



Rules of Thumb: Writing in the Core at Patrick Henry College¹

Formatting Guidelines

Always follow the instructions for specific assignments, as required by the individual instructor. Some instructions may differ from the following list of formatting guidelines, which are based on Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style. Consult *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. by Kate Turabian for further information or details.

- *Title page.* Do not include a title page for papers less than five pages; put your name, class and section, and the date single-spaced in the upper right corner of the first page instead. Include a title page when required by the instructor or when the paper is longer than five pages.
- *Title.* If there is a title page, no title is needed on page 1 of a short paper. But if the title is repeated on page 1 (that is, because there are intervening pages), it must be exactly the same as on the title page—same wording, same formatting. Titles are first-level headings, usually centered, bold, no italics or quotation marks, 12-point font. Most papers in the humanities avoid the use of subheadings, especially for shorter papers. Instead, use transitions within the text of the paper to indicate topic shifts and order.
- *Page numbers.* All papers longer than one page should have page numbers in the upper right corner. Title pages are not numbered; numbering starts with the first page of text.
- *Fonts.* The default font for Microsoft Word is Times New Roman, but other fonts may be used so long as they are similar in size and look professional. Size may need to be adjusted to appear similar to Times New Roman's 12-point size. Avoid mixing fonts within a document.
- *Line spacing.* All papers should have double-spaced main text. Footnote text should be single-spaced within and double-spaced between each note.
- *Block quotations.* For quotations of five or more lines of text, indent the left margin one tab (1/2"), single-space the quotation, and double-space above and below the quote. Do not use quotation marks. The right margin remains flush with the rest of the text.
- *Page margins and other spacing.* Use 1" margins all the way around the page. Indent the first line of each paragraph one tab (1/2"). Do not insert extra space between paragraphs. Insert one space after final punctuation of sentences.
- *URLs.* Do not include active hyperlinks in a paper unless the work is to be posted online. Many word processing programs, including MS Word, automatically turn URLs into hyperlinks as you type. You will need to disable the feature by right-clicking on the link, then selecting "Remove Hyperlink."

¹ "Rules of Thumb" guidelines are largely adapted from *A Handbook for Research and Writing* by G. T. Smith ©2006.

General Guidelines on Using Sources

- It is important to evaluate sources carefully for their value in academic writing. Look for and use sources that are written by authorities in a particular field, and assess the credibility of the authority (i.e., the author's professional background, how well he has supported claims, etc.). *Credible* means “meets a minimal standard of reasonableness and reliability.”
- When consulting secondary sources, use only scholarly or academic sources for your papers at PHC. A *scholarly* work is a work (monograph or professional journal, for example) by an author credentialed in the subject of the work, writing in his field or a related field for a scholarly or expert audience. See Turabian and PHC's CLA201 course for more information on distinguishing between scholarly sources and popular sources. Be especially careful with Internet sources. Avoid general sources like Wikipedia and general encyclopedias.
- The PHC library provides valuable assistance in locating, using, and citing reliable sources. Do not hesitate to seek advice and guidance from the library staff.
- Follow the *Golden Rule of Citation*: **Cite whenever you use another person's information, research, words, or ideas directly.** Failure to cite a source correctly may constitute plagiarism. Permissible exceptions include common knowledge, commonplace phrases, class materials when the instructor permits such use, conversations, and well-known works. Always cite quotations; place the citation number directly after the closing quotation mark, no matter if the quotation ends within the middle or at the end of the sentence.
- *Plagiarism* may take a variety of forms. Impermissible violations of the Golden Rule of Citation are intellectual dishonesty. Such dishonesty may take the form of:
 - Failing to cite a verbatim quotation.
 - Rephrasing the words of another without acknowledging the original source.
 - Failing to cite the source of information that you did not originate or that is not common knowledge.
 - Failing to cite an idea or argument that comes from another source.
 - A close paraphrase or imitated principle of arrangement for which the source is not cited.
 - A citation that is inaccurate or does not clarify what information comes from another source.
 - Other kinds of intellectual dishonesty (such as resubmitting the same paper for two different classes) are addressed in the PHC Catalog and on the syllabus for each course.

Conventions of Quotation

- The essential rule of quotation is to reproduce the words of the quoted source exactly, including spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. See Turabian for some minor exceptions to this rule.
- *Punctuation*. Use quotation marks to enclose shorter quotations; remember periods and commas go inside the quotation marks, while semicolons and colons go outside. Mark any omissions with ellipses (. . .) and any necessary additions with brackets [].
- *Block quotations*. Short quotations should be incorporated into the text of the paper, but longer quotes—five or more lines of text—should be set off as block quotations. Indent each line from the left margin as far as you indent the first line of a paragraph (keep the right margin flush with the rest of the paper) and use single-space for the text. Double-space above and below the quotation. Use *no* quotation marks, unless there is a direct quote within the block quotation. Font size should remain the same as that used in the rest of the paper. See Turabian for more details on block quotations.
- *Poetry*. If quoting poetry, either format as a block quote, dividing the lines exactly as they appear in the original, or, if quoting just a few lines, incorporate them into the paragraph of the paper, but use slashes (/) to show where the lines are divided in the original poem.

- *Secondary source of quotation.* Where possible, avoid using secondary sources of quotations (“quoted in”). Try to find and cite the original source of a quotation. However, if you do need to use a secondary source, include as much information from the original as you can along with the bibliographic information from the secondary source.

Conventions of Citation

While some disciplines may prefer other citation systems, the Turabian/CMS is the preferred citation style used in all core courses at Patrick Henry College except Constitutional Law. The CLA201 Research & Writing teaches details of Turabian citation, but here are a few brief guidelines. There are two formats for citations in Turabian, *Notes-Bibliography* and *Author-Date-Reference List*. The former is more common, so only that format is given in the examples below. Many more examples can be found in Turabian.

Footnotes, which can be automatically formatted in MSWord, should be single-spaced with two returns between footnotes. Use Arabic numerals for the footnote numbers. Indent the first line as you would a paragraph (indenting before the number), and use the same style font as your text; generally footnotes are the next smaller size than the text font. Full information must be given the first time a source is cited, while subsequent citations can use a shortened reference (e.g., author’s last name and page number). Bibliography entries should be listed alphabetically, single-spaced, double-spaced between entries; use hanging indent.

Book. Note that the footnote contains the author’s name (first name, then last), the title of the book, publication information in parentheses, and page number for the specific note. The bibliography entry provides the same information, except the author’s last name is given first, and minus the specific page number. Please note that, though the content is similar in both a footnote and bibliography, the formats (including punctuation, exact content, and order of content) differ.

Footnote: ¹David Aikman, *The Mirage of Peace: Understanding the Never-ending Conflict in the Middle East* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 2009), 79.

Bibliography: Aikman, David. *The Mirage of Peace: Understanding the Never-ending Conflict in the Middle East*.
Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 2009.

Journal Article. Note that the exact page number(s) for the citation are given in the footnote, while the bibliography entry contains the page numbers for the whole article.

Footnote: ¹Daniel J. Mahoney, “1968 and the Meaning of Democracy,” *The Intercollegiate Review* 43, no. 2 (2008): 9.

Bibliography: Mahoney, Daniel J. “1968 and the Meaning of Democracy.” *The Intercollegiate Review* 43, no. 2 (2008): 4-13.

Online Journal or Magazine.

Footnote: ¹Hernando de Soto, “Bringing Capitalism to the Masses,” *Cato’s Letter* 2, no. 3 (2004): 4, <http://www.cato.org/pubs/catosletterv2n3.pdf> (accessed 19 February 2005).

Bibliography: de Soto, Hernando. “Bringing Capitalism to the Masses.” *Cato’s Letter* 2, no. 3 (2004): 1-6. <http://www.cato.org/pubs/catosletterv2n3.pdf> (accessed 19 February 2005).

Essay or Chapter in an Edited Work

Footnote: ¹Gene Edward Veith, “Renaissance,” in *Reading the Classics with C. S. Lewis*, ed. Thomas L. Martin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2000), 107.

Bibliography: Veith, Gene Edward. “Renaissance.” In *Reading the Classics with C. S. Lewis*, ed. Thomas L. Martin, 105-122. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2000.

Style and Usage

The standard reference for issues of style and usage is *Elements of Style*, by Strunk and White, though the newest edition of Turabian has a good deal of style, grammar, and usage information as well. However, several principles of composition are given below as reminders.

- Almost all writing for core classes at PHC should use formal diction, including omission of contractions, slang, incomplete sentences, etc.
- Paragraphs should consist of a sentence that suggests the topic or, in persuasive writing, that asserts a point. The paragraph should present support for the validity of that point and provide analysis of the support, weaving it into a coherent argument that arrives at a conclusion. Provide logical transitions from one paragraph to the next.
- When possible, use active voice.
- Use specific, concrete language, relying on meaningful nouns and verbs rather than adverbs and adjectives. Do not overuse “to be” verbs.
- Omit needless words (e.g., “the fact that”).
- Express coordinate ideas in similar forms, using parallel grammatical structure.
- Use consistent verb tense.
- Subject and verb should agree in tense and number. Be especially careful regarding subject-verb agreement when words or phrases intervene.
- Pronouns should agree in number with their antecedents. Be especially careful about pronoun agreement when words, phrases, or sentences intervene between the antecedent noun and any subsequent pronouns.
- Avoid overly long sentences. Students earn no special awards for sentences that run to four lines of text. Overly long sentences tend to become confusing, and students often try to fix the confusion by throwing in ill-advised commas and semi-colons. Do not discriminate against cogent sentences.
- Conversely, avoid a long string of short, choppy sentences. Overuse of such sentences, without transitions and without the cadence of longer sentences interspersed, makes writing choppy and inelegant.
- Awkwardly worded sentences ruin essays. Sometimes the problem is not a specific mechanical error (like a misplaced comma) but rather mangled syntax. Identify poorly worded sentences by reading your essay out loud to yourself.
- Get into the habit of carefully proofreading all of your writing, even informal writing in e-mails, etc. The computer’s spell check does not catch everything. Errors, even typographical errors, detract from the content of your writing and the brilliance of the thought behind it.
- Use quotation marks with titles of articles, italics with titles of books, movies, and plays.