

Guide to Written Assignments

The following guidelines focus on the description of term papers, but they are also relevant for shorter assignments and final theses.

Students should read these guidelines carefully before they start writing. It is recommended to adhere to these guidelines as closely as possible. Assignments that are not in accordance with the formal prerequisites outlined in these guidelines may not be accepted.

General Format

- The main text of a term paper should be 12 to 15 pages in length (excluding title page, table of contents, tables, figures, appendix and affidavit). Other assignments may be shorter, while final theses are longer (BA thesis: approx. 40 pages; *BA-Lehramt* thesis: approx. 30 pages; MA thesis: approx. 80 pages; State exam thesis: approx. 60 pages).
- Use the font Times New Roman, font size 12 and 1.5 line-spacing. Justify margins.
- The left margin should be 2.5 cm, the right margin 4 cm, and top and bottom margins 2.5 cm.
- Linguistic examples must be numbered consecutively throughout the document. Example:
 - (1) a. *An American drinks his coffee black.*
b. *Americans drink their coffee black.*
- Any language material that is discussed in the text must be italicized; translations are provided in single quotation marks.

Example: The German noun *Mann* ‘man, male human being’ is semantically more restricted than English *man*, which is occasionally also used (pseudo-)generically.
- References to sources are given in the text by providing the author’s name/authors’ names, year of publication followed by a colon and page references in parentheses in the text (e.g. Smith 2015: 40; Smith and Miller 2015: 40-41).
- Footnotes are used to provide additional comments that are less central to the argument developed throughout the main text. They are not used for providing references and should be used sparingly.¹
- Write in proper paragraphs. A paragraph consists of several sentences. Paragraphs of isolated sentences are not acceptable (even if they are commonly found on the internet).
- Make consistent use of one variety (preferably American English or British English).
- Use citation formats consistently (see “Introducing Secondary Sources in the Body of the Text” and “Format of the Bibliography” below).

¹This is a sample footnote.

Advice on Academic Style

- Write the text of your term paper or other assignment in academic style. This means that you should avoid colloquialisms (e.g. *pretty* as a modifier), generic *you*, and contractions such as *I'll* and *don't*. Note also that *going to* should be avoided, as it is mostly used incorrectly. Students tend to use it to express intention with regard to the structure of their paper when *will* is appropriate (e.g. *In section 3 I will describe my database*).
- Your text needs to be cohesive. This means that ideas should be linked and not presented in an unconnected random sequence.
- Introduce abbreviations by writing them in full the first time you use them, followed by the appropriate abbreviation (that will be used from then on) in parentheses, e.g. second language acquisition (SLA).
- Conventions should be followed with respect to omissions and additions to quotations, and author comments. Omissions in quotations need to be marked as such: (...). Missing letters are supplied in square brackets: [*T*]his text (...). Comments by the student are added in square brackets, e.g.: [my translation, MH]. Incorrect spellings are pointed out by [sic] after the misspelled word: *Form* [sic] 1920 to 1945.
- Make sure that you check online sources that you intend to use for their integrity and reliability. Avoid any dubious or anonymous sources. Wikipedia articles only very rarely fulfil the standards required for academic assignments.
- Proofreading is an essential part of writing a term paper or other written assignment. This means that whenever you are uncertain about the spelling or meaning of a word, you need to check it in a dictionary, and if you are uncertain about a construction (for example the complementation of a verb), you need to consult a grammar. Finally, you need to check your text and your bibliography for consistency.

Structure and Contents of a Term Paper

Title Page

The title page of your term paper needs to contain the following information:

- term paper details: title, number of pages, number of words,
- author details: name, postal address, e-mail address; matriculation number, course of studies, number of terms studied,
- details of the course for which the term paper has been written: title, term, name of instructor, number of credit points.

Table of Contents

- The table of contents should list all sections of the term paper with page numbers. Note that the terms ‘chapter’ and ‘section’ cannot be used interchangeably. The term ‘chapter’ is restricted to longer works such as dissertations and books.
- Section headings should be hierarchically numbered. Content words are capitalized. Function words are only capitalized if they form the beginning of a heading.
- Subsections are numbered accordingly, that is, 2.1, 2.2 etc. It only makes sense to introduce subsections if there are at least two. Having, for example, section 2, and only one subsection, 2.1, is nonsensical and not acceptable.

Example:

1. Introduction	p.3
2. Theoretical Background: Word-Formation	p.4
2.1 Derivation	p.4
2.2 Compounding	p.6
2.3 Clipping, Back-Formation and Acronyms	p.7
3. Methodology	p.8
(. . .)	

In the following we provide a brief overview of the content of the individual sections of a term paper. Section headings in the main text should be in bold.

1. Introduction

- Introduce the topic of your term paper.
- Briefly mention previous research on your topic and gaps which your research could address and formulate your research question(s). Alternatively, you may formulate a hypothesis or hypotheses that you intend to test.
- In the case of a longer assignment (such as a final thesis), give an overview of its structure.

2. Theoretical Background

- Provide definitions of theoretical concepts and technical terms relevant to your investigation and explain their relevance.
- Provide a critical review of the research literature on your topic.
- As an alternative to introducing research questions in the introduction, you could introduce them here.

3. Methodology

- Introduce the data used in your analysis (e.g. words, sentences or other linguistic structures; texts, conversations, etc.). Provide details about the source(s) of your data (e.g. a corpus, a dictionary, questionnaires, interviews, TV talk shows, etc.) and its extent (i.e. number of words, sentences, texts) and state why you chose them.
- Explain your method of data collection including its advantages and potential disadvantages.
- Explain how you have analysed your data: introduce the categories you have used for the analysis, explain them (unless you have already explained them in detail in the section on theoretical background) and give reasons for your choice of classification. Specify the type of analysis (qualitative/quantitative) and explain the main steps involved.
- If you have encountered any problems, explain how you have dealt with them.

4. Presentation of Findings

- Present the results of your research in a clear and logical way.
- Illustrate your observations with examples to support your argumentation. Do not only list examples, but discuss them in detail.
- If you present results of a quantitative analysis, use tables or diagrams and explain them in the text. Tables and figures need to be numbered consecutively and provided with a caption (e.g. Table 1: Use of Diminutive Suffixes by Speaker Age). Longer concordance lists, as well as other data can be put in an appendix.

5. Discussion of Findings

- Discuss your findings: Which conclusions can you draw about the phenomenon you investigated on the basis of your research? Answer your research question(s).
- Provide explanations for your observations.
- Compare your results to those of the previous studies that you have described in the section “Theoretical Background”.

6. Conclusion

- Briefly summarize the most important findings of your study and relate them to your research question(s)/hypothesis/hypotheses.
- You may mention implications of your findings for future research in the field.

Bibliography

- List all the sources you refer to in your paper (and only those).
- Follow the referencing conventions (see below: “Format of the Bibliography”)

Appendix

- Provide your data, e.g. questionnaires, transcripts and audio and/or video files, etc.
- Document your coding/analysis, e.g. with the help of a spreadsheet.
- You may also present additional tables, figures, etc.
- Refer to the appendix in the main text.

Affidavit

- Add the signed Fakultät I affidavit (cf. Moodle/Fakultät I download area) to your term paper.
- Make sure that you have understood what you have signed!
- A note on plagiarism: Using the work (phrases, sentences, text passages, ideas, pictures, etc.) of other people without acknowledging your source constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious offence. In your term paper, you must make sufficiently clear which parts of it are your own and which you have taken from other sources (book, article, internet, etc.) ,i.e. you must provide accurate references to the respective sources. Students who have plagiarised will automatically fail the respective course and are reported to the *Dekanat*.

Introducing Secondary Sources in the Body of the Text

It is essential that you specify where the ideas you are discussing have been taken from. Use direct quotations sparingly and paraphrase secondary sources rather than quoting them literally. You need to provide references for paraphrases as well. However, you do not use quotation marks for these. References in the text should look as follows:

Single author: Paradis (2004: 112) states that ... ; As noted by Paradis (2004: 112), ...

Two authors: Baugh and Cable (2002: 117) claim that ...

Three or more authors: A study by Hay, Wright and Bent (2005: 112) found that...

Works written or edited by more than three authors should in the first reference be cited or quoted by listing all authors' names. For all additional citations and quotations of these works, an abbreviated form should be used: “Hay et al. (2005: 112) observe that...”

If you use a reprinted edition of a work, provide the date of its first publication in square brackets in addition to the reference to the reprinted edition, e.g. (Salmon [1967] 1987: 263). References should include page numbers if you refer to only part of a text. Compare:

Code switching was common in late Middle English literature (Machan 2012).

Code switching in Middle English was also employed in Psalters (Machan 2012: 313-315).

Short direct quotations (which include phrases) are included in the running text and marked off by double quotation marks. If the text you quote contains a quotation, this is enclosed in single quotation marks. Note that you may also find the reverse use. The main point is that a different type is used for quotations within a quotation.

Example from Charon (1994: 21):

Alice Hoffman explains that “these groups rarely leave written records of their lives; the meager documentary evidence about them is usually biased against them (...) and they have largely been ignored by historians who view history in terms of ‘big men’ and ‘important events’”.

Direct quotations of three or more lines should form a separate paragraph (indented, single line-spacing).

Example from Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013: 24):

The special quality of drama was realised early on:

It is, of course, a selective and inadequate representation of speech; but the more skilful the dramatist, the more skilful he will be, if presenting the normal life of his time, in authenticating the action by an acceptable version of contemporary speech. (Salmon [1967] 1987: 263)

If you cannot access a source directly, you may quote from a secondary source.

Example adapted from Parsons (1998: 58):

Lloyd James stated that “The BBC very definitely concerns itself with checking ultra-modern tendencies in the language, and in carrying out the injunctions of the Committee with regard to the purity of the English vowels” (“Statement on the History of the Advisory Committee”, 20 Sept. 1934, quoted from Briggs 1965: 468).

Format of the Bibliography

All sources mentioned in the term paper must be included in the bibliography. The entries in the list must be sorted alphabetically by the surname of the (first) author. If you have used several sources by the same author, earlier publications should be listed before later ones. If two works by the same author date from the same year, you must disambiguate them both in your bibliography and in the main text by means of letters (e.g. Smith 2011a, Smith 2011b). Depending on the type of publication, the entries in the bibliography take various formats. Examples of major publication types are illustrated below. Note that the use of capitalization, punctuation marks and italics is not random and has to be employed consistently in your bibliography, which means that you must change the capitalization in some titles to make them consistent with your system. Consistency is also required with respect to publishers (first names must be used either with all publishers or none) and university presses; we recommend that you use the most explicit reference (e.g. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Note that two systems exist with respect to articles in journals and edited books.² In one system they are put in inverted commas, while in the other system they are unmarked. You must use one of the two systems consistently in your bibliography. Below we have opted for the unmarked system.

For reasons of transparency we have listed the various publication types separately in these guidelines. Note that in the bibliography of your term paper all references must be listed in alphabetical order by authors' surnames.

Monographs:

Hoffmann, Thomas. 2011. *Preposition Placement in English: A Usage-based Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Journal Articles:

Adger, David. 2013. Constructions and Grammatical Explanation. *Mind and Language* 28: 466-478.

Edited Volumes:

Nicolaï, Robert 2014. *Questioning Language Contact: Limits of Contact, Contact at its Limits*. Leiden: Brill.

Furiassi, Cristiano, Virginia Pulcini and Félix Rodríguez González (eds). 2012. *The Anglicization of European Lexis*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins.

²For the use of full stops in the abbreviations *ed.* and *eds* see MHR_StyleGuideV3_2.pdf, section 4.4, which can be downloaded free of charge from <<http://www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml>>.

Contributions to Edited Volumes:

Tabouret-Keller, Andrée. 2014. Limites objectives et limitations subjectives des effets de contact entre parlars. In Robert Nicolai (ed.), *Questioning Language Contact: Limits of Contact, Contact at its Limits*. Leiden and Boston: Brill. 313-331.

Callies, Marcus, Alexander Onysko and Eva Ogiermann. 2012. Investigating Gender Variation of English Loanwords in German. In Cristiano Furiassi, Virginia Pulcini and Félix Rodríguez González (eds), *The Anglicization of European Lexis*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins. 65-89.

Internet Documents:

Ethnologue. 2009. *Ethnologue. Languages of the World*. Sixteenth edition. <http://www.ethnologue.com/> [accessed 25 October 2015]

Wells, John. 1995. Esperanto: A Joke, or a Serious Option? [updated version of talk given at the symposium “The University in the Tower of Babel”, University of Santiago de Compostela]. <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/wells/esperanto-info.htm> [accessed 16 November 2015]

Note: Some e-books have no page numbers. Therefore it is preferable to use print editions in your references and your bibliography.

Submitting Written Work

- The deadline for submitting written work will be set by your instructor or the *Prüfungsamt* (in case of final theses).
- Submit your term papers and other written assignments both in print and in electronic form unless otherwise instructed (Instructions on labelling will be provided by your instructor, but all submissions need to contain your name).
- Leave the printed copy of your paper in the pigeonhole of the respective instructor (located on the second floor of AR-K).
- Submit the electronic version via e-mail.
- Grades will be made available through LSF.