Freie Universität Berlin
Otto-Suhr Institute
Department for European Integration – Jean Monnet Chair

How to write a term paper?

Aim of a term paper

Demonstration of the ability to solve and present an academic problem with the use of plausible references.

Structure

1) Title Page (name, address, semester, name of the course, teacher of the course)
2) Table of Contents (including page numbers)
3) Introduction (formulation of the problem, academic impact, approach)
4) Main Body (consistent argumentation)
5) Conclusion (resume of results, knowledge gain, implications)
6) References

Introduction

WHAT?   What is the problem? Clarify: what is the dependent and independent variable?

WHY?   Why is this problem (academically) relevant?

HOW?   How is the problem approached? What kind of theories will be used? How is the argument structured? What will be discussed in the chapters?

Main Body

= discussion of the problem, e.g.

- Demonstration of the theory
- Definition of concepts
- Formulation of hypothesis
- Operationalisation of variables (dependent and independent variable)
- Empiricism = empiric evidence

Conclusion

- Summary of argumentation and results
- What kind of knowledge was gained?
- What does this resulting knowledge implicate?

Advice!

- Do not overstep or undercut the pre-set scope of the paper
- Proofread orthography, grammar and punctuation
- Avoid very long sentences
- Check page numbers

Strictly forbidden

DO NOT PLAGIARISE (i.e. do not copy anyone's paper) - Plagiarism causes serious consequences!

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How to cite?

WHY?

An academic paper must be accountable.

HOW?

- Direct vs. indirect quotation
- American quotation vs. footnote quotation

Direct quotation (word-for-word)

"text text text" (author, year, page) = The text is cited word for word

If you want to cite paragraphs or long sentences, highlight paragraph by centring it. Nevertheless, try to avoid this technique in general. Instead, try to paraphrase.

Indirect quotation (paraphrasing)

text text text (author, year, page) = paraphrase the ideas of the author in your own words -> no word-for-word quotation

American quotation

One author: text text text (Name 1, year, page)

More than one author (e.g. two authors): text text text (Name 1, Name 2, year, page)

➔ References must be listed completely in bibliography.

Footnote quotation

text text text[1]

➔ **Footnote (see below)** = complete reference - do not cite just the author, year and page

Advice

It is better to use the American quotation than the footnote quotation, because you just use one kind of footnotes – adding extra information. Thus, your paper is structured more clearly.

References (bibliography)

Only cite references that were used in the paper!

- Sort names alphabetically
- If you cite an author more than once, sort these references by year.
- If you cite an author more than once in the same year, add a and b to the year (e.g. 2014a, 2014b). This must be done in the paper **and** the bibliography.
- If you cite two to four authors, order alphabetically, separate names by comma and put "and" before the last name (e.g. Mill, Smith, Johnson and Jordan).
- If you cite more than four authors, only mention the first author and replace the other ones with "et al." (e.g. Smith et al.)

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[1] **footnote**