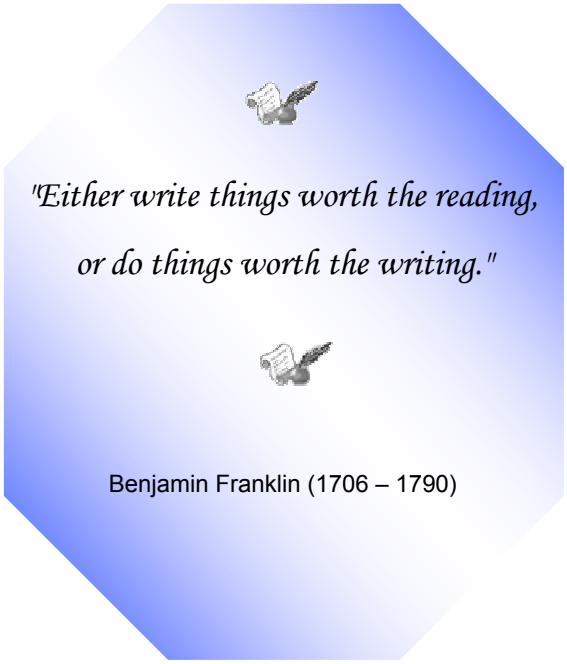
Academic Writing Skills

H. Mennens MSc

&

B. Wilkinson MSc


"Either write things worth the reading,
or do things worth the writing."
Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790)

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Preface

We have written this guide for you to help you on the way to becoming proficient in your chosen field of economics or business administration. As you advance in your studies, you will demonstrate your proficiency through the essays, papers, case reports, and other texts that you write. Your writing is thus a marker of your relative expertise in your discipline. Yet, it is also a means in itself. Writing helps you organize your own ideas, discover the strengths and weaknesses in your thinking, and internalize the knowledge you construct. We hope this guide will help you on your way. But like all guides, it does not contain everything. As Voltaire said, "the best way to be boring is to leave nothing out". This guide acts as a starter – it is up to you to go deeper.

Just as you will find with your writing assignments, we too have gone through the writing process in the construction of this guide. We constructed a plan, consulted numerous sources and people, wrote the text, revised it, and edited it, all the time trying to keep it clear and simple. In putting together this guide, we have aimed to follow Ernest Hemingway who said, "My aim is to put down on paper what I see and what I feel in the best and simplest way." We hope we have succeeded.

Henri Mennens MSc
Bob Wilkinson MSc

Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the many people and sources we have consulted during the construction of this guide. In particular, we would like to express thanks to Jeanette Hommes (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Universiteit Maastricht), for her inspiration and help throughout. Furthermore, we are indebted to Mike Hannay and Lachlan Mackenzie, whose book Effective Writing in English: A Resource Guide (1996) has been a major source of information for chapters 2 and 3. Finally, we acknowledge the American Psychological Association whose "Publication Manual" (American Psychological Association, 1994) and the related electronic update (American Psychological Association, 2001) have been an excellent support in the construction of chapter 4 in this guide.

1. Introduction

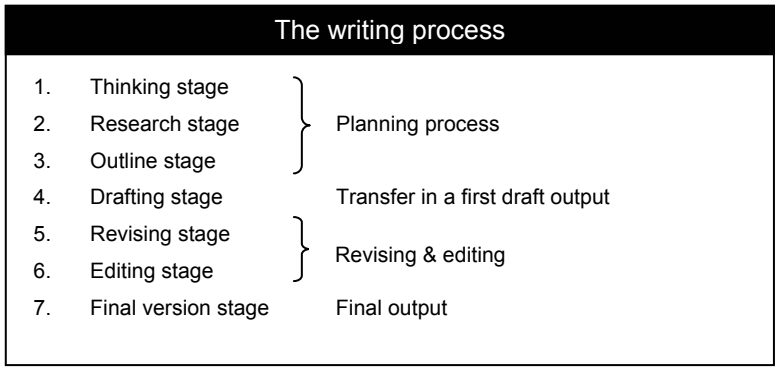
Academic writing covers the wide range of specific writing tasks that you are required to write during the course of your academic studies: papers, reports, literature reviews, projects, case studies, dissertations, theses, research papers, and articles. Some of these text types are quite rare outside the academic environment (papers, literature reviews, dissertations, theses); others (reports, projects, etc.) may well be aiming at a much broader public. However, what they all have in common is a similar type of reader: a person educated in the specialist field (here economics or business studies), and usually acting as a professional in that field. These target readers represent the professional community that you are studying to become a member of. To be accepted as member requires you to meet the norms and standards that the professional community expects. Thus with regard to writing, you are expected to adhere to the norms expected by the (international) academic community.

Compare this to a game of rugby. If you want to play rugby, you have to play with 14 other players on your team and an opposing team too (your local community). All of you have to play according to a set of rules agreed by the sports governing body (the professional community). If you don't, your game is not accepted, and it might be anarchy. Of course, the rules set the framework for what is potentially a great game, and within the rules there is vast scope for individual flair and talent. So with academic writing: you have to write according to the 'rules', but to write well demands your own individual talent and enterprise. And just as a highly skilled rugby player knows how to use the rules to his advantage, so an expert writer uses the norms and standards of professional academic writing to persuade readers of the power of his argument.

We should not extend this sport analogy too far: sports have clear sets of rules which everyone can read and study: academic writing does not. What a professional academic field has is a set of *overt norms*, such as a style guide. This guide is based on the editorial style requirements, described in "The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association" (2001). Alongside these is a set of *covert norms* which are just as powerful. Examples of the covert norms will be the nature of argumentation that is considered acceptable in the field. Some researchers have been looking into these covert norms, in order to find out exactly what it is that expert writers in the field do. So far, the findings are limited. Most novice writers acquire them through extensive reading in the field, and by paying active attention to the way other writers use language. This process of acquisition demands close observation of how expert writers use words and expressions differently in different types of text, e.g. literature reviews or case studies in a single field (e.g. marketing).

Academic papers (and most other forms of academic writing) are typically *expository* or *argumentative*. An *expository or informative paper* describes or explains a particular set of phenomena, and provides an account of why these phenomena are found in one or more specific situations or contexts. The goal of the expository paper is also to acquaint the reader with a body of knowledge. An *argumentative or persuasive paper* must choose a side, make a case for it, consider and refute alternative arguments, and prove to the undecided reader that the opinion it presents is the best one. You must be aware of other sides and be fair to them; dismissing them completely will weaken your own argument. It is always best to take a side that you believe in, preferably with the most supporting evidence. It can often be educational, however, to adopt a different position from the one you might normally choose (debating requires this kind of flexibility).

To develop a good academic paper you should go through a number of stages, called the writing process. The following seven stages can be distinguished:



1. Thinking stage

In this stage you determine your topic area (which may of course already be given), brainstorm about ideas on the topic, select, reject and focus those ideas, before arriving at your final choice.

2. Research stage

Here you search for and study background literature and other materials, analyse the results, draw your own conclusions and interpretations, etc.

3. Outline stage

In this stage you draft an outline of the paper you intend to write, setting out your main aim or purpose in the paper (the thesis statement), sketch how you will develop the points that follow from the thesis statement, and indicate how you will conclude the paper.

4. Drafting stage

Here you put down on screen successively improved versions of your paper.

5. Revising stage

In this stage you scan your work on a macro level for logical coherence, checking whether you need to add or delete information, whether sections need rephrasing for clarification.

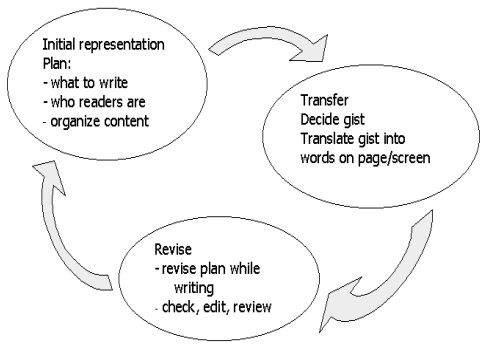
6. Editing stage

Here you edit your text on a micro level, checking the grammar, spelling, punctuation, citations in the text, references and the layout.

7. Final version stage

In this stage you set out the final paper neatly and clearly.

It must be emphasized that writing a paper is recursive: you do not start at the beginning, and work through straight to the end, and that is that. At all times you will be 'backtracking' or 'looping', so that as you are writing your first draft, you may discover you need to add more information and have to return to the research stage. During the revising stage, you may discover that your original plan was too broad, and so decide to cut out a whole section. Assuming you have time, you may produce several revised versions of the paper before your final version. Do not forget to allow yourself plenty of time (the 'simmering' time) between writing your first draft and your final version. *Figure 1* illustrates the three groups of actions in writing a paper, the planning process, the transfer, and revision and editing. The figure emphasizes the recursive nature of writing a paper in that each action not only feeds into the next but feeds back into the previous actions, entailing revision of those actions.



"You may start with a plan, conduct some research (reading, library and/or Internet search), analyse and then synthesize the information you have acquired, construct a thesis statement, draft an outline, write a rough draft of the introduction, start writing the body, then stop. You go back, conduct some more research, adjust your outline, rewrite the body, write a bit more, adjust the introduction, perhaps adjust your thesis statement, then stop again. You conduct more research, rewrite the body again, draft a conclusion, go back to the introduction, adjust the thesis statement, rewrite the introduction, then stop. You let the paper 'simmer' for a while, then reread it, adjusting here and there for content accuracy, perhaps search or check for a contrary argument, throw out less relevant parts of the paper, check the logical development of your ideas and arguments, and wrap-up the conclusion. Then you check again for spelling (using the spellchecker, but also reading carefully word by word), check for grammar (using the grammar checkers wisely), check all punctuation, check the layout, check the citations and the references. Check too for sentence length (eliminate very long, rambling sentences), check paragraph structure (particularly if the topic of the paragraph changes in the paragraph – check the subjects of the main verbs), check the logical links between paragraphs and sections. And so on."

Figure 1: The writing process and its recursive nature (Bruer, 1993).

The next chapter focuses on the planning process. The planning activities and the construction of an outline are described. Then, the following chapters continue by elaborating the different focus points in the writing process:

Focus points
1. Structuring
2. Citing and references
3. Text revision
4. Lay-out
5. Evaluation

Because of the recursiveness of the writing process, the different focus points will be applicable in each of the different stages as described above.

Chapter 3 elaborates on the structuring of the paper, through a detailed discussion of the three parts of a paper, *introduction, body*, and *conclusion*. Moreover, structuring a paper effectively requires that you write well-constructed paragraphs: this chapter also provides brief guidelines on paragraph organization. Chapter 4 explains the importance of citing sources and giving references, and provides guidelines how to put them in the paper in a correct way. Chapter 5 concentrates on finalizing the paper. This chapter discusses the text revision, format requirements and the evaluation of the paper.

To conclude, this guide helps you to master the process of academic writing, which you can apply to the specific writing assignments during the course of your academic studies. It specifies the elements necessary to a successful academic paper. But keep in mind that writing is a skill; you only get better at a skill through regular practice. Regular practice leads to routine and expertise. The application of the principles of this guide can be of use until your last writing examination: the final thesis. However, this guide just contains a brief summary of the different topics discussed. For more information you should consult literature and the Internet. Besides, keep in mind that the writing process is not just simply following a set of rules. Try to develop your own style, expertise and talent, in order to distinguish yourself. Good luck with your writing career!

2. The planning process

In order to get a good start to writing your paper, it is important that you go successfully through the planning process. This chapter describes the different activities of the planning process. Then, section 2.2 discusses the most important stage of the planning process: the construction of an outline.

2.1 The planning activities

During the planning process, according to Hannay and Mackenzie (1996), you are concerned with six major activities:

❶ *Generating ideas for the content*

Ideas for content can come from several sources: from your own knowledge, from discussions with other people, and from various media sources (written texts, audio-visual media and electronic media). Brainstorming techniques help you to generate ideas in the first two categories.

❷ *Selecting and classifying points*

Here you are concerned with ordering your ideas. Analyse them to determine the extent to which they are connected with each other. Ideas and concepts that are highly connected are likely to form key points in your texts. Those which are less closely connected may form essential supporting topics, or may need to be abandoned. Some may require more development. Always be prepared to get rid of ideas that prove not to be relevant to your argument.

❸ *Establishing your perspective*

In this activity you need to decide what angle you are going to take with your material. Are you taking a historical perspective, or only discussing the present situation? Are you taking an objective position, or are you bringing in your own personal standpoint? Are you taking a general viewpoint, or only a specific case? Are you looking at the matter from your home country's perspective? Are you discussing a general issue or only a national situation?

❹ *Determining your intention*

Now you need to consider what you want to do with the text. Do you want to present both sides of an argument equally, or do you want to present only one side? Do you need to give examples, or will your argumentation be sufficient on its own? Do you want to persuade the reader of your

opinion, or are you only wishing to describe the matter? Do you want just to present a problem, or do you want to offer solutions as well? What you are going to do with your text must become very clear to the reader in the thesis statement: this statement directs the readers to the purpose of the text.

❺ *Formulating a draft title, structuring the introduction and conclusion*

Here you should set down a working title and devise a draft structure for the introduction and the conclusion. At this stage your drafting should only be provisional: you should write the actual version only after you have written the body of the paper. This is because you do need to know what your introduction is indeed introducing and you need to know what your conclusion is concluding. A useful rule of thumb, according to Hannay and Mackenzie (1996), is:

Plan your introduction, then your conclusion, and then your body, but

Write your body, then your conclusion and then your introduction.

❻ *Drafting paragraph themes*

At this stage, go back to the ideas (themes) you have selected and classified. Now you have to decide which will be suitable for your text. Each theme usually is the basis for a single paragraph. Each theme too will require sufficient development; so do not try to include too many. As a rough guide, you probably cannot treat adequately more than about 4 themes in a 1000-word paper (roughly 3 pages), while a 2500-word paper (roughly 6 pages) will seem overwhelming if it includes more than 9 or 10 themes. Once you have selected your themes, list the points that you need to make to support the theme in the paragraph.

2.2 The outline

A useful tool for planning your paper is an outline. It is a logical, schematic summary of the ideas that you wish to express in your paper. It is the organizational pattern of your paper, presented visually in conceptual form. The goal of the outline is to help you organize your ideas, and present them in a logical order. It serves to identify the relationships between the ideas: it allows you to see how related ideas can be grouped together, and which ideas you can cut out, and which ideas need more support. A good outline helps you to maintain the direction in your paper, and prevents you from getting distracted into irrelevant information.

The following six steps may be considered in the development of an outline:

❶ Decide the purpose of your paper and the audience you are writing for.

❷ Develop the thesis statement you are going to present or argue in the paper. At this stage you may not have a definitive version of your thesis statement.

❸ List all the important points you want to handle in the paper. These points have to be split in three main parts: introduction, body, and conclusion.
The points in the introduction include the items that lead to the thesis statement (so-called background information), and a thesis statement that should now be defined precisely. When you are planning your paper, you will group all your ideas around one central theme. This theme forms the core of your thesis statement.
The points in the body have to be logically organized so that they follow from your thesis statement and lead towards the conclusion. In a larger paper (for example a thesis), you usually develop a set of subquestions, covering the points that lead to an answer to the thesis statement. By answering step by step the different subquestions in the body, you can draw a structured and well-founded conclusion at the end.
The points in the conclusion include the summary of the facts that lead to an answer to the thesis statement and the answer itself.

❹ Categorize the points in the body under general headings so that you can identify which points need more development (e.g. you have to do more reading) and which points are not useful or relevant (delete these). Choose precise, concrete words for the headings: avoid vague terms. Relate the headings to the purpose of your paper. If your paper is describing a situation, you are more likely to choose noun structures for headings (for example: Failure of Bretton Woods). If your paper is oriented to action, you may choose verbal structures; typically –ing forms in English (for example: Reforming the auditor's duties).

❺ Work out how one idea follows logically from the previous one. Note down how you will make the transitions from point to point. This is a key step, but one that is often underrated. Failure to think out the transitions in the planning stage can cost you more time in the revising stage.

❻ Finally, look back at the whole outline, and check that you are satisfied that it all hangs together logically and conceptually. Now you are ready to start writing.

Outlines are *generative*. They are most useful if you modify them as you write in line with new thoughts or information. Some of you may find that a simple, less detailed written outline is sufficient – you may be very competent in holding the full structure in your mind – but you may add more detailed points to the outline as you progress. Most of you, however, find that a relatively detailed outline on paper is *an effective reminder* of what the goal of your paper is and of what you have selected from the literature, and *an efficient guide* to how far you have come.

3. Structuring

On the basis of the outline, described in the previous chapter, it is now possible to continue with the structure of your paper. This chapter discusses the structuring process. Structuring a paper effectively also requires that you write well-constructed paragraphs. Each part of the paper (introduction, body and conclusion) consists of different paragraphs. The first section in this chapter provides brief guidelines on paragraph organization. Then, section 3.2 continues the discussion to the structuring process.

3.1 The organization of a paragraph

Paragraphs are not the same as sections; students often cannot tell them apart. Papers are divided into sections, and a section is organized into paragraphs. Paragraphs are the organizing units of writing, indicating which ideas go together and how they relate to each other. Good paragraphing gives readers clues to how to read your paper. Moreover, the visual impact of paragraphs on the page or screen helps show the reader when you have moved on to the next step in your ideas. Readers expect your paragraphs to be *unified* – that is, each paragraph discusses one main issue. They also expect your paragraphs to be well *organized* – in that the development of the ideas follows a clear order. Finally they expect your paragraphs to be *coherent* – so that each sentence logically follows from the previous ones, in advancing and supporting the topic of the paragraph. Always ask yourself: how does this paragraph fit in the whole paper?

The paragraph starts with the so-called *topic sentence*, and subsequently, treats the issue in a series of linked sentences: the *elaboration*. The high point of the paragraph comes at the end, the *wrap-up*, which concludes the paragraph. If you do not fulfil these three components of a paragraph, you leave your reader with a feeling of incompleteness and dissatisfaction. This implies that you should avoid using *one-sentence paragraphs*. The one-sentence paragraph is a technique that should, as a rule, not find a place in a paper. It is a technique of informal writing, e-mails, webpages, manuals, guides, correspondence and of some types of popular journalism, but, with rare exceptions, has very limited place in academic writing.

3.1.1 The topic sentence

The foundation of every paragraph is of course the initial sentence, the topic sentence. This sentence performs a dual function. First, it announces what the rest of the paragraph will deal with,

and a paragraph will indeed be internally coherent to the extent that all sentences in that paragraph fall under the scope of the topic sentence. Secondly, it relates the paragraph to the surrounding text, especially to the preceding material (Hannay & Mackenzie, 1996). The topic sentence helps both you the writer and your readers grasp the issues (the topic) being discussed in the paragraph. When you check your work, you can quickly see whether information in the sentences of the paragraph are all related to the topic, or whether some information needs to be deleted or moved to a different paragraph, or even whether a paragraph needs splitting in two.

3.1.2 The elaboration and wrap-up

The central portion of the paragraph is known as the elaboration of the topic sentence; this is the part of the paragraph that offers the most information. The final sentence is the wrap-up. It may be explicitly linked to the topic sentence, but is never a mere restatement of the latter. Rather, it serves to state the point, to make clear the *cognitive gain* of the paragraph and may, where appropriate, point ahead to the topic sentence of the next paragraph. Hannay and Mackenzie (1996) distinguish seven different types of elaboration, depending on the communicative goal of the paragraph.

❶ *Spatial elaboration* is found in paragraphs whose goal is to describe some aspects of reality, especially the spatial configuration of things and places. Such paragraphs typically have a topic sentence that introduces the location, an elaboration that takes the reader on an imaginary journey around the area being depicted, and a wrap-up sentence that identifies some point as being of particular importance for the ensuing text. Although this type is frequently found in tourist guidebooks, it is not common in academic writing.

❷ *Temporal elaboration* is used where various pieces of historical evidence are cited for the claim made in the topic sentence. Just as the body as a whole should show chronological sequencing, so the paragraph should give the succession of events in the order of their actual occurrence in time. The wrap-up sentence should present the historical high point of the time period under discussion.

❸ *Analytical elaboration* occurs where the topic sentence presents a generalization and the following sentences serve to particularize, exemplify or specify that generalization. After a topic sentence such as: *all the major religions of the world have underrated the potential of their female adherents,* the elaboration sentences would then provide examples of how this

applies to each of the world's most important religions. The wrap-up sentence would both add more detail to the topic sentence and link in naturally with a following paragraph.

❹ *Deductive elaboration* is found where the topic sentence tends to to make an assertion that has some obvious validity and the elaboration develops the logical consequences of that assertion. For example, a topic sentence like: *language is a vital tool of human communication,* would be followed by elaboration sentences such as: *any study of language must therefore take account of its role in communication.* The wrap-up of the paragraph takes the form of a conclusion to the argument presented in the elaboration: *it follows that every effort should be made to elaborate a functional theory of language.*

❺ *Inductive elaboration,* by contrast, occurs when the topic sentence makes some claim, the validity of which is not immediately obvious, and the subsequent elaboration presents evidence to support the claim. A topic sentence such as: *the world is a safer place today than it has ever been*, would be followed by elaboration sentences such as: *the Soviet Union, the major threat to world peace, no longer exists.* The wrap-up sentence offers a (typically positive) evaluation of the evidence.

❻ *Dialectical elaboration* involves presenting two sides of an argument in one paragraph. The topic sentence (plus possibly one or two further sentences) advances the proposition to be discussed, the elaboration offers the counter-argument. Finally, the wrap-up sentence can then contain the synthesis of the two; a resolution of the opposition that preserves something of both sides of the argument. For example, a paragraph might begin: *many people consider that the high fees charged by medical specialists are contributing to the difficulties being experienced in financing health care.* After a couple of sentences amplifying this side of the argument, you can switch to the counter-argument: *it must be conceded, however, that these specialists have invested many years of their lives in attaining their high degree of expertise and moreover incur many expenses that are not immediately visible to outsiders.* Again after a couple of sentences elaborating the counter-argument, the wrap-up synthesizes both viewpoints: *the answer lies in moderating the fees, but also in making visible the hidden expenses with a view to reducing them and maintaining the specialists' standard of living.*

❼ *Enumerational elaboration,* finally, is encountered in those paragraphs in which the topic sentence serves merely to quantify the points that are to be made in the elaboration. After a

topic sentence like: *there are five arguments in favour of abolishing capital punishment in the USA,* the elaboration must then contain exactly five distinct arguments against the preservation of capital punishment. Enumerational paragraphs often lack a wrap-up sentence. If they do have one, then it usually picks out some justification for presenting the various arguments in combination: *these arguments, taken together, call for an immediate implementation of a ban on capital punishment.*

3.2 The structuring process

Actually, you started the structuring process already in steps three and four of the construction of an outline, described in section 2.2. The structuring process continues by implementing these steps in the paper, starting with the introduction.

3.2.1 The introduction

The introduction has three functions, all of which must be present. First, it sets the context by introducing the topic of your paper. This is called the background information. This information leads to the second function: it specifies the thesis statement. Finally, the introduction contains a short outline of how you are going to handle the aspects of your topic in the rest of the paper. Any introduction in which one of these functions is missing is necessarily incomplete.

The length of the introduction varies from one paragraph to several pages, depending on the total length of the paper. As a useful rule of thumb, it is valuable to think of your introduction as being about *one-eighth* of the length of the text you are writing. Thus, the introduction to a 1000-word paper would be about 125 words; the introduction to a 10,000-word dissertation would contain about 1250 words, and may well appear as a short chapter in its own right. However, length also depends on context. So treat the one-eighth concept as a guideline, not as a straightjacket.

Writing the introduction depends heavily on personal preference. Some writers like to know exactly how they will begin before they start to elaborate the text they are aiming to write; other writers prefer to know what they have written first, and then write the introduction to fit it, so that it leads to their thesis statement. Yet, a good rule of thumb is to write a draft introduction that leads to your thesis statement, then write the whole text, right to the conclusion, progressively editing as you go along. Only then do you return to your introduction and adjust or rewrite it so that it does indeed fit your paper neatly and satisfyingly.

3.2.1.1 The background information

The introduction serves to prepare the readers for what will follow (Hannay & Mackenzie, 1996): thus, it should orient the readers, enabling them to feel confident that the rest of the text will follow logically and coherently from the context given in the introduction. It should therefore present enough background information so that the readers can make sense of what follows - you need to pay attention to what the reader can be expected to know already and what will be new. Your introduction is more effective when it progresses from the known to the unknown.

Equally, your introduction is more effective when it not only has a logical progression, but also attracts the reader intellectually for the argument that is to follow. The introduction gives you scope for personal input: by giving examples from personal experience, or by showing in the choice of words some degree of personal commitment to the subject. The very fact that you bring in such examples or choose specific words indicates your commitment. The introductory paragraph serves to introduce the reader gradually to your 'world'. Remember the reader will not always be familiar with your 'world': so do not assume they will be.

3.2.1.2 The thesis statement

The thesis statement is a vital component in your academic papers. The thesis statement marks the high point of the introduction. It forms one of the criteria of academic writing assignments at the faculty: you must clearly specify in the thesis statement what you are discussing in your paper. The thesis statement is a clear expression of the purpose which your paper is expected to assert, explain, support, or defend (Fulwiler & Hayakawa, 2000). Broadly speaking, it summarizes the main idea of a paper and makes that idea explicit to the readers. You can view the thesis statement as the starting line for a race – the tension has been building up and now this is the real point of departure for the detailed argument that will follow. The thesis statement answers the questions the critical reader has: "So what? Why does this paper exist? What's it all about?"

At the same time, the thesis statement defines the scope of the body of the paper: it makes a commitment to the reader, creating expectations that the reader expects to be fulfilled. It also points the way forward to the conclusions that you will draw at the end of the paper.
We discuss the thesis statement at this point, but do remember that you will develop the 'argument' contained in your thesis statement alongside your planning (research) and your construction of an outline (see section 2.2).

The thesis statement is, characteristically, a generalization usually in one sentence (sometimes more): it summarizes the main point of your text which is then supported and developed throughout the rest of the paper.

Thesis statements are effective when they conform to one or more of the following criteria:

❶ Imply rather than state that the discussion will follow.

> *The question arises whether the West should be more proactive in the fight to reduce world poverty.*

> *Any decision to place restrictions on the free movement of capital should follow from a careful consideration of the pros and cons of the freedoms enshrined in the European Union.*

❷ Use conditional constructions, to make effective, suggestive thesis statements:

> *If the West were to consider its long-term interests, its leaders would appreciate the need to become more active in dialogue with popular movements in North Africa and the Middle East.*

❸ Use a question form, if that helps make your thesis statement more striking. It also implies a more balanced, neutral assessment of the topic.

> *Should the common agricultural policy be scrapped before new countries accede to the European Union?*

❹ Do not personalize the thesis statement: personal preferences do not entice the reader to read further.

❺ Do not present a statement of fact or definition in your thesis statement: such statements leave no room for expansion.

The thesis statement in an explanatory or informative paper is simply your declaration of what the paper is about. Positioning the thesis statement early lets the readers know what to expect and

guides their understanding of the information to be presented. Typically, the thesis statement provides a one-sentence answer to the implied question your paper sets out to address: What is it? How does this work? Why is this so? The question *"Why did so many dot.com companies failed in 2000-2001?"* could be translated in the following thesis statement:

> *Many dot.com companies failed in 2000-2001 because high expectations were based on hype rather than on solid performance.*

In an argumentative or persuasive paper, your thesis statement presents in fact the major claim you make about the issue you have chosen to discuss. An argument must be based on an issue about which there is debate; that is, there must be at least two sides to the argument. You are trying to persuade readers to agree with your side of the argument. This means that you not only have to provide claims (and the support or evidence to back them) which back up your major claim, but you also have to take into account the counter-claims that opponents can put forward, and refute them. Without such a reasoned presentation of the claims and counter-claims, you do not have an argument, let alone an academic argument: you simply have a polemic. See the following example of a thesis statement, based on an issue, claim, and counter-claim:

Issue: Does the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration adequately represent the cultural diversity of the European Union?

Claim: The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration fails to provide a good education because the staff and students are not culturally diverse.

Counter-claim: The staff at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration are good scholars and teachers; therefore, their cultural backgrounds are irrelevant.

Thesis statement:

> *The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration should enact a policy to make the faculty staff and students representative of the cultural diversity of the European Union.*

3.2.1.3 The short outline of the introduction

The last part of the introduction contains a short outline that stipulates your approach to how you are going to answer the thesis statement, thus how you are going to handle the aspects of your topic in the rest of the paper. This part actually describes the (remaining) structure of the paper. In step four of the construction of an outline, described in section 2.2, you already categorized the points in the body under general headings. After having defined the different points and related headings, you can now construct the short outline in the introduction. For example, the following short outline comes after the related background information and the specification of the thesis statement:

> *To investigate this <core of thesis statement>, this paper compares the investment strategies of three companies against two criteria. Section 2 discusses the similarities and differences in the companies' approach with respect to <criteria 1>. Section 3 compares the companies' performance regarding <criteria 2>. Finally, section 4 concludes by evaluating the findings under the two criteria against the <core of thesis statement>, and offers recommendations for further study.*

As indicated above, the introduction in larger papers (such as a thesis) may well form a short chapter in its own right. The short outline is then expanded to a whole section, the last one in the introduction. In this section you will indicate the contents of each chapter of your larger paper or thesis. As specified in section 2.2, when you are planning a larger paper, you will have broken the main thesis statement down into a series of subquestions. Now, you will usually devote one chapter to the analysis and discussion of each subquestion. Finally, after you answered each of these subquestions in the related chapters, in the final chapter you conclude by providing the answer to the thesis statement. The outline of your paper, described in the introduction, shows the reader the path that leads to the final answer to the thesis statement, by concisely describing the contents of the different chapters. In the outline you mention each of the chapters indicating first what subquestion is going to be answered and why (clearly indicating the link to the previous step and the next step in answering the thesis statement so the reader can follow the line of the story) and also what issues will be dealt with.

3.2.1.4 The organization of paragraphs in the introduction

Although the organization of paragraphs is discussed in section 3.1, special attention has to be paid to the construction of an introductory paragraph, containing the background information and

the thesis statement. Especially, topic sentences in the introductory paragraph demand great care. After all, in the introductory paragraph the topic sentence represents the starting point for your readers, and can attract or repel them!

The following list specifies some good guidelines for topic sentences in introductory paragraphs:

- ☑ Make sure your first sentence is fairly uncontroversial – you do not want to put off or irritate immediately those readers who may disagree with you.
- ☑ Make sure the topic sentence of the introductory paragraph is relatively 'timeless'; that is, it should not be directly linked to the time of writing. You cannot always know when a reader is going to be reading the text. General time expressions like *in recent years* or *in the last years of the twentieth century* can be freely used, but do not use expressions like *last week, this month, yesterday*, etc.
- ☑ Although the topic sentence of the introduction occurs immediately under the title, the convention is that the introduction should always be seen as a fresh start. So do not make the topic sentence simply a reformulation of the title.
- ☑ Similarly do not make the topic sentence depend on the title for its interpretation: as a rule, the first sentence should not refer back to the title.

There are two key functions for the elaboration sentences in an introductory paragraph: to *contextualize* the topic and to indicate *the perspective* from which it is viewed.

Contextualizing means providing sufficient background against which your subsequent argument can unfold. This may concern simple matters of time and place. But note the following points:

- ❖ Readers will assume you are writing about the present unless you clearly indicate otherwise.
- ❖ Readers of texts in English will assume the texts refer to the English-speaking environment unless you specifically indicate otherwise. Make sure, for instance, that specific references to a German or a Dutch context are clear for a non-German or non-Dutch reader.

Perspective concerns the angle you wish to adopt to your subject. For example, if you are writing about the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), you should indicate your perspective on the topic. Do you approach the topic of the EBRD from a purely economic standpoint, or do you approach the issue from a socio-political point of view?

In the elaboration, especially in short papers, you will often have to indicate the areas of the topic that you cannot cover in the text. Preferably, do this by focusing on what you *will be dealing with*, rather than going on at length about things you will not discuss. An expression like *of particular interest* enables you to focus on the topic you are dealing with, but at the same time implies that there are other aspects which are, for current purposes, of less interest.

3.2.2 The body

The body is the middle part of the paper, the meat in the sandwich as it were. In step four of the construction of an outline (as discussed in section 2.2), you categorized the points in the body under general headings to identify which points need more development and which points are not useful or relevant. Now, you choose specific (numbered) headings that relate to the different sections you mention in the short outline of the introduction. Then, you define the different subsections and related headings to finalize the structure of the body. However, too many headings in a short paper do not help the readability of your paper: on the contrary, they appear as a series of unconnected chunks of information and give the impression of an unfinished set of notes.

The body must logically follow from the thesis statement, and you must develop the points adequately and sufficiently to support or refute your thesis statement.

The body must be organized in clear paragraphs, and, where necessary, supported by *exhibits* (figures, tables, charts, etc.). Always try to refer to the exhibit in the text first before it appears on the page. Ensure that you explain the important features of the exhibit in the text – do not leave your readers to work it out for themselves, for they could well draw different conclusions.
The body of a paper is the largest part, approximately three-quarters of the total length. In very short papers (i.e., 500 words) it is not necessary to indicate the start of the body by anything else than the natural break for a new paragraph. After all, since in very short papers the introduction is one paragraph, then the second paragraph will mark the start of the body. This implies that in very short papers, you do not need to use *subheadings* for the different sections – the text is short

enough. In most papers that you will write for your studies, however, you will need to indicate the different sections by giving appropriate subheadings.

Ideally, your paragraphs should derive from the outline of the arguments you wish to present in your paper. However, you may wish to split a long paragraph in two. But again make sure that each of the two new paragraphs is internally consistent: that is, they both have topic sentences, adequate elaboration, and a satisfying wrap-up. Similarly, you may wish to join two short paragraphs, and the same considerations apply. Aim to ensure that your paragraphs are well-balanced in length.

The direction you take in the body of your paper will be determined by the approach you have adopted. This indicates the overall organizing principle of your paper. For example, a paper on the historical origins of the European monetary union is likely to be controlled by a *chronological structure*. Each paragraph will deal with events in clearly delimited periods of history. In contrast, if your perspective in a similar paper on the origins of the European monetary union is from an analysis of the banking system, you may adopt an *opposition structure*. In this case, you may contrast the different approaches to EMU taken by various banking authorities and specify these in separate paragraphs. A third organizing principle is that of *relative strength*, where you are asserting a particular claim (in your thesis statement) and you then order the pieces of evidence in terms of their strength. This may apply to a paper in which you assert that countries with booming economies should increase taxation.

3.2.3 The conclusion

A paper must close with an effective *conclusion*. The conclusion finally provides the answer to the thesis statement. The concluding paragraph is organized in the following way.

The topic sentence of a concluding paragraph must serve as notice that the body is over and the conclusions are about to be drawn. It aims to synthesize the impression you wish the reader to have from reading the text. Note that the signalling words *so, however, thus* and *therefore* are too weak to signal the change from body to conclusion. Other signals, such *as to conclude, by way of conclusion, to sum up* are clear, but may be too explicit, especially in short papers. Adverbs seem to work best for this purpose, such as *certainly, clearly, indeed, arguably, undoubtedly*. In longer papers, indicate the conclusion by a clear heading.

The elaboration of the conclusion should cover three functions: first, a summary should been given of what has been argued before in the body. This summary leads to the second function, the answer to the thesis statement. Finally, a personal view should be incorporated in the elaboration.

The wrap-up sentence should be striking and memorable, and end on a communicatively important and positive note. It should not depend for its interpretation on the preceding sentences. It should stimulate the reader to think further. So, take care that the conclusion ends strongly.

As a useful guide, the conclusion should comprise about one-eighth of the whole text; thus in a 500-word paper the conclusion should not be more than about 60-70 words. In a somewhat larger paper the conclusion may consist of several paragraphs. In a thesis, for example, it will form a separate chapter.

4. Citation of sources

Citation is the process of giving due credit to the sources of facts, opinions and ideas that you refer to in your writing. If, for example, you find an interesting fact in a book, journal article, webpage, or other publication, and you want to use it in your paper, then you must indicate in your paper exactly where you got the information. If you report an author's opinion, hypothesis, or idea, you must also give due mention in your paper. You always cite the source you *use*. If you describe Porter's generic strategies in your paper, and you used an introductory textbook on international strategy, then do not cite the original book of Porter's, but cite the textbook you *used*.

When you are citing an author, you may do so in three ways. First, you can literally *quote* an extract from the author, putting the quotation in quotation marks ("inverted commas"). This way is not very common in many social scientific disciplines, but is used, for example, for important definitions.

You can also write down the information you have found from another's work in your own words (paraphrasing). This can be done in two ways. In one way, you try to *summarize* those particular parts of another's work that are important to your paper. You summarize in your own words, because you are telling your story: you are interpreting the information you have found in the literature in the light of your conception of the topic.

The other way is when you find several books or articles that discuss the same aspect of your topic: here you try to *generalize* from the several sources by summing up the general finding or conclusion that you draw from those works.

Whether you paraphrase (saying in your own words) or quote an author directly, the source should always be credited. The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration requires that you apply the APA (American Psychological Association) standards for the citation of sources. This chapter will discuss these standards, based on the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 1994) and the related electronic update (American Psychological Association, 2001). If you cite a source according to APA standards, you have to insert two components in the paper: a reference citation in the text and a related entry in the references at the end of the paper. Section 4.2 discusses how to put a reference citation in the text in a correct way. Section 4.3 describes how to construct an entry in the refer-

ences at the end of the paper. Section 4.4 continues by explaining the use of footnotes in an academic paper. Finally, section 4.5 shows you how to deal with tables, figures, and other exhibits from another source in your paper. The first section, however, starts by emphasizing the importance of citation in academic writing.

4.1 The importance of citation

Three main reasons may be identified why (correct) citation is that important in academic writing, and why you need to check carefully that what you tell in your story of the information from your cited authors is an accurate representation. First, you demonstrate your understanding of the different concepts that you have learned and afterwards applied in the text. Secondly, the reader can retrieve the different sources you refer to in the text for further research or other purposes. You too would be very grateful for the research of your final thesis if you could easily retrieve the sources from another author's work. The third reason is to avoid being charged of plagiarism. This last reason may need some further explanation.

Plagiarism is the deliberate or unintentional reporting of facts, opinions, ideas, etc., as though they were your own. It is a serious academic offence that may have some serious consequences.

You may think that academic knowledge is shared, objective knowledge, and is therefore a kind of communal property. Nothing could be further from the truth. When anyone invents something or discovers some new fact, he tries to register that invention or that fact under a patent or through the copyright acts. Music, logos, commercial ideas can all be protected as the intellectual property of the inventor, and these are protected because they are the source of livelihood for the inventor. If the rights are infringed, then the inventor or owner of the rights can take legal action. The same principles apply to academic facts, ideas and opinions: although few academics will make money out of them directly, this academic knowledge does underpin their jobs and career prospects. And in the same way, your ideas will lay the basis for your own careers.

While academic knowledge is freely available, it is necessary to give due credit to the source of that knowledge. That makes your own work academic.

Why might you fall into the trap of plagiarizing? Firstly, you may do so unintentionally. You have forgotten where you found the information, because you have read so much. The solution is

to keep careful records of the sources of information that you need for writing a paper. Another unintentional reason is that you may have a false idea of what it means to write a paper. A paper is not simply the assembly of lots of facts and ideas gathered from various sources, and your task is just to put them together. That would be a collection of notes. A paper implies that you are telling your story about that facts and ideas, and you need to identify which pieces of information are yours and which are your sources. Similarly, you may be rather unsure about what is "common knowledge" and what is specific knowledge for which you need to cite a source. This grey line between these areas is difficult to determine, especially at the beginning of your studies. However, the more you advance in your studies, the more you will discover what is the shared common knowledge – you find it as the background in lots of textbooks and articles. In the early stages of your studies, it is wise to cite all the authors of sources, just to be on the safe side.

Secondly, you may plagiarize because you think your own writing is not good enough. While using other people's work to learn how to write can be beneficial, plagiarism itself will not help you produce a good writing. What you need to do is to learn how to express other people's ideas in your own words, by trying different structures, by distilling the gist of what an author wants to say and then saying it in your words.

The third reason for plagiarism is much more serious. This is deliberate: you may be under time pressure, or you have other priorities, so you decide simply to copy chunks of text from the sources you read, and pass it off as your own work. This is of course easy to do with electronic sources. The trouble is, though, that usually it is also easy to spot: the style of writing changes, the relevant references do not appear in the text as they should, and errors of grammar and interpretation are simply repeated in your work. Worst of all, it does not help you acquire an effective understanding of the sources, nor does it help you develop your own writing style.

Closely associated with this is plagiarizing other students. You may not think of this as plagiarism; after all, it is just copying text that is not copyright. You may think another student's work is hardly intellectual property, but it is. This kind of activity eventually leads to the culprit being excluded from the academic community for life. In the end, doing this means you have destroyed your potential academic career.

Clearly, then, while plagiarizing may sometimes seem like the economically viable option in the short term, in the end it is simply not worth your while. The consequences for your academic studies and career and for you as a person are too great.

4.2 Reference citations in the text

If you cite a source according to APA standards, you have to insert two components in the paper: a reference citation in the text and a related entry in the references at the end of the paper. This section discusses how to put a reference citation in the text in a correct way. The APA standards for reference citations in the text use the *author-date* method. That is, the surname of the author and the year of publication are inserted in the text at the appropriate point:

In a recent study of reaction times **(Rogers, 1994)**…	> The standard parentheses
Rogers (1994) compared reaction times…	> When the name appears as part of the narrative
Rogers also found…	> Within the same paragraph the year need not be included subsequently, if the name appears as part of the narrative

If you literally quote an author, in addition, the related page number has to be put between the parentheses, and the quoted text has to be put in double quotation marks.

"A business model is a vague concept" **(Rogers, 1994, p.5).**	> The standard parentheses
Rogers (1994, p.3) stated: "A business model is a vague concept".	> When the name appears as part of the narrative
Rogers also stated that "a business model is a vague concept".	> Within a paragraph the year and page number has not to be included subsequently, if the name appears as part of the narrative

Often, for direct quotation at length, permission from the owner of the copyright is needed. This length varies from one copyright owner to another. If permission is requested and granted, a footnote should be made, acknowledging the permission (see section 4.4). Note that this footnote does not replace the related entry in the references, as discussed in the next section.

Now, both items *author* and *date* will be discussed into more detail.

<u>One source by multiple authors</u>

- When a work has two authors, always cite both names every time (i.e. within the same paragraph and the subsequent paragraphs); in subsequent citations within the same first paragraph, exclude the year. In subsequent paragraphs, the first citation includes again the year; then within the same (subsequent) paragraph, the citation again excludes the year.

Rogers and Zoe (1994) found…	> first citation in the text
Rogers and Zoe (1994) found…	> subsequent first citation per paragraph thereafter
Rogers and Zoe found…	> omit year from subsequent citations after first one within the same paragraph

- When a work has three, four, or five authors, cite all authors and the year the first time the reference occurs; in subsequent citations within the same first paragraph, include only the surname of the first author followed by *et al.* In subsequent paragraphs, the first citation includes only the surname of the first author followed by *et al.* and the year; then within the same (subsequent) paragraph, the citation includes only the surname of the first author followed by *et al.* without mentioning the year.

Rogers, Tac, and Zoe (1994) found…	> first citation in the text
Rogers et al. (1994) found…	> subsequent first citation per paragraph thereafter
Rogers et al. found…	> omit year from subsequent citations after first one within the same paragraph

- When a work has six or more authors, always cite only the surname of the first author followed by *et al.* (i.e. within the same paragraph and the subsequent paragraphs); in subsequent citations within the same first paragraph, exclude the year. In subsequent paragraphs, the first citation includes again the year; then within the same (subsequent) paragraph, the citation again excludes the year.

Rogers et al. (1994) found…	> first citation in the text
Rogers et al. (1994) found…	> subsequent first citation per paragraph thereafter
Rogers et al. found…	> omit year from subsequent citations after first one within the same paragraph

- Separate the different names with a comma, except for the last two names: join these names in narrative text by the word *and*. In a parenthesized reference citation in the text, the last two names have to be separated by an *ampersand sign* (= &).

Baaten, Jansen and Noes (1994) found…	> In narrative text, separate the last two names by *and*
In a recent market research **(Baaten, Jansen & Noes, 1994)**	> In a parenthesized reference citation in the text, separate the last two names by an ampersand sign

<u>One source with no author</u>

- Sometimes the name of a group can serve as author (e.g., corporations, associations, government). This is called a *group author*.

In a telecommunications study **(KPN, 2001)**…

- When a work has no author, cite in the text the first few words of the related reference entry (usually the title) and the year.

In an old report of the CIA **(The Z-files of , 1967)**…

- When a work's author is designated as "Anonymous", cite the word *Anonymous*.

In another report of the CIA **(Anonymous, 1969)**…

<u>One source with no date</u>

- When a work has no date of publication, cite in the text the author's name, followed by a comma and *n.d.*

(Janssen & Schröder, n.d.)

<u>Distinguishing two or more sources from the **same** author</u>

- When you cite two sources from the same author with a different year of publication, there is no problem to distinguish them:

Baaten (1994) found…
Baaten (1999) found…

- When you cite two sources from the same author with the same year of publication, lowercase letters are placed immediately after the year of publication, so that you can distinguish them:

Baaten (1994a) found…
Baaten (1994b) found…

Distinguishing two or more sources from the **same** two or more authors in the same order

- When you cite two sources from the same two or more authors in the same order with a different year of publication, there is no problem to distinguish them:

> **Baaten, Jansen, Klaassen and Zelt (1994)** found…
> **Baaten, Jansen, Klaassen and Zelt (1999)** found…

- When you cite three sources from the same two or more authors in the same order with the same year of publication, lowercase letters are placed immediately after the year of publication, so that you can distinguish them:

> **Baaten, Jansen, Klaassen and Zelt (1994a)** found…
> **Baaten, Jansen, Klaassen and Zelt (1994b)** found…
> **Baaten, Jansen, Klaassen and Zelt (1994c)** found…

> **Baaten et al. (1994a)** found…
> **Baaten et al. (1994b)** found…
> **Baaten et al. (1994c)** found…

Distinguishing two or more sources from a **different** author

- When you cite two sources from a different author with a different year of publication, there is no problem to distinguish them; the same applies to a different author with the same year of publication:

> **Baaten (1994)** found…
> **Klaassen (1999)** found…

> **Baaten (1994)** found…
> **Klaassen (1994)** found…

Distinguishing two or more sources from **different** groups of authors

- When you cite two sources from different groups of authors with a different year of publication, there is no problem to distinguish them; the same applies to different groups of authors with the same year of publication:

Baaten, Jansen, Klaassen and Zelt (1994) found…
Baaten, Jansen, Bank and Neus (1999) found…

Baaten, Jansen, Klaassen and Zelt (1994) found…
Baaten, Jansen, Bank and Neus (1994) found…

- However, if you shorten the reference citations in the last example with *et al.* in case it is allowed (see above), then it would not be possible anymore to distinguish them. In this case you must cite the surnames of the first authors and as many of the subsequent authors as are necessary to distinguish the two sources:

Baaten, Jansen et al. (1994) found…
Baaten, Jansen, Bank et al. (1994) found…

- When you cite two sources from different groups of authors that by accident all have the same surnames, then, in case of the same year of publication it would not be possible to distinguish them. You always have to include the first author's initials in the related reference citations.

R. Baaten, Jansen and Noes (1994) found…
V. Baaten, Jansen and Noes (1994) found…

Even in the case of a different year of publication it would not be possible to distinguish both sources in the right way. If you did not include the first author's initials in the related reference citations, then it would look as if they were two different sources from the same authors and not from different groups of authors.

There are two types of sources that do not need a related entry in the references at the end of the paper: *personal communications* and an *entire Web site*. These two types just need a reference citation in the text.

Personal Communications

- Personal communications may be for example a lecture, an interview, a telephone conversation, and a conference speech. In the related reference citation in the text, the initials as

well as the surname of the communicator have to be provided, and the date has to be stated *as exactly as possible*, instead of only providing the year of communication.

> (K. Hacker, personal communication, April 18, 1999)
> K. Hacker (personal communication, April 18, 1999) said…

An entire Web site

- An example of citing an entire Web site is the impression you got from visiting the Homepage of the IBM company. When you want to cite the related source, the reference citation in text should only mention the Web address:

> The homepage of IBM may be improved on several design aspects (www.ibm.com).

However, for (downloaded) documents from the World Wide Web, like an Annual Report of IBM company, the usual two components have to be inserted in the paper: a reference citation in the text and a related entry in the references at the end of the paper. Furthermore, apply all the same guidelines for printed sources, as described above. The only difference is the case of having no information about the year of publication. If the date of publication is not available, which is often the case when citing a document from the Web, use the date of retrieval after the abbreviation *n.d.* For example, see the reference citation in the text of an Annual Report of IBM company of which IBM is the corporate author and of which no year of publication is available:

> (IBM, n.d./2000)

4.3 The references or bibliography

As stated several times before, if you cite a source according to APA standards, you have to insert two components in the paper: a reference citation in the text and a related entry in the references at the end of the paper (except for a personal communication or an *entire* Web site). This section describes how you have to construct an entry in the references at the end of the paper.

However, first the distinction between the *references* and a *bibliography* has to be explained, since these terms are often confused. A bibliography is more extensive than the references. The references contain only those works that are actually cited in the text. A bibliography, on the other hand, contains *in addition* all the works that have been consulted during the research, and

that are considered relevant for further reading on the topic, but are not cited in the text. You have to make a choice between the two in consultation with your supervisor. After you have chosen, you type "References" or "Bibliography" at the top of the page in question.

The following rules have to be applied in the construction of a reference (or bibliography) entry:

A. Alphabetical order

The different entries should be arranged in alphabetical order by the surname of the first author. Each entry starts with a hanging indent and 1.5 line spacing between. Furthermore, each entry has to be aligned *left* (not justified). For the alphabetical order, the following rules have to be applied:

General

- Alphabetize letter by letter. Remember, however, "nothing" precedes "something". For example: Brown, J. R. precedes Browning, A. R.
- Alphabetize the prefixes M', Mc and Mac as if they were all spelled *Mac*.
- Alphabetize surnames that contain prefixes (*de, la, du, von, van* etc.) by starting with the surname: Akker, G. J. van de.
- Alphabetize entries with numerals as if the numerals were spelled out.

Order of several works by the same first author

- Single-author entries by the same author are arranged by the year of publication.
- Single-author entries precede multiple-author entries beginning with the same surname.
- Reference entries with the same first author and different second or third author are arranged alphabetically by the surname of the second author and so on.
- Reference entries with the same authors in the same order are arranged by the year of publication, the earliest first.
- Reference entries with the same author (or by the same two or more authors in the same order) and with the same publication date are arranged alphabetically, by the first significant word (i.e. excluding *A* or *The*) of the title that follows the date. Important: lowercase letters are placed immediately after the year of publication in the reference entry.

Order of several works by different first authors with the same surname

- Works by different authors with the same surname are arranged alphabetically by the first initial.

Order of works with no author

- If a group author can be used, alphabetize by the first significant word of the name. Spell out the full name of a group author. Do not use abbreviations.
- If, and only if, the work is signed "Anonymous", then the entry begins with the word Anonymous spelled out, and alphabetized as if anonymous were a true name.
- If there is no author, the title moves to the author's position before the date of publication, and the entry is alphabetized by the first significant word of the title.

B. Categories of different types of sources

Different types of sources can be identified. First they can be categorized in periodicals (i.e. journals, magazines, newsletters and newspapers) and non-periodicals (i.e. books, brochures, and book chapters). Second, these periodicals and non-periodicals can be divided in printed sources or Internet sources (a downloaded document from the Internet; not an entire Web site). *Figure 2* presents a categorized overview of the 12 most common types of sources.

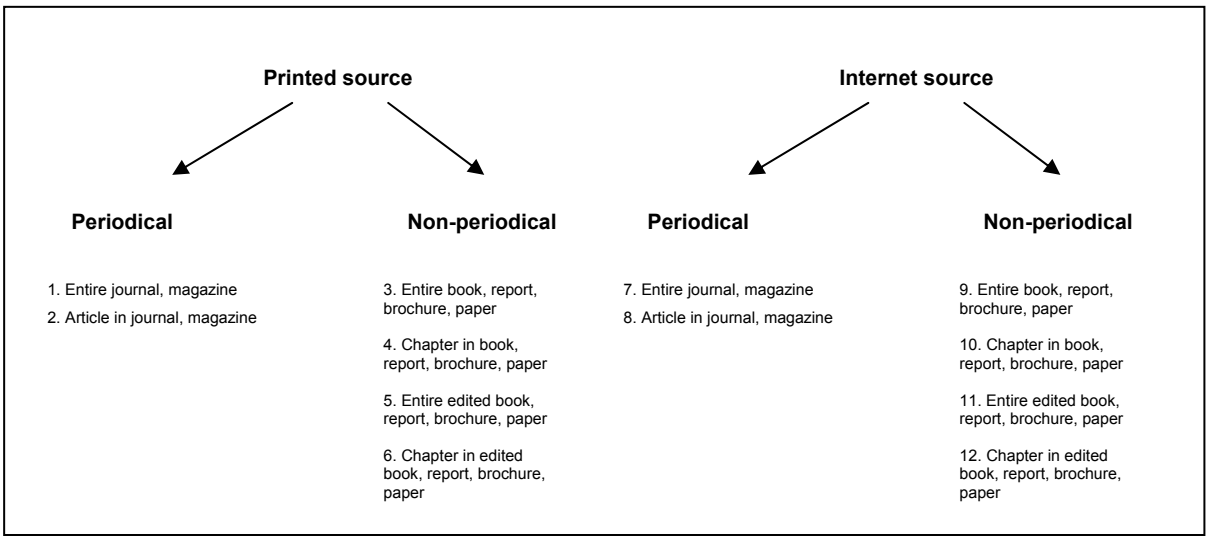


Figure 2: Categories of different types of sources

For each type of source a different reference entry has to be constructed. Below, the different categories will be discussed. For each category the different elements in the construction of a related reference entry will be described. For several categories you will identify repetitions. This is necessary, in case you want to look up just a specific category in the future.

Category 1: printed source, periodical, entire journal, magazine

Barlow, D. H., Hall, Z., & Fisch, H. von, Jr. (Eds.). (2001). RSI, the evil of the twenty-first century [Special issue]. *Journal of Psychiatry, 102* (4).

The editor element: Barlow, D. H., Hall, Z., & Fisch, H. von, Jr. (Eds.).

- To cite an *entire* issue of a magazine or journal, give the editors of the issue. Add the abbreviation *(Eds.)* and for one editor *(Ed.)*. If the issue has no editors, the issue title (with related information) shifts to the editor's position. If there is no separate issue title, the title of the periodical (with related information) shifts to the editor's position.
- Invert all editors' names; give surnames, next initials, next a possible prefix (von), and finally a possible suffix (Jr.) for *all* editors, regardless of the number of editors.
- Use commas to separate editors, to separate surnames, and suffixes from the preceding; with two or more editors, use an ampersand (&) before the last editor.
- Finish the element with a period. If a reference entry already ends with a period (e.g. after an initial), no extra period is needed.

The publication date element: (2001).

- In parentheses give the year in which the work was copyrighted.
- References of periodicals that appear on a clear regular basis (dailies, weeklies, monthlies, quarterlies, and seasons bound): always state a more exact date of publication. Dailies and weeklies state beside the year of publication also the month and day (2001, October 12). Monthlies state beside the year of publication also the month (2001, October). Quarterlies and seasons bound periodicals: (2001, Summer).
- References of periodicals that do *not* appear on a regular basis (such as a journal like in the example): state only a more exact date of publication (mostly the month is added), when no volume and issue numbers are known.
- For work that is not published yet (but is in the press), type *in press* between parentheses.
- Finish the element with a period after closing the parentheses.

The issue title element: RSI, the evil of the twenty-first century [Special issue].

- Capitalize only the first word of the title and of the subtitle, if any, and any proper names.
- Enclose non-routine information that is important for identification and retrieval in brackets immediately after the title.
- If there is no separate issue title, the title of the periodical shifts to this position.
- If this title is in a language other than English, the title has to be translated. The original title has to be put according to above-stated guidelines. The translation follows between square brackets right after the original title.
- Finish the element with a period.

The periodical title element: *Journal of Psychiatry, 102* (4).

- Give the periodical title in full, in uppercase and lowercase letters. Put the title in italics.
- Give the volume number of the periodical in italics. If, and only if, each issue of the periodical begins on page 1, give the issue number in parentheses immediately after the volume number. But not in italics.
- Use commas to separate the title and volume number. But do not put a comma between the volume and issue number.
- Do not give volume and issue number for work that is not published yet.
- Finish the element with a period.

Category 2: printed source, periodical, article in journal, magazine

Wilson, D. H., Gap, Z., & Rhein, H. von, Jr. (2001). Leben mit RSI [To live with RSI]. *Journal of Psychiatry, 102* (4), 10-36.

The author element: Wilson, D. H., Gap, Z., & Rhein, H. von, Jr.

- To cite an article within a magazine or journal, give the authors of the article. If the article has no authors, the article title (with related information) shifts to the author's position.
- Invert all authors' names; give surnames, next initials, next a possible prefix (von), and finally a possible suffix (Jr.) for *all* authors, regardless of the number of authors.
- Use commas to separate authors, to separate surnames, and suffixes from the preceding; with two or more authors, use an ampersand (&) before the last author.

- Sometimes the name of a group can serve as author (e.g., corporations, associations, government). This is called a *group author*.
- When a work's author is designated as "Anonymous", type the word *Anonymous* in the reference entry.
- Finish the element with a period. If a reference entry already ends with a period (e.g. after an initial), no extra period is needed.

The publication date element: (2001).

- In parentheses give the year in which the work was copyrighted.
- References of periodicals that appear on a clear regular basis (dailies, weeklies, monthlies, quarterlies, and seasons bound): always state a more exact date of publication. Dailies and weeklies state beside the year of publication also the month and day (2001, October 12). Monthlies state beside the year of publication also the month (2001, October). Quarterlies and seasons bound periodicals: (2001, Summer).
- References of periodicals that do *not* appear on a regular basis: state only a more exact date of publication (mostly the month is added), when no volume and issue numbers are known.
- For work that is not published yet (but is in the press), type *in press* between parentheses.
- Finish the element with a period after closing the parentheses.

The article title element: Leben mit RSI [To live with RSI].

- Capitalize only the first word of the title and of the subtitle, if any, and any proper names.
- Enclose non-routine information that is important for identification and retrieval in brackets immediately after the title.
- If this title is in a language other than English, the title has to be translated. The original title has to be put according to above-stated guidelines. The translation follows between square brackets right after the original title.
- Finish the element with a period.

The periodical title element: *Journal of Psychiatry, 102* (4), 10-36.

- Give the periodical title in full, in uppercase and lowercase letters. Put the title in italics.
- Give the volume number of the periodical in italics. If, and only if, each issue of the periodical begins on page 1, give the issue number in parentheses immediately after the volume number. But not in italics.

- Use commas to separate the different parts. But do not put a comma between the volume and issue number.
- Give the page numbers. Only include *pp.* (i.e. pages) when volume and issue number are unknown. In case of a newspaper, *pp.* has *always* to be included. Do not put this information in italics.
- Do not give volume and issue number and page numbers for work that is not published yet.
- Finish the element with a period.

Category 3: printed source, non-periodical, entire book, report, paper, brochure

Step, D. H., Dolle, Z., & Hirsch, H. von, Jr. (2001). *E-business strategies* (10th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

The author element: Step, D. H., Dolle, Z., & Hirsch, H. von, Jr.

- To cite an *entire* book, report, paper, brochure, give the authors of the source. If the source has no authors, the non-periodical title (with related information) shifts to the author's position.
- Invert all authors' names; give surnames, next initials, next a possible prefix (von), and finally a possible suffix (Jr.) for *all* authors, regardless of the number of authors.
- Use commas to separate authors, to separate surnames, and suffixes from the preceding; with two or more authors, use an ampersand (&) before the last author.
- Sometimes the name of a group can serve as author (e.g., corporations, associations, government). This is called a *group author*.
- When a work's author is designated as "Anonymous", type the word *Anonymous* in the reference entry.
- Finish the element with a period. If a reference entry is already ended by a period (e.g. after an initial), no extra period is needed.

The publication date element: (2001).

- In parentheses give the year in which the work was copyrighted.
- For work that is not published yet (but is in the press), type *in press* between parentheses.
- For unpublished work, type the year in which it was produced between parentheses.

- When a work has no date of publication, type *n.d.* between parentheses.
- Finish the element with a period after closing the parentheses.

The non-periodical title element: *E-business strategies* (10th ed.).

- Capitalize only the first word of the title and of the subtitle, if any, and any proper names. Put the title in italics.
- Enclose non-routine information that is important for identification and retrieval in parentheses immediately after the title. But do not put this information in italics.
- If this title is in a language other than English, the title has to be translated. The original title has to be put according to above-stated guidelines. The translation follows between square brackets right after the original title.
- Enclose a description of the form of the work in brackets if the information is necessary for identification and retrieval. But do not put this information in italics. For example [Brochure].
- Finish the element with a period.

The publication element: New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Give the city as location. Add the country name after a comma if the city is unknown (Limmel, the Netherlands: Limmel Press).
- Use a colon after the location part.
- Give the name of the publisher in as brief a form as is intelligible. Write out the names of associations, university presses, but omit superfluous terms such as *Co*, *Inc* or *GmbH*.
- If the author is a group author and also the publisher of the source, then the name of the publisher is replaced by the term author (New York: Author).
- Finish the element with a period.

Category 4: printed source, non-periodical, chapter in book, brochure, report, paper

Step, D. H., Dolle, Z., & Hirsch, H. von, Jr. (2001). Strategic alignment and e-business. In *E-business strategies* (10th ed., pp. 1-33). New York: McGraw-Hill.

The author element: Step, D. H., Dolle, Z., & Hirsch, H. von, Jr.

- To cite a chapter in a book, report, paper, brochure, give the authors of the source. If the source has no authors, the chapter title (with related information) shifts to the author's position.
- Invert all authors' names; give surnames, next initials, next a possible prefix (von), and finally a possible suffix (Jr.) for *all* authors, regardless of the number of authors.
- Use commas to separate authors, to separate surnames, and suffixes from the preceding; with two or more authors, use an ampersand (&) before the last author.
- Sometimes the name of a group can serve as author (e.g., corporations, associations, government). This is called a *group author*.
- When a work's author is designated as "Anonymous", type the word *Anonymous* in the reference entry.
- Finish the element with a period. If a reference entry is already ended by a period (e.g. after an initial), no extra period is needed.

The publication date element: (2001).

- In parentheses give the year in which the work was copyrighted.
- For work that is not published yet (but is in the press), type *in press* between parentheses.
- For unpublished work, type the year in which it was produced between parentheses.
- When a work has no date of publication, type *n.d.* between parentheses.
- Finish the element with a period after closing the parentheses.

The chapter title element: Strategic alignment and e-business.

- Capitalize only the first word of the title and of the subtitle, if any, and any proper names.
- Enclose non-routine information that is important for identification and retrieval in brackets immediately after the title.
- If this title is in a language other than English, the title has to be translated. The original title has to be put according to above-stated guidelines. The translation follows between square brackets right after the original title.
- Finish the element with a period.

The non-periodical title element: In *E-business strategies* (10e ed., pp. 1-33).

- Start the element with *In*.
- Capitalize only the first word of the title and of the subtitle, if any, and any proper names. Put the title in italics.
- Enclose non-routine information that is important for identification and retrieval in parentheses immediately after the title. But do not put this information in italics.
- Enclose page numbers of the chapter within parentheses. Always state *pp.* before the page numbers. If non-routine information is enclosed within parentheses, do include the *pp.* + page numbers in the same parentheses after a comma.
- Enclose a description of the form of the work in brackets if the information is necessary for identification and retrieval. But do not put this information in italics. For example [Brochure].
- Finish the element with a period.

The publication element: New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Give the city as location. Add the country name after a comma if the city is unknown (Limmel, the Netherlands: Limmel Press).
- Use a colon after the location part.
- Give the name of the publisher in as brief a form as is intelligible. Write out the names of associations, university presses, but omit superfluous terms such as *Co*, *Inc* or *GmbH.*
- If the author is a group author and also the publisher of the source, then the name of the publisher is replaced by the term author (New York: Author).
- Finish the element with a period.

Category 5: printed source, non-periodical, entire edited book, report, paper, brochure

Groot, S. de, Sauvé, A., & Booms, H., Jr. (Eds.). (2001). *Killing tutor stories* (2nd ed.). Maastricht, the Netherlands: Universiteit Maastricht, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

The editor element: Groot, S. de, Sauvé, A., & Booms, H., Jr. (Eds.).

- To cite an *entire* edited book, report, paper, brochure, give the editors of the source. Add the abbreviation *(Eds.)* and for one editor *(Ed.)*.
- Invert all editors' names; give surnames, next initials, next a possible prefix (de), and finally a possible suffix (Jr.) for *all* editors, regardless of the number of editors.
- Use commas to separate editors, to separate surnames, and suffixes from the preceding; with two or more editors, use an ampersand (&) before the last editor.
- Finish the element with a period. If a reference entry already ends with a period (e.g. after an initial), no extra period is needed.

The publication date element: (2001).

- In parentheses give the year in which the work was copyrighted.
- For work that is not published yet (but is in the press), type *in press* between parentheses.
- For unpublished work, type the year in which it was produced between parentheses.
- When a work has no date of publication, type *n.d.* between parentheses.
- Finish the element with a period after closing the parentheses.

The non-periodical title element: *Killing tutor stories* (2nd ed.).

- Capitalize only the first word of the title and of the subtitle, if any, and any proper names. Put the title in italics.
- Enclose non-routine information that is important for identification and retrieval in parentheses immediately after the title. But do not put this information in italics.
- If this title is in a language other than English, the title has to be translated. The original title has to be put according to above-stated guidelines. The translation follows between square brackets right after the original title.
- Enclose a description of the form of the work in brackets if the information is necessary for identification and retrieval. But do not put this information in italics. For example [Brochure].
- Finish the element with a period.

The publication element: Maastricht, the Netherlands: Universiteit Maastricht, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

- Give the city as location. Add the country name after a comma if the city is unknown (Limmel, the Netherlands: Limmel Press).
- Use a colon after the location part.
- Give the name of the publisher in as brief a form as is intelligible. Write out the names of associations, university presses, but omit superfluous terms such as *Co*, *Inc* or *GmbH.*
- Finish the element with a period.

Category 6: printed source, non-periodical, chapter in edited book, report, paper, brochure

Engelen, S., Dennis, A. de, Jr., & Moonen, M. (2001). Tutorials in the evening. In S. de Groot, A. Sauvé, & H. Booms Jr. (Eds.), *Killing tutor stories* (2nd ed., pp. 2-43). Maastricht, the Netherlands: Universiteit Maastricht, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

The author element: Engelen, S., Dennis, A. de, Jr., & Moonen, M.

- To cite a chapter in an edited book, report, paper, brochure, give the authors of the source. If the source has no authors, the chapter title (with related information) shifts to the author's position.
- Invert all authors' names; give surnames, next initials, next a possible prefix (de), and finally a possible suffix (Jr.) for *all* authors, regardless of the number of authors.
- Use commas to separate authors, to separate surnames, and suffixes from the preceding; with two or more authors, use an ampersand (&) before the last author.
- Sometimes the name of a group can serve as author (e.g., corporations, associations, government). This is called a *group author*.
- When a work's author is designated as "Anonymous", type the word *Anonymous* in the reference entry.
- Finish the element with a period. If a reference entry is already ended by a period (e.g. after an initial), no extra period is needed.

The publication date element: (2001).

- In parentheses give the year in which the work was copyrighted.
- For work that is not published yet (but is in the press), type *in press* between parentheses.
- For unpublished work, type the year in which it was produced between parentheses.
- When a work has no date of publication, type *n.d.* between parentheses.
- Finish the element with a period after closing the parentheses.

The chapter title element: Tutorials in the evening.

- Capitalize only the first word of the title and of the subtitle, if any, and any proper names.
- Enclose non-routine information that is important for identification and retrieval in brackets immediately after the title.
- If this title is in a language other than English, the title has to be translated. The original title has to be put according to above-stated guidelines. The translation follows between square brackets right after the original title.
- Finish the element with a period.

The editor element: In S. de Groot, A. Sauvé, & H. Booms Jr. (Eds.),

- Start the element with *In*.
- To cite a chapter in an edited book, report, paper, brochure, give the editors of the source. Add the abbreviation *(Eds.)* and for one editor *(Ed.)*.
- Do *not* invert all editors' names; give initials, next a possible prefix (de), next surnames, and finally a possible suffix (Jr.) for *all* editors, regardless of the number of editors.
- With two names, use an ampersand before the second surname, and do not use commas to separate the names. With three or more names, use an ampersand before the final surname, and use commas to separate the names. Use a comma to separate suffixes from the preceding.
- Finish the element with a *comma*.

The non-periodical title element: *Killing tutor stories* (2nd ed., pp. 2-43).

- Capitalize only the first word of the title and of the subtitle, if any, and any proper names. Put the title in italics.

- Enclose non-routine information that is important for identification and retrieval in parentheses immediately after the title. But do not put this information in italics.
- Enclose page numbers of the chapter within parentheses. Do always state *pp.* before the page numbers. If non-routine information is enclosed within parentheses, do include the *pp.* + page numbers in the same parentheses after a comma.
- Enclose a description of the form of the work in brackets if the information is necessary for identification and retrieval. But do not put this information in italics. For example [Brochure].
- Finish the element with a period.

The publication element:

Maastricht, the Netherlands: Universiteit Maastricht, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

- Give the city as location. Add the country name after a comma if the city is unknown (Limmel, the Netherlands: Limmel Press).
- Use a colon after the location part.
- Give the name of the publisher in as brief a form as is intelligible. Write out the names of associations, university presses, but omit superfluous terms such as *Co*, *Inc* or *GmbH.*
- If the author is a group author and also the publisher of the source, then the name of the publisher is replaced by the term author (New York: Author).
- Finish the element with a period.

Category 7: Internet source, periodical, entire journal, magazine

Barlow, D. H., Hall, Z., & Fisch, H. von, Jr. (Eds.). (2001). RSI, the evil of the twenty-first century [Special issue]. *Journal of Psychiatry, 102* (4). Retrieved July 20, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.all.net/RSIevil.html

Category 8: Internet source, periodical, article in journal, magazine

Wilson, D. H., Gap, Z., & Rhein, H. von, Jr. (2001). Leben mit RSI [To live with RSI]. *Journal of Psychiatry, 102* (4), 10-36. Retrieved July 20, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.all.net/RSIleben.html

Category 9: Internet source, non-periodical, entire book, report, paper, brochure

Step, D. H., Dolle, Z., & Hirsch, H. von, Jr. (2001). *E-business strategies* (10th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. Retrieved July 20, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.all.net/ebusstrat.pdf

Category 10: Internet source, non-periodical, chapter in book, brochure, report, paper

Step, D. H., Dolle, Z., & Hirsch, H. von, Jr. (2001). Strategic alignment and e-business. In *E-business strategies* (10th ed., pp. 1-33). New York: McGraw-Hill. Retrieved July 20, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.all.net/sa_ebusiness.pdf

Category 11: Internet source, non-periodical, entire edited book, report, paper, brochure

Groot, S. de, Sauvé, A., & Booms, H., Jr. (Eds.). (2001). *Killing tutor stories* (2nd ed.). Maastricht, the Netherlands: Universiteit Maastricht, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. Retrieved July 20, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.all.net/killingts.pdf

Category 12: Internet source, non-periodical, chapter in edited book, report, paper, brochure

Engelen, S., Dennis, A. de, Jr., & Moonen, M. (2001). Tutorials in the evening. In S. de Groot, A. Sauvé, & H. Booms Jr. (Eds.), *Killing tutor stories* (2nd ed., pp. 2-43). Maastricht, the Netherlands: Universiteit Maastricht, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. Retrieved July 20, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.all.net/tut_evening.pdf

Constructing a reference entry of an Internet source is very easy. All reference entries of an Internet source begin with the same information that would be provided for a printed source (or as much of that information as is available). So all the rules, discussed in category 1-6 first have to be applied. Then each reference entry of an Internet source continues with the *WWW element*.

Retrieved <date of retrieval>, from the World Wide Web: <Web address>

For example:

Retrieved July 20, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.all.net/tut_evening.pdf

- The date of retrieval has to be as exact as possible.
- Do *not* end the *WWW element* with a period.
- If the Web address should run longer than the space available on a line, it may be broken at a slash character, keeping the slash as the last character on the line, in the same way as a dash is used to divide hyphenated words.

4.4 Footnotes

The use of footnotes within the APA standards is not meant for a replacement of reference citations in the text and related reference entries. They are used in two ways: *content footnotes* and *copyright permission footnotes*.

Content footnotes

These kinds of footnotes supplement or amplify substantive information in the text. They should not include complicated, irrelevant, or non-essential information. A content footnote should convey just one idea. Since they are distracting to readers, these footnotes should only be used if they strengthen the discussion. In most cases, however, important information should be integrated in the text. An example:

In the text: The objective of this paper is the construction of a business model[1] for e-tailing.
Footnote: [1] In this paper, a *business model* means the approach used to conduct business according to Van der Zee (2000): "a classification of the arrangement of business processes, structure, and the allocation of resources, either within an organization or within a whole vertical chain of activities in which multiple parties co-operate".

Copyright permission footnotes

These footnotes acknowledge the source of direct quotations in the text (see previous section 4.2). An example of a permission footnote:

> [1] From: *On competition* (p. 100), by M. Porter, 1999, Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing. Copyright 1999 by Harvard Business School Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

Although the information in the footnote about the other source is quite elaborate, a complete reference citation in the text and a related reference entry in the references should be made.

4.5 Tables, figures, and other exhibits from another source

Authors must obtain permission to reproduce or adapt all or part of a table, figure, or other exhibit from a copyrighted source. Although some owners of copyright give the permission to reproduce one table (or more), it is recommended to request always for permission. If permission is requested and granted, do *not* insert a permission footnote, as in case of a direct quotation in the text. Nor should a reference citation in the text be made. *However, a complete reference entry must be included in the references.* Instead of the permission footnote and the standard reference citation in the text, the following has to be applied. Any reproduced table, figure, or other exhibit must be accompanied by a note at the bottom of the reprinted table (or in the figure caption) giving credit to the original author and to the copyright holder.

Example of a reproduced table:

Table 1 Title of the table				
20	65	88	3	23
35	54	76	333	44
45	33	55	2	5
22	56	43	43	67
56	675	44	978	7

Note. (...) From: *On competition* (p. 103), by M. Porter, 1999, Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing. Copyright 1999 by Harvard Business School Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

In the place "(…)" any information can be put to clarify the table, like explanations and comments. If a permission was not requested, the last part of the note, "Reprinted with permission", is omitted.

Example of a reproduced figure:

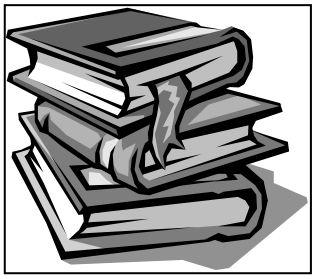


Figure 1. Title of the figure

In contrast to a table, the figure caption is placed outside the figure. In addition, all fig-ure captions are collected in a separate part in the paper called list of figures. The figure caption has the following form:

> *Figure 1.* Title of the figure. *(...)* From: *On competition* (p. 105), by M. Porter, 1999, Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing. Copyright 1999 by Harvard Business School Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

Again, in the place "(…)" any information can be put to clarify the figure, like explanations and comments. If a permission was not requested, the last part of the note, "Reprinted with permission", is omitted.

5. Finalizing the paper

This chapter looks at the steps that you go through to finalize your paper, before you submit it. Usually when you have finished writing the paper, you will revise it. The steps that you take in text revision are discussed in section 5.1. Then, when you are satisfied that you have revised your paper to the best of your ability, you need to check that it matches the format requirements in terms of layout for the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (section 5.2). Finally, it is wise to know how your paper will be evaluated. The evaluation criteria that are applied by the assessor of your paper are presented in section 5.3.

5.1 Text revision

Revision is a natural part of the writing process. It is in fact an ongoing process during the composing phase, and continues right up to the final moment when you say, "That's it. I'm satisfied with this piece of work. It's the best I can do." In essence, you are revising while you are planning your paper and constructing an outline, when for example you decide not to include a point you had first thought of, or when you move a point from one section in the body to another. You are also revising when you are actually writing the words on the screen, and you decide to change the structure of a sentence or a paragraph. However, for ease of explanation, we present the steps that you can take during the revising process in a separate section here, as though it is a step after the actual composing. Indeed, you will also revise your paper after the end of the composing step.

Revision concerns everything that you do to create a text. Thus, it covers many different steps from global revision of your content to the nitty-gritty editing of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. In this section we will focus on four levels of revising: first, the content; second, style and tone; third, the grammar; and finally, punctuation.

Do bear in mind, however, that although these revising levels are presented as though they were separate, they all interact. So in practice, you will probably be revising recursively all the time, switching from level to level and from step to step continuously.

5.1.1 Revising the content

Your first consideration when revising your paper is the content – what you actually say. You need to check whether your paper correctly responds to the question or problem set, defined in the thesis

statement. You should check what you have written against the outline that you made during your planning, and in particular check that you have indeed answered your thesis statement.

Your thesis statement will have provided your paper with the controlling idea. Your thesis statement encapsulates your purpose in the specific paper. Everything else should relate to that - that is, your thesis statement has set out what kind of a paper you have written (e.g. informative, explanatory, persuasive, comparative, etc.). Check that each section (and each subsection) in the body of the paper does expound and clarify the goal you have set yourself in your thesis statement. If you find some information is not really relevant, then either *delete* it, or *rewrite* it in such a way that it is relevant. Consider carefully the order of the points you are making: do they occur in the most effective order for your topic, or should you *reorder* them? What is most important of all is to check whether you have provided sufficient support for the points you wish to make. If you find that information is missing, that you have not provided adequate evidence, then *add* it.

One way of checking your work is read the paper without the introduction; just read the body and conclusion. This is more effective if you have time to put your paper to one side for a few days, and then re-read it. As you read the text, see if you can identify a clear *pattern* of organization of information: each point and each sub-point should logically fit into a pattern. If you find yourself wondering how one point links to another, then you know you must revise at that point. If you can identify a clear pattern, then check back to see if the pattern matches what your readers would expect when they read your introduction.

Next you should check your conclusion. The most important consideration here is that you do indeed conclude by providing the succinct response to the thesis you set yourself. You need to be sure that the conclusion is based on the evidence or the arguments that you have presented in the body. And you need to root out any claims that you make in the conclusion for which you have not provided any evidence before. Unsupported claims undermine your academic writing and will be sure to lower the quality (and consequently your grade).

A further step in revising the content is checking the sources that you have cited. This is not merely a question of following the correct format for reference citations in the text and the related references at the end of the paper (see chapter 4); it concerns the accurate reporting of the information your sources have provided you with. Your aim should be to summarize or paraphrase the facts, ideas, and opinions that your sources advance: you are aiming to tell *your story*, after all,

referring accurately to the sources of the facts and ideas. Check that you do not copy information from sources and then claim it as your own: that is plagiarism. If you have quoted a source directly, make sure that you have put the quotation in quotation marks, and that you have given the page reference for the quotation as well.

Finally, check that the reference citations in the text are all fully and accurately listed in the references at the end of your paper. Your references should include all and only the sources actually cited in the text. Do not include grammar books, dictionaries, and the like: these are writing aids, not sources of content information. However, if you have consulted other authors to gather general or background information, but you do not cite these authors in the paper itself, then you may insert these in the list of references at the end of the paper; but this list should then be called *bibliography* instead of *references*.

5.1.2 Revising the style and tone

It goes without saying that the style of your paper should be appropriate to formal academic writing. In the first place that means eliminating jargon that would complicate your message. If you find that you have used jargon or fashionable phrases (e.g. "an empowering environment"), first ask yourself clearly what it means. If you cannot explain it, you should not use it. If you can explain it, then maybe the explanation is clearer for your readers. The same applies to *slang* expressions, *street language*, and *regionalisms* (e.g. Briticisms and Americanisms that non-Brits and non-Americans do not readily understand). Note that specialist technical terms are not jargon if they are used in the appropriate context: they may, however, need a quick explanation. Check whether you need to do so.

Generally, check that you have not filled your paper with long words (e.g. "approximately") where short ones will do ("about"), and that you have not included unnecessary words (e.g. firms can be "bought" and "sold", not "bought up" and "sold off"). You should cut all the unnecessary words. Writing in a short, precise style is a mark of good academic writing that will be read with pleasure.

Style also implies using the active voice, rather than the passive. This strengthens your writing, and makes it livelier. When you are revising, check every passive sentence to see if you really need it. In some circumstances, there are sound reasons for using the passive: you do not need to

mention the actor (the doer of the action); you want to keep the topic the same in successive sentences in a paragraph. Although the passive may seem to indicate an *objective* report of the facts or opinions, that is a myth. In practice, too much use of the passive makes your writing dull.

Writing in an academic style also means writing clearly. Make sure that if you use abbreviations and technical jargon, you explain what they mean. Some very well-known abbreviations may be used without explanation (e.g. "GDP").

Academic style implies also the avoidance of first-person pronouns (I, we, my, our, etc.). Everything you state and mention in your paper, unless it is accompanied by a reference citation in the text, is "your story", your interpretation of the facts and opinions that you have found in the literature or in your research. Therefore, you do not have to write "I, we, etc." to express that it is you who thinks that … and that it is your opinion. You do not need to highlight additionally that you are the writer: your readers know that. As you revise your paper, cut out the first-person forms and rephrase the relevant sentences: in some cases, this may mean switching to a passive structure or choosing different words.

Tone in your paper concerns the degree of commitment and emotion. At one level, you should avoid the fancy language of so-called *political correctness*. Cut out needless repetition of "him or her" (making the sentence plural will often be a solution). On a similar level, make sure that you do not come across as arrogant in your paper: cut out emotional language (e.g. "the plan is stupid", "the organisation is very bad"). Do not treat people who may disagree with you as stupid or mad; make sure that you give reasoned arguments for your opinions, supported by evidence.

Avoid using contracted forms (e.g. "isn't", "aren't"): these are markers of colloquial or conversational language. And do not try to be too smart: you are likely to irritate or bore your readers. Finally, do not try to teach your readers: cut out as many imperatives as you can (e.g. "Recall that …", "Remember …", "Consider …", "Note …"). If you do use imperatives frequently, your readers will think you are writing a textbook or a style guide.

5.1.3 Revising the grammar

This manual on Academic Writing Skills does not include sections on grammar. If you have serious problems of grammar, then you would be well advised to study the specific problems in a

grammar book and if necessary follow some training in grammar. This subsection, however, deals with characteristic syntactic problems in writing that you risk overlooking, but that can be readily resolved through careful revision and editing. First, we look at the *grammar beyond the sentence*, before looking at *sentence-level grammar*.

5.1.3.1 Grammar beyond the sentence

Your first check is at the level of the paragraph. You check whether each paragraph is well structured, whether there is a topic sentence, and whether the paragraph is adequately developed. If you are comparing, for example, does your paragraph in fact compare? If you are explaining the causes of a situation, does your paragraph in fact give the causes? Then you look at the pattern of nouns and verbs to see if they are consistent. In other words, make sure that you do not mix up different kinds of sentence structure. For example, the more frequently you change the subject of sentences, the more difficult the text is to read. Similarly, if you change frequently from active to passive verb tenses, you make it more difficult for your readers to understand. Consistent chains of subject within a paragraph ensure that your paper is easier to read.

Secondly, you need to check the connective words and phrases to see whether they support your pattern of argument. Connective words function at two levels, at a rhetorical level between paragraphs and between sentences, and within sentences, as links between clauses and phrases. Some connective words will function at both levels, but most will not. For example, "however" and "moreover" can only be used at the rhetorical level: check that you have not used them at within-sentence level. "Both … and …" and "as well as" can only function at the within-sentence level: make sure you do not use them to link sentences or paragraphs together.

You need to check too whether you are using the appropriate connective word, for example:

Words for addition	in addition, moreover, for example, for instance, in particular, and, also, both ... and, as well as
Words for cause	thus, consequently, as a result, so, therefore, as a consequence, thus
Words for contrast	but, however, although
Words for sequence	briefly, first, finally, next, then, in short, second, third

Similarly, you should check whether you have used too many connective words or not enough: how

well does your argument hang together? Can your readers follow, or do they have to infer too much between the points you make? Or, the opposite, are you treating your readers like simpletons by using too many connectives? The message then (the content) risks becoming obscured by the means.

5.1.3.2 Grammar at sentence-level

At the level of each sentence, you need to check the nouns, the verbs, the pronouns, and structures. Check that the subjects are meaningful, important nouns. That is, where possible, avoid using vague subjects (e.g. “this”, “thing”, “problem”, “matter”, “it”, “that”). Check that you have used strong, active verbs. If you have used passive constructions, are they necessary? Do not get rid of a passive if that means bringing in an unnecessary subject. Where possible, cut out weak verbs like “to be” or “get”: try to find a stronger, more precise verb. Identify every pronoun, especially "it", "that", and "this". Can you clearly identify what each refers to? Are there any possible ambiguous references?

Apart from the accuracy of your syntax, there are three structural aspects that demand special attention. First, identify every compound sentence (clauses beginning with "and" and "but"). Are all these compound sentences necessary? In many cases, check to see whether it is better to keep the sentences short and simple. Second, find all "it ... that" constructions and all "which" clauses. Are they necessary? You may well find that you can delete some words to make your writing clearer, simpler, and more precise. Third, identify every introductory *-ing* participial phrase ("By using ...", "Having completed ...", etc.), and then check the first noun in the main clause. Is that noun the source (the "doer") of the action? If not, your sentence is ambiguous, and may even be humorous: consequently, your readers can be distracted from your main message.

Poor spelling irritates readers. Make sure that you do use the spelling checker carefully before you submit your work. However, because the spelling checker is not perfect, you should double-check in a good dictionary if you are in doubt. Papers that contain careless spelling errors usually attract lower grades. Be consistent in the choice of a spelling variant of the English language. When you choose for British English, take care that you keep this spelling throughout the whole paper. Do not mix American English words in the text, when you choose for the British spelling.

This section ends with a checklist that can be used to finalize your text revision on grammar:

Verb tenses:

☑ Is each progressive form (-ing) correctly used?

☑ Which tense have you used with "since" or "for"? Should you use the present perfect here ("have done/have been doing")?

☑ If you are making generalizations, is the simple present tense correct?

Verb agreement:

☑ Does each verb agree with its subject (singular or plural)?

☑ Should you have a plural verb with expressions like "a large number of ...", "a small percentage ..."?

Modal auxiliary verbs:

☑ Check each "if" and "when" clause: make sure you do not use "will" or "would" in this part of the sentence, unless you really mean "be willing".

☑ Are you being unnecessarily cautious in using "may" or "might"? Could you be more positive, more certain?

Nouns:

☑ If you use quantifiers such as "less", "amount", "much" (with uncountables) and "fewer", "number", "many" (with countables), check whether the noun accompanying the quantifier can be counted directly or not.

☑ Where possible, avoid long, complex noun combinations before the main noun, especially expressions like "the earlier identified problem": write “the problem identified earlier”.

Articles "the" or "a/an":

☑ Do not use "a/an" before plural or uncountable nouns.

☑ If you have used abstract nouns or plural nouns with "the", and these are being used in a generalized way, you should normally be able to delete "the". (e.g. "Society" rather than "the society")

Prepositions:

☑ If you are unsure, check in a good dictionary.

☑ Where appropriate, avoid putting a prepositional phrase in the middle of the sentence between the verb and its object.

Adjectives and adverbs:

☑ Check that you have used an adverb to qualify a verb. Adjectives qualify nouns or pronouns.

☑ Avoid using "more" and "most" with single syllable adjectives ("rich", "strong"). Write "richer", "stronger".

Structural problems:

☑ Check that you have not omitted the subject of the verb.

☑ Check that you have not "inverted" subject and verb after a starting phrase like "In this study", "Furthermore", "In conclusion".

☑ Do "invert" subject and verb after a negative or semi-negative starter ("Never", "Not until", "Only" - where "only" is not qualifying the subject).

☑ Do not use "there is/are" with a passive verb.

☑ Check carefully the structures after certain verbs: try, start, suggest, recommend, discuss, consider, consist of, depend on, prevent, stop, avoid, enable, etc.

☑ Check that you do not "invert" subject and verb in indirect questions.

☑ Check each participial clause (-ing): is it ambiguous?

☑ Check the grammatical concordance in lists.

5.1.4 Punctuation

This subsection provides you with a brief guide to the main patterns of punctuation in English. However, to master the use of punctuation in English, you first need to know the difference between an *independent clause* and a *dependent clause*.

5.1.4.1 Clause dependence

An *independent clause* is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb, and that can stand alone as a complete thought. For example:

> *It is easy to underestimate Mr Blair.*
> *The dollar fell by over 10 percent against the euro.*
> *The policy implications of these prospects are obvious.*

A *dependent clause* is a group of words is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb, but does *not* stand alone as a complete thought. For example:

> *Even if at times they kick each other.*
> *Wherever in the world they might be.*
> *When the traditional short-term financing shift begins.*

A sentence can contain both dependent and independent clauses, or it can contain two (or more) independent clauses:

> *Europe's royals have recently proved themselves alive and kicking, even if at times they kick each other. [= independent clause, dependent clause]*
> *When that traditional short-term financing shift begins, the rising euro will begin to attract the long-term portfolio reallocation that will mark its inevitable ascendance as a global key currency.*
> *[= dependent clause, independent clause]*
> *The oil price went up, and Norway bound itself with a large trade surplus..*
> *[= independent clause, and independent clause]*

5.1.4.2 Patterns of punctuation

Now that you are sure of the difference between an independent clause *and a* dependent clause*,*

you will readily understand the following eleven items, which briefly specify the major patterns of punctuation in English.

1. An independent clause ends with a period/full-stop or exclamation mark or question mark.

> *The IMF is concerned about the continuing weakness of the euro.*
> *Why have there been so many mergers in the banking sector?*

2. Two independent clauses that are closely related are linked by a semi-colon.

> *This proposal would permit IMF support for countries with profligate monetary policies; this would enable the countries to perpetuate the very policies that triggered the crisis in the first place.*

3. A rhetorical conjunction followed by an independent clause is separated from the clause by a comma.

Examples of rhetorical conjunctions are: “therefore”, “however”, “moreover”, “nevertheless”, “consequently”, “furthermore”. Rhetorical conjunctions link information in one sentence to the information given in the preceding sentence or sentences.

> *However, Europe's royals have recently proved themselves alive and kicking.*

Similarly, use a comma in sentences when you make an author’s comment before the independent clause.

> *Remarkably, the age of the purchaser was not a significant factor in software sales.*

And similarly, use a comma after location phrases that precede the independent clause.

> *At Maastricht University, most of your study materials will be in English.*

4. Two independent clauses with separate subjects are separated by coordinating conjunction and a comma.

Examples of coordinating conjunctions are: “and”, “or”, “but”, “nor”, “so”, “yet”, “for” (when “for” means “because”).

> *The oil price went up, and Norway found itself with a large trade surplus.*

The comma is necessary because the subjects ("oil price" and "Norway") are different. The information in each clause is different, but the writer indicates the close relation by the use of the comma and the conjunction.

5. Two independent clauses with the same subjects are separated by coordinating conjunction but without a comma.

> *The inspector criticized the management and recommended structural changes.*

The comma is not necessary because the independent clauses have the same subject ("The inspector") and they are relatively short.

6. If the first part of an independent clause is separated from the rest of the independent clause by a non-essential clause or phrase, then the non-essential part must be separated by commas.

A non-essential clause consists of information which, if left out, would not make the sentence interpretable. It may be a clause ("coupled with the robust underlying growth of US productivity") as in the following example:

> *Such performance, coupled with the robust underlying growth of US productivity, is likely to lead to a further sharp increase in global investment in the United States.*

Other examples of non-essential phrases are the rhetorical conjunctions and comments by the writer (see pattern 3 above) such as: "however", "of course", "therefore", "also", "consequently", "moreover", "nevertheless", "on the other hand", "surprisingly". These words may also occur after the first part of the independent clause.

> *We should not, however, jump to conclusions.*

> *The Irish vote was seen, surprisingly, as support for European Union enlargement.*

7. If the first part of an independent clause is separated from the rest of the independent clause by an essential clause or phrase, then commas must not be used.

The example below illustrates an essential clause that defines which prediction the writer is referring to. If the essential clause is left out, then the reader does not know what the prediction is.

> *My prediction that the euro would quickly come to rival the dollar has turned out to be decidedly premature.*

8. If a dependent clause precedes the independent clause, the comma must be used.

The dependent clause is introduced by a subordinating conjunction (e.g. "if", "because", "since", "when", "while", "although", "after", "even before", "until", "as", "as soon as"). A subordinating conjunction specifies the kind of relationship the dependent clause holds with the independent clause. (e.g. a *condition, cause, time, sequence*).

> *If the conditions become too onerous, emerging economies may have to delay their requests for assistance.*

9. If the independent clause comes before the dependent clause, then no comma is necessary.

The dependent clause is again introduced by a subordinating conjunction (see pattern 8 above).

> *Emerging economies may have to delay their requests for assistance if the conditions become too onerous.*

10. An independent clause introduces a list by a colon.

Each item in the list after the colon is separated by commas, including the last.

> *The IMF does not have the resources to make sound policy recommendations in a wide range of areas: corporate governance, trade policy, privatization, poverty reduction, and environmental management.*

11. An independent clause is separated by a comma from a relative clause that qualifies the whole independent clause.

The relative clause (a kind of dependent clause) in the example below qualifies the whole independent clause ("The IMF bungled bank closures in Indonesia").

The IMF bungled bank closures in Indonesia, which precipitated a credit crunch in crisis countries.

5.2 Format requirements

This section provides you a set of guidelines concerning the format of your paper that can be applied to all writing assignments during your study at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. First, the construction of the title page will be discussed. Then, the format of the paper will be described. Finally, this section ends with some additional format requirements for writing assignments at the faculty.

5.2.1 Title page

The title of your paper has to be positioned as shown in *figure 3* below. In the left bottom corner of the title page (also called *cover page*), the following items are expected to be mentioned:

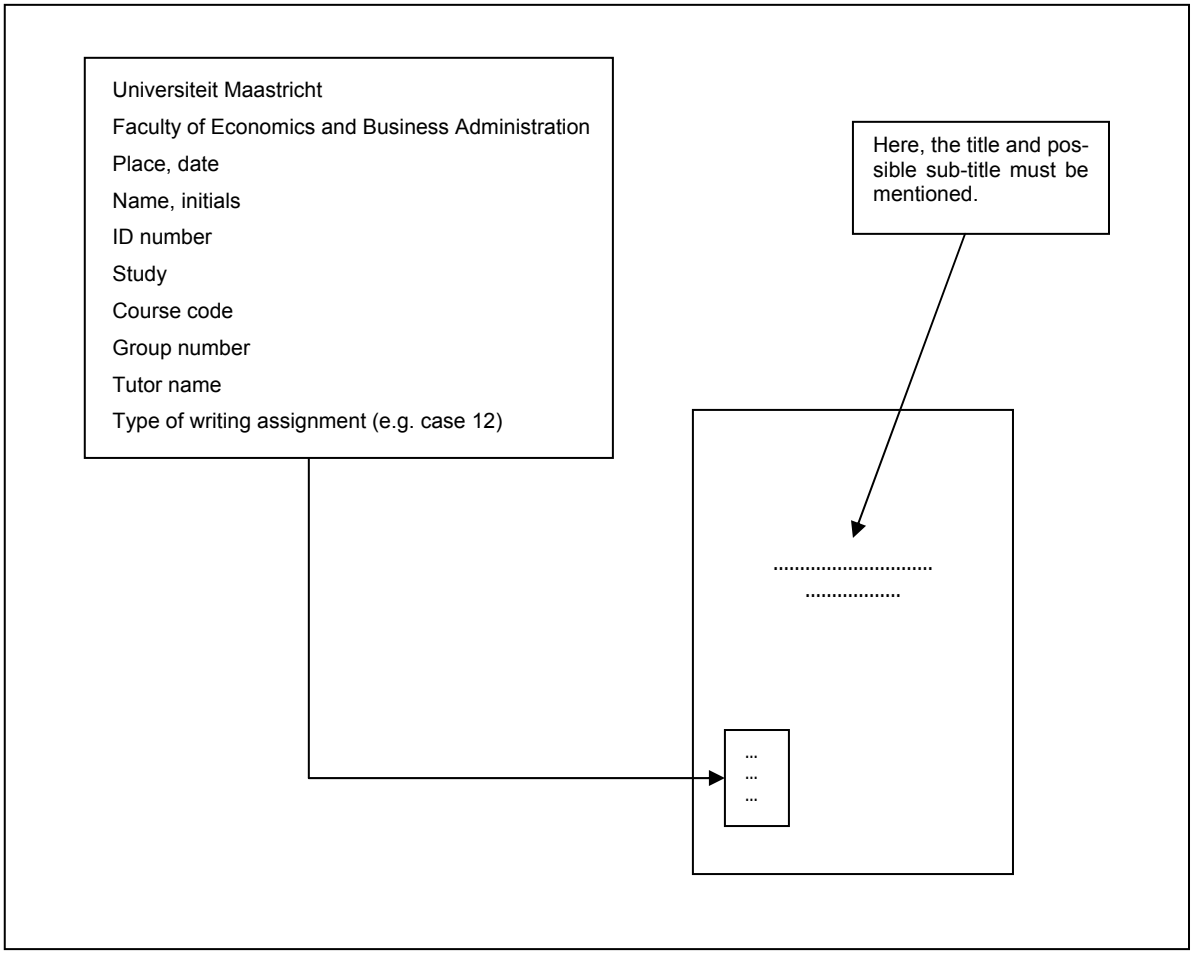


Figure 3: Cover page

Only the information stated above should be put on the cover page. Items such as a famous quotation do not belong here and should be stated somewhere else within the paper. The title page should not be numbered. The page numbering starts after the cover page. The margin at the left should be wide enough for binding purposes. Since a cover page is used, there is no need to repeat the same information (like the title) on the first page of the paper.

A paper must have a title, which gives the reader a clear indication of what the paper is about. It provides your readers with the first impression of your writing. A poor title puts your readers off: it may be too general or too vague, too emotional or too polemical, too chatty or too restricted. Make sure that it accurately reflects what you have written about. Relate your title to the nature of the paper: are you focusing on *action* or on *facts*? Titles that are focused on *action* typically start with a verb in the *–ing* form: *Harnessing the emotional strengths of your employees*. Titles that are focused on *facts* typically start with a noun: *The impact of terrorism on patterns of trade*. Titles may also be direct or indirect questions, to which your paper gives an answer: *Why accounting firms should not merge*. But, do not copy the complete thesis statement as the title. Finally, two-part statements are often used as titles: *Chin@: e-business in world's fastest growing economy.* Whichever form of title you choose, your paper has to reflect accurately the topic established in the title. The title should be clear, not too long, and immediately understandable. Finally, take care that the title does not tell your readers what the conclusion of the paper is.

5.2.2 Format of the paper

The structure of an average paper normally comprises several chapters that are divided into different sections and subsections. A smaller paper just consists of sections and subsections. In the case of a larger paper (for example a final thesis), the structure may be divided first into some parts (for example in case of a final thesis: Part I: theoretical framework; Part II: Findings from practice; Part III: Synergy and conclusions). Each of these parts may contain several chapters. And these chapters again consist of a number of sections and subsections.

At the end of the paper you may add one or more appendices. These contain information that you do not want to put directly in the text of the paper, since otherwise they would interrupt the reader too often and distract from the line of the story. Do not put too many tables and figures in the text if it is not necessary to illustrate the findings in the text. If some results, described in the text, are based on an extensive data output (for example an SPSS output), then put this output in an appendix and refer to it in the related text.

In a paper that contains 1500 words or more it is desirable to insert a table of contents. This table refers to the different headings of the parts, chapters, sections, and subsections that form the structure of the paper. For an example, see the table of contents at the beginning of this manual. When numbering the several headings and related referrals in the table of contents, follow some general guidelines:

- Parts are indicated with Roman numbers (I, II, III, …)
- Chapters, sections and subsections are indicated with Arabic numbers (1,2,3, …)
- Appendices are indicated by capital letters (A,B,C, …)

Of course, it is not possible to refer to a certain heading in the table of contents, without having inserted page numbers. For *all* papers *page numbering* is required. Not only is page numbering necessary for the construction of a table of contents, but also if readers refer to a certain statement or position in the paper, they will mention the page number and (sub)section.

5.2.3 Additional format requirements

- Apply "1.5 line spacing" between all the lines, except for changing from section to section. In the latter case use "double line spacing" as shown in *figure 4* below.

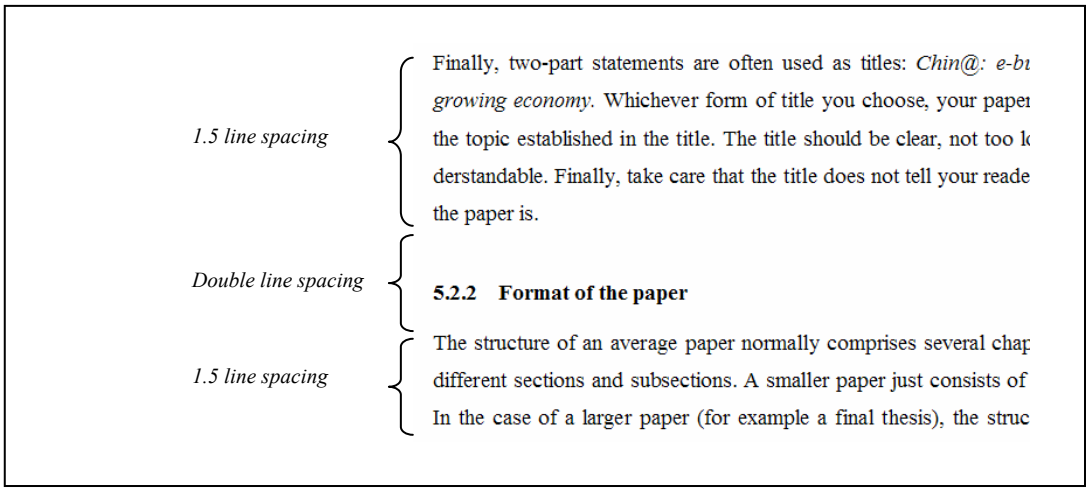


Figure 4: Text alignment

- Font: Times New Roman; font size: 12 points.
- Margins (top, bottom, left, right): 2.54 cm (= 1 inch).
- Paper size: A4 (210 x 297mm).
- Alignment: justified. This implies that no indentation of the first line is required for starting a new paragraph. Between two paragraphs there is one line (1.5) space.
- Choose one appropriate English spelling for the whole document.
- Enable "hyphenation", to avoid large spaces between words, because of the justified alignment applied.
- The paper should be bound before you hand it in.

5.3 Evaluation

As it is stated before, it is not possible to give a blueprint for the writing of a paper. The same applies to the assessment of a paper. Every paper is tailor-made and needs to be considered as such. However, the assessor refers to a defined set of criteria when correcting your paper. All these criteria are discussed in the preceding text in this guide. The criteria are displayed on the "Score form writing assignment" (see *figure 5* below). It is highly recommended to use this score form as a checklist, when finalizing your paper. When correcting your submitted paper, the assessor will fill in the different items on the score form. You will get a copy of this form, when you get the assessed paper back. In order to acquire routine and expertise, always evaluate your performance afterwards by analysing the returned paper and the related score form.

Universiteit Maastricht *Faculty of Economics and Business Administration*

Score form writing assignment

Feedback

*** Content**

Literature and course concepts are correctly and sufficiently applied ..... …[1]
The assignment is correctly and sufficiently elaborated ..... …
The content is judged as a whole (please cross out what doesn't apply): Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

*** Title:**

Title is effective ..... …

*** Introduction:**

Sufficient background information is given to introduce the topic ..... …
Thesis statement presents clearly what the paper is about, and addresses the main issue …
Thesis statement motivates the reader to continue ..... …
Introduction ends with a short and clear outline ..... …

*** Body:**

Body has a clear structure and direction ..... …
Body focuses on main issues of the paper ..... …
Body builds effectively towards the conclusion ..... …

*** Conclusion:**

Conclusion follows logically from the arguments developed in the body ..... …
Conclusion consists of a summary, answer to the thesis statement, and own opinion …
Conclusion ends strongly ..... …

*** Paragraphing:**

It is clear where paragraphs begin and end ..... …
Paragraphs are well balanced in length and content ..... …
Paragraphs are well structured and each paragraph has a topic sentence ..... …
The links between the paragraphs are logical and clear ..... …

*** Grammar and accuracy:**

Grammar is accurate ..... …
Expressions are clear for the reader ..... …
Terminology and vocabulary are accurate ..... …
Spelling is accurate ..... …
Punctuation is accurate ..... …
Style and tone are appropriate to formal academic writing ..... …

*** Layout aspects:**

Tables and figures are correctly presented ..... …
Reference citations in the text are correct and complete ..... …
References are correct and complete ..... …
Paper is presented correctly (cover page, table of contents, headings, etc.) ..... …

*** Overall impression and comments, if necessary:**

[1] Fill in instruction: – = poor (1/2), - = unsatisfactory (3/4), -/+ = no judgement (5/6),+ = good (7/8), ++ = very good (9/10)

Block code:
.....
Academic year:
.....
Name student:
.....
ID-number:
.....
Group number:
.....

Grade:

Final grades are given as whole marks or half marks based on a scale from 1 to 10. The paper passes if the final mark is 6.0 or higher. Criteria: first, the content has to be satisfactory.
Besides, content/structure/layout are judged on a 60/30/10% ratio.

Name of the assessor:
.....
Department/section:
.....
Signature:

.....

In the case of a student assessor, this form must be signed by the block co-ordinator or his/her deputy.

Date:

.....

Tutors hand in the original copy of this form, accompanied by a copy of the writing assignment in question, together with the attendance list to the Exam Administration. The duplicate is for the student and is handed out by the tutor during one of the last tutorial meetings.

Figure 5: Score form writing assignment

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About the authors

Henri Mennens, MSc, works at the liaison office of Maastricht University, responsible for the development of entrepreneurship within the academic community of Maastricht and Euregio. He is also the coordinator of the Technocademy at Maastricht University. He has worked for several years as a lecturer at the department of Management Science at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. During and after this period he contributed in the development of writing skills as an integral part of academic study. The manuals on writing skills he wrote for the first and second-year students form the essentials in the construction of this guide for academic writing skills during the Bachelor's and Master's programmes.

Bob Wilkinson, MSc, works at Maastricht University Language Centre, focusing in course and materials design. He has been working for the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration since the mid-1980s, designing and implementing courses in writing and communications skills for English-medium programmes in the Faculty. His particular interests lie in the integration of content and language in the process of academic learning, especially in writing. His professional experience includes work in business, government, and academia, as well as in several European countries.