

FORMAL WRITING STYLE SHEET

Pts.	Rule
1	1. Avoid beginning a sentence with <i>and</i> , <i>there</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>or</i> , <i>nor</i> , <i>so</i> , or <i>yet</i> .
1	2. Do not switch point of view. (Example: That was the eeriest feeling I have ever had. You can't think of anything else.) [8-9]=Blue manual; {9-11}=White manual
1	3. Use <i>an</i> before words that begin with a vowel sound. [48-50] {55-57}
1	4. If words must be separated at the end of a line, do so only at syllable breaks; use a hyphen. [90-92] {97-99}
5	5. Run-on or Rambling Sentences: two sentences not properly separated. [45-48] {50-54} To correct use one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. . Capital letter b. ; c. , coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, for, nor, yet) d. make one independent clause into a dependent clause or phrase
5	6. Fragments: Make sure every sentence has a subject and a verb and is a complete thought. [42-44] {48-50}
2	7. Spelling errors [88-92] {95-97}
2	8. Commas: [57-64] {64-72} Commas <u>should</u> be used under the following conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. to set off direct quote in a sentence [62] b. around parenthetical expressions (Example: As for me, well, I prefer a good book.) [61-62] c. after introductory adverb clauses, phrases, or words [57-58] Examples: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After the policeman left, I... 2. On the way to the store, Mary... 3. Seeing his mother, the baby... 4. No, I do not... 5. The girls, having both bought the same dress, they... d. around a noun of direct address [62] e. around non-essential phrases, clauses, appositives f. before contrasting expressions [62] g. after interjections [62] h. in dates, addresses [62] i. between two adjectives if the word <i>and</i> can be used between the words or the can be reversed j. around adjectives following a noun Example: I bought a puppy, cute and frisky, before I... k. between items in a series [58] l. before <i>and</i> or other coordinating conjunctions when there is a sentence on each side [57] m. before an echo question (Example: Write Bobby, will you?)

Do not use commas in the following situations:

- n. between a subject and a verb
- o. between a verb and a completer (direct object, indirect object, etc.)
- p. before or after a series
- q. after conjunctions
- r. with two paired words, phrases, etc. linked by a coordinating conjunction unless the two items are sentences
- s. to set off a prepositional phrase within a sentence
- t. between an adjective and a noun

- 5 9. Comma Splice: This is the joining of two sentences with a comma rather than a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon. [45] {51}
- Example: Steinbeck writes about the common man, he experienced the lives of those he wrote about.

- 1 10. Semicolon: (;) [65-66] {72-74}
- Semicolons are used under the following conditions:
- a. to separate items in a series which have commas in them
 - b. to separate two complete sentences related in thought
 - c. no coordinating conjunction, separated by a conjunctive adverb or a transitional device

- 1 11. Colon: (:) [67-68] {74-76}
- Colons should be used as follows:
- a. to introduce a clause or statement that explains, restates, or proves the statement in the preceding clause
 - b. to mean "note what follows" or "the following"
- NOTE: When a list comes immediately after a verb or a preposition, do not use a colon.
- c. after a salutation of a business letter and other special situations
 - d. to introduce a quotation that is formal or lengthy

- 1 12. Periods: [75-76] {83}
- Periods are used in the following situations:
- a. end of a sentence
 - b. abbreviations
 - c. to show omission (...) ellipsis [78-79]
- If a period is included in the part omitted, use...

- 1 13. Question mark: use after a question [76] {83-84}

- 1 14. Capitalization: [81-83] {88-90}
- a. Do not capitalize seasons or directions.
 - b. In a title, do not capitalize prepositions, articles, or conjunctions unless they occur as the first or last word. Subtitles follow the same rules.
 - c. Do not capitalize school subjects except languages, proper adjectives, and numbered courses.
 - d. Do capitalize proper nouns and the word at the beginning of a sentence.
 - e. When outlining, capitalize the first word of each line and proper nouns.
 - f. Do not capitalize common nouns or other parts of speech.
 - g. Capitalize *God* and religious words but not *gods*.
 - h. Capitalize holidays.

- 1 15. Possessive Punctuation: [69] {76-77}
- boy's book – one boy owns the book
 - boys' books – more than one boy and more than one book
 - Alan and Bruce's boat – one boat
Alan's and Bruce's boats – two boats
 - week's news; ten dollars' work
 - Yours, ours, hers** and other possessive pronouns do not need apostrophes.
- 1 16. Pronouns: [22-24, 32-40] {25-27, 36-44}
- use of nominative or objective case
 - agreement with antecedent [32-34]
 - no antecedent
 - vague or ambiguous
 - reflexive pronoun
 - who** and **whom** [39]
 - who, which, that** – **which** only refers to things; **who** and **that** refer to people [24]
 - Indefinite pronouns, **someone, each, everybody, etc.**, are treated as singular; **all, any, or some** may vary depending on the noun or pronoun they refer to. [22-23]
- 1 17. Verb Tense: [9-10, 29-31] {10-11, 33-35}
- Do not shift from past to present tense without a reason. [9-10]
 - Use a past participle with *have*.
 - Check for the correct sequence of tenses.
 - In an *if* clause, use *had*, not *should* or *would*.
- 1 18. Subject – Verb Agreement [21-25] {24-28}
- 4 19. Confusing Words and Usage Errors: [196-206] {210-220}
- Below are examples of some of the most common errors.
- good* – adjective; *well* – adverb [200]
 - lie* – intrans. v. to recline or rest on a surface; *lay* – trans. v. to put or place [26-27, 202]
 - accept* – v. to receive; *except* – prep. excluding [196]
 - affect* – v. to influence; *effect* – n. result, v. to bring about [196]
 - among* – three or more items; *between* – two items [197]
 - passed* – past tense of pass; *past* – belonging to a former time [203]
 - imply* – to suggest or state indirectly, hint; *infer* – draw a conclusion [201]
 - amount* – use with a singular word, refers to a quantity that cannot be counted; *number* – refers to a plural word [197]
 - fewer* – use with plural words, refers to items that can be counted; *less* – use with singular words, refers to general amounts [200]
 - there, their, they're* [204]
 - its, it's* [201]
 - to, too, two* [205]
 - where, were*
 - your, you're* [206]
 - by, bye, buy*
 - are, our*

NOTE: Many other confusing words and easily misused words are included in the *Glossary of Usage* in A Pocket Style Manual. This rule applies to any of those words, not just those mentioned here.

- 1 20. Awkward wording [2-3] {2-3}
- 1 21. Repetitious (redundant) wording [2] {2}
- 1 22. Double negative [201; see *hardly*] {215}
- 1 23. Poor word choice for context
- 1 24. Poor sentence variety [14-16] {16-18}
- 1 25. Clause is incorrectly used with a preposition. Example: There are several types dresses in which a person may choose.
- 1 26. Slang, jargon, discriminatory, offensive, or inappropriate language should be avoided. [16-19] {18-22}
- 1 27. Keep items in a series parallel. Follow a pattern using the same grammatical structure. [5-6] {6-7}
- 1 28. Misplaced or dangling modifier [11-13] {13-15}
Wrong: Coming into town, the house is on the left.
Correct: The house is on the left as you come into town.
- 1 29. Title Punctuation [72, 86-87] {80, 93-94}
 - a. *italics* or underlining – book titles, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, long poems, plays, films, television programs, radio programs, musical compositions, choreographic works, works of visual art, comic strips, software, web sites
 - b. "quotation marks" – newspapers and magazine articles, poems, short stories, essays, songs, episodes of television and radio programs, chapters or subdivisions of books
- 1 30. Dash/slash – use sparingly [76-77, 79] {84-86}
- 1 31. Parentheses – use sparingly [77-78] {85}
 - a. use to say "this is only an aside" or to de-emphasize
 - b. Within a sentence, use no capital letter or end punctuation unless a question mark is needed.
 - c. Within a paragraph, use capital letters and end punctuation.
 - d. When using an unfamiliar abbreviation throughout a paper, write the full name followed by the abbreviation in parentheses at the first mention of the name. The abbreviation alone may be used from then on.

- 1 32. Brackets – use to enclose editorial additions to quoted materials [78, 115-16] {85- 86, 121}
- 1 33. Numbers [85-86] {92-93}
- Spell out numbers of one or two words.
 - Use figures for numbers that are more than two words when spelled out.
 - At the beginning of a sentence, spell out the number or reword the sentence.
 - For dates, addresses, percentages, statistics, etc., check the rules in A Pocket Style Manual.
- 1 34. Punctuating Dialogue [71-75] {79-82}
- "A...," said Joe. "Did...?" asked ...
 - Joe said, "A..."
 - "A...," Joe said, "but..."
 - "A...," Joe said. "Then..."
 - Commas and periods always go inside the quotation marks – even if the quotation marks are around words or phrases. [72]
 - Semicolons and colons go outside the quotation marks. [73]
 - Question marks and exclamation marks vary. Look at what part of the statement is the question or exclamation. [73]
 - Change paragraphs when speakers change.
 - Single quotation marks go inside double quotation marks when quoting quoted material.

2 35. Paragraphs should be 5 (or more) sentences – 8 or more words per sentence.

2 36. No contractions (can't = cannot, don't = do not, they're = they are, etc.)

2 37. No abbreviations [83-85] {90-92}

2 38. No 1st or 2nd person point of view [8-9] {8-9}

<u>1st person</u>	<u>2nd person</u>	<u>3rd person</u>
I me my	you your	they them their themselves
mine myself	yours	it its one oneself
we us our	yourself	he him his himself
ours ourselves		she her hers herself

2 39. No opinion phrases – I think, I feel, I believe
 It is *your* paper; I know it is *your opinion* without you saying so.
 Do not use:
 I feel this attitude displays the corruption in society during this time period.

Use:
 This attitude displays the corruption in society during this time period.

2 40. Use active voice, not passive voice [3-5, 32, 206] {4-5, 220}

Example:

Passive: A plan of attack was constructed by the military officers.

Active: The military officers constructed a plan of attack.

- 2 41. No elementary or informal words or wording (*below are some examples*)
- Words: a lot lots
 big good
 very
- Wording: Well, ...
 This paper is about...
 This paper will cover...
 In this paper...
- 3 42. Thesis statement errors [106-107] {113-114}
- missing required elements (e.g. author's name, book title, points of interest, etc.)
 - does not appear in the assigned location (e.g. last sentence of the first paragraph)
 - Thesis statements on the outline and in the introductory paragraph should match exactly.
 - No thesis restated in the conclusion paragraph; not word for word
- 3 43. Citation Errors
- missing or misplaced punctuation
 - missing information
 - incorrect information included
- 1 44. Title Page
- Set margins at 1 ½ " on the left and 1" on all other sides.
 - Paper title is centered and typed in upper and lower case letters two inches from the top of the page.
 - By is centered and typed in upper and lower case letters four inches from the top of the page.
 - Student's name is centered and typed in upper and lower case letters two lines below the By line.
 - Typed (single spaced) in upper and lower case letters and centered on the last three lines of the title page should be the following:

Submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements
of English 11
7 September 2006
 - The date is the due date of the paper and do not abbreviate the month.
- 1 45. Outline Page
- Type the paper title in upper and lower case letters and centered two inches from the top of the page.
 - Type *Thesis statement*: and then the thesis statement two lines below the title. Begin on the left margin. Any additional lines after the first line of the thesis should line up under the first letter of the beginning of the actual thesis statement. The thesis statement is single-spaced.
 - Begin typing the outline two lines below the thesis statement.
 - The outline should be single-spaced.
 - Do not use "Introduction" or "Conclusion" as major divisions of the outline.

- f. Remember that there cannot be an A. without a B. or a 1. without a 2.
- g. Capitalize the first word in each heading and any other proper nouns.
- h. Number the outline page one inch from the bottom, centered – ii
- i. If a second outline page is needed, number it with – iii – centered, one inch from the bottom of the page.

- 1 46. Paper Identification Errors (on the first page of the paper) [138, 140] {149, 151}
 - a. student name
 - b. instructor's name
 - c. course title (English 11)
 - d. due date – 7 September 2006

- 3 47. Paper Title Errors (on the first page of the paper) [138, 140] {149, 151}
 - a. title should be centered
 - b. title should be typed in upper and lower case letters
 - c. title should match the title on the title and outline pages

- 3 48. Margin Errors (3 points per page) [138] {149}
 - a. 1" top
 - b. 1" bottom
 - c. 1" right
 - d. 1 ½" left
 - e. right margin is not justified

- 2 49. Pagination Error [138, 140-141] {149, 151-152}
 - a. upper right corner, ½" below the top edge
 - b. student's last name and page number
 - c. To format the page numbers:
 - i. Be sure to begin on the first page of the actual paper.
 - ii. In Word, go to Insert, then Page Numbers.
 - iii. Position should be "Top of the Page"; alignment should be "Right."
 - iv. On the 1 at the top of the page, double click.
 - v. In the box that appears, place the cursor in front of the 1.
 - vi. Type your last name and a space. Click Close.

- 5 50. Double Spacing – paper should be double-spaced (5 points per page) [138, 140] {149, 151}

- 1 51. Paragraph Indentation – One tab [138, 140] {149, 151}

- 2 52. Quotes [112-121, 138, 140] {115-127, 149, 151}
 - a. quote types incorporated as required per assignment (e.g. novel quote required)
 - b. number of required quotes included (e.g. three quotes required or no more than five quotes per paper)
 - c. long quotes incorporated correctly

- 1 53. Typing Errors [138, 140-141] {149, 151-152}
- a. one space after words, commas, colons, semicolons, etc.
 - b. one or two spaces after periods, questions marks, and exclamation points
 - c. no orphan or widow lines (one line of a paragraph left at the bottom of a page or at the top of a page by itself)
- 1 54. Visuals [139] {149-150}
- a. labeled and identified correctly
 - b. placed correctly in the text (instructor may give special instructions)
- 1 55. Works Cited Page [139,141] {137-148, 150, 152}
- a. last page of the paper (unless an appendix is required) and numbered accordingly
 - b. title – Works Cited – is typed and centered correctly on the top 1" margin
 - c. alphabetized by the last names of the authors or editors; if there is no author or editor, alphabetize by the first word of the title other than *A*, *An*, or *The*.
 - d. entries need to be punctuated correctly.
- 3 points
- d. Do not indent the first line of each entry in the list, but indent any additional lines of each entry five spaces.
 - e. double-space throughout
 - f. use the correct format for the source type [127-137]
 - g. available information is missing in the entry
- 5 points
- h. entry is included in works cited but not used in the text of the paper
 - i. entry is included in the text of the paper but not included in list of works cited
- 20 56. Presentation
for the
- a. All parts of the paper are turned in and in order.
 - i. Title page
 - ii. Outline page
 - iii. Paper/paragraphs
 - iv. Works Cited page
 - b. Printer quality is excellent.
 - i. No smeared ink.
 - ii. Ink is dark enough to be easily read.
 - c. 12 font
 - d. Times New Roman
 - e. Black ink (When necessary, corrections to final papers should be made neatly with white-out and black pen.)

MLA Update 2009

In Summer 2008, the Modern Language Association released its third edition of the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, which publicly unveiled modifications to MLA Style for the upcoming year.

These changes go into effect April 2009 with the release of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th edition). The OWL's new MLA 2009 Guideline resources are [here](#). General paper formatting (margins, headings, etc.) and in-text citations will remain the same, but all Works Cited style entries will be different from the 6th edition guidelines.

The Purdue OWL will begin listing these changes in all our MLA resources in April 2009. Until then, here are some of the more noteworthy changes to look forward to:

- **No More Underlining! Underlining is no more.** MLA now recommends italicizing titles of independently published works (books, periodicals, films, etc).
- **No More URLs!** While website entries will still include authors, article names, and website names, when available, MLA no longer requires URLs. Writers are, however, encouraged to provide a URL if the citation information does not lead readers to easily find the source.
- **Continuous Pagination? Who Cares?** You no longer have to worry about whether scholarly publications employ continuous pagination or not. For all such entries, both volume and issue numbers are required, regardless of pagination.
- **Publication Medium.** Every entry receives a medium of publication marker. Most entries will be listed as Print or Web, but other possibilities include Performance, DVD, or TV. Most of these markers will appear at the end of entries; however, markers for Web sources are followed by the date of access.
- **New Abbreviations.** Many web source entries now require a publisher name, a date of publication, and/or page numbers. When no publisher name appears on the website, write N.p. for no publisher given. When sites omit a date of publication, write n.d. for no date. For online journals that appear only online (no print version) or on databases that do not provide pagination, write n. pag. for no pagination.

MLA 2009 Sample Entries

Before the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th edition) arrives, refer to the following preview. Each entry highlights changes in the new edition.

Book

Book citations remain largely the same except for the addition of the medium of publication, Print, at the end of the entry.

Carré, John le. *The Tailor of Panama*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. Print.

Scholarly Publication (Journal)

Regardless of pagination, all scholarly publication citations include both volume and issue numbers. End citations with the medium of publication, *Print*.

Aldrich, Frederick A. and Margueritte L. Marks. "Wyman Reed Green, American Biologist." *Bios* 23.1 (1952): 26-35. Print.

Online Periodical

Online periodicals include both the name of the website in italics and the website publisher. Note that some sites will have different names than their print formats, such as ones that include a domain name like **.com** or **.org**. If *no publisher* is listed, use *N.p.* to denote no publisher name given. Follow with date of publication, *Web* as medium of publication, and date of access.

Lubell, Sam. "Of the Sea and Air and Sky." *New York Times*. New York Times, 26 Nov. 2008. Web. 1 Dec. 2008.

Cohen, Elizabeth. "Five Ways to Avoid Germs While Traveling." *CNN.com*. CNN, 27 Nov. 2008. Web. 28 Nov. 2008.

Online Database Scholarly Journal Article

Cite online journal articles from an online database as you would a print one. Provide the database name in italics. Library information is no longer required. List the medium of publication as *Web* and end with the date of access.

Berger, James D. and Helmut J. Schmidt. "Regulation of Macronuclear DNA Content in Paramecium Tetraurelia." *The Journal of Cell Biology* 76.1 (1978): 116-126. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Nov. 2008.

Online-only Publication

For articles that appear in an online-only format or in databases that do not provide a page number, use the abbreviation *n. pag.* for *no pagination*. End the citation with the medium of publication, *Web*, and the date of access.

Kessl, Fabian, and Nadia Kutsche. "Rationalities, Practices, and Resistance in Post-Welfarism. A Comment on Kevin Stenson." *Social Work & Society* 6.1 (2008): n. pag. Web. 10 Oct. 2008.

Online Scholarly Project

Online scholarly projects appear italicized. Difficult-to-find projects may be listed in quotation marks with the website name and domain in italics. Publication location and date follows. *Web* medium of publication and date of access end the entry.

Kline, Daniel T., ed. *Geoffrey Chaucer Online: The Electronic Canterbury Tales*. U of Alaska Anchorage, 30 Jul. 2007. Web. 2 Dec. 2008.