

Assignment Style Guide

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Introduction

This handbook has been produced to help you present college assignments and papers according to the college requirements. These requirements are consistent with most tertiary educational institutions and will help you to develop your research presentation skills. Please read through these guidelines and refer back to this handbook when you are preparing your assignments. Failure to follow these requirements will result in a reduction of marks.

General Study Guidelines

Good study and research habits take time to develop. Regardless of your past study experiences, your time with Paradise College of Ministries is a unique opportunity to develop and refine your study skills. If you have not already done so you are encouraged to complete unit SRSCOP014B *Prepare to Study*, which outlines many essential attitudes and skills necessary for a successful study experience.

In addition to the guidelines presented in *Prepare to Study* the following study practices are highly recommended.

- Always read the question(s) carefully and make sure you understand it.
- If you are unsure of what is being asked, ask the lecturer for further explanation. Lecturers are there to help you learn and will always welcome opportunities to discuss issues that you do not understand.
- Be sure to answer the question you are being asked.
- Make notes and prepare an outline before you start writing an essay/assignment.
- Substantiate major points and claims with evidence from the Bible and/or other sources, and acknowledge each of your sources. Guidelines for referencing your sources are presented in *Appendix 1 References* (p.11)
- Re-read your paper carefully and correct typing/spelling errors, etc., before handing it in.

Assignment Presentation

The following guidelines are given so that you will be able to present your assignments in the required manner.

A. Paper Size and Layout

You should use paper of A4 size (i.e. 30 cm x 21 cm), with a margin of about 3-cm on each side of your work. The text should be 1.5 or 2 lined spacing and preferably justified. Work should be printed on only one side of the paper.

If you can have your paper typed, this is advantageous. If not, at least be sure it is neat and readable. Although your lecturers try to be objective, there is no doubt that a neat, well-presented paper gives a favourable impression. If you handwrite an assignment still make sure that you double-space the lines.

Assignments should **not** be presented in plastic sleeves or folders, a single staple in the top left-hand corner is sufficient.

B. Cover Sheets

You must use an assignment cover sheet provided by the college or produced on computer yourself with all the relevant details, or your paper will not be marked. Complete all details on your cover sheet, sign it and staple it to the front of your assignment. Please note that the reverse side of the Cover sheets contain an Assignment Checklist that is helpful for checking that you have presented your assignments in the best possible form.

C. Restatement of Question

It is always a good idea to include the assignment question at the beginning of your paper. This will remind you what is being asked and will help you keep your answer on track.

Due Dates

Requests for extensions must be lodged on the appropriate form, obtainable from the college. Extensions will only be granted for genuine compassionate reasons beyond your control. Pressure of work or bad organisation will not be accepted as sufficient reason. Please refer to the Student Handbook for more information and details of late penalties.

Number of Words

When you are given a set number of words for an essay/assignment you are expected to stay within a range of 10% either way of the required number. (i.e. for an essay/assignment of 1,000 words you are expected to stay within the range of 900 to 1,100 words; for an essay/assignment of 2,000 words you are expected to stay with the range of 1,800 to 2,200 words etc.) You are likely to be penalised if your paper is not within these limits. When you are given a range of words (e.g. 1,000-1,500) you are expected to stay within the given range.

Note that a few direct quotations may be included in the number of words. But they should not usually occupy more than about ten per cent of the total number of words. If you refer to lengthy sources put these as appendices at the end of your essay/assignment. An appendix is not included in your word count. Similarly, footnotes are not included in the word count.

Required Reading

You are expected to read the relevant sections of the college notes and set texts as directed by your lecturers. Additional reading may also be necessary in preparing your essays/assignments.

Where the essay/assignment requires research from other reference books the following minimum guidelines should be followed:

- Certificate IV level assignments require reference to a minimum of 3 substantial, relevant books.
- Diploma level assignments require reference to a minimum of 5 substantial, relevant books.

Note that it is not usual to include the Bible in your bibliography, unless you have made particular use of study notes, etc. It is assumed that you will be drawing on the Bible in preparing your papers.

Acknowledgement of Research Sources

Your study at PCOM will require you to complete a variety of assignments. Some of these will include reports and personal responses to subject material. Some of the assignments are only short and will not require extra reading or bibliographical details. Generally, the lecturers will communicate with you regarding their expectations. In many cases you will be asked to submit an essay and it is expected that you will read a variety of books, journals or other sources and draw both ideas and brief quotations from these in preparing your work. An essay should never be simply an unstructured discussion of your own opinions. Rather, it should demonstrate that you have developed opinions and ideas by interacting thoughtfully with good literary sources and can support your argument with reference to those sources. Make sure you carefully read *Appendix 4: A Brief Guide to Essay Writing*, (p.21) for help in developing your essay.

Where you draw your ideas from the work of others you are required to acknowledge them with appropriate references and entries in a bibliography. Using other people's work or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement is called *plagiarism* and is tantamount to cheating in that you are presenting the ideas of others as your own. Naturally, there are many areas of common knowledge that you don't need to reference but where you are drawing on someone else's research or ideas or borrowing their wording, you must acknowledge this by appropriate in-text referencing and entries in a bibliography.

A. In Text Referencing

The simplest way to give references in the body of the essay is to put the author's surname, the date of publication and the page concerned in brackets directly in the text after the relevant point. Please note the punctuation used in these examples: follow it exactly - "To get the job done, we must see a thriving church in every local community on earth" [Cho, 1986:131]. OR Cho comments, "To get the job done, we must see a thriving church in every local community on earth" [1986:131]. [Note there is no need to put 'p' for the page]. The full publishing details of each source referenced are to be given in a bibliography at the end of the paper.

Even if you do not give an exact quotation, you can still use the same reference system, e.g. Cho [1986: 131] claims that to get the job done we need a thriving church in every local community on earth. OR, According to Cho [1986:131] to get the job done, we must see a thriving church in every local community on earth.

Further guidelines for appropriate referencing of your research sources are presented in *Appendix 1, References* (p.10). If you are unsure whether to include an acknowledgement or not, it's better to give the acknowledgment. If you are guilty of plagiarism, you can expect an automatic fail.

B. Bibliography

A bibliography is a list of books that have influenced your research or thinking for the essay/assignment, including the sources actually cited in your text.

A bibliography should be given on the last page(s) of every essay/assignment where you have based your ideas on research from other sources. Even in a report, your opinions will have been partly shaped by your reading, so a bibliography should be included. You need not have quoted from all the books or resources you include in a bibliography but it must only include sources that you have used in your research.

See *Appendix 2, Bibliography Entries* (p.14) for examples of bibliography entries and how to lay them out correctly.

C. Quotations

It is wise to include one or two effective quotations in every essay. But be careful to acknowledge them. Short quotations can be included in the body of the text, indicated by the use of quotation marks. Longer quotations of 4 lines (30-40 words), or more, should be included as a separate paragraph indented at each side by about 1 cm. In this case, no quotation marks are needed. A smaller font size may be used for the quotation, but this is not essential. An example of a longer quotation follows:

Jesus was also readily available to meet the needs of others - whether old or young, rich or poor, powerful or powerless, healthy or diseased, dutiful or wayward. Reflect on a time when you responded to another, through hospitality, practical help, advice, visiting in home, hospital or prison, counselling or simply listening. Perhaps your attempt to help bear their burdens was spurned or misunderstood, or you felt manipulated or taken advantage of in some way. Ask God to forgive any resentment or bitterness you may still hold (Hurding, 1992:56).

In both cases you must always acknowledge the source of the quotation with an appropriate in-text reference to the corresponding entry in the bibliography.

D. In-Text Scripture References

Always give the biblical authority for every major point you make, where appropriate. You do not need to quote every passage in full, but you should give the reference(s) wherever possible. If you do quote or refer to a specific passage, you must give the Scripture reference.

1. Format

Standard abbreviations may be used for the names of books of the Bible, e.g. Jn 3:16. Do not however, use abbreviations when you are referring to a whole book or a whole chapter, e.g. 1 Samuel, not 1 Sam. Full stops are not needed for abbreviations of Bible books, e.g. Gal 2:10, not Gal. 2:10.

Indicate the version of the Bible you are using the first time you make a quotation, and then only if you change from one version to another, eg. James 3:2 NIV.

2. When a Reference is Grammatically Part of a Sentence

If a Scripture reference is part of a sentence, simply put it in the normal position, like this: The great truth of John 3:16 is that salvation is God's free gift.

3. When a Reference is Added for Identification

If you quote a reference to identify a passage you have quoted, the reference should be given in brackets after the quotation, like this: 'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son' [John 3:16].

Greek and Hebrew Words

Greek and Hebrew words should be either underlined or set in italics when used in an essay/assignment (e.g. *ekklesia* or ekklesia). Do not put them in quotation marks.

Capitalisation

Here are some commonly used words that might cause questions regarding capitalisation:

- *God*: use upper case. If you write about other gods, use lower case.
- *Bible*: use upper case only when it is used as a proper noun – referring to 'the Bible' or when beginning a sentence. In other situations use lower case, eg: 'Wesley received his first bible on his fifth birthday.'
- *Scripture*: use lower case unless speaking of 'the Scripture' or beginning a sentence. If you simply say, 'the scripture says...' then use lower case.^a

^a PCOM wishes to thank PCBC Journal for the information regarding capitalisation

Appendix 1: References

The preceding pages explained how to use in-text referencing to indicate the sources of your research. This appendix explains in more depth how to include appropriate references for a variety of specific situations.^b

1. General Reference

Sometimes a particular idea is not found on just one or two pages but throughout a whole volume. In this case, simply use the author's name and date, eg. The gospel is both biblical and rational [Lewis, 1976].

2. More than One Author

Where there is more than one author, use the following guide to in-text referencing:

Two authors: [Clanchy and Ballard, 1991:14]

Three authors: [La Sor, Hubbard and Bush, 1982:32]

In subsequent references in the same paper where there are three authors include the first author plus the words "et al": [La Sor et al. 1982:35]

Where there are four or more authors you only need to include the first author plus "et al" at any time in the in-text referencing. [Meier et al. 1991:15]

3. When One Author Quotes Another Author

When you are referring to one author quoted by another author, you need to include both names in your in-text reference, eg. Smith [Jones, 1997:70] strongly supports this view of the Toronto blessing, OR Smith's research in 1996 [cited in Jones, 1997:70] strongly supports this view of the Toronto blessing. Here, Smith is called the primary reference and Jones the secondary reference.

4. When You are Quoting Several Sources

When two or more authors make the same point, you should refer to them all, eg. Understanding tribal economies has become a necessity for those economists who are concerned with underdeveloped areas of the world [More, 1955; Myrdal, 1957; Neale, 1959].

^b PCOM wishes to thank Tabor College Adelaide for the information in this appendix.

5. Where There is an Editor, Not One Single Author

Where there is an editor of a volume containing chapters, or contributions by several writers, put the name of the writer of the article followed by the name of the editor and the letters [ed.], as follows: Over 80% of communication is non-verbal [Jones, Black (ed.) 1986:27].

6. When an Author has Written More than One Book in One Year

When an author has two or more books published in the same year and both are used as sources for your paper, use letters of the alphabet to distinguish them - 'a' for the first one, 'b' for the second, and so on, eg. This problem is referred to in Wilson [1979b:320]. Label the entries in your bibliography accordingly.

7. Book and Periodical Titles

If you need to give the title of a book or a periodical, make sure the title is underlined or in *italics*. Do not use quotation marks for book titles. Give the full title of the work, including the subtitle if there is one. Use maximal capitalisation, ie. upper case letters for every word which is not an article, preposition or conjunction, for the title, and subtitle if there is one, eg. *Renewal Theology: Salvation, the Holy Spirit and Christian Living*.

8. Chapters or Articles

If you are giving the title of a chapter in a book or of an article in a periodical, the name of the book or periodical should be in *italics* or underlined and the name of the chapter or article should be in quotation marks. Use minimal capitalisation, as illustrated here, ie. upper case letter for only the first word in the title and for any other words that are normally capitalised. Use lower case for all other words in the title of the chapter/article, e.g. Ian Jagelman discussed this at length in an article in *New Day* entitled 'What I believe about the state of the Australian church' [1966:10-13].

9. Quotations from PCOM notes

When quoting College notes the 'author' should be presented as 'Paradise College of Ministries (PCOM)' in your bibliography and 'PCOM' in your in-text references. Do not refer to the subject lecturer as the author as we do not list them as the author on the notes and they did not necessarily write all the notes themselves. Otherwise, treat them as you would a book, including date and the page number as in other instances. Consider the following examples: PCOM [2003:26] stresses the need to be willing to risk failure when living creatively, OR Justification is the gracious and just act of God by which He

pronounces the believer innocent of all guilt through the righteousness of Jesus Christ [PCOM, 2003:33].

10. Microfilm, Audio and Videocassettes, CD-ROMs and Online Resources

Basically use the same approach as for a book, eg. [Jones, 1995].

Appendix 2: Bibliography Entries

As previously noted, a bibliography lists all of the resources you have used in your research and should include the following details:

- Surname of the author(s), followed by their initials, e.g. Erickson, J. M.
- Full title, in *italics*, e.g. *Introducing Christian Doctrine* (or underlined if handwritten)
- The place of publication followed by the name of the publisher and the date of publication, [in brackets], e.g. [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992].

For example:

Erickson, J.M. *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992]

Please note the punctuation used in this example and follow it for your papers.

Further guidelines for setting out entries in a Bibliography include:

- Entries in a bibliography should be in alphabetical order of authors, with the surname first, followed by the initials.
- If there are two or more resources by the same author or group of authors, order them first by author(s) and then by date, from the least recent to the most recent.
- Entries for each resource should be single-spaced and each entry should be separated by a double-space.
- Indent the second and subsequent lines of each entry.
- The date of publication is the date that the book was first published rather than the dates of subsequent reprintings.
- Where the resource has been updated between printings this will be indicated by an edition number and date. In this case use the edition date as the date of publication and indicate the edition.

For example:

Clanchy, J. and Ballard, B. *Essay Writing for students: A Practical Guide*. 2nd edn [Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991].

A sample bibliography is presented below.

Sample Bibliography

Boyd, Dr. G.A. and Boyd, E.K. *Letters From a Skeptic, A Son Wrestles with His Father's Questions about Christianity*, [Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 1994]

Clifford, R. *The Case for the Empty Tomb*, [Sutherland, Australia: Albatross Books, 1991]

Frame, J. *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, [New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 1994]

Geisler, N.L. *Baker Encyclopaedia of Christian Apologetics*, [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999]

Holman Bible Handbook, Dockery, D.S. [ed.] [Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 1992]

Holy Bible: New International Version, [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996]

Kennedy, D.J. *Skeptics Answered*, [Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1997]

Kreeft, P. and Tacelli, R.K. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, [Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994]

Phillips, T.R. and Okholm, D.L. [ed.] *Christian Apologetics in the Modern World*, [Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1995]

Strobel, L. *The Case for Christ*, [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998]

There are of course many different situations that will be encountered when citing resources in a Bibliography. The table below illustrates how to handle these variations. Use the examples listed below to guide you in formatting entries in your Bibliography.^c

^c PCOM wishes to acknowledge Tabor College Adelaide for the information in the following tables.

Examples of Entries in a Bibliography

1. Books

One author	Chapman, C. <i>Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam</i> [Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1995].
More than one author	La Sor, W.S. Hubbard, D.A. and Bush, F.W. <i>Old Testament Survey</i> . [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1982].
No author - Title entry	<i>The Good News According to Mark</i> . Trans. E. Schweizer and D.H. Madvig [Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1970].
Edited work where author has major responsibility for the work	McKim, D.K. [ed.]. <i>A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics</i> [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1986].
Compiler	McIntosh, L.D. [comp.]. <i>A Style Manual for the Presentation of Papers and Theses in Religion and Theology</i> [Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Information Studies, 1995].
Bible	<i>Holy Bible: New International Version</i> , [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996]
Article or chapter in a book where an author has major responsibility for work	Burnett, D. 'How to cope with culture shock'. In <i>Prepared to Serve: A Practical Guide to Christian Service Overseas</i> . Edited by Derek Williams [London: Scripture Union/TEAR, 1989].
Article in an edited work where the editor has major input into the structure and content of the volume	Brown, H.O.J. 'The crusade or preventive war.' In R.G. Clouse, ed. <i>War: Four Christian Views</i> [Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991], 151-168.
Dictionary, encyclopaedia, etc.	<i>The Dictionary of Bible and Religion</i> . Ed. W.H. Gentz [Nashville: Abingdon, 1986].
Article in Dictionary/Encyclopaedia	Achtemeier, P.J. 'Mark, gospel of'. In <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Vol.4 Edited by D.N. Freedman [New York: Doubleday, 1992], 541-557.
Edition other than first edition	Clanchy, J. and Ballard, B. <i>Essay Writing for Students: A Practical Guide</i> . 2 nd edn [Melbourne: Longman

Cheshire, 1991].

- Translators - written after the title *Early Christian Writings*. Rev. edn. Trans. M. Stainforth [London: Penguin Books, 1987].
- Author's work edited Finney, C.G. *The Memoirs of Charles G. Finney: The Complete Restored Text*. Edited by G.M. Rosell and R.A.G. Dupois [Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1989].
- Series Coate, M.A. *Clergy Stress: The Hidden Conflicts in Ministry. The New Library of Pastoral Care* [London: SPCK, 1989].
- Bible commentary [series] Hooker, M.D. *The Gospel According to Saint Mark. Black's New Testament Commentary* [Boston, M.A.: Hendricksen Publishers, 1991].

2. Articles in Journals, Periodicals, Serials

- Numbered by volume, issues paginated consecutively Berge, C.L. and Pretz, P.E., 'Latin America's fifth wave of Protestant Churches'. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 20 [1996]: 157-159
- Numbered by volume, each issue paginated separately Miller, J. 'The literary structure of Mark: An interpretation based on I Corinthians 2:1-8'. *The Expository Times* 106 [10] [July 1995]: 296-298.
- Numbered by issue only Jagelman, I. 'What I believe about the state of the Australian church'. *New Day* 161 [Oct 1996]: 10-13.

3. Other Sources

- Audio cassette Thurman, C. *Helping Clients Defeat Perfectionism*. [Sound recording] [Forest, VI: American Association of Christian Counsellors, cassette KCGSO3, 1996]
- Video cassette 'God and family: the making of a culture'. On *The Real Story: A Christian's Guide to the Arab World, Part 2* [Video recording] [Lynnwood, W.A.: Vision Productions, 1995].
- Item a data base on CD-ROM 'Church music - bibliography'. *ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM*. [Evanston, IL: American Theological Library Association, 1993], issue 1.
- Journal article on CD-ROM Brown, A.S. and White, T.G. 'Ethical dilemmas posed by dual relationships in counselling'. *Complex Issues* [CD-ROM] 5 [1] [1996]: 21-26. Available UNI File: XYZ [TRI publications ondisc] Item 2000001.
- Document on Internet, including WWW, email, List or Bulletin Board, etc. 'Citing electronic resources'. The Internet Public Library. Available WWW:<http://www.ipl.org/classroom/userdocs/internet/citing.html> [Online, accessed 5 August 1996].

When citing resources from the Internet always include the date at which the resource was accessed.

Appendix 3: Copyright Guidelines

Paradise College pays an annual copyright fee to allow our students to make limited copies of our library resources for educational purposes. When making single or multiple copies please ensure that you abide by the following copyright guidelines.

1. Books and Other Separately Published Works

In respect of literary, dramatic or musical work contained in a published edition of that work, being an edition of more than 10 pages in length you may copy:

10% of the number of pages in that edition; or

one chapter of that edition,

whichever is the greater.

(This does not apply to the copying of an article in a periodical publication.)

2. Periodical Publications

e.g. newspapers, magazines, journals

In respect to articles in a periodical publication you may copy:

The whole or part of an article contained in any issue of a periodical publication.

The whole or part of two or more articles contained in any issue of a periodical publication if those articles relate to the same subject matter.

3. Anthologies

e.g. books of readings, collections of works

In respect to an anthology of works you may copy:

The whole or part of a literary or dramatic work in a published anthology of works if that work comprises not more than 15 pages of that anthology.

4. Artistic Works

e.g. maps, illustrations, drawings, pictures

An artistic work may be copied in whole or part if:

That artistic work accompanies a literary or dramatic work for the purpose of explaining or illustrating the literary or dramatic work copied (and the literary or dramatic work has been copied within these limits); or

It is not separately published.

If an artistic work has been separately published, no more than a reasonable portion of that work can be copied unless a new copy of the artistic work cannot be obtained within a reasonable time at an ordinary commercial price.

5. Works Not Separately Published

You may copy the whole or part of a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work (other than an article in a periodical publication) which is not separately published.

6. Unavailable Works

You may copy the whole or part of a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work (other than an article in a periodical publication) if new copies of that work cannot be obtained within a reasonable time at an ordinary commercial price.

Appendix 4: A Brief Guide to Essay Writing

In your studies at PCOM there will be numerous modules where you will be asked to submit an essay for assessment. Sometimes students prepare work that might contain some great ideas but doesn't achieve the result it could have done because it fails to develop an argument logically or clearly. Further, many students fail to really identify what the question is asking them to do. When preparing an essay, it is very helpful to have a strategy that involves planning, researching, writing and reviewing. By taking this kind of approach, and remembering to make sure you give the examiners what they are looking for you can achieve excellent results. Following are a few key points that will help you develop an effective approach to essay preparation.

1. Understanding the Question

The most important thing you can do initially is to make sure you know what is required. Do you understand the question? Make sure that your essay answers the question and don't waste time and effort writing anything else. No matter how insightful or interesting you might think your ideas are, unless they specifically and clearly answer the question set for you they will cost rather than gain marks for you. It can't be said enough times, make sure you understand the question. If ever a question does not seem clear or may have different options talk to your lecturer about it. The lecturer will be very happy to help you.

When starting out with your essay it is also important to check details such as word limits and due dates. Allow plenty of time so that you don't have to do a rushed job.

2. Collecting Information

Once you have sorted out exactly what the question is asking, the next step is to spend some time thinking about all of the possible things you might need to research in relation to your question or problem. Include everything that you think may be remotely related to your chosen question or problem. Brainstorm and develop a list of all of these possibilities.

Similarly you will need to think of the types of resources that you will need in order to develop your research. These may include books, journals and online sources. Online sources can be very useful, but should be approached with caution as the World Wide Web has a blend of good and bad materials. Try to stick to web pages from libraries, academic institutions, web journals and other quality sources.

As you begin to read and do your research it is important to begin to develop an outline for your essay. Good essays are not just a random collection of ideas. They must exhibit a flow of argument whereby each idea is introduced and developed in a logical sequence. As mentioned earlier, the question or problem being addressed by the paper defines the focus and limits of the

essay. The outline may become obvious from the research question itself or it might slowly evolve as you think and read about your topic. In either case make sure that the essay remains within the bounds set by the question and that all the aspects of the question are covered.

In addition to exhibiting a clear flow of argument, it is essential that your essay demonstrates evidence of research. When writing an essay, your opinions must be substantiated and your conclusions must be based upon good research. Each main point must be supported either by reasonable logic or by reference to the ideas and conclusions drawn from your research sources. You should never present an essay that simply spouts out your own opinions without logically supporting them. The examiner will always be looking to see that you have accessed a variety of good quality literary sources, have thought about them and can refer back to them in formulating your argument.

In doing your research it is a good idea to make notes on cards or on sheets of paper, but make sure that you have a reliable system for keeping the notes together, eg., for cards use a file index, for sheets of paper use a folder. Start each topic on a new card or page. Don't forget to note full details of the sources being quoted or referred to, this will mean that you won't have to come back and "double handle" the book when you need to write the references or Bibliography.

3. Writing the Paper

In both planning and writing your essay you should make sure you include each of the following sections. These should not be labelled, but should be clear structural elements in the essay.

a. Statement of the Question

It is always a good idea to state the question at the beginning of your paper. This will help you keep your answer relevant and helps the assessor know exactly what you are supposed to be answering in your paper.

b. Introduction

The Introduction introduces the paper. By this is meant that the introduction essentially states "This is what this paper is going to be about". This can be done in many different ways and might include a discussion of the question or problem addressed by the paper. It might include mention of the importance of the question or problem, identify the key issues and outline how these issues will be addressed. In most essays the introduction will be one paragraph in length.

c. Body

The body of the paper presents builds the argument by logically presenting each main point and clearly explaining each one. As you develop each main point ask yourself “Why am I saying this?” and “Why am I saying this here?” These two questions should help you clarify the content and logic of your arguments. There are no guidelines on the number of main points and main points may be broken up into sub points etc. The body of the essay is the longest section and should numerous paragraphs, depending on the length of the essay. You might like to label main points, although this is not necessary.

d. Conclusion

The Conclusion states what you have concluded from your research. It presents your final understanding of the answer(s) to the question. It does not introduce any new information into the paper but rather draws your ideas and arguments to a close. Essentially a conclusion states, “So this is what this paper has found to be true”. The Conclusion, like the introduction, should be one paragraph in length.

e. Bibliography

The final section of your essay is the Bibliography, which lists all of the sources that you have used in your research. Never, never, never forget to include a Bibliography.

4. Additional Considerations

The following additional guidelines need to be followed when writing an essay:

a. Academic English

Essays are generally written in an impersonal style. They are usually written in the *third person* (he/she/it/they/them) rather than in the first person (I, we, me, us) or the second person (you). For example, instead of saying in the introduction, “I decided to limit this paper to ...”, write “This paper has been limited to ...”, or “The natural limits of the topic are...”. Similarly, instead of writing, “To understand the Second Coming of Christ it is important that *you* consider ...”, write “To understand the Second Coming of Christ it is important to consider ...”.

Similarly essays need to be written in English that is simple, concise and clear. Avoid using excessive superlatives (best, greatest, fantastic, wonderful etc.). Also avoid using slang, colloquial language or casual abbreviations (they’d, don’t, doesn’t - rather use ‘they had’, ‘do not’, ‘does not’).

b. Paragraphs and Topic Sentences

A paragraph is a single unit of thought. It may contain only a few sentences or many but essentially it expresses only one main idea. When writing a research paper it is important to limit each paragraph to only one main idea and to start a new paragraph for each new idea.

In good research writing the first sentence of each paragraph (called the topic sentence) expresses the main idea of the paragraph. The remaining sentences in the paragraph expand, qualify or explain the main idea. For examples of this consider each of the paragraphs in this Appendix and notice the role of the first sentence in each one. (The essential ideas of each paragraph can be understood by simply reading the first sentence of each paragraph.)

Limiting each paragraph to only one main point and introducing each paragraph with a clear topic sentence enables you to develop a clear logical flow of argument throughout the paper. Each paragraph must logically lead to the next and must support the main idea expressed in the topic sentence.

c. Layout

Please see the guidelines in this Style Guide (p.5) for setting out the paper.

d. Grammar

Essays are not intended to be great literary masterpieces but it is important to consider the following basic guidelines:

- Be careful of spelling.
- Use complete sentences. Don't write your paper in note form.
- Try not to write in sentences longer than three lines.
- Try not to always start sentences with the same word.
- In larger papers it is a good idea to use headings.

e. Proof Reading

Undertake several very careful proof readings of your essay before you submit it. It is a good idea to put the essay aside for a few days after you have completed it and then come back to do a fresh proof reading. This will enable you to read it with fresh objectivity.

5. Assignments: Key Words

a. Explain

To give details and clarify the heading/question which you are required to explain.

b. Discuss

To interact with the material given by giving multiple opinions.

c. Outline

Simply outline what has been asked. This may be done in paragraph or list form.

d. Summarize

Give a clear and concise overview by reviewing the results from the material presented.

e. Describe

Clearly portray or illustrate the material required.

f. Background and Setting

Some assignments will ask you to outline the background and setting of a particular book, etc. This refers to the time in which the circumstances took place. This question is not asking you to explain the content or give an outline of the story, but an insight into the world behind the story. i.e. dates of the period, date of writing, author of the book, circumstances that led to the writing, key people or events at the time (i.e. kings, prophets, judges, exile, return, etc).

g. Specific and practical application

Identify a specific situation in which you can apply the given principle. Relate the principle directly to the situation being as specific and practical as possible.

Example: Principle of Giving. I have recently been challenged by the principle of giving. One area I could improve in my life is with my relationship with my parents. I sometimes find it hard to give more than they ask. I will choose to do three things this week to go above expectations. The three things are: 1) Wash up at dinner for mum this Wednesday night. 2) Take Dad for a hit of golf on Saturday. 3) Buy them a box of chocolates and have a meal with them this week.

6. The Essay Checklist

Before you submit your essay go through the following checklist. You should be able to tick every box – if you can't, go back and fix your work. Using a strategy in preparing your essay and making sure this checklist is complete will help you get great marks for your work.

Layout

- Have I set the paper out correctly? Are the margins the right size? Have I double spaced the lines? Have I paragraph justified the paragraphs?

Length

- Is the paper within 10% of the length prescribed by the question?

Structure

- Have I stated the question at the beginning of the paper?
- Is my paper clearly structured? Does it progress in logical stages?
- Has my introduction prepared the reader for what is to come?
- Have I stated a clear position that will be argued/defended throughout the paper?
- Are the main points of the paper connected?
- Are my paragraphs clearly connected and coherent?
- Does each paragraph begin with a topic sentence?

Content

- Have I logically and clearly answered the question?
- Do the major points all relate to the topic, or are there some that I can do without?
- Are there places where I need more evidence or argument?
- Are my quotations useful and necessary, and do I interact with them adequately?
- Are facts and opinions supported with examples and explanations where necessary?

Language

- Is my written expression appropriate? Is the paper grammatically correct?
- Are some of my sentences too long? Should I make some sentences into two or more shorter ones for clarity sake?
- Have I used non-discriminatory language?

Research

- Is there a clear distinction between my thoughts and words, and the thoughts and words of the sources I am using?
- Have I fully referenced my sources in both direct and indirect ways?
- Have I used a consistent referencing style?
- Is the bibliography complete and set out consistently?

Checking

- Have I proof read the paper for all possible errors?
- Have I kept a copy of this for myself as backup?
- Have I included a correctly completed assignment cover-sheet?