

Writing Guide

assembled by
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University of Rochester
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These pages, based largely on *The Chicago Manual of Style* and the University of Rochester History Department's writing manual, is a guide to commonly accepted conventions governing citations, usage, and editing. For more suggestions and additional information, consult Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), Henry M. Sayre, *Writing About Art*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), William Strunk and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, (New York: Macmillan, 1979), and Xia Li and Nancy B. Crane, *Electronic Style: A Guide to Citing Electronic Information* (Westport, CT: Meckler, 1996).

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1. Writing the Paper

i. Use of Words or Numerals

In general, write as words all whole numbers from one to nine and use numerals for all numbers 10 and over. Never begin a sentence with a numeral, but rather write the number out as a word.

ii. Dates

Be consistent in writing dates: use either 24 July 1994 or July 24, 1994, but not both. Spell out centuries in lowercase letters (the twentieth century) and hyphenate them when used as adjectives modifying a noun (twentieth-century modernism). Decades are usually written out without capitalization, but it is becoming acceptable to express them in figures (the 1980s or the '80s). Whichever form you use, be consistent.

iii. Titles

Italicize titles of works of art, other than architecture: Michelangelo's *David*, van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, but the Empire State Building, the Brooklyn Bridge, the Palazzo Vecchio.

Italicize titles of books other than holy works: *Art and Illusion*, *The Odyssey*, Genesis, the Bible, the Koran.

Titles to be underlined include books, plays, long poems, pamphlets, films, radio and television programs, record albums, ballets, operas, instrumental music, ships, aircraft, and spacecraft.

Examples:

The Awakening (book)
Romeo and Juliet (play)
Wall Street Journal (newspaper)
Time (magazine)
It's a Wonderful Life (film)
Star Trek (television program)
The Nutcracker (ballet)
Rigoletto (opera)

Use quotation marks for the titles of works published within larger works (the article "Crime Rate Declines" appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*). Such titles include the names of articles, essays, short stories, short poems, chapters of books, and individual episodes of radio and television programs. Also use quotation marks for songs and for unpublished works, such as lectures and speeches.

iv. Quotations

While quotations are common and often effective in research papers, use them selectively. Quote only words, phrases, lines, and passages that are particularly interesting, vivid, unusual, or apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible. Whether you quote directly or

paraphrase in your own words, be sure to credit your sources. See section on “Footnotes and Endnotes” below, 2. ii.

In general, a quotation, whether a word, phrase, sentence or more, should correspond exactly to its source in spelling, capitalization, and interior punctuation. If you change it in any way, make the alteration clear to the reader, following the rules and recommendations explained below.

If a prose quotation runs no more than four typed lines and requires no special emphasis, put it in quotation marks and incorporate it in the text: Jackson Pollock said, “When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I have been about.”

Remember, though, that you need not always quote full sentences. Sometimes you may want to quote just a word or phrase as part of your sentence. Use brackets [] to enclose paraphrased material or pronouns or words you have supplied: As Pollock's action painting demonstrates, seeing “what I have been about” occurs in the process itself.

If a quotation runs to more than four typed lines, set it off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting the entire quotation five spaces from the left margin, and typing it single-spaced (unless otherwise instructed) without adding quotation marks:

When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of “get acquainted” period that I see what I have been about. I have no fears about making changes, destroying the image, etc., because the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through. It is only when I lose contact with the painting that the result is a mess. Otherwise there is pure harmony, an easy give and take, and the painting comes out well.

v. Ellipsis (three spaced periods...)

When you wish to omit a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph from a quoted passage, you should be guided by two principles: 1) fairness to the intent of the author quoted and 2) the grammatical integrity of your own text.

Original text from Vincent van Gogh:

In my picture of the Night Café, I have tried to express the idea that a cafe is a place where one can ruin oneself, run mad, or commit a crime. I have tried to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green. The room is blood-red and dark yellow, with a green billiard table in the middle; there are four lemon-yellow lamps with a glow of orange and green. Everywhere there is a clash and contrast of the most alien reds and greens in the figures of little sleeping hooligans in the empty dreary room, in violet and blue.

Text with ellipsis in the middle and end of the quote:

“I have tried to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green...a clash and contrast of the most alien reds and greens in the figures of little sleeping hooligans in the empty dreary room....” [ellipsis plus period]

vi. Punctuation with Quotations

Use a colon before a quotation if you formally introduce it, but either no punctuation or a comma before a quotation you integrate into the sentence.

Francis Bacon argued thus: “There is no excellent Beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.”

or

Francis Bacon thought “there is no excellent Beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.”

vii. Common Errors

The Apostrophe:

To form the possessive of a name, add 's even if the name already ends with a sibilant (-s, -x, -cks, -z):

El Greco's colors

Rubens's models

Velàzquez's subjects

Augustus John's sketches (last name is John)

Jasper Johns's recent work (last name is Johns)

Know the difference between its and it's: (it's = it is)

The sculpture extends into its space. (possessive)

It's an aggressive sculpture because it extends into the viewer's space. (it + is followed by the possessive form of viewer).

Subject/verb agreement:

The painting hangs in the Louvre. The paintings hang in the Louvre.

Comparative form

Many comparatives are formed by adding -er: harsh - harsher (not - more harsh)

blue - bluer (not - more blue) clear - clearer (not - more clear)

Active versus Passive Voice

Active voice creates clear and direct expression without the use of an auxiliary verb like “to have” or “to be.” Do not use the passive voice unless the action rather than the actor is to be emphasized. Make sure you're not avoiding the issue of who was acting.

Examples:

I will always remember my first visit to Egypt. (active)

My first visit to Egypt will always be remembered by me. (passive and weak)

Viewers at the Armory Show did not appreciate European abstract art. (active)

European abstract art was not appreciated by viewers at the Armory Show. (passive and weak)

European abstract art was presented to the public at large for the first time at the Armory show. (passive with an emphasis on the action)

Distinguish between people and other subjects:

Who and whom refer only to persons; which and that refer to animals and things.

I like the vase which/that appeared in the exhibit.

I like the ceramic artist who made the vase.

Avoid overuse of double dashes to insert a phrase into a sentence; in most cases commas are the appropriate punctuation.

This guide--from the Art and Art History Department--will help you to avoid needless errors. (too journalistic)

This guide, from the Art and Art History Department, will help you to avoid needless errors. (better)

2. Documenting Sources

i. Illustrations

If you use photocopied illustrations in your paper, collect them in order of your discussion at the end. In the text refer to each image consecutively: figure 1, figure 2, and so on (or fig. 1, fig. 2). Under each illustration you should provide a figure caption providing full information about the image.

For example:

Leonardo da Vinci, Mona Lisa, oil on panel, circa 1504, Paris: Louvre.

Dimensions, and number from a catalogue raisonné may be included if relevant.

For example:

Claude Monet, The Gare Saint-Lazare, 1877, 75 x 100 cm., W. 438, Paris: Musée d'Orsay

Follow any additional guidelines provided by your instructor.

ii. Footnotes and Endnotes

There are two different conventions governing footnotes and endnotes; be sure to ask your instructor as to which style he or she prefers, and then follow the prescribed format.

1. Chicago Manual of Style:

Footnotes contain the references in consecutive order at the bottom of the page and endnotes contain the references in consecutive order at the end of the essay but before the bibliography. Place foot/endnote numbers at the end of the sentence that contains the quotation you are documenting.

2. Social Sciences style:

This involves the use of an author's name and page numbers in parentheses in the body of the text with full references appearing only at the end of the paper in a bibliography. While some faculty in the Department of Art and Art history will accept this style, many do not. Ascertain before writing whether your instructor will accept internal references instead of footnotes or endnotes.

- First reference to a book:

1. Michael Levey, *Painting at Court* (New York: New York University Press, 1971), p. 134.

Abbreviate subsequent references:

____. Levey, p. 134.

If you cite more than one title by Levey then abbreviate the titles:

____. Levey, *Painting*, p. 138. to distinguish it from Levey, *Early Renaissance*, p. 85.

- Reference to a book in multiple volumes:

2. Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: His Life, Art and Times* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), II, 161.

- Reference to a book with more than one author:

3. John M. Rosenfield and Shujiro Shimada, *Traditions of Japanese Art* (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Museum, 1970).

- Reference to an edited or translated book:

4. *The Letters of Peter Paul Rubens*, trans. and ed. Ruth Magurn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 238.

- Reference to an article within a collection of essays:

5. Charles Pellet, "Jewellers with Words," in *Islam and the Arab World*, ed. Bernard Lewis (New York: Knopf, 1976), p. 151.

- Reference to an encyclopedia entry (Note: The “p.” is not included with page citations):
 6. Thomas M. Messer, “Picasso, Pablo,” *Encyclopedia Americana* 22 (1979), 67.
- First reference to a journal (convert volume numbers from Roman to Arabic):
 7. Anne H. van Buren, “Madame Cezanne's Fashions and the Date of Her Portraits,” *Art Quarterly* 29 (1966), 119.
 8. Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?,” *Art News* 69 (January 1971), 38.
- Reference to a review:
 9. Pepe Karmel, review of Calvin Tomkins, “Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of Our Time” (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), *New Republic* (June 21, 1980), p. 38.
- Reference to a newspaper:
 10. Bertha Brody, “Illegal Immigrant Sculptor Allowed to Stay,” *The New York Times* (July 4, 1980), sec. B, p. 12, col. 2.
- Reference to an anonymous entry in a newspaper:
 11. “Portraits Stolen Again,” *Washington Post* (June 30, 1990), p. 7, col. 3.
- Footnoting interviews, lectures, letters:
 12. Interview with Alan Shestack, Director, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, July 12, 1988.
 13. Howard Saretta, “Masterpieces from Africa,” Tufts University, May 13, 1988.
 14. Information in a letter to the author, from James Cahill, University of California, Berkeley, March 17, 1988.

iii. **Bibliography**

Many instructors require a bibliography even for a short paper so that they can see at a glance the student's source material. If the bibliography is extensive, it may be advisable to divide it into two parts, Primary Materials and Secondary Materials.

A bibliography is arranged alphabetically by author so the last name is given first; subsequent lines are indented. For more suggestions see Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997).

Various examples follow:

Caviness, Madeline Harrison. *The Early Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.

Rosenfield, John M., and Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis. *Journey of the Three Jewels: Japanese Buddhist Paintings from Western Collections*. New York: Asia Society, 1979.

Goldwater, Robert, and Marco Treves, eds. *Artists on Art*. New York: Pantheon, 1945.

Livingstone, Jane and John Beardsley. "The Poetics and Politics of Hispanic Art: A New Perspective." *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1991. 104-120.

- Two or more works by the same author:

Cahill, James. *Chinese Painting*. Geneva: Skira, 1960.

_____. *Scholar Painters of Japan: The Nanga School*. New York: Asia House, 1972.

- Reference to a periodical in a bibliography:

Mitchell, Dolores. "The 'New Woman' as Prometheus: Women Artists Depict Women Smoking." *Women's Art Journal* 12 (Spring/Summer 1991): 2-9.

- Bibliography Social Science Style:

White, J., 1973, "Measurement, Design and Carpentry in Duccio's Maestö," *Art Bulletin* 55 Pt. I, 334-66; Pt. II, 547-69.

_____, 1979, *Duccio: Tuscan Art and the Medieval Workshop*, London.

3. Evaluating and Citing Web Sites

This section contributed by the University of Rochester Libraries.

i. Evaluating Web Sites

1. First ask whether you should be using a web site for your research.

- Consider why you are using a web site rather than some other source.
- If the site provides information not available elsewhere or provides the information in a more convenient or up-to-date manner, then it may be worth using.

2. To determine if you should use a particular web site, ask yourself what your purpose is in using the site. If you are looking for accurate and authoritative information, consider the source of the information and ask the following questions (these questions will not give you an absolute answer as to the merit of the site, but they may help weed out unreliable sites):

- Is the creator of the site named and is that person an authority in the subject matter covered?
- Is the site sponsored by a university, a government agency, or some other organization likely to be a source of reliable information?
- Is the site sponsor likely to have no vested interest or prejudice concerning the material being presented? If there is a bias, does the site acknowledge it?
- Is the purpose of the site to provide information rather than to entertain or to advertise?
- Does the site offer documentation or bibliographic references for the material covered?
- Is the site carefully edited or is it full of mistakes (typographical and factual)?
- Is the site updated regularly--important if the information you are seeking must be current?
- Is the organization of the site clear and is it well enough developed that the information you are seeking is complete? (Web sites in early stages of construction may have significant gaps or completely change focus later on.)

3. Linked Sites

- If the site provides links to other sites, do those links work?
- Are the linked sites carefully selected and are they reliable according to criteria in no. 2?

ii. **Guides to Citing Web Sites and Other Internet Resources**

Information from a web source needs to be cited (with the full URL of the page on which the material appears) just like information from any other source. Citation styles for Internet resources, including web sites, are a recent development and still evolving. Book guides are the basic sources to use for citation styles, but web sites may update specific information. Be aware that some web sites with citation style guidelines are not kept current. The web

sites listed under Online Guides do update their style guidelines for Internet resources. Check with your instructor for the preferred citation style for your paper.

Book Guides (These are all available at Rush Rhees Reference and Carlson Reference):

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Gibaldi, Joseph. (1999). *MLA handbook for writers of research papers* (5th ed.). New York: Modern Language Association of America.

Li, Xia and Nancy Crane. (1996). *Electronic styles: A Handbook for citing electronic information* (2nd ed.). Medford, N.J.: Information Today.

Turabian, Kate L. (1996). *A Manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations* (6th ed. revised by John Grossman and Alice Bennett). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

University of Chicago Press. (1993). *The Chicago manual of style* (14th ed.). Chicago: Author.

Online Guides

American Psychological Association (1999). *Electronic Reference Formats Recommended by the American Psychological Association*, <<http://www.apastyle.org/eleceref.html>>, May 31, 2001.

Modern Language Association of America. (2000). *MLA Style FAQ*, <<http://www.mla.org>>, May 31, 2001.

NOTE: This is the only “authorized” site for MLA style and should be checked first. Other sites listed for MLA style cover additional formats not included here.

University of Memphis. Regional Depository Library Government Publications Department. (1997). *Uncle Sam--Brief guide to citing government publications*, <<http://www.lib.memphis.edu/gpo/citeweb.htm>>, May 31, 2001.

NOTE: The University of Memphis site provides information for citing all formats of government publications, including several sections covering electronic publications.

Greenhill, Anita. (1999). *Electronic references & scholarly citations of Internet sources*, <<http://www.spaceless.com/WWWVL>>, May 31, 2001.

NOTE: Greenhill's site is part of the World-Wide Web Virtual Library and provides current links to a variety of web resources on citation styles.

iii. People and Services

- Library Subject Specialists List helps you contact a librarian who knows about specific subject resources and can help you with your research.
- Ask a question online of any UR Libraries reference desk.
- Individual sessions with a librarian are available to help you with library research for term papers and other writing assignments.
- Term Paper Research Assistance at Rush Rhees Library for topics in the humanities and social sciences.
- Library Research and Writing Assistance at Carlson Library for topics in the sciences.

4. Proofing the Paper

Standard writing guides seldom mention the most important mechanical consideration -- proofreading. Because word processors have the ability to turn out a clean-looking page of type, check spellings and perform other routine chores, many students seem to think that these machines have eliminated the need for proofreading. However, computers only catch the obvious mistakes. They do not know the difference between words that sound alike but are spelled differently, such as “their” and “there.” By carefully reading over each draft, the author alone can make sure that everything is in order, even if it means correcting mistakes by hand at the last minute. A few handwritten insertions are greatly preferable to a seemingly impeccable copy that turns out, on closer examination, to be full of misspellings, typos, and grammatical mistakes. If you do not know how to spell-check or number pages by using your computer software, then you must be sure to perform these checks manually.

5. Revising the Paper

Questions to Ask Yourself When Revising an Essay:

(from Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, inside cover)

1. Have I studied the object with sufficient care so that I understand what qualities in it caused my initial response, and have I studied it with sufficient care so that I have deepened or otherwise changed that response?
2. Is the title of my essay at least moderately informative?
3. Is the opening paragraph interesting, and by its end, have I focused on the topic?
4. Is the work of art identified as precisely as possible (artist, material, location, date, etc.)?
5. Do I state my point (thesis) soon enough--perhaps even in the title--and do I keep it in view?

6. Is the organization reasonable? Does each point lead into the next, without irrelevancies and without anticlimaxes?
7. Is each paragraph unified by a topic sentence or topic idea?
8. Are generalizations and assertions about personal responses supported by references to concrete details in the work?
9. Are the sentences concise, clear, and emphatic? Are needless words and inflated language eliminated?
10. Is the concluding paragraph conclusive without being repetitive?
11. Are the dates and quotations accurate? Is credit given to sources? Are photocopies of works of art included and properly captioned?
12. Are the long quotations really necessary? Can some be shortened (either by ellipses or by summarizing them) without loss?
13. Has the essay been proofread? Are the spelling and punctuation correct? Is the title of the essay in proper form? Are the titles of works of art – other than architecture – underlined? If there are any footnotes, are they in proper form?

These pages compiled by the Department of Art and Art history and the Art and Music Library, University of Rochester, Fall 2001.