



Europa-Universität  
Flensburg

# M.A. European Studies

## Academic Writing Guide

Academic Writing Appendix  
Conclusion Criticism  
Paragraphs Creativity  
Linking **Analysis** Ideas  
Citation Quotes **Plagiarism**  
Formatting Hypothesis Introduction  
Argumentation **Words**  
Research Question  
**Coherence**

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This booklet provides a general overview of the rules and guidelines for academic writing. Further, it lays down the format and style of academic papers suggested by the M.A. European Studies programme at the Europa-Universität Flensburg.

It presents the relevant rules regarding the format and documentation within academic work in order to guarantee the formal consistency of the writing.

## 1. Structure and Parts of an Academic Paper

Academic work to be submitted at the university should include the following elements:

### 1. Cover page

- Title, university, supervisor, student's name and matriculation number, date, words/pages
- Example:

<h1>Title</h1> <h2>Subtitle</h2>	
Europa-Universität Flensburg	
M.A. European Studies	
Course: XX	
Lecturer: XX	
Name	
Student ID	
Date: XX	
Words: XX	

## 2. Table of contents

- Presents the structure of the paper
- Example:

### Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	p. 1
2. Theoretical/Conceptual Background.....	p. X
3. Empirical Analysis.....	p. X
3.1.Sub-chapter 1.....	p. X
3.2.Sub-chapter 2.....	p. X
4. Conclusion.....	p. X

Bibliography

Appendix

## 3. Contents (the actual paper)

1. Introduction
2. Main part (theory & case analysis)
3. Conclusion



Do not forget to include the research design of your paper!  
Depending on its length, it can be a paragraph within your introduction or a separate chapter following the introduction.

## 4. Bibliography

## 5. Appendix (if applicable)

*The academic paper itself should always contain three parts:*

**1. Introduction:**

- Catch the reader's attention
- Declare the topic
- Reveal the purpose and present the main problem: research question
- Present the concept and plan of your paper

**2. Main part:**

- Literature Review
- Theoretical/conceptual Background
- Connection of findings and theory: support your argumentation with a relevant theory or concept
- Argumentation, backed by proper sources: approve or disapprove with your statement/thesis in a logical fashion
- Take the reader by the hand; make him understand your point of view
- Stay focused on your research question
- Consider different sources and indicate quotations
- Every part of your paper is constructed similarly to the overall paper and, thus, also structured accordingly, with an introduction, main part and conclusion

**3. Conclusion:**

- Summarize your argumentation and come to an overall conclusion
- No new information/arguments/quotations...!
- Find a suitable way of closing your paper, e.g.: give an answer to your research question / complete the circle of argumentation (end where you started) / give a perspective on the topic (present new questions resulting from this research)

*Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

## 2. Working with Sources

Good sources are important for the quality and validity of an academic paper!

When writing a research paper, it is important that you develop your own line of argumentation. Additionally, you should back up your ideas with information taken from other sources. Whenever another source has been used, quoted or paraphrased, it needs to be acknowledged accordingly (Cottrell, 2008, p. 131). With the help of proper sources you can underline and stress your own line of thought and, thereby, convince the reader for your argumentation. Within your academic work, sources can be used either by direct quotation or by paraphrasing. When using sources it is important to reference them either through in-text references, footnotes or endnotes. The most common citation style within the social sciences is the APA style, relying on an 'author-year' system. It consists of parenthetical in-text references and a bibliography, comprising all sources that are used in the paper. Whatever style you chose, make sure to be consistent throughout the entire paper.



*When using sources to prove your point, always consider the context in which something has been written. Never change the context of a source when you take it into your own context. Think and reflect the argumentation of your source critically!*

### **Quotations**

Quotations must be transferred one-to-one and accord with the original in words, spelling, and internal punctuation. Every change must be clearly acknowledged. Use [...] whenever you change something from the original wording. In order to have a running-text, do not drop quotations into the text without warning. Rather, use introductory phrases by mentioning the author's name, to prepare readers for the quotation. Examples are: According to XX, "..."/ As XX mentions, "...".

Quotations of up to three lines are integrated into the main text with quotation marks, e.g.: The author signals that "... (XX, 2005, p. X). Quotations of more than three lines are placed in an extra paragraph, set-off by a line spacing of 1.5 and indention (one inch or ten spaces from the left margin). Within this paragraph use a line spacing of 1. Quotation marks are not required, since these characteristics already indicate the quotation.

Tip: Avoid the use of long quotations. As Cottrell (2008) states, "[a] few words, carefully chosen, make the most powerful quotations, and demonstrate that you can select appropriately" (p. 131).

### ***In-text references***

In-text references usually consist of three elements: last name of the author, year of publication, and page number(s). This enables the reader to find the correct source in the bibliography (the complete bibliographic information of a source is provided only there, rather than in the main text or in foot-/endnotes).

E.g.:

- 1) The author argues that “...” (Nugent, 2010, p. 15).
- 2) According to Nugent (2010), “...” (p. 15).
- 3) Multiple authors: The authors argues that “...” (Nugent, 2010, p. 15; Delors, 1988, p. 16).

In-text references with regard to internet sources have the same format as regular references: (author, year) or (author, year, page number) → NOT the entire internet address in your running-text! If the source does not explicitly mention an author, reference is made in terms of a short title instead of the author, e.g. (Deutsche Welle, 2011).

### ***Paraphrasing***

“A statement that says something that another person has said or written in a different way” (Merriam Webster, 2016).

Paraphrasing means presenting another scholar’s idea in your own words. It is *insufficient* to merely change single words of the original sentence: the words and the sentence structure should differ from the original, however, without changing the content. Since the idea behind the paraphrased sentence stems from someone else’s work – you are solely putting it into your own words – it requires citation (iParadigms, 2014).



Keep in mind that your paper should be based on your *own* line of argumentation. Other sources should be used to *support* your claim(s).

*You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes.  
You can steer yourself any direction you choose.*

Dr. Seuss



### 3. Plagiarism

“The act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person”  
(Merriam Webster, 2016).

***All issues below are considered plagiarism:***

- Handing in other people's work under your name
- Copying words or ideas from others without indicating it
- Failing to announce a quotation by not putting it into quotation marks
- Giving incorrect information about sources
- Changing words but keeping the structure of the sentence without giving credit to the original author
- Others' works should not make up the majority of your work

***The way out: citations!***

To avoid plagiarism, you should simply use your own words and cite the sources you have used. If you acknowledge the fact that some information you have used has been taken from other sources and is not your own idea, and if you indicate where the reader can find the sources you applied, you will avoid being suspected of plagiarism (iParadigms, 2014; Cottrell, 2008, p. 128).



Never use other people's work without indicating it!  
Plagiarism is regarded as an act of fraud. You are stealing intellectual property.  
Develop confidence in your own words!

***Please attach the official anti-plagiarism declaration of M.A. European Studies at Europa-Universität Flensburg to all academic work you submit:***

<http://www.europeanstudies.info/fileadmin/content/studiengaenge/europeanstudies/various-forms/anti-plagiarismdeclaration.pdf>

## 4. Bibliography

At the end of each research paper there is an alphabetical list of sources, named 'Bibliography', 'Works Cited' or 'References'. There are several styles for creating a proper reference list. The following examples are drawn from the APA style, which is widely used in many disciplines, including the social sciences.

### **Books:**

Author's surname, first letter of the first name (date of publication). Book Title. Publication information (place: publisher).

E.g.:

Rietbergen, P. (2006). *Europe. A Cultural History*. London: Routledge.

Cottrell, S. (2008). *The Study Skills Handbook (3rd ed.)*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

### *Two or more authors:*

Palmer, R. R. & Colton, J. (1992). *A History of the Modern World*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Note: up to six authors mentioned, after that: 'et al.'

### *Chapter:*

Clark, K. (1969). Heroic materialism. In *Civilisation* (pp. 321-47). New York: Harper.

### *Cooperation as author:*

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. (5<sup>th</sup>, rev. ed.). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

### *Edited book:*

Baechler, J., Hall, J.A., & Mann, M. (Eds.) (1988). *Europe and the Rise of Capitalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell

### *Article or chapter in book:*

O'Neil, J. M., & Egan, J. (1992). Men's and women's gender role journeys: A metaphor for healing, transition, and transformation. In B. R. Wainrib (Ed.), *Gender issues across the life cycle* (pp. 107-123). New York: Springer.

### *English translation of a book:*

Laplace, P. S. (1951). *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*. (F. W. Truscott & F. L. Emory, Trans.). New York: Dover. (Original work published 1814)

### *Entry in an encyclopedia:*

Bergmann, P. G. (1993). Relativity. In *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* (Vol. 26, pp. 501-508). Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica.

**Articles:**

Author's last name, name (date of publication). Article Title. Journal Title, publication information (volume, issue), page numbers.

E.g.:

*Journal article:*

Burke, P. (1980). Did Europe Exist before 1700. *History of European Ideas*, 1, 21-29.

Jones, W.R. (1971). The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31, 376-407.

*Magazine article:*

Buruma, I. & Margalit, A. (2002). Occidentalism. *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. XLIX, 1, 4-7.

*Newspaper article:*

Rankin, J. (2016, October 13). How much will Brexit cost Britain?. *The Guardian*, p. 2.

**Internet sources:**

Author's last name, name (date of publication). Title. Plattform. Retrieved month day, year, from link

E.g.:

Riegert, B. (2016). Rule of Law under Threat: Poland in the EU Pillory. *Deutsche Welle*.

Retrieved July 29, 2016, from <http://www.dw.com/en/rule-of-law-under-threat-poland-in-the-eu-pillory/a-19276653>

Merriam-Webster (2016). *Justice*. Retrieved July 29, 2016, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/justice>

**Visual source:**

Green, A. B. (producer), & Brown, C. D. (Director). (1991). *The joys of inconsistency* [videotape]. Tiburon, CA: Vader.

**Archival sources:**

The Schuman Declaration 9 May 1950, Archives of the ministry of foreign affairs Paris, Secretariat general, inv.nr. 57, ff. 3-6.

**Government communication:**

Commission of the European Communities. (2001). *European governance: a white paper*. (COM (2001) 428). Brussels: European Commission.

## 5. Academic Language

Proper language plays an essential role for the expression and clearness of your arguments. Academic writing takes place in a formal context and papers are expected to be clear and straightforward. Choosing words that are appropriate in your writing can convince your readers that your work is serious and important. Therefore, language should be used accordingly.

***The following should be taken into account:***

- The use of **formal vocabulary**
  - Don't, can't, aren't... → do not, cannot, are not...
  - Strong verbs, e.g. to get → to obtain, to achieve...
  - Things → aspects, matters, components...
  - Good and bad sides → advantages and disadvantages...
  
- The use of appropriate **transitions and connectors**
  - Adding: Furthermore; Additionally; Moreover...
  - Contrasting: However; In contrast; Nevertheless...
  - Cause: For this reason; Due to; As a result...
  - Effect: Therefore; Thus; Consequently...
  - Purpose: In order to...
  - Emphasis: Particularly; Above all; Especially...
  - Examples: For example; For instance; Such as...
  - Concluding: To conclude; Overall; Summing up...
  
- Correct use of **grammar**
  - Sentence structure
    - ➔ Correct word order (S-V-O)
    - ➔ The structure should be clear and simple; easy to follow!
  - Punctuation
  - Tenses (simple present; present perfect; simple past...)
  - Relative clauses
  - Capitalization
  
- The correct use of **abbreviations**

## 6. Formatting

All writing that is handed in must be typed and carefully proofread (for spelling and other errors) and meet the following formal standards:

- Paper size and color: use white **A4** format paper and black ink
- Line spacing: **1.5** throughout the paper (except quotations, footnotes or references)
- Lettering: **12-point** (footnotes and setoff quotations 10-point); Times New Roman
- Margin: the margin to be left on all sides generally runs up to **1 inch** (2.54cm)
- Indention: indent the first line of each new paragraph **one-half inch** (1 tab) from the left margin, except the first paragraph of your paper or after a blank line; indent setoff quotations (longer than 3 lines) as a whole one inch from the left margin
- Page numbers: use **Arabic numerals** for numbering all pages consecutively, except the title page. Put the page number preferably at the centre of the top or the bottom of the page. If your paper has a preface of more than one page, use Roman numerals for the page numbers of the preface.

*"Action is the fundamental key to success"*

Pablo Picasso

## 7. Evaluation of Academic Papers

CONTENT	
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction introduces the topic in a stimulating way and catches the reader's attention.</li> <li>• It declares the topic and reveals the purpose of the paper. It clearly states the position of the author in an appealing way. It introduces the approach and the structure of the paper and the parts to follow. It makes a good "first impression" and employs useful starters/openers.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Thesis Statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The thesis is stated clearly, early and often (1<sup>st</sup> time in introduction).</li> <li>• It is a definitive and arguable statement that is clear-cut and precise.</li> <li>• "The main argument of the paper is:                      _____".</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Main Body – Argue, Defend, Justify</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main body has a clear line of reasoning to support the claim. It introduces the reader to the respective academic debate and offers evidence why a certain claim is supported. This includes that possible counter arguments have been elaborated upon. The argumentation appears reliable and trustworthy. The reader can easily follow the logic of the text and can be convinced of the argumentation provided. The paper therefore has persuasive power.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Paragraphs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The subjects dealt with are divided into valid, cohesive parts and are effectively arranged (i.e. paragraphs) so that the paper is easy to read and the argumentation is good to follow.</li> <li>• Each paragraph has a central point and is in itself uniform in the subject.</li> <li>• Successive paragraphs follow each other in a logical order; their organization reflects a certain degree of development.</li> <li>• Paragraphs are balanced in length.</li> <li>• Transitions between paragraphs are smooth.</li> <li>• The individual paragraphs are structured correctly (topic sentence, explanations, evidence, summing up – transition to next paragraph ...).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conclusions are clearly stated and follow from the evidence presented. No complete new information or arguments are presented.</li> <li>• The conclusion creates a feeling of closure but allows an outlook into future research that should follow from the research presented.</li> <li>• Concluding ideas leave an impact on the reader.</li> </ul>	

QUALITY OF THE ARGUMENT	
<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evidence stems from a variety of well selected, trustworthy and convincing sources.</li> <li>• Critical, relevant and consistent connections are made between evidence, subtopics, arguments, counter arguments and the thesis.</li> <li>• Different techniques are applied (quoting/paraphrasing/summarizing) correctly.</li> <li>• Others' work has been used with the proper indications. The plagiarism finder has not detected any copyright infringements.</li> </ul> <p>Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure and logic of the paper can be followed easily.</li> </ul> <p>Overall quality of analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paper demonstrates an understanding of the topic discussed.</li> <li>• Insights provided are stimulating and accessible to the reader.</li> <li>• The information given is well researched, detailed, accurate.</li> <li>• The topic has been analyzed and reflected critically.</li> <li>• The approach chosen is original.</li> <li>• The paper shows the writer's ability to critically analyse a certain idea or position. The style is argumentative and analytical, not merely descriptive.</li> </ul>	

EDITING	
<p>Spelling and Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paper is free of grammatical errors.</li> <li>• The paper is free of spelling mistakes.</li> </ul> <p>Sentences and Writing Style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The writing style supports the argument and is reader friendly.</li> <li>• Sentence structures are clear and simple.</li> <li>• Sentences vary in length, type, and pattern.</li> </ul>	

FORMAT	
<p>Title</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The title chosen is accurate, specific, compelling and gives a first insight into the main argument.</li> </ul>	
<p>Table of contents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The table of contents provides the reader with a first understanding of how the main argument is built up. The structure is clear and makes sense.</li> </ul>	
<p>Headings and Subheadings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headings and subheadings are clear and precise; they correspond to the table of contents and also reflect the paper's structure and therefore are supportive to the writer's claim.</li> </ul>	
<p>Bibliography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paper has a detailed bibliography in which all sources employed are mentioned, ordered alphabetically and presented in a coherent and consistent style. The main information is provided so that the reader can find the respective sources quickly (Author, Year, Title, Publisher, Location etc).</li> </ul>	

## 8. References and Recommended Literature

Booth, W.C./Colomb, G.G./Williams, J.M. (2003). *The Craft of Research. Second Edition*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.

Cottrell, S. (2008). *The Study Skills Handbook (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Creedy, J. (2008). *Research Without Tears. From First Ideas to Published Output*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

Decker, C. & Werner, R. (2016). *Academic Research and Writing: A Concise Introduction*. Frankfurt am Main: ICADEMICUS.

iParadigms (2014). *Plagiarism*. Retrieved October 6, 2016, from <http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/overview/>

Merriam Webster (2016). *Plagiarism*. Retrieved October 6, 2016, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarism>

Merriam Webster (2016). *Paraphrase*. Retrieved October 6, 2016, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/paraphrase>

Rawlins, J. (2002). *The Writer's Way (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Turabian, K. L. (2013). *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations (8th ed.)*. Chicago: University of Chicago.