

Final Paper Tips

References: The final paper should include *at least 5* references from peer-reviewed journals. You can use required or supplementary readings from the course, but required readings do not count toward the 5 articles.

APA formatting: It is required that the paper conform to APA formatting as described in the 6th Edition of the APA Manual. Here are a few links on APA formatting, although there are many other good resources online (but make sure to check they use the 6th edition of the manual and not early editions).

www.apastyle.org

<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx>

<http://www.apastyle.org/apa-style-help.aspx>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

APA paper [example 1](#)

APA paper [example 2](#)

Papers with proper APA formatting also signal that you put effort into the paper because formatting is little more than following rules to standardize your paper.

2500 words, +/- 50: The word count includes the introduction, method, results, and discussion sections. It does not include the title page, abstract, references, tables, figures, captions, or appendices. Applying the same strictness as an academic peer-reviewed journal, we will not accept papers that are beyond the word limit range.

Quality of writing: The quality of writing in the final paper is an important part of the grade. There are three common mistakes when it comes to student academic writing. I'm telling you about them now so you can avoid them.

The first mistake is writing to sound smart or scientific, which almost never results in the writer sounding smart or scientific. Big words and technical terms are fine, as long as they're used correctly. But if a simpler word or phrase will do, then consider using that instead. In short, write in clear English. At the other extreme, the final paper is not a long text message. Do not write as if you're having an informal conversation with an old friend.

The second mistake is not proofreading your paper and not having someone else proofread it.

You should proofread your final paper two or more times, letting it sit for at least 24 hours between reads so that you can look at it with fresh eyes. Because we have blindspots when reading our own writing, it especially helps to have a third party read over your paper to locate parts that might not be clear or make sense. In addition to catching logical problems, proofreading will also help you catch typos and grammatical errors. Papers with fewer typos and grammatical errors also signal that you put more effort into the paper. If you struggle with writing, or even if you don't but want helpful feedback, I strongly encourage you to visit the writing center on campus (<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/>).

The third mistake is not knowing who your audience is. Your audience is actually not your instructor and it's not your TA. Think of your audience as an academic at another university who is familiar with your area of research but is hearing about your proposal for the first time. To get a sense of the right level at which to write your proposal, *you should refer to the papers we've read this semester.*

Plagiarism: It should go without saying, but plagiarism is a major academic offense. Although I trust that no one would deliberately plagiarize, there have been instances where students plagiarized because they did not understand what plagiarism is. Please carefully review these [three examples](#), paying special attention to the third one.

The worksheet and oral presentation do not determine how you will do on the final paper: The purpose of the worksheet and oral presentation was to set you up for writing the final paper by having you think about your proposal in detail and providing you with feedback from multiple sources, including your classmates. A good grade indicates that you are on track and moving in the right direction. However, do not assume that because you received a high/low grade on those assignments that you will receive a high/low grade on the final paper. There is a lot that

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goes into writing your final paper, including articulating your theories, explaining the logic that connects your hypotheses to your theories, describing your stimuli and tasks, and fleshing out the implications, limitations, and future directions.