

# Department of English Language and Literature

## Rules for Paper Submission

### I. General Guidelines

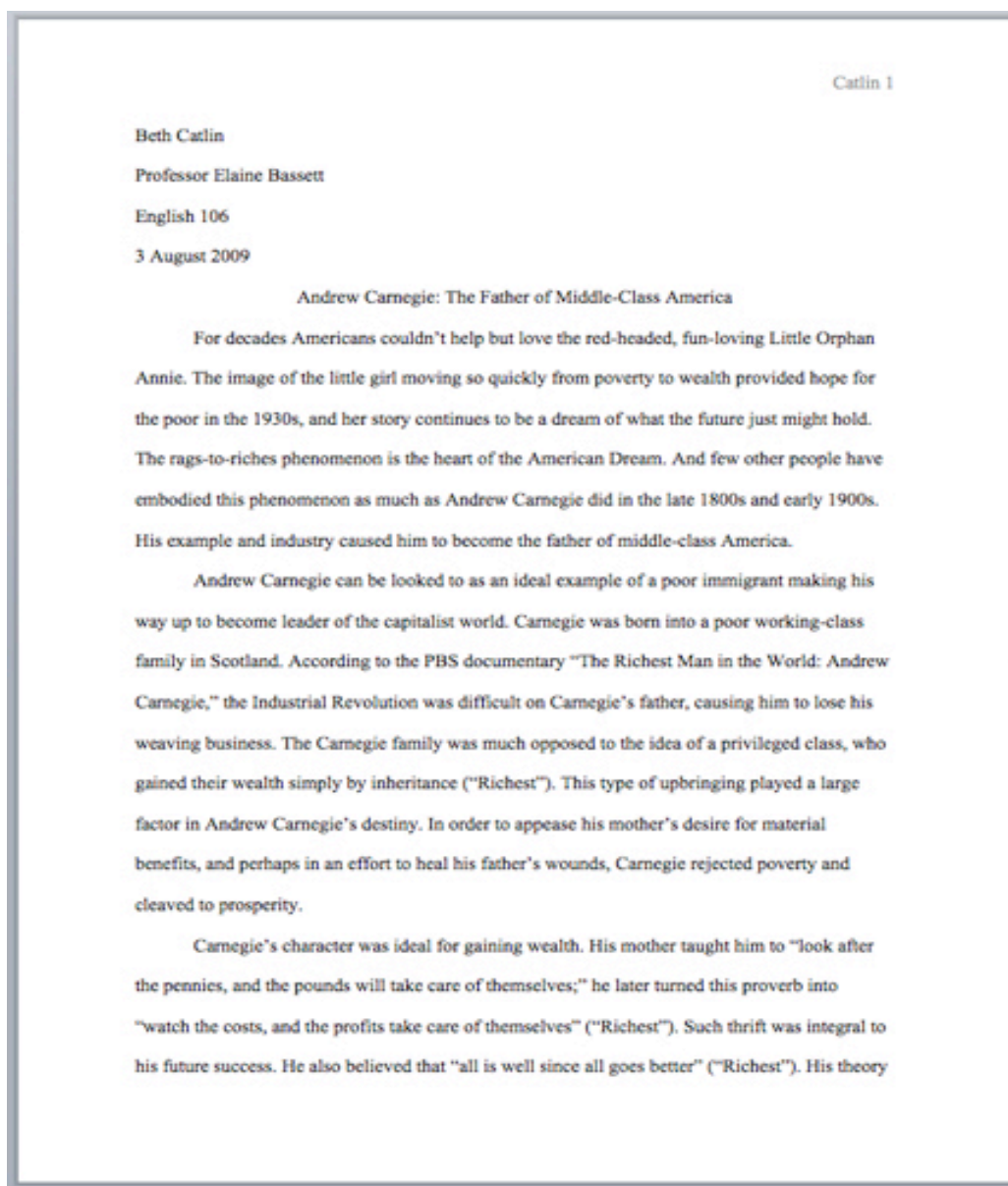
- ◆ Type your paper/assignment and print it out on standard, white A4 paper.
- ◆ Double-space the text of your paper.
- ◆ Use Times New Roman, font size 12.
- ◆ Use standard margins all round (1 inch/2.5 centimeters). Note: the default of Word documents is set at 3.17 cm and needs to be changed for your papers.
- ◆ Use standard header & footer.
- ◆ Use correct paragraph structure.
- ◆ Indent the first line of paragraphs 5 spaces.
- ◆ Paginate your paper with the help of the header function (Note: Your instructor may ask that you omit the number on your first page. Always follow your instructor's guidelines).
- ◆ Leave no space between a word and punctuation thereafter.
- ◆ Leave *one space only* before each word.
- ◆ Make sure the length of your paper answers the assignment.
- ◆ Proofread your paper before submission to catch spelling and grammar errors.
- ◆ Titles of works referenced in your paper must be marked in the following fashion: poems, essays, articles, chapters and short stories appear between inverted commas; novels, books, plays, collections of poetry/articles /essays, films, dictionaries, encyclopedias are italicized. For example: "After Apple-Picking" (a poem by Frost), *The Iliad* (an epic by Homer).
- ◆ Follow standard rules of capitalization.
- ◆ Never use bold, or a larger font, or ONLY CAPITALS to emphasize a point. Good style will achieve the same effect.
- ◆ Do not decorate your paper with drawings or illustrations.

### II. Formatting the First Page of Your Paper

- ◆ Do not make a title page for your paper unless specifically requested.
- ◆ In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date.

- ◆ Choose an appropriate title for your paper.
- ◆ Center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks; write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not all in capital letters.

Here is a sample of the first page of a paper in MLA style:



The First Page of an MLA Paper. From Owl Purdue Online Writing Lab. Web. 16 Dec. 2011.  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Note: if you are submitting a longer paper, provide an appropriate cover page, according to department and instructor's guidelines.

### III. General Guidelines on Content & Structure

- ◆ **Thesis statements help focus papers.** Without a clearly articulated thesis, your paper is bound to meander and its development to suffer. **Do not** start writing your paper until you have established a clear thesis statement. Do not end your paper until you have fully proven the thesis.
- ◆ Like a small essay, each paragraph discusses one idea only. It contains an introduction to the idea argued, its development by illustration or enlargement, and a conclusion. To do justice to the idea it seeks to prove, a paragraph must consist of at least five sentences, preferably more. Avoid skimpy paragraphs. It is always possible to develop your point further or to integrate two or three points into one paragraph.
- ◆ Remember to organize your material and develop your argument in a logical and coherent manner.
- ◆ Make certain your essay answers the paper topic/question posed.
- ◆ All assertions must be relevant to your thesis and fully supported.
- ◆ [For papers on any literary genre]: Do not simply identify the devices, techniques, form of the poem/short story/novel/play analyzed. Make sure you analyze their effect and explain their impact on your understanding/interpretation of the poem.
- ◆ [For papers on poetry or fiction]: Do not confuse **the poet** with the **speaker** in the poem, or **the author** with the **narrator** in a story or novel.
- ◆ [For papers on any literary genre]: Always refer to the writer you are writing about by his/her full name or last name – never by his/her first name only!
- ◆ [For papers on any literary genre]: The paper consists of a series of paragraphs following one another without break (i.e. no subsections). Each paragraph runs through without line return until the end and should be written in full, that is, without arrows, numbers and abbreviations.
- ◆ [For papers in linguistics, education and psychology]: Headings and subheadings divide the paper into sections, such as Introduction, Method, Literature Review ... Each paragraph runs through without line return until the end. Numbers may be used.

### IV. General Guidelines on Style

- ◆ Try to be as succinct as possible – it is always preferable to use one word instead of seven. For example, the phrase “From the point of view of structure...” can be simplified to “Structurally...”

- ◆ Vary your vocabulary.
- ◆ Avoid overusing the passive form and forms of the verb *to be*. Prefer the active voice and strong verbs.
- ◆ Avoid using “there is” and “there are.”
- ◆ Avoid the phrase “which means” or “that means.” This verb is too blunt and uni-dimensional. Use more suggestive and interesting verbs: i.e., “the imagery evokes...” or “this motif implies / suggests...”
- ◆ Other words you should avoid: “thing,” “very” and “the fact that.” Write with as rich a vocabulary as possible, **and** state your point as clearly as possible.
- ◆ Avoid colloquialism (a bit, a lot, lots of, kind of, kids, ...)
- ◆ Do not use arrows or other signs.
- ◆ Avoid abbreviations.
- ◆ Correct fragments, comma splices and run-on sentences:
  - A fragment is an incomplete sentence, i.e. a sentence missing its subject, main verb or object.
  - A comma splice consists of two full sentences separated by a comma instead of a full stop or a semi-colon.
  - A run-on sentence consists of two or more sentences separated by no punctuation.
- ◆ Review the correct usage of punctuation marks, particularly commas.
- ◆ Avoid using first person singular or plural: e.g. “we know,” “I know”
- ◆ Do not use contractions: for example, “don’t,” “aren’t,” etc..
- ◆ Do not use nonspecific pronoun references: e.g. “This shows the speaker’s grief,” or “While this figure is mother-like, alongside it she is also a witch.”
- ◆ [For papers on any literary genre]: When referring to the content of a short story, novel, poem or play, use the present tense (e.g. “The story discloses how the protagonist perceives the changes in his family circumstances, and to some extent misunderstands them,” or “The speaker in Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey” contemplates an experience that ...”).
- ◆ [For papers on any literary genre]: When referring to a critic or a writer, use the present tense (e.g. “as Fry notes,” “Woolf contends that...”).
- ◆ [For papers in linguistics, education and psychology]: When referring to the case study, use the past tense (e.g. “The group of students involved in the experiment underwent a series of tests...” or “The results raised questions about...”).
- ◆ [For papers in linguistics, education and psychology]: When referring to a researcher, critic

or a theoretician, use the past tense (e.g. “as Cooke noted,” “Freud observed...”).

- ◆ Make sure to place adverbs in the right place.
- ◆ Check the correctness of the prepositions you use.

## **V. Common Editing Marks**

- ◆ Sp — incorrect spelling
- ◆ WW — wrong word
- ◆ VF — incorrect verb form (wrong formation of tenses, infinitive instead of gerund, etc.)
- ◆ VT — incorrect verb tense
- ◆ WO — word order
- ◆ SS — sentence structure
- ◆ § — Indent first line of paragraph
- ◆ ≠ § — Not a paragraph (too short to be a paragraph)
- ◆ Prep — preposition
- ◆ Frag — fragment (incomplete sentence)
- ◆ RO — run-on sentence (=merged sentences)
- ◆ CS — comma splice (2 sentences separated by a comma)
- ◆ Agr — agreement (subject/verb, antecedent/relative...)

**NOTE:** The internet site Purdue Owl Online Writing Lab is an invaluable resource for MLA & APA formats and for all matters relating to paper submission. See <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>