**Academic Writing General Guidelines**

All writers should ensure that their papers meet the following standards before submission.

1. **Instructions are followed to the letter**. Here, confirm that you have used the right number of sources, your word count meets what’s required with an allowance for editing, and all aspects are considered.
2. **Formatting/Referencing/Citing.** Owl purdue has all the guidelines for referencing any source ranging from books, websites, to journal articles. Use the following key words to search and find the correct links. For example, if you are referencing a book in APA, Google: owl purdue APA referencing a book, owl purdue APA referencing multiple authors. It is crucial to note that:
3. For **APA, citing multiple authors. If authors are between 3 and 5,** you list all in the first citation and use et al. in the subsequent citations. However, if the authors are 6 and above, you start by using et al. in the first citation. <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/in_text_citations_author_authors.html>
4. For **APA, referencing of multiple** authors does not use et al. in the references section. However, there is a unique format if they are more than six. <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_author_authors.html>
5. For **APA, when referencing a book**, the city of publication is included. <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_books.html>
6. For **APA, referencing electronic sources** <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_electronic_sources.html>
7. For **APA, referencing journals/**periodicals <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_articles_in_periodicals.html>
8. For **MLA, when referencing a book**, the city of publication is not included unless the book was published before 1900, the publisher has offices in more than one country, or the publisher is unknown outside North America. Also, take note of editions and edited books. <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_works_cited_page_books.html>
9. For **MLA, when referencing/citing multiple authors.** If there are three or more authors, list only the first author followed by the phrase et al. (Latin for "and others") in place of the subsequent authors' names.
10. All papers should have a uniform font. Use Times New Roman as the default unless instructions state otherwise.
11. Line spacing should be single in the header and double without spaces before/after paragraph in the paper body.
12. **Thesis.** Papers that are not question-answer based or letters should have a **thought-provoking** thesis. Avoid use of **purpose statements**, such as the paper will; the paper seeks to, unless instructions demand so. Check this link for effective development of a thesis statement: <http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/tips/thesis/>
13. **Paragraphing**. Each paragraph should focus on one idea. Introduce it without a citation. Support it using research and evidence. End it with a **summarizing sentence** that gives a clear impression of what has been covered in the paragraph. Do not end paragraphs with citations or new information. A paragraph should be at least three meaningful sentences.
14. **Tautology/Repetition**. Avoid repetition of words or phrases. You can use synonyms or pronouns. For example, instead of using company in sentences that are subsequent to each other, you can replace it with organization/firm/business/corporation.
15. **Slang words**. Do not use short language, such as e.g., etc, use their alternatives; for instance, and others, among others.
16. **Cohesiveness**. Ensure that your paper flows by using effective cohesive words or phrases.
17. **Informal Language**. Do not use informal statements or general opinions. Academic writing should be presented in a formal tone without using first person pronouns, “I, WE, YOU” unless it is a personal statement/letter/admission essays, or instructions demand so.
18. **Plagiarism**. Paraphrase your ideas better to avoid plag and confirm through turnitin or other tools.
19. **Grammar**. Always proofread your work and check via grammarly before submitting.
20. **Fake sources**. Ensure that all references have corresponding citations in the paper body. Moreover, use genuine sources and page numbers that you can defend in case the customer demands them.
21. **Phrasal verbs**. Kindly avoid these types of verbs. Use strong ones instead. Examples of phrasal verbs include “bring about” and “take away” among others. Check online for more.

**Courtesy of smartwriters2015@gmail.com**