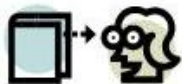

University of Lapland

General Guidelines for Academic Writing



International Studies Centre ISC

Aug 2007



UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND
LAPIN YLIOPISTO

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www.ulapand.fi/ISC
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1. Introduction

Studying at a Finnish university can at times be very different from studying at other universities. Besides differing in teaching methods, (academic) manners and terminology used, various practical matters of the Finnish academic system can take a little while to get familiar with. Hence, the purpose of this booklet is to help new students familiarise themselves with the aspect of “academic writing” as practiced in the system of study here at the University of Lapland.

This booklet contains basic information about the different types of written assignments; how to format, arrange and technically structure written assignments; and how to correctly cite and use references in ones work. Besides these central issues, some general rules about writing in English can be found at the end of the booklet.

It is important to note that the information, guidelines and examples presented in this booklet are only general and that each Faculty and Department at the University of Lapland can have their own preferences on how to use references or format and present written assignments. More information about Faculty or Department specific written assignment guidelines is often provided by the course tutor and /or available in the outline of each individual course.

2. Definitions of Written Assignment

2.1 General Information

Studying in the Finnish university system requires a fair amount of individual (academic) writing, as a variety of written assignments are widely used. The basic study unit of the Finnish study system is a “course” that typically consists of series of lectures with a written assignment or an exam at the end. Most courses are also individual parts of a larger study unit called a “study module” that often concentrates on a theme or a topic (e.g. KICP1103 Applications of Intercultural Communication). Most study modules include a variety of courses that the students can freely choose from to complete, for instance, the required 10-12 ECTS credits for the whole study module.

Although different universities, faculties and disciplines, might have some variation in preferred style and format of written assignments, in the Finnish academic system there are some general standards that all written assignments should follow. The most important things to keep in mind while studying are a) that one should use good academic manners; b) one should never present someone else’s text or thoughts as one’s own, and; c) one should be consistent in the style and format used. Examples of different types of written assignments are lecture journals, essays, learning journals, research papers and written examinations. Definitions for each of these types of written assignments are presented in the next chapter.

All written assignments must be comprehensible meaning that words should be spelled properly, sentences should be complete and meaningful, and paragraphs should be coherent. Written course assignments can be submitted to the course tutor either in paper format or via e-mail, according to the agreement between the tutor and the student. Nevertheless, students must always retain the original text(s) until evaluation of the course has been completed.

All Finnish universities use numeric grading scales and, at the University of Lapland, the scale used is from 5 (excellent) to 1 (sufficient). Please note that some courses give only a pass/fail grade without any further grading, in which case only the mark ‘Pass’/‘Fail’ will appear on the transcript.

Generally, students can expect results from written exams, essays and other written course requirements within three to four weeks of the date of the exam or deadline for written assignments. If this is not possible, the course tutor should inform the students of a new date before the original deadline has passed.

It is important to keep in mind that academic dishonesty such as plagiarism is an extremely serious offence and will subject the student to disciplinary action. It is plagiarism to quote another’s words or ideas without referring to them. Also incorrect documentation, failure to cite ones sources or simply relying way too heavily on external sources is considered as plagiarism. For plagiarising a student will receive a failing grade for the assignment with plagiarized work, and if a student plagiarizes an entire paper (a copy of another), he/she will be failed from the course in question. In addition, depending on the severity of the misconduct, the student can temporarily be expelled from the university or receive a written warning from the Rector of the University of Lapland. For visiting and exchange students, this could also mean that the student’s home institution will be informed of the misconduct. Further references on different forms of plagiarism are available in *Appendix 1* at the back of this document.

2.2 Lecture Journal

A *lecture journal* is usually required when there is no specific exam for a lectured course. The objective of a lecture journal is to bring out the essential contents of the lectures, presentations, and discussions provided during contact lessons, and to supplement this with ones own comments and views. In other words, a lecture journal should always be more than just a copy of lecture notes in a narrative form. Lectures should be commented and evaluated critically, and additional questions and well-founded contemplations should be included in it. In order to do this, one can use additional literature, articles and other materials to help comment on the lectured subject.

Completing a lecture journal generally requires a written assignment approximately five (5) pages in length. Depending on the lecturer and the amount of credits gained from the course, the length of the journal can vary. In some courses, the lecture journal can also be done as a group work, but this should always be agreed upon with the tutor of the course before hand. In case of group work the individual lecture journals should additionally include the discussions of the group.

Here are some questions, which could be considered while writing a *lecture journal*:

- What kind of thoughts or questions did the lectures give you?
- In your opinion, what was the most important message of the lectures?
- What kind of objections did you have and why?
- Was there something you did not understand?
- Were you able to connect the lectures to your previous studies / knowledge of the topic? And if so, how?

2.3 Essay

Besides written exams, *essays* are also commonly used as written course assignment; however the use of written essays as a course requirement can vary depending on the course. For example, a written essay can be a mandatory part of a certain course or study module or it can be a voluntary assignment with which a student can compensate, for example, certain parts of courses or course literature. An essay can also be a partial study attainment in a special course, working group or a seminar, in which case a 10- 15 minutes long oral or written presentation of the essay to all participants of the course is usually required.

If a student wants to compensate part of a course or some required course literature with an essay, then he/she should discuss the subject, contents, length and deadline of the proposed essay with the tutor of the course *before hand*. The length of an essay depends upon the amount of credits the student wants to compensate, but usually it varies from eight (8) to fifteen (15) pages.

An essay is never just a written summary of a course or a book. Rather, an essay should answer questions set by the student or argue for a statement or viewpoint that he/she has posed. In doing this, a student should use the knowledge gained from the course lectures or other materials agreed upon before hand with the tutor of the course. Furthermore, as most courses are open to students at different academic levels (Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral students), the requirements for an essay paper may vary between each of these levels. Detailed information on course-specific essay paper requirements is usually provided by the course tutor at the beginning of a course.

In evaluation of an *essay*, the things that count the most are:

- Presentation of a problem or originality of the statement
- The ways of arguing for the statement or the answers to the posed questions
- Factors that show credibility, independent insight and originality
- Correct use of sources and references together with a coherent overall style

2.4 Learning Journal

A *learning journal* is also currently used in teaching and training at the University of Lapland. A learning journal is an analytical record of a student's learning process that may be tied to an individual subject in a course or a particular topic within a subject. A learning journal may also be about the experience and process of learning throughout a course in general. Paper-based journals are typically reviewed by other students or the tutor of the course at the end of the learning period.

The purpose of a learning journal is to help the student to follow and analyse his/her own learning process and to fulfil (preset) individual study goals by the end of the course. When evaluating ones own learning through out a course, a learning journal should include the content of the course together with a student's own reflections, thoughts and comments about the topic and lectures. In contrast to a lecture journal, a learning journal is expected to include more personal commentary on the individual process of learning during the course.

As examples, these questions can be considered when writing a learning journal:

* In the beginning of the course:

- What are the things that you should and would like to learn about this topic?
- What are the questions and issues that in your opinion should be addressed with regards to this topic?
- How important do you consider this topic to be and why?

* During the course:

- What did you learn today at the lecture and what are the things that possibly need clarification?
- Are you able to connect the information of the lectures to a wider context and your previous knowledge or experiences on the topic?
- Are your personal opinions on the topic actively involved in your learning process or do you try remain objective?

* At the end of the course:

- What did you learn from this course?
- How well in your opinion did you reach your personal goals of the course?
- What are the things that you would still like to learn about this topic?

The use of, and requirements for a *learning journal* are either available in the formal outline of a course or provided by the course tutor at the start of the course.

2.5 Research Papers

A *research paper* is an analytical essay of a given or chosen topic or issue. Generally, research papers are not as common a course requirement as are essays or exams; but rather, a research paper is often a requirement in (advanced) workshops and seminars. In this respect, and depending on the course in question, a 10-20 minutes oral presentation of the research paper, and a critique of another course participant's research paper could also be a mandatory part of this type of assignment.

As opposed to just reviewing or summarizing existing sources or literature on a given topic, a research paper analyses a perspective or argues a point. By placing an issue or a topic in a broader context or theoretical perspective, a research paper can take either an argumentative or analytical approach on an issue and use logic, arguments and source information as evidence to support its points. In general, writing a research paper involves a significant amount of independent research and synthesizing what one learns from it with one's own ideas. Depending on the preferences of a certain discipline, and /or the particular instructions by the course tutor, the requirements for a research paper may vary. For example, the length of a research paper may vary depending on course objectives and the amount of credits gained from the course. Furthermore, as most courses are open to students at different academic levels (Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral students), the requirements for a research paper may vary between each of these levels. More information on course-specific research papers requirements is usually provided by the course tutor at the beginning of a course.

The greatest danger inherent in doing a research paper is plagiarism. If a student's paper consists of a string of quotations or paraphrases with little input of his/her own, the student is not synthesizing but copying, in which case he/she should expect a low grade. If any of the borrowings are not acknowledged, then the student is plagiarizing and the penalty could be far more severe. For further reference on different forms of plagiarism see *Appendix 1* at the back of this document.

In the evaluation of a *research paper*, the things that count the most are:

- Presentation of original views with the support of arguments and source information
- Factors that show credibility, independent research and originality
- Correct use of sources and references together with a coherent overall style

2.6 Written Examinations

At the University of Lapland, the academic year comprises of two semesters. The autumn semester lasts from the 1st of August to the 31st of December, and spring semester from 1st of January to 31st of July. Teaching during the academic year is divided into five study periods that in length vary from 7 to 10 weeks. Written exams are held at the University of Lapland throughout the academic year, so there is no particular exam period at the end of each term.

There are two types of written exams: *course exams* and *general exams*.

Course exams are held upon completion of a course, and the tutor of the course will inform the students of the date, time and place of the exam. In general, course exams are held in a class or seminar room, but can sometimes also be held as a take-home exam. Advance registration is usually not required for this type of exam.

General exams of the Faculty or Department are held every three to four weeks, and one must register in advance to attend a general exam. On these pre-defined examination dates, a student can, for example, take an exam based on the individual study of a set of books from the course catalogue.

The deadline for *general exam* registration is approximately 10 days before the actual exam date. Registration can be done either through the WebOodi System or by using the special "examination envelopes". When choosing the latter, students are responsible for submitting the completed exam envelope in the appropriate (faculty or department) drop-off box by the registration deadline. If the registration envelope is not properly filled-in or is submitted late, then the examiner has the right to discard the registration. Note: all faculties and departments are gradually phasing-out the use of the examination envelope; therefore students are advised to check with their academic coordinator on what options are available to them.

The questions of an exam depend on the type of the exam. *Course exam* questions can vary from essay type questions to multiple-choice-questions. *General exam* questions are often essay style questions but also short questions can be used. Depending on the extent of a given course, students have from two to four hours to answer the examination questions. Books and other reference materials are not allowed in general or course exams unless other wise agreed with the tutor of the course. Generally, dictionaries are not allowed in exams, however any exceptions can only be granted by the course tutor in advance. Please note that before registering for an exam, students must always agree on the detailed requirements of the exam with the tutor of the course.

The main thing to keep in mind with essay type questions is that essentially the tutor of the course wants to see that the student knows the material well enough to make a critical judgment upon it, and not that one can throw out a collection of unrelated details. Sometimes an essay type question may include a quotation, statement or affirmation that the student is asked to discuss. "*Discuss*" here does not mean "make sure that you agree with the quotation"; rather it is to open the topic for exploration. It often is that the student's response to the quotation will be to suggest a modification of it, rather than an unquestioning agreement with it. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the given quotation, be sure to support the position taken. Nevertheless, the more information one is able to recall and use effectively the better, but one should always remember to relate what one writes to the question itself.

Failing an exam on the first try does not mean that one has failed a course entirely. *Course exams* can be taken again two more times after the first try. There is no advanced registration required for any of the course exams. Generally, the course tutor informs the students about these two additional course exam dates at the beginning of the course. The additional two course exam days can also be used for improving ones grade if unsatisfied with the existing one. Out of these additional tries, the tutor of the course will take into consideration the best grade when giving the final grade for the course. As for *general exams*, there is no limit on retaking a Faculty or Department exam as these exams can be retaken during the academic year on any of the general exam days listed individually for each Faculty or Department. The students must however remember that advance registration to general exams need to be done approximately 10 days before the actual exam day. Like with course exams, additional general exams can be used to improve ones final course grade.

The students can expect the grades from exams generally about three weeks after taking the exam. All grades can be viewed on the bulletin boards of each Faculty or Department and the student's personal WebOodi account.

A good answer on an essay type question includes:

- A clear beginning followed by a body of text where one actually answers the question;
- a clear end that summarizes the main points relating to the question or concludes and states the student's thoughts and reflections on the subject and required reading;
- and literally shows that the student has read the book(s) or required material for the exam. One way of doing this is to, in your answer, refer to particular part of the book or text.

* Things to know before taking a *General Examination*

Before entering the examination hall, each student will receive an envelope containing the exam questions. A few sheets of answering paper are usually included with the exam questions but if a student thinks that he/she might need more, the student should pick up some extra sheets (which are usually found at the front of the exam hall) before beginning to write the exam. The envelopes can only be opened once all the students are in the hall and permission to open the envelopes has been granted by the exam supervisor(s).

All examinations begin on the hour (i.e. 9:00 / 13:00). Students who arrive more than 30 minutes past the hour will not be allowed to enter the examination hall. Students can leave the examination earliest 30 minutes after the exam in the hall has started.

During an exam, students can only have writing material on or around their working area, which means that bags or other personal items such as a cellular phone, PDA, laptop computer, are not allowed. The use of dictionaries or programmable calculators is only allowed if permission is granted by the student's examiner (course tutor). In which case, such permission must be noted on the examination envelope itself.

Once completed, answers to the examination questions have to be returned inside the envelope and taken to the examination supervisor. Upon doing so, each student has to provide proof of his/her identity when returning the envelope.

Cheating, including receiving or giving answers to another student during an exam, is strictly forbidden. University rules require that if a student is caught cheating in an exam, then he or she can be immediately removed from the exam and thus possibly failing the entire course. If cheating is noticed after the actual examination, the tutor responsible for grading the exam/course may fail the student from the course. Depending on the severity of the misconduct, the student may also be temporarily expelled from the university or receive a written warning from the Rector of the University of Lapland. For visiting and exchange students, this could also mean that the student's home institution will be informed of the misconduct.

3. Format of Written Assignments

3.1 General Information

The content of written assignments can vary, but basically all written assignments include the following items in the following order:

1. Cover page
2. Table of contents
3. The actual written part of the assignment
4. List of references
5. If necessary; figures, tables, and appendices

3.2 Cover Page

A cover page should contain the following information (see sample cover page on the next page):

1. Information on the University (*Faculty* and *Major subject* or *Study program*) should be marked on the upper left corner of the page.
2. *Title* (the assignment title should be placed in the middle of the page).
3. Course work information goes in the bottom right-hand of the page, which is to include the *Course Code*, *Course Title*, and *Date submitted* (this can be either the date the assignment was handed in, or in case it is a seminar paper, then the date it is presented in the seminar).
4. Finally the students *Name*, *student Number*, and the name of the *course tutor* or *assignment supervisor*. If an opponent has been assigned to comment on the work, then the name of the *opponent* should be indicated as well.

Note: For an academic Thesis (BA, MA, etc.) the information provided and the structure of a "*Title Page*" is different than what is indicated above. For further details, refer to the thesis writing guidelines provided by the Faculty you are studying in.

University of Lapland
Faculty of Social Sciences
International Relations

Title of the Assignment

KAES#### / Seminar
24.09.2007

Student's name:
Student number:
Supervisor:
Opponent:

3.3 Table of Contents

The use of a Table of Contents (TOC) is really only recommended for longer (> 10 pages) and more structured (use of headings, subheadings, etc.) assignments. For a table of contents one can use ready formats from the word processor program used. Here is an example of how a table of contents should be constructed:

Table of Contents	Page
1. HEADING	3
1.1 Subheading	3
1.1.1 Second subheading	4
1.1.2 Second subheading	5
1.2 Subheading	6
2. HEADING	7
2.1 Subheading	7
2.2 Subheading	8
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Figure 1	2
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Table 1	2
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3.4 List of References

A central element of academic writing is the use of references, and the purpose for using references is to reveal the origin of, for example, an idea, theory or a fact. In addition, references also help the reader to find more information on the topic by checking the reference. However, and more importantly, references are important because they allow the reader to identify which part of text is the author's/student's own analysis, discussion or information based on his/her own research, and which part of information is from other sources such as books or articles. Hence, one must include a citation (to each and every reference) into the text whenever the information presented originates from a written or other identifiable source. For detailed instructions on how to properly cite references, go to Section 5. *Citing References*.

At the University of Lapland, the most common reference styles used are the American Psychological Association (APA) style, which uses parentheses in the text with a separate list of reference at the end of the paper, and the Modern Language Association (MLA) style, which uses

footnotes or end notes. Unless otherwise informed, the students may use either one of these styles, but nevertheless it is important to remember to be consistent in using only one for any given assignments.

For all intent and purposes, a list of references (also know as a “bibliography” or “literature list”) is written on a separate page and is placed in the document after the written part of an assignment. The heading of the reference page(s) should be *References*, and the list of references is not given a heading number in the table of contents. All books and articles listed in the list of references must have been used in the written assignment and a citation in the text is needed for all of them.

In the list of reference, each reference should be listed in alphabetic order according to the surname of the author of the book, article or some other material. If for whatever reason you are unsure of what name the source should fall under, then as a general rule you should indicate the name according to how the work/source is found in the library. When there is more than one reference from the same author, then these should be listed in chronological order. If there are several sources from one author published within the same calendar year, then use a letter (beginning with “a”) to separate them (e.g. 2001a, 2001b, 2001c etc.).

More and more, the Internet is becoming an important source for reference material, therefore, it is equally as important to present these sources properly in the list of references. If a student has used an Internet sources in his / her work, then he/she must mark the date when he/she retrieved the information from the Internet, and the complete URL –address. If one does not know the name of the author of the text, then one should mark the organisation or community who has produced the text in the place of the author. Still if not available on the web-page itself, then one can also refer to the origin or title indicated in the file “*Properties*” [from the pop-down menu on your internet navigation program, go to the “*File*” option where the properties option will be found].

Although differences can be found between faculties and departments in the preferred style of presentation, there are certain general rules for formatting specific information sources, for example with monographs, articles, internet sites or personally conducted interviews. On the following pages students will find more detailed information about how to correctly reference these different kinds of sources in the list of references. Additionally there also are some examples of the preferred styles used by the departments of International Relations, Sociology and Administrative Science.

3.4.1 Monographs

Monographs are usually separate publications that mainly discuss one topic. In the list of references monographs should be marked as following:

1. The surname and the first name of the author in the form as they are written in the publication. (Use initials for the first names, if that is the way they are written in the publication). Include the names of all authors.
2. Year of publication of the edition that was used. If there are many editions of the same book it is advisable to mention also the publication year of the very first edition. Depending on the style used it can be marked for example this way: 1999 (1800) or this way: (1800/1999).
3. The name of the publication with possible subtitle.
4. The name and number of publication series if the book is part of a publication series.
5. Possible (public) authority involved in the publication, for example the University of Lapland (see example below).
6. Publisher and the city of publication. One can leave out abbreviations, such as Inc., Ltd, or GmbH, from the name of the publisher. In case there are several towns mentioned, one can use the first one or the one situated in Europe.

For example: Keskitalo, Carina (2002): Constructing “the Arctic” – Discourses of international region-building. Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis 47. Lapin yliopistopaino. Rovaniemi.

3.4.2 Academic articles

Academic articles that can be found, for example, in monthly publications, journals, books or online, should be marked in the list of references as following:

1. The name (surname, then first name) of the author of the article,
 2. Year of publication,
 3. Name of the article as explained above,
 4. Name of the journal or the edited volume that the article was published in,
 5. With edited volumes you should also include the information concerning *the editor and other information*. The edited book will not be included as a separate reference in the List of References, if there are no references to the book as a whole in the text,
 6. Number of the Journal and possible volume (for example World Politics, Vol. 4 July 1989)
 7. Page numbers of the article in the journal or edited volume
-

For example: Gutsol, Natalia & Larissa Riabova (2002): Kola Saami and Regional Development. In edition Conflict and Cooperation in the North, Kristiina Karppi & Johan Eriksson (eds). Norrlands universitetsförlag i Umeå,Umeå. pp. 251-267.

3.4.3 Other References

*Newspaper and magazine articles

For newspaper and magazine articles one can follow the same instructions as for academic articles.

*Conference publications and presentations

With published conference publications, students should follow the same basic instructions as for academic articles. However, when referring to a conference presentation that has not been published online or in any kind of printed publication one should follow these instructions:

1. The name of the presenter
2. The year when the presentation took place
3. The name of the presentation
4. The name of the conference, date(s) of the conference, the city and country where the presentation took place
5. Indication that the information referred to is based for example on your personal notes from the presentation. If one does not know the title of the presentation, one can use a descriptive word such as “Lecture” or “Debate”.

For example: Cindi Godsey (2006): National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System & Mining. Alaska Forum on the Environment, 6-10 of February 2006, Anchorage, USA. Personal notes.

*Internet sources

As earlier indicated, internet sources are to be included in the reference list in the same manner as other written and published sources. In order to avoid serious problems with the use of internet sources, students should remember that the primary reference for any source should be the author of the text. If one does not know the name of the author of the text, then one should:

- a) mark the organisation or community who has produced the text in the place of the author;
- b) if this is not available on the web-page itself, then one can refer to the origin or title indicated in the page or site "*Properties*" [from the pop-down menu on your internet navigation program, go to the "*File*" option where "*Properties*" choice will be found];
- c) finally, if all else fails, then one should write the title of the page or first few words of the page into the list of references.

Note: Of course, the second most important detail to include is the complete URL –address.

Here are examples of how to present internet sources in the list of references:

Example references with author: Spicker, Paul (2002): Poverty and the welfare state. A catalyst working paper. Internet source: <http://www.catalystforum.org.uk/pdf/paper9.pdf>. Consulted 9.11.2004

Dowling, Ross K. (2000): untitled page on ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Internet source: <http://www.business.ecu.edu/tourism/start.html> Consulted 19.10.2003

Example reference without author: IAATO (undated): A timeline of Human Activity in Antarctica –Some Selected Highlights (*Author unknown*). http://www.iaato.org/overal_history.doc. Consulted January 2003

*Personal communications

Information acquired through personal communication with someone who is notable or an authority on the issue in question (e.g. researchers, professors, etc.) must also be included in the list of references. Whether the information was obtained through oral or written correspondence, one must mark down the name and title of the person interviewed; a brief description of the topic; the method of correspondence (e.g. personal interview, telephone interview, personal e-mail, etc.), and the date and the place.

For example:

Tennberg, Monica. Research Professor. Arctic Centre, University of Lapland. Telephone interview. Rovaniemi, Finland 10.4.2002.

*Lecture notes and teaching materials

As a general rule, the use of personal notes from lectures and possible unpublished materials distributed in lectures is inappropriate and not to be used as a source in written assignments.

3.4.4 Preferred Styles

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

References

Jones, Katherine T. 1998. Scales as epistemology. *Political Geography*. Vol. 17, No 1, pp. 25-28.

Keskitalo, Carina 2002. Constructing 'the Arctic'. Discourses of international region-building. Rovaniemi: The University of Lapland.

Massa, Ilmo & Tynkkynen, Veli-Pekka 2001. Introduction. In Ilmo Massa and Veli-Pekka Tynkkynen (eds) *The Struggle for Russian Environmental Policy*. Helsinki: Kikumora Publications, pp. 11-26.

Spicker, Paul 2002. Poverty and the welfare state. A Catalyst working paper. Internet source: <http://www.catalystforum.org.uk/pdf/paper9.pdf>; 9.11.2004

SOCIOLOGY:

References

Gorz, André (1988): *Metamorphoses du Travail. Quete du Sens. Critique de la Raison Economique*. Galilee, Paris.

Järvelä, Marja & Kristiina Kuvaja-Puumalainen (1998): Environmental Impact Assessment. In *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics*, Vol. 2. Academic Press, San Diego, pp. 83-91.

Pfaller, Alfred, Ian Gough & Göran Therborn (1991a): The Issue. In Pfaller, Alfred, Ian Gough & Göran Therborn: *Can the Welfare State Compete. A comparative study of Five Advanced Capitalist Countries*. Macmillan, Hampshire, pp. 1-14.

Pfaller, Alfred, Ian Gough & Göran Therborn (1991b): Welfare Statism and International Competition: The Lesson of the Case Studies. In Pfaller, Alfred, Ian Gough & Göran Therborn: *Can the Welfare State Compete. A comparative study of Five Advanced Capitalist Countries*. Macmillan, Hampshire, pp. 271-297.

ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE:

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3.5 Appendices

Appendices are used when the incorporation of material in the body of the assignment would make it poorly structured or too long and detailed. The appendix may be used for helpful, supporting or essential material that would otherwise clutter and break-up the text and/or be distracting to the reader. For example, if into ones assignment one plans to include a VERY LARGE table or figure (or a series of tables or figures requiring more than one or two adjacent pages), then such objects are to be placed at the end of the assignment in the Appendices section.

Appendices may include some of the following:

- Supporting evidence and Contributing facts
- Specialised data (note that "raw data" appears in the appendix, and summarised data appears in the body of the assignment text)
- Technical figures, tables or descriptions
- Detailed description of research instruments
- Maps
- Questionnaires (questionnaire results appear in the body of the assignment text)

In essence, the assignment text must be complete without the appendices. Meaning that the assignment text must contain all information including tables, diagrams and results necessary to answer the question or support the thesis of the work, and that the appendices is used only for support purposes. Therefore it is important to note that:

- a) other people's work is referred to, but not quoted in an appendix, and
- b) the appendices contents are not included in the word count of an assignment.

For details on how each individual Appendix should be formatted, see Section 4.2.6 below.

4. Structure and Technical format of Written Assignments

4.1 General Information on structuring written assignments

The basic structure of a written assignment should contain the following parts:

1. Introduction that for example sets the context and significance of the topic creates interest and sets the tone for the paper.
2. Material and methods that informs the reader of the possible data and methods of analysis that you have used in your paper.
3. The actual body of writing that presents the transition from introduction to the development of your ideas with supporting documentation.
4. Conclusion that ties together the writing by presenting possible research results and discussing and summarizing the main points of the paper.

Each of these individual parts of the paper can include one or more chapters that are marked in the Table of Contents with separate chapter and subchapter headings. The list of references and the possible enclosures, figures and tables should come after these main parts.

Additionally to these basic parts of the paper one should remember to use a cover page, number each page after the first, and write on one side of the paper only.

4.2 General guidelines for formatting written assignments

4.2.1 Spacing, Fonts and Margins

Even though each Faculty and Department may have slightly differing recommendations for formatting their assignments, here are some general guidelines for formatting written assignments:

- *Spacing: Unless otherwise requested, in the main assignment text, one should use a 1,5 line-spacing format. The only exceptions to this are for the Table of Contents; Abstract and List of Reference sections, where a line spacing of 1,0 must be used.
- *Font: Usually written assignments are written with the "Times New Roman" font and the letter size is 12. Additionally one should use the "Justification" format to align the text to both sides of the page, and to leave margins in the top, bottom, right and left side of the page.
- *Margins: The width of the margins can vary a little, but generally one should reserve 2 to 3 cm on each side of the page for margins. The guidelines, for example in sociology say that margins in the top, bottom and right side of the page should be about 2-3 cm, and the left margin should be at least 3 cm. For International Relations assignments, the margins are usually 2.5 cm or 3 cm on each side. When writing a Pro-Gradu Thesis, the left margin of the work must be at least 3 centimetres, and the top, bottom, and right margins should be at least 2 centimetres (but no more than 3 cm).

4.2.2 Paragraphs

Generally each paragraph should be separated from the previous paragraph. In some departments such as Sociology an indent is used in the beginning of a new paragraph, except for the paragraph beginning immediately after the main or subheadings. In others such as International Relations, an indent is not commonly used, but one must leave an empty row between paragraphs. In general one should however leave two empty rows between the end of a paragraph and the beginning of the next main heading, and one empty row between a heading and the paragraph beginning after that.

4.2.3 Page Numbering

One must remember to use a page numbering system on all written assignments, where the placement of page numbers is on the bottom or top right-hand corner of each page. Although one begins to count the number of pages from the first page of an assignment (cover page), the numbering should not be displayed on the Cover page or the Table of Contents -page. As the actual text of an assignment begins after these two sections, then the page numbering should begin thereafter. As an example, if one has a cover page and a Table of Contents -page, then the page number 3 will appear on the third page. Page numbers should continue throughout the text, including the List of Reference -pages. The page numbering of any Enclosures (a.k.a. Appendix or Annex) can be written by hand if it is not technically possible to do so with the word processor.

4.2.4 Headings

Written assignments are structured with headings with a number before each heading: 1, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc. Please note that there should be at least two headings of equal level: if you start with a subheading 1.1, then it should be followed by subheading 1.2. In between those there can of course be lower subheadings like 1.1.1 and 1.1.2. Note that each chapter with a main heading number (1.; 2.; etc.) should start from a new page.

4.2.5 Tables, Diagrams, Graphs, and Pictures

Tables, diagrams, graphs and pictures are very common parts of a written assignment, and as such, these objects must always be numbered accordingly in sequential order. Typically, in addition to the individual number, *table* objects are labelled Table and all other objects (i.e. diagrams, charts, graphs, pictures) are represented by using the term Figure. When including *tables* and/or *figures* in an assignment, it is essential that in the text one makes reference to every *table* and *figure* that is included. In doing so, references to tables and figures should be written using lower case letters and placed between brackets or parentheses (see example below).

As such, all *tables* and *figures* must also have a title. In providing a title to a *table* or *figure*, one should always attempt to write a full sentence, which if possible should be a short answer to the questions: what, where and when. As a general rule, the *figure* text is placed below the Figure, and the *table* text is placed above the Table. Normally when including any such object in ones text, one does not need to include the name of the person who has created it, as it is normally understood that it is from the person writing the assignment. However, if the *table*, *figure*, and/or the information they contain originates from another source, than the source must be identified either at the end of the title or at the bottom of the object (see example below). The only exception to this rule is with photographs, where the photographer's name and the date the photograph was taken must be given for all pictures included in an assignment.

When producing Charts or Graphs it is not recommended to use three dimensional / 3D representations if the data does not include a third dimension. That's because, although they are very beautiful, they can be deceiving and confusing for the reader.

For example:

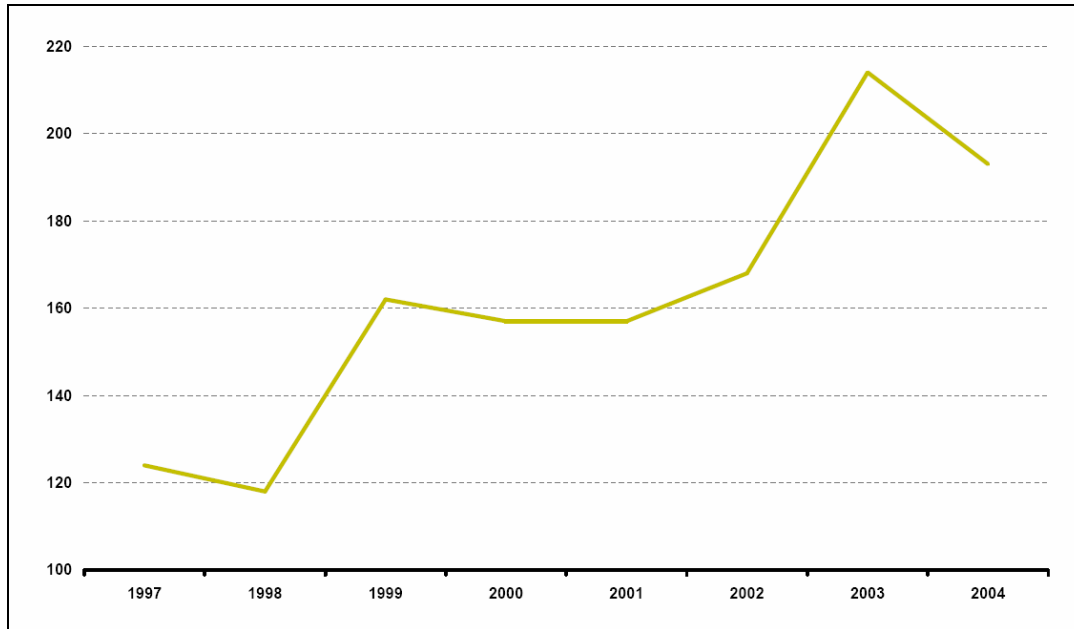


Figure 1. The number of new infringement cases brought before the Court of Justice (EU-15) between 1997 and 2004. Source: Eurostat / Court of Justice of the European Communities.

Table 2. The total number of new infringement cases brought before the Court of Justice by each member state (EU-15) during the period 1997 to 2004.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
EU (15 countries)	124	118	162	157	157	168	214	193
Belgium	19	22	13	5	13	8	17	13
Denmark	0	1	1	0	2	2	3	2
Germany	20	5	9	12	13	16	18	14
Greece	10	17	12	18	15	17	16	27
Spain	7	6	7	9	15	11	28	11
France	15	22	35	25	20	22	22	23
Ireland	6	10	13	14	12	8	16	3
Italy	20	12	29	22	21	24	20	27
Luxembourg	8	8	14	11	10	12	16	14
Netherlands	3	3	1	12	5	5	9	13
Austria	0	4	8	8	7	15	20	14
Portugal	15	5	13	10	7	10	10	7
Finland	0	1	:	4	3	1	6	8
Sweden	0	1	1	3	3	2	5	5
United Kingdom	1	1	6	4	11	15	8	12

Source: Eurostat / Court of Justice of the European Communities.

4.2.6 Appendix

As mentioned in Section 3.5 (above), Appendices are used when the incorporation of material in the body of the assignment would make it poorly structured or too long and detailed. The appendix may be used for helpful, supporting or essential material that would otherwise clutter and break-up the text and/or be distracting to the reader (see section 3.5 for examples).

Each individual object placed in the Appendices is entitled an Appendix, and each appendix must have a number or letter prefix that are kept in sequential order (i.e. Appendix 1; Appendix 2; / Appendix A; Appendix B; etc.). Equally, each Appendix must be cited (referred to) in the body of the text, for example: 'details of the questionnaire are given in Appendix B [on page 23]'.

Each Appendix must have the following structure and formats:

-
- Each must have a heading entitled **APPENDIX**, which is written in capital letters followed by a letter or number (e.g. **APPENDIX A**; **APPENDIX 1**). The heading must be placed in the Centre of the page, and formatted in **Bold**.
 - Each appendix must begin on a new page.
 - Appendices (if used) must be listed in the table of contents.
 - The page number(s) of any and each appendix will follow on from the body of the text.
 - Appendices may precede or follow the reference list.
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5. Citing References

5.1 General Information

A central element of academic writing is the use of references, and all written assignments must follow standard conventions for the citing of reference sources. The purpose of references is to reveal the origin of, for example, an idea, theory or a fact. References also help the reader to find more information on the topic by checking the reference. Further more, the reader must be able to identify which part of text is the author's/student's own analysis, discussion or information based on his/her own research, and which part of information is from other sources such as books or articles. Therefore the students must include a reference into the text whenever the information presented originates from a written or other identifiable source. The only time when a reference is not necessary is when the piece of information is something that is commonly known to the perceived readers of the text (i.e. the information is general knowledge or a commonly agreed fact in a particular field of discussion).

All books and articles listed in the list of references must have been used in the written assignment and a citation in the text is needed for all of them. In this respect, direct quotes used directly from a reference source should always be marked with quotation marks.

Academic dishonesty such as plagiarism is an extremely serious offence and will subject the student to disciplinary action. It is plagiarism to quote another's words or ideas without referring to them. Also incorrect documentation, failure to cite ones sources altogether or simply relying way too heavily on external sources is considered as plagiarism. The students will receive a failing grade for any paper with plagiarized work. If a student plagiarizes an entire paper, he/she will be failed from the entire course. Depending on the severity of the misconduct, the student can temporarily be expelled from the university or receive a written warning from the Rector of the University of Lapland. For visiting and exchange students, the most serious cases of misconduct will be notified to the home institution of the student. Further references on different forms of plagiarism are available in *Appendix 1* at the back of this document.

5.2 Quoting Text from a Book: "The usual case"

A reference note can be placed in the beginning of a sentence or in the very end of a sentence. It should include the name of the author of the book / article, the year when it was published and the pages where the information can be found. Page numbers are divided from the year of publication by a comma. If one quotes from *two pages*, one must indicate both page numbers. In case one quotes from *two separate parts* of the book, one must also clearly indicate the page numbers. If there are *several* references from the same author during a particular year, one must use an alphabet to separate them. If a sentence or a paragraph is derived from several sources, one must include both sources in the text.

For example, in the text, at the start of a sentence: Keskitalo (2002, 44) argues that...
 Keskitalo (2002, 44-45) argues that...
 Keskitalo (2002, 44-46, 128) argues that...
 Keskitalo (2002b, 66) argues that... ..
 Keskitalo (2002, 66) and Young (1993, 44) argue...

OR in the text, in the end of a sentence: xxxxxxxx (Keskitalo 2002, 44).
 xxxxxxxx (Keskitalo 2002, 44-45).
 xxxxxxxx (Keskitalo 2002, 44-46, 128).
 xxxxxxxx (Keskitalo 2002b, 66).
 xxxxxxxx (Keskitalo 2002, 66; Young 1993, 44).

The book in the list of references:
 Keskitalo, Carina (2002): Constructing "the Arctic" – Discourses of international region-building. Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis 47. Lapin yliopistopaino. Rovaniemi.

The only case when page numbers can be left out of the reference note is when the particular reference relates to the whole volume of the book/article in question. In this case there is no comma between the name of the author and the year of publication.

For example, in the text, at the start of a sentence: Keskitalo (Keskitalo 2002) argues...

OR in the text, in the end of a sentence: xxxxxx (Keskitalo 2002).

In the list of references the book itself should be marked as indicated above.

5.3 Quoting Edited Books

An edited book consists of chapters, each of them written by a different author or a group of authors. Usually one (or several) of the writers is the editor of the book. Some chapters may be written especially for that particular edition, but they may also be scientific articles that have already been published before. Edited books are valuable sources of information in the sense that individual chapters are often authored by specialists.

In the case of edited books, the name of the editor is used as the reference, not the title of the book.

For example, in the text, in the end of a sentence: xxxxxxxxxxxx (Horn 1996).

OR in the text, in the start of a sentence: Horn... (Horn 1996)

In the list of references edited books are to be marked alphabetically like any other book reference.

Sometimes a book or a report has no editor. In this case the reference can include the title of the book or two to three first words of the title if it is very long.

For example, in the text, in the end of a sentence: xxxxxxx (The Arctic Nuclear Challenge 2001).

OR in the text, at the start of a sentence: According to the Arctic Nuclear Challenge (The Arctic Nuclear Challenge 2001, 15)... .

In the list of references, these types of books and reports should be marked alphabetically like any other written source of information.

If one is referring to a specific article in an edited book, use the name of the author of the article in the reference note.

For example, in the text, at the start of a sentence: According to Gutsol & Riabova (2002, 320-326)...

OR in the text, in the end of a sentence: xxxxxxxxxxxx (Gutsol & Riabova 2002, 320-326).

With publications originating from different ministries or other organisations, for example, the name of the ministry can serve as the reference if no author to the text is stated.

For example, in the text, at the end of a sentence: xxxxxx (Minedu 1996, 22).

In the list of references: Minedu (1996): Report. Ministry of Education. Helsinki

The main thing is that the reader can locate the reference in the list of references with the information given in the text. If the references note states, for example EC 1997, the publication referred to should be found under the same abbreviation in the list of references, and not from European Commission, for example. Also keep in mind that used abbreviations should be explained in the list of references.

5.4 Quoting Sentences and Paragraphs

Additionally to clear marking of ones reference notes, one should remember that there are some specific rules in quoting sentences and paragraphs.

*If the reference points at *one sentence only*, it should be included in brackets at the end of the sentence before the full stop.

For example: Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985 (Sakwa 1996, 3).

*When the reference note points *at the whole paragraph* it is usually positioned at the end of the paragraph. If the reference note points at *several sentences within a paragraph* it should be placed after the last of those sentences. Please note the location of the full stops in the following example:

For example: Richard Sakwa gives a comprehensive account of Russia's post-communist political development. His analysis also includes a thorough discussion on federalism in Russia today. (Sakwa 1996, 175-183.)

*If the publication you are referring to has *several authors*, the reference note should include both surnames.

For example: xxxxxxxxxxxx (Eräsaari & Rahkonen 1975, 26-27).

Please note that when referring to these authors in the text write Eräsaari and Rahkonen instead of the &-sign.

*If the publication has more than two authors, one should in quoting use the surname of the first author together with a et al- mark. In the list of references all the names of the writers should however be included in the order they can be found in the book or an article.

For example, in the text: xxxxxxxxxxxx (Kotler et al 1996).

In the list of references: Kotler, Philip, Armstrong Gary, Saunders, John & Wong, Veronica (1996): Principles of Marketing. The European Edition. Prentice Hall Europe. Hertfordshire.

*If the same sentence or paragraph is derived from several sources, they all should be listed in the reference note in chronological order and separated by a semi colon.

For example: xxxxxxxxxxxx (Järvelä 1997; Järvelä & Kuvaja-Puumalainen 1998).

5.5 Other Important Things to Remember when Quoting

*For the sake of clarity one should always write the whole reference note [for example (Sakwa 1996, 66)] instead of using "ibid." when referring to the same publications more than once.

*The reference note can begin with a "See:" if the reference includes more thorough or specific information on the subject and the text that the reference is pointing at *has more of your own thoughts*.

For example, in the text: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (See: Sakwa 1996, 245-250).

*The reference note can also begin with a "cf." if one wants the reader to compare ones ideas to same issues from a different perspective written by another author.

For example, in the text: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (cf. Sakwa 1996, 66).

*If the source referred to has not yet been published, it can in the text be referred to as (Young, no date). If the source has been accepted for publication it can be referred to as (Young, forthcoming 2004). Be as specific about the information given about these publications in the list of references as possible.

*If one uses a direct quotation from another author but wants to leave something out from the middle of the sentence, one can use [...] at the place of the text one have left out.

For example: ... as Carina Keskitalo (Keskitalo 2002, 1) says: " [...] the Arctic has largely been conceived of as a polar region – The high Arctic where polar bears roam ".

*Internet sources are to be used in the same manner as other written sources. The primary reference should be to the author of the text. Also be sure to mention the date when the information was retrieved from the web as well as the URL-address in the list of references.

*The use of direct quotes should be reserved to situations that show support for ones own arguments directly from the source.
[OR Use direct quotes *only* to show support for own arguments directly from the source.]

*Do not quote without identifying and introducing the quotation and saying something about the quotation.

*Keep in mind that one can also use footnotes in ones text if one wants to explain something in more detail than in the actual text.

6. Academic Writing in English

6.1 General notes on writing and how to get started

Writing an essay, written exam, a lecture journal etc. is always a process that requires a fair bit of practice and work. Tasks such as writing, taking a written exam or speaking before an audience may make one anxious or apprehensive. It is, however, good to remember that a moderate level of anxiety can also be helpful and make one more productive.

As with any task, the main thing with written assignments is to get started. A simple task like choosing a topic may sometimes seem like an insuperable challenge. With the help of simple techniques such as journalistic questions (who? what? where? when? how? why?) or written/verbal brainstorming, one can easily pin down some ideas to be explored and to even connect them into sub-topics. After that the next step is to discard the most bizarre and irrelevant ideas and to focus on those ideas that seem to imply a basic point of view that can further be explored and develop into an argument in the assignment.

If these types of techniques do not seem to help one to get started, then some good tips can be found online from online writing lab such as:

[<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>]

or

[<http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/MasterToc.html>]

Both of these internet sites also include a variety of information and tips on questions relating to such topics as writing concerns, English as a second language, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and how to edit ones text. On both sites, students can also find advice on how to acknowledge different types of sources in ones text. This being said, the students should always keep in mind that while studying in a Finnish university they must, above all, follow the instructions given to them by their academic professor or course tutors or follow the overall examples on citations, written assignments' format and technical structure in this booklet.

The next most important thing after starting the actual writing is to decide who ones audience is. As ones audience will influence ones choice of vocabulary, sentence structure, and even the kind of evidence one uses to support ones argument. A good idea might be to narrow ones audience down to ones course including the professor, classmates and future professor, and the research community in ones field be it English, Education or Biology. In most cases the students would also be well advised to bear in mind the preferences of the tutor, as well as the requirements of the assignment.

Keep in mind that writing in a second language (such as English) can be an unexpectedly demanding and time consuming task. Paying attention to the content and the technical structure and layout of ones paper, the students should also keep in mind that editing (such as grammar and accurate spell checking) may take a surprisingly long time. After the actual writing, editing might not seem as important, but remember that a well-laid out and correctly spelled paper is a positive advertisement for a student. With this in mind, students are advised to reserve some time for spell and grammar checks before submitting their assignments.

6.2 Some notes on language

6.2.1 Spelling and language

As a general rule, written assignments should be properly written so as to effectively convey the intended meanings of the work. Hence, students are asked to pay attention to the language used, as the level of coherent in ones work can greatly influence the final grade for a written assignment. In other words, if the reader cannot understand what the student is saying, then his/her point will not be made. Therefore, to develop one language skills and to help one avoid the most common spelling mistakes in English, there are several sources (in libraries and on the Internet) one can access. For example, the British Council grammar web-site which thoroughly explains the common areas of English grammar and where you could even test your proficiency level:

http://www.learningenglish.org.uk/grammar_home_frame.html

Within Finnish universities (state institutions), the preference is that UK English be used for spelling and grammar. However, if one chooses to us US/American English, then its use must be consistent.

6.2.2 Verb tense and active versus passive voice

Social sciences and humanities normally use present tense: "I analyze"; "This paper examines" etc. Conversely, past tense is usually used only in technical or scientific papers to describe experiments performed and results found: "We placed the sample", "the test proved" etc. This is a general rule, but whichever verb tense one prefers, stick with it and be consistent in writing.

Different academic disciplines, and different instructors within those disciplines, have varying attitudes to the use of the personal pronoun. Even though the passive voice is useful under certain circumstances, it is often actually better to use the active voice instead.

6.2.3 Punctuation and other common grammatical errors in English

The comma is a useful and valuable punctuation tool because it separates the structural elements of a sentence into manageable pieces. Unfortunately, the use of comma also is one of the most common grammatical errors in English written assignments. To avoid the basic comma mistakes one should at least remember that:

1) Independent clauses cannot be joined by a comma:

We are not allowed to take our cell phones to the exam, that privilege is reserved for supervisors. [THIS IS WRONG]

We are not allowed to take our cell phones to the exam, because that privilege is preserved for supervisors. [THIS IS CORRECT]

We are not allowed to take our cell phones to the exam. That privilege is reserved for supervisors. {THIS IS CORRECT}

2) One should avoid the so-called run on sentences that include two or more independent clauses without a conjunction or proper punctuation:

Two suspects were arrested last week one of them was a cripple. [THIS IS WRONG]

Two suspects were arrested last week; one of them was a cripple. [THIS IS CORRECT]

Two suspects were arrested last week, and one of them was a cripple. [THIS IS CORRECT]

To learn more about and practice the basic punctuation rules one can for example go to:

http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/grammar_home_frame.html

or

<http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/GramPunc.html>.

6.2.4 Other grammatical rules to keep in mind while writing in English

Like punctuation, also irregular verbs, irregular plurals, the agreement between a verb and its subject and the agreement between a pronoun and its antecedent are errors that commonly appear in English written assignments. To avoid some of the most common mistakes one should keep in mind that:

1) A verb must always agree in *number* with its subject:

A group of well dressed youth *are* approaching the cafeteria. [THIS IS WRONG]

Because the subject of the sentence is *group*, not *youth*, the sentence should actually read:

A group of well dressed youth *is* approaching the cafeteria.

To find out more about the basic rules of verb and subject agreement see for example

<http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/SentSVAgr.html>.

2) A pronoun must always agree in number, person, and gender with its antecedent noun¹, and it should have a clear antecedent:

John told his father that his car would not start.

The captain threw some floatable items overboard for the sailor, even though he saw that the rescue boat was already on its way to save him.

To learn more about the basic rules of pronoun agreement see for example

<http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/SentProAgr.html>

3) Some very basic nouns like a *phenomenon*, *medium*, *criterion* and *crisis* have exceptional plurals that one simply sometimes forgets. To be sure one has got ones correctly see for example

<http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/SentNounStr.html>

4) Surprisingly many basic verbs such as *read*, *choose*, *write*, and *come* have irregular tenses. To check how well one knows ones see a verb list at

<http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/SentProAgr.html>

¹ Antecedent is the noun to which the pronoun refers to

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-----*Narrowing Your Essay Topic*. <<http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/EssayNarrowTopics.html>>.

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APPENDIX 1

What is Plagiarism? – A short guide to recognise and avoid it

Most of the plagiarism committed by students is accidental and mainly due to their ignorance about what constitutes plagiarism. If one does not know exactly what plagiarism is, one cannot avoid doing it. This short guide is intended to illustrate what plagiarism is in all its forms.

There are several different types of plagiarism: 1) Copy and Paste plagiarism; 2) Word switch plagiarism; 3) Style plagiarism; 4) Metaphor plagiarism; and 5) Idea plagiarism.

1) Copy and Paste plagiarism is:

- Copying text directly from the Internet, printed material, manuscripts or any material produced by
- Copying texts or any printed material, manuscripts or other material produced by other people
- The use of direct translation from other languages without proper references to the original.

To avoid copy and paste plagiarism one must use quotation marks and cite the author and article any time one uses a sentence or significant phrase from a source.

2) Word switch plagiarism is:

- Copying text from a source, only making minor changes to it. Such changes include switching word order or using synonyms.

To avoid word switch plagiarism one must use quotation marks and cite the author and article any time one uses a sentence or significant phrase from a source.

3) Style plagiarism is:

- The use of a source or an author's reasoning sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph just by paraphrasing the content.

To avoid style plagiarism one must use the source material only to emphasize the point you make.

4) Metaphor plagiarism is:

- Copying the metaphors of another author to ones own article. (For instance if one cannot come up with ones own metaphor to illustrate an important idea, one can use the metaphor in the source material, but give the author credit for it.)

To avoid metaphor plagiarism one must remember to give credit to the original author of the metaphors.

5) Idea plagiarism is:

- Presenting another author's ideas as ones own without giving credit to the original author.

To avoid idea plagiarism one must remember to give credit to the author of the idea. For information of general knowledge, no credit is needed. If one is not certain whether the idea is general knowledge or not, one should name the author. Here "General knowledge" refers to any idea or solution that people in the field accept as general knowledge.

Source: Dr. Cecilia Barnbaum

