

Instructions for writing an academic paper

The structure of an academic paper may vary but generally it should have three phases:

- **Introduction:** Here the purpose of the paper must be stated and an outline of the main arguments should be given, as well as an introduction to the main cited literature.
- **Body of the paper:** Here the main points of the paper should be detailed and discussed, remembering always to reference correctly any information that is not your own. All points must be supported with evidence from the literature.
- **Conclusion:** In this section the main conclusions of the paper are described and summarised. No new information should be brought forward in this section.

An academic paper should be written in proper academic language, references should be marked in the text and on the last page there should be a list of references.

Cover page

The cover page should contain the name of the student, the name of the professor(s), the title of the paper, the university, the department and the subject title and code along with the date.

Font size: 12

Spacing: 1.5

Style: Times New Roman

Margins: left 4cm, right 2cm, top and bottom 2.5cm

Numbering

Page numbers should be clearly printed on the top right corner of each page. Numbering should begin from the cover page but should only be printed from the second page of the introduction onwards (if introduction has only one page then after the introduction).

Headings

The spacing on all headers should be adjusted so that there is adequate space above and below the text of the header. For example two lines above and below the headings. As regards to subheadings it is less strict as long as the chosen style is used throughout the paper.

Tables and figures

As regards tables and figures there is also a unified set of rules of presentation. Each table should be numbered, given a name and/or a short description, and a reference (if the table is taken from somewhere else and reproduced in the paper at hand). The name of the table should be typed in capital letters, and should be followed by a name and/or description with single line spacing. The body text inside the table should be formatted with font size 11.

References and plagiarism

The issue of plagiarism is one, which is taken very seriously in our programme. Plagiarism refers to the process of taking someone else's ideas and writings and presenting them as your own. It is important for the programme to state their opinion on the issue of plagiarism clearly: Plagiarism is not acceptable in any form. If such conduct is noticed the consequences can be very severe.

It is of the utmost importance that the references, both in the text and in the reference list at the end of the paper, are correctly cited. You will find, in Optima, detailed instructions on the layout of an academic paper, including clear notes on writing references. These instructions should be carefully followed in the writing of all academic papers submitted during your studies at the faculty.

Types of references

1) Indirect citation

a) Summarised presentation of the idea

b) Paraphrase (presentation of the referred information in writer's own words)

2) Direct citation (i.e. a quotation)

Style of the reference

1) Writer-centred reference: the original writer is introduced and often his/her research examined.

2) Matter-centred reference: the original writer is not introduced.

Marking the references

Making the appropriate marks of references requires accuracy. The place of a dot defines to where the reference refers. The form of a reference depends, for example, on the number of authors or whether the reference has been referred to earlier. In the following only the basic rule concerning the place of the dot is presented.

1) Referring to one sentence

John McDowell states that the natural world is structured on both the facts of the first nature as well as meanings attached to these in the second nature (McDowell 1998, 174).

2) Referring to two or more sentences or to a whole paragraph

These phenomena appear differently to us than to the members of the community we study because we are watching them from an exterior and objective point of view. This independence from the community's values does not mean that it would be free from meaning output. (Lévi-Strauss 1997, 440.) OR (Lévi-Strauss 1997, 440)

When referring to two or more sentences or to a whole paragraph the dot should be placed either inside the brackets or left out totally. Both options are correct but it is important to use the same style throughout the paper. If the same source is referred to two or more times in a row on the same page the abbreviation "Ibid" is used instead of writing the name of the author and year of publishing several times. If the citation is direct the cited text must be separated with quotation marks.

References in the list of references

Articles

In a journal:

The information needed in reference to an article in the order of appearance:

1. Last name of the author(s)
2. First letter of the author's first name
3. Year of publication

4. Name of the article
5. Name of the journal
6. Volume (if applicable)
7. Issue
8. Pages

An example of a journal article:

Pickle, J. 1985. Toward teacher maturity. Journal of Teacher Education, vol. 36 (4), 55-59.

Article in a compilation

The information needed in reference to an article in the order of appearance:

1. Last name of the author(s)
2. First letter of the author's first name
3. Year of publication
4. Name of the article
5. Name of the editor: First letter of the first name, surname (editor)
6. Name of the compilation
7. City of publishing
8. Publisher
9. Pages

An example:

Karisto, A. 1988. Sport and lifestyles. In E. Sironen (ed.) Towards new sport culture. Jyväskylä: Gummerus, 43-74.

Books

The information needed in reference to a book:

1. Last name of the author
2. First letter of the author's first name
3. Year of publication
4. Name of the publication
5. Edition (if applicable)
6. City of publishing
7. Publishing company

An example:

Cunningham, W., Saigo, B. 1999. Environmental science: A global concern. (5th ed.). New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies.

Electronic reference

An article that is available online:

Sjöholm, K. 2003. From Special Boards to Recreation Administration. Available in www-format: ><http://www.kuntaliitto.fi/opetus/nuoriso/kuntaeri.html>< 28.5.2003*.

Reference to a website:

Language Center of University of Jyväskylä.

<http://kielikompassi.jyu.fi/main.php?d1=10&d2=13&d3=668>. Referred to 19.4.2006*.

*The date when the reference was made