

Research Paper Formatting Guidelines

Most college courses go beyond course content alone and help you develop general skills that will benefit you throughout life. This course is no exception. Being able to present information in an organized manner according to a standard format is such a skill. A hand-written missive scrawled on the backside of a fast food carry out bag is simply not going to cut it later in life. Few would even accept a submission of that sort. And it would be a disservice to you if I did. And so there is a standard format for research papers and all written work in this course.

General Specifications	
Length	3-5 Typed Pages Minimum, Plus Reference Page
Spacing	Double-Spaced
Margins	One Half Inch - Right, Left, Top and Bottom
Font Size and Color	12 or 14 Point, Black or Blue
Font Style	Times Roman, Arial, Other Standard Formats
File Format	.PDF, .DOC, .DOCX, .ODT, .RFT
References	3-5 Sources Minimum (Wikipedia Not Acceptable) American Psychological Association (APA) Style
Tables, Graphs and Figures	Insert In Text, Not At End
Page Numbering	Optional
Cover / Title Page	None
Abstract	None
Running Head / Footer	None

Beyond these general specifications (which differ on some points) you should adhere to American Psychological Association (APA) Style for all aspects of formatting. Most importantly your references, both the complete reference list at the end and those within the text of your paper, must adhere to APA Style. APA Style is the format required for articles submitted to psychological journals for publication and is also used in a number of other scientific disciplines. An APA Style guide is posted on my webpage, as well as a guide comparing the differences between MLA and APA Style.

You may submit your paper by emailing it as an attachment, saving the file on a USB flash drive for transfer or by submitting a printed copy. If submitted electronically it must be in one of the file formats specified (they can be universally read by virtually any computer). Do not merely email a link to your paper requiring download from an internet storage site. The option to submit your papers electronically means that, "I don't have my paper because my printer didn't work" is no longer a valid excuse. And since computers are available for your use on campus, "I don't have my paper and couldn't email it to you because my computer was down" is not a valid excuse either. Five points will automatically be deducted from research papers submitted after they are due. And remember that it's always a good idea to **save a backup copy**

of your paper. Also be sure to **save a backup copy of your paper.**

What should you include in your papers? Put the title of the paper, your name and the date at the top of the first page. The paper itself should be three to five typed double-spaced pages of twelve or fourteen point font text, that's approximately 1000-1500 words. A final page listing your references should follow. If the paper runs long or requires more references that is fine. Insert relevant tables, graphs, figures, and so forth when applicable. However, graphics will not reduce the word requirement. The overall design is to begin with a paragraph or two introducing your topic, followed by the main body of information, ending with a paragraph or two devoted to your conclusions. The individual research paper assignments for each unit provide additional specific information. You can work with a partner and each of you will receive the same points earned. I will not intervene in any disputes between you and your partner.

Of particular concern is referencing your paper properly. Certainly a good deal of your paper will consist of your own observations, interpretations, and conclusions. However, that should be tied to outside sources that you have read and critically assessed. In science it's important to tie your ideas and research to previous findings. That's how science generates a body of knowledge in a particular area. This is especially true regarding experimental research. Any assumptions, hypotheses or predictions made prior to an experiment must be based on previous research or theory. And your conclusions should be related back to previous findings. So at various points in your paper you will need to paraphrase or quote from sources and cite those sources as you do so. Put simply, anything that is not your own words or your own ideas must be credited to the appropriate source. Keep in mind that it is generally fairly easy to tell if some item mentioned is statistical, specialized or theoretical information that must have come from an outside source. If you try to pass off another person's work or ideas (whole or in part) as your own that is plagiarism. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a score of zero. Refer to the section on academic honesty from the college catalog and appended to this handout for further specifics. If you're not sure if you should reference a particular piece of information **it is best to err on the side of caution and reference it.** On the flip side, when merely expressing your own personal opinions, views or experiences you should make it clear that that is all they are. Presenting these as the product of legitimate research is not acceptable either.

How exactly should you cite your sources? At the end of your paper provide a complete reference list of all sources used with long form APA citations. Include as much detailed information as possible including author(s), date, article or chapter title, journal or book title, page numbers, Internet address and so forth. This list should provide enough information so that anyone could find your sources to verify the information you've provided or discussed. Within the paper use short form APA citations. Cite the author(s) and date of publication for any piece of information, whether paraphrased or quoted, whenever used in your paper. The idea is that anyone reading your paper should be able to figure out which of your sources you're referring to when used in the paper. There should be an **exact correspondence between the long form citations in the reference list and the short form citations in the paper.** Anything cited in the reference list should actually be cited in the paper itself at least once, and anything cited in the paper should be cited in the reference list. The APA Style guides posted on my webpage should help in determining how to cite particular sources. But depending on the nature of the source, you may have to take your best guess on what is appropriate. It's also a good idea to download or print a copy of all sources used in your paper for future verification or reference. Don't assume they will always be accessible.

What does not constitute a legitimate source? Random quotes are not the same as citing a source. A quote may dress up the paper, and the source should be cited to verify accuracy, but it will not necessarily count toward your minimum number of required references. A blog is simply random thoughts, observations, recollections, opinions and so forth that someone decided to publish online. As there is no critical scientific review a blog is not a legitimate source. Religious texts are not appropriate to a scientific research paper and should not be used to exemplify a point, support an argument or defend a position. Merely cutting and pasting from a news summary of some research and adding it to your paper is not acceptable. You should obtain a copy of the original research article and assess it yourself. Wikipedia articles are not legitimate sources because the content is not reviewed prior to posting. Anyone can post anything to Wikipedia, and you can't tell what is legitimate and what is not. Bogus information is eventually removed, but perhaps days or even weeks after the original posting. And so you cannot cite Wikipedia articles in your paper.

What does constitute a legitimate source? Above all else the research articles that you cite should be specifically relevant to your research paper. There should be more than a vague, tangential link between your sources and what you discuss in the paper. Your references should directly tie in to what you are describing, analyzing or discussing. So pick and choose from the articles you read when deciding which to actually include in the paper. Valid, legitimate, and accredited sources include the textbook, my handouts (cite as lecture notes or personal communication), other non-fiction books written by knowledgeable authors and articles from accredited journals. Accredited journals are where scientific research and theoretical articles are published. The articles are reviewed by a board of editors (well versed in the field) in order to insure accuracy and credibility. Be critical of scientifically based magazine or newspaper articles or the online equivalent. These will often oversimplify or leave out critical details, and sometimes be nothing more than hype or misinformation. Find the original sources they discuss to get the real facts. Presumably most of your sources will come from the Internet. Look for sites with '.edu' '.gov' or '.org' suffixes rather than '.com' or '.net'. The former are more likely to be legitimate sites. Scientific journals will list the members of its editorial review board and the articles usually will provide reference lists. These things indicate that the article has been critically assessed by experts in the field and that the authors are supporting and verify their claims. Note that known legitimate sources may lead you to others. For instance, your textbook has an extensive reference list of all the sources used in its creation as do most legitimate articles.

Make every effort to use legitimate sources of information, but that doesn't mean you won't be fooled. There is a great deal of less reputable stuff out there. That's okay because another reason for providing references is that the person reading your paper can look up your sources to assess validity. And yes, I might do that. In general, personal, commercial, and political websites are not good sources of information. Going on the assumption that if somebody bothered to type it then it must be true is not what we call critical assessment. However, a less reputable site can sometimes be used as a jumping off point by providing ideas and insights that may help direct your search for information and legitimate sites.

Five points will automatically be deducted from research papers submitted after they are due. Three points will automatically be deducted for each reference that you are lacking short of the minimum requirement. So if your paper only cites two sources you lose three points. If it only cites one you lose six points. If no references are cited you lose nine points.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty is required of all students. Plagiarism—to take and pass off as one’s own work the work or ideas of another—is a form of academic dishonesty. Penalties may be assigned for any form of academic dishonesty. Questions or clarification as to how to include the ideas and statements of others or how to avoid other forms of academic dishonesty should be discussed with your instructor to avoid unintentional academic dishonesty.

ACADEMIC HONESTY/ DISHONESTY POLICIES

Your instructors are eager to help you succeed in your studies at Cuyamaca College. But success means more than just receiving a passing grade in a course. Success means that you have mastered the course content so that you may use that knowledge in the future, either to be successful on a job or to continue with your education.

Your success depends on a combination of the skills and knowledge of your instructors and your own hard work. You will reach your future goals only if you gain new knowledge from every course you take. That knowledge becomes yours, and can be used by you only if it is gained through your own personal efforts. Receiving a grade in a course without acquiring the knowledge that goes with it diminishes your chances for future success.

While in college, you are also shaping the principles which will guide you throughout the rest of your life. Ethical behavior and integrity are a vital part of those principles. A reputation for honesty says more about you, and is more highly prized, than simply your academic skills. For that reason, academic honesty is taken very seriously by the Cuyamaca College faculty. The following guidelines have been prepared so that you will understand what is expected of you in maintaining academic honesty.

1. Academic dishonesty is normally dealt with as an academic action by the instructor, reflected in the student’s grade in the particular course rather than through college disciplinary procedures.
2. No specific departmental, divisional or institutional procedures are established for academic dishonesty other than the normal process for review and appeal of an instructor’s grading procedures.
3. Other disciplinary procedures (e.g., dismissal, suspension, etc.) will be used only if the student disrupts the class or is

otherwise abusive or threatening or violates any other college policy.

4. Academic dishonesty is defined as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work by the use of any dishonest, deceptive or fraudulent means. Examples of academic dishonesty would include but not be limited to the following:

- a. Copying either in part or in whole from another’s test or examination;
- b. Discussion of answers or ideas relating to the answers on an examination or test when such discussion is prohibited by the instructor;
- c. Obtaining copies of an exam without the permission of the instructor;
- d. Using notes, “cheat sheets,” or otherwise utilizing information or devices not considered appropriate under the prescribed test conditions;
- e. Altering a grade or interfering with the grading procedures in any course;
- f. Allowing someone other than the officially enrolled student to represent the same;
- g. Plagiarism, which is defined as the act of taking the ideas, words or specific substantive material of another and offering them as one’s own without giving credit to the source.

Options may be taken by the faculty member to the extent that the faculty member considers the cheating or plagiarism to manifest the student’s lack of academic performance in the course. One or more of the following actions are available to the faculty member who suspects a student has been cheating or plagiarizing:

1. Review – no action.
2. An oral reprimand with emphasis on counseling toward prevention of further occurrences.
3. A requirement that work be repeated.
4. A reduction of the grade earned on the specific work in question, including the possibility of a failing grade or no credit for the work.
5. A reduction of the course grade as a result of item 4 above including the possibility of a failing grade for the course, if a failing grade for the work produces such a result.
6. Referral to the office of the Associate Dean of Student Affairs for further administrative action, such as a failing grade for the course, suspension or expulsion.