

THE SEMINAR PAPER
STYLE GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

Compiled by Prof. Aladár Sarbu in
accordance with MLA criteria

2002

This set of norms contains but a handful of the many you may need to know in writing your paper. For detailed information see Joseph Gibaldi, ed., MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 5th ed. (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1999).

General guidelines

The first requirement for any written work of yours is that it should be neat, tidy and legible. Handwritten papers are accepted, but instructors prefer them typed or printed (on one side of the paper). Assuming that you are using a word processor, your paper should be 1.5 spaced, with one-inch (i.e., 2.5 cm) margins at the top, the bottom and on both sides of the text, 70 characters (including spaces) to the line, 28 lines to the page. Choose the typeset that conforms to this format. Note that the lines, as a rule, are not justified.

Heading

At the top of the first page, flush with the left margin, write your name, your instructor's name, the course number, and the date on separate lines.

Page numbers

Number the pages consecutively, with your family name and the page number (e.g., Titch 6) in the top right-hand corner, one half-inch (i.e., 1.25 cm) from the top.

Corrections

Corrections mar the appearance of your paper, but if you cannot avoid them, write them directly above the line, indicating where they belong with carets (^).

Spelling and punctuation

Be consistent. You are free to choose between British and American spelling, but once you have made the choice, follow the same standard throughout. Retain the original spelling in quotations. Names and quotations in foreign languages must be reproduced in the form they take in the original. Do not divide words at the end of a line; if you cannot avoid breaking the word, consult a dictionary.

Note that a dash in typing is indicated by two hyphens (--) (which in MS Word is often automatically converted to a long --), with no space before, between or after.

Quotation marks are single (') or double ("). Single quotation marks enclose a quotation within a quotation. Note that the comma (,) and the full stop or period (.) are *always* enclosed.

"I have never read that book," he said.

Keats believed that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty."

If the quotation ends with both single and double quotation marks, the comma and the full stop precede both.

"You should read 'The Dead,'" he said.

Titles of works

Copy titles from the title page. Capitalize nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and the subordinating conjunctions (e.g., although, if, because); *do not* capitalize articles, prepositions, coordinating conjunctions (e.g., and, or, but, nor, for) and the *to* in infinitives.

Title and subtitle are separated by a colon (:), unless the title has ending punctuation (American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman).

Underline the titles of works published independently (A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man). Use quotation marks for titles of works published within larger works (articles, essays, short stories, short poems, chapters of books, e.g., "The Dead" is one of the best short stories in Joyce's Dubliners).

Quotations

Prose quotations (sentences or phrases) not exceeding four typed lines should be incorporated in the text. You set off quotations longer than four typed lines by beginning a new line and indenting one inch from the left margin, without using quotation marks.

Poetry quotations not longer than three lines may—unless they require special emphasis—be incorporated in the text in quotation marks, the lines being separated with a slash (/). Quotations longer than three lines begin on a new line and each line is indented one inch from the left, without quotation marks; if the lines are too long, you may indent less than one inch. Indented quotations are introduced by a colon.

Emerson had this to say on consistency:

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with the shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said today.

When quoting a dialogue between two or more characters in a play, set the quotations off from the text. Always include the character's name indented one inch from the left margin and written in all capital letters. All subsequent lines in a speech are indented an additional quarter inch (or three spaces).

The true significance of this capsule definition of the tragic net is then provided in the central sequence, when the Players illustrate Ross and Guil's fate (in the sense of final outcome). As they explain:

PLAYER Do you call that an ending? —with practically everyone on his feet? My goodness, no—over your dead body.

GUIL How am I supposed to take that?

Documentation

Avoid even the appearance of plagiarism. Always document your sources. If you lift somebody else's text into your own unchanged, it is not enough to identify the source by a reference, you must also use quotation marks.

List of Works Cited and parenthetical references

As your instructor will insist that you conclude your paper with a List of Works Cited, you may as well acknowledge your sources by supplying just enough information within your text to identify them by means of the List.

An item in the List of Works Cited should conform to the following pattern: name (of author, translator, editor) alphabetized, title, publication data, with two spaces between these major items. If the book has several authors, editors, etc., only the name of the first is alphabetized.

Listing books

- Boroff, Marie, trans. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. New York: Norton, 1967.
- Cunningham, Valentine. British Writers of the Thirties. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.
- Daiches, David. The Novel and the Modern World. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1939.
- . Critical Approaches to Literature. London: Longmans, 1986.
- Fellows, Jay. Tombs, Despoiled and Haunted: "Under-Textures" and "After-Thoughts" in Walter Pater. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991.
- Howe, Irving, ed. Classics of Modern Fiction: Ten Short Novels. 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt, 1972.
- Sillitoe, Alan. Introduction. The Old Wives' Tale. By Arnold Bennett. London: Pan, 1964. 9-20.
- Wellek, René and Austin Warren. Theory of Literature. 3rd ed. New York: Harcourt, 1962.

Listing articles (from scholarly journals) or dissertations

- Reynolds, Larry J. "The Scarlet Letter and Revolutions Abroad." American Literature 50.2 (May 1978): 167-86.
- Vargha, Endre. "The Novels of Norman Mailer." Diss. Loránd Eötvös U, 1992.

Internet sources

Citations of electronic sources (Internet, CD-ROM, etc.) should give sufficient information to allow the reader to locate a certain document. Therefore, specifying the URL (i.e., uniform resource locator) address is highly recommended. Give the complete address; if you cannot avoid dividing a URL, do it only after a slash, no hyphen should be used. Enclose URLs in angle brackets (e.g., <<http://www.princeton.edu/~lancelot/>>).

"Albatross." The Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. CD-ROM. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.

CNN Interactive. 19 June 1998. Cable News Network. 19 June 1998

<<http://www.cnn.com/>>

Dawe, James. Jane Austen Page 15 Sept. 1998 <http://www.english.ualberta.ca/~dawe/jausten.html>

Identifying sources within the text

If you list two or more works by the same author, parenthetical documentation in the text includes the author's last name, the short title of the work, and the page number(s).

The question of author, work and reader has always been controversial (Daiches,

Critical Approaches 29-30; Eagleton, Literary Theory 74).

If you mention the author's name in the text, you must give only the title and the page reference. Note that the full stop follows the parenthesis that falls at the end of the sentence.

Daiches believes that the question of author, work and reader has always been controversial (Critical Approaches 29).

When your list has only one title by an author, the last name of the author and the page reference will suffice.

The idea of a Christian community is a recurrent theme in Eliot's poetry (Cunningham 277-78), which is not surprising.

With the author's name in the text you supply only the page number.

Cunningham writes that the idea of a Christian community is a recurrent theme in Eliot's poetry (277-78). We have no reason to be surprised at this.

If your text contains a quotation which is set off from the text, leave two spaces after the ending punctuation mark of the quotation and insert the reference.

Walter Pater's mind is a multivocal mind, which is mirrored in his "almost self-parodying series of relative clauses":

These clauses, with their own form of superimposition, carry not only discordant voices but they also prevent, in their ambitious subordination, the beginning of a sentence from swiftly reaching the end, in serial narrativity. At the same time, the clauses create an autonomous status of the middle with a *presence* of its own which covers the abyss of 'undercurrent' of a probable nihilism that results from a dismantled metaphysics. (Fellows 28)

Footnotes and endnotes

You may find it more appropriate to provide documentation in note form. Notes may be footnotes (at the bottom of each page) and endnotes (on a new page, after the main text of the paper). They are identified by consecutive numbers. Always use arabic numerals. Note numbers are raised slightly above the line, with no full stops or periods, parentheses, or slashes; they follow punctuation marks, except dashes.

The note form is different from the bibliographic form used in the List of Works Cited. Here the author's name is not reversed for alphabetizing, and it is followed by a comma; the title, the publishing data in parentheses; and a page reference.

¹ Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957) 25.

² Endre Vargha, "The Novels of Norman Mailer," diss., Loránd Eötvös U., 1992, 29.

³ Larry J. Reynolds, "The Scarlet Letter and Revolutions Abroad," American Literature 50.2 (May 1978): 179.

⁴ Irving Howe, ed., Classics of Modern Fiction: Ten Short Novels, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1972) 31.

⁵ Britannica Online, vers. 98.2, Apr. 1998, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 8 May 1998 <<http://www.cb.com>>.

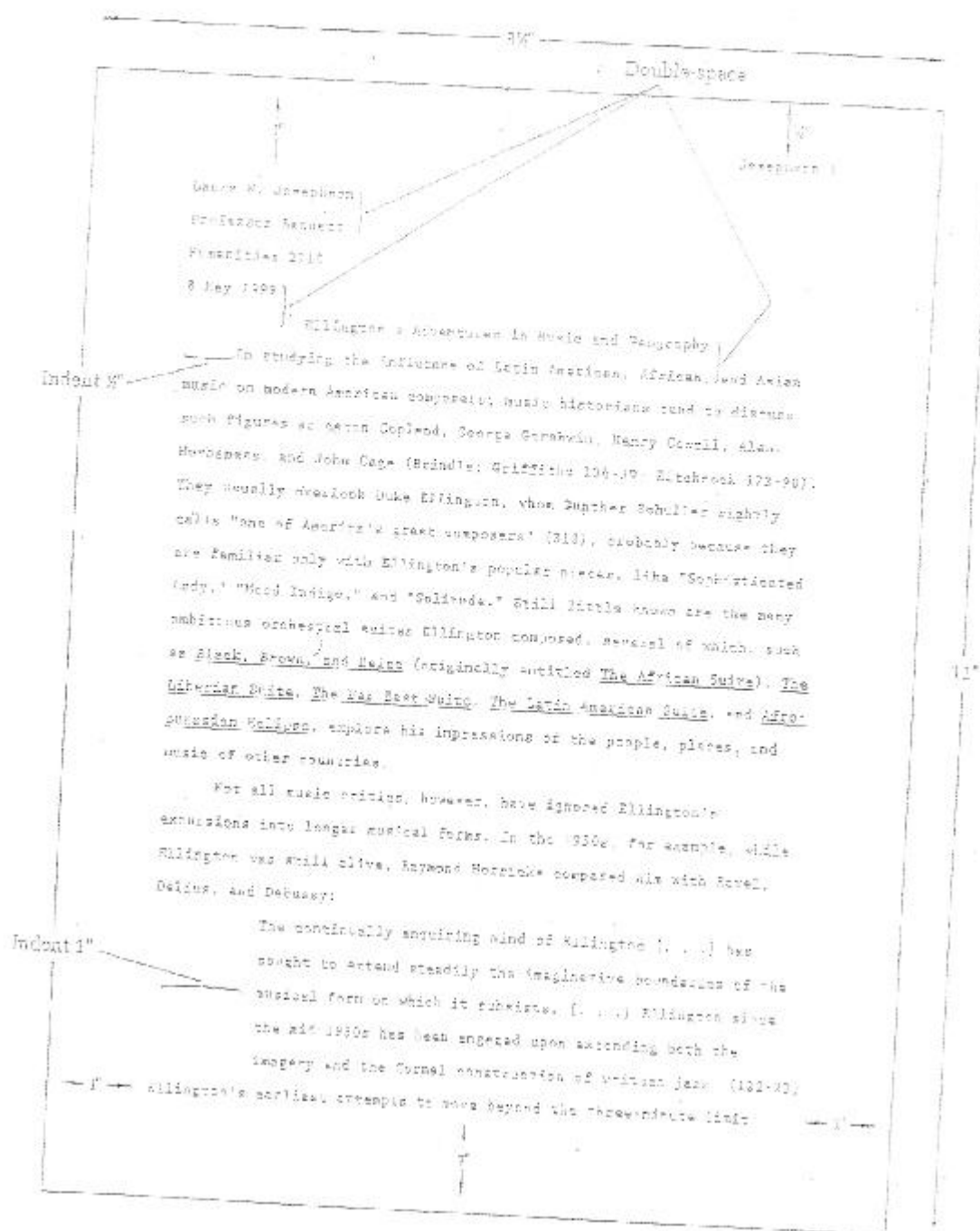
⁶ Vern L. Bullogh, "Medieval Concept of Adultery," Arthuriana 7.4 (1997): 5-15, abstract, 26 June 1998 <http://www.de.smn.edu/Arthuriana/Abstract/Ab_list1.htm>.

In subsequent references to the same work it is sufficient to identify the source by the author's name, a part of the title, and a page number.

⁷ Frye, Anatomy 38.

Atadár Sarbu

First Page of a Research Paper



First Page of a List of Works Cited

Double space

Works Cited

January 13

Indent 1"

- Brundage, Reginald Nathan. "The Research Question: The Doctor, (Jazz, Archival)" The New Yorker. The Avant-Garde since 1945. New York: Oxford UP, 1973. 133-45.
- Burnett, James. "Ellington's Place as a Composer." Camden 241-55.
- Ellington, Duke. Afro-Burlesque Soliloquy. 1911. Fantasy, 1980.
- ... Black, Brown, and Beige. 1943. RCA Bluebird, 1980.
- ... The Far East Suite. LP. RCA, 1983.
- ... The Latin American Suite. 1967. Fantasy, 1983.
- ... The Liberian Suite. LP. Philips, 1947.
- ... Music for Mr. Mistral. 1973. New York: De Capo, 1978.
- Camden, Peter, ed. Duke Ellington: His Life and Music. 1958. New York: De Capo, 1977.
- Griffiths, Paul. A Concise History of Avant-Garde Music: From Debussy to Boulez. New York: Oxford UP, 1978.
- Reese, John Edward. Beyond Category: The Life and Genius of Duke Ellington. Ed. Minton Marzalis. New York: Simon, 1993.
- Witchcock, H. Wiley. Music in the United States: An Introduction. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs. Prentice, 1974.
- Herricks, Raymond. "The Orchestra Suites." Camden 122-31.
- Reitenbach, Ken. Duke Ellington, Jazz Composer. New Haven: Yale UP, 1990.
- Schuller, Gunther. Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development. New York: Oxford UP, 1968.
- Southern, Eileen. The Music of Black Americans: A History. 3rd ed. New York: Norton, 1983.
- Tucker, Mark, ed. The Duke Ellington Reader. New York: Oxford UP, 1981.
- ... Ellington: The Early Years. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1991.