tuck

Western Seminary San Jose

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Course

DBS 506, Learning to Interpret Scripture

By

Name, Box 000

September 17, 2001

COUNSELING COURSES (APA)

General Tips:

- Before you begin writing- understand the assignment!
- Read the professor's requirements as laid out in the class syllabus. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask the professor for clarification. All papers must contain a coversheet and at least three section headings (introduction, body of the paper, conclusion). Additionally, any sources you quote from must be cited in the body of the paper and on a resources page at the end of the paper.

TYPES OF PAPERS

Research paper:

- Become familiar with the topic through reading of books and scholarly journals.
- Check the syllabus to see how many sources are required for the paper. All of the sources consulted must be cited on the resources page at the end of the paper.
- Use third person. Avoid using "I" and "you" statements.
- Provide an abstract, which is a brief, one-paragraph summary of what will be said in the paper. An abstract, no matter how short, must be alone on the page.

Reaction paper:

- Discuss your impressions of a book or in-class experience. Include things you learned, areas in which you agreed or disagreed, and themes that emerged.
- Use first person. Avoid using "you" statements.
- Use direct quotations from the source you are reacting to, cite it appropriately in the body of the paper and include it on a resources page at the end.
- Abstracts are generally not required.

Reflection paper:

- Discuss your opinion on the posed question or statement.
- Use first person. Avoid using "you" statements.
- Outside sources are normally not required. If you choose to refer to any source other than your own experience, be sure to cite it appropriately in the body of the paper and include it on the resources page.
- Abstracts are generally not required.

FORMATTING

Document Title:

- Simple and clear description of assignment
- If you plan on turning in your paper via email, please put your name in the document title. Example: M. Abbey's final paper.doc.

Margins:

- Side margins: 1 inch.
- Top and bottom margins: 1.5 inches.

Coversheet:

- Always use a coversheet.
- The coversheet must contain the following information: running head, assignment title, name of professor and school, course number and name, your name, mailbox number and the date (see APA paper example).

Page Numbering and Headers:

- Place running head and page numbers at the top right corner of each page.

- Instruct your word processing program to begin page numbers with “0” rather than “1.”

Section headings:

- Every written assignment must begin with the section header “Introduction,” and end with a clearly marked “Conclusion.” As you change topics within the body of the paper, include a new section heading to guide the reader.
- Primary section headings should be centered and bolded, with upper and lower case letters. Secondary headings should be left-side justified and bolded, with upper and lower case letters (APA, 2010, p.62-63). Whichever you choose, do not hit “enter” twice preceding your section headings. There should be no extra blank space between sections of your paper.

Resources Page:

- If sources are used, dedicate the final page of your paper to “resources.” List them alphabetically by the author’s last name.
- The resources section should be alone on the page, regardless of how many resources you actually consulted (see APA paper example).

RESEARCH SOURCES

- Quality sources = a quality paper
- Scholarly sources include articles from peer-reviewed journals, information from trusted websites, and books written by qualified individuals.
- Popular or lay sources are not to be utilized in your research.
- The quality of the research paper you write will in large part be dictated by the quality of the sources you consult- strive to find the most recent information from the most highly qualified sources.
- If you have questions as to whether or not a source counts as “scholarly”, ask a peer or your professor.

QUOTATIONS

- Whenever you refer to someone else’s work- whether written or spoken, you must cite that source (author, year, page#). Neglecting to do so constitutes plagiarism. This citation is sufficient and does not need repeating until you switch to another source.
- All forms of print, audio, visual, and digital media (including websites) must be cited within the body of the text and on the references page.
- Quotations are not to be used as “filler,” but rather as support for the ideas you are presenting.
- Quotations under 40 words in length can be incorporated into the text using double quotation marks. Larger quotations must begin on a new line and the entire quotation should be indented about ½ an inch from the left margin (for more detailed instructions, see the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition, 2010, p. 92).

OTHER RESOURCES

QUICK REFERENCE WEBSITES

LPTS Writing Guide	http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/Online_Writing_Lab.asp
APA Format	http://www.apastyle.org
MLA Format	http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
Turabian Format	http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html

APA MANUAL

American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed. Washington: APA publications. [**use 2nd print only!**]

OTHER

Nichols, Sue (1963). *Words on Target: For Better Christian Communication*.