Guidelines for Research Paper
prepared by Thom South

1. All research papers should be type written with one inch margins on each side and on top and bottom. [Left margin may be 1/2 inches to allow for binding space.] The print should be 12 point in a standard font and double spaced.

2. The purpose of a research paper is to show what was learned in research. It is assumed that you know nothing about the topic except what has been learned in your research. Everything said in a research paper should be documented with footnotes, unless it is such common knowledge that it is assumed that everyone knows it.

3. Footnotes should be superscript in both text and bottom notes. Footnotes at bottom of the page should be separated from the text by a 2 inch line. First line of note should be indented 5 spaces (begin typing on 6th space)and second and succeeding lines of each note should go to the margin. There should be a minimum of two notes per page. Footnotes at the bottom of the page (with superscript numbers in the text) are preferred. Parenthetic notes within the text will be permitted. Please do not place notes at the end of the paper.

4. The paper should include a title page, a table of contents page, and a “Selected Bibliography.” Note that a “Table of Contents” page is optional on a paper less than twenty pages, unless required by the instructor.

5. The paper should be well organized and may include sub-topic headings using the following pattern:

   MAIN HEADING 1
   [ 2 double spaces]
   Main Heading 2
   [ 2 double spaces]
   Secondary Heading

   Main sub-heading
   Second sub-heading

   Third level sub-heading  (underlined and included on the line of text)

   The main heading on a page should be on line 12 and the text (or next sub-heading) begin on line 16 (two double spaces). Secondary headings and sub-headings are separated from the text or other headings only by a double spaced line. Subheadings at the top of a page begin at the top margin and are not separated from the text. No heading should be on the last line of a page. At least one line of text should be on the last line of a page after a heading.

6. A “Selected Bibliography” should show ALL the works used in research for the paper. You may include works in the bibliography which are not used in footnotes. Any work cited in footnotes MUST be included in the bibliography.

7. Page numbering should be in the upper right hand corner except on pages beginning with a main heading which should be centered at the bottom of the page. Do not number the title page.

8. A minimum of 10 sources should be cited with at least 3 Journal article included and no more than one internet source for every 3 other works cited and a maximum of 3 internet sources. (See professor’s instructions for minimum number of sources required.)

9. Sample bibliography reference entries:

   Book:
   [Second line of bibliographic entry should be indented 5 spaces.]

   Journal:
Reference work:

Footnote:
Superscript in Text¹ with first line of note indented and page number of reference. A second reference to the same author² need only include the author’s name and the page of reference. If more than one work by the same author is cited, use an abbreviation of the title to distinguish the works.³ In parenthetic notes, when the author is mentioned in the text only the page number is included in the note. Parenthetic notes are included before the sentence is ended, i.e. before the period (p. 85).

10. Common errors to avoid in writing research papers:
   A. Title page - See example below.
   B. First page should begin on line 12 and page number should be at bottom center of page when the title is on the first page. All other pages should have number in upper right corner.
   C. Footnotes - two problems: (1) not enough; (2) improper form. There should be at least 2 footnotes for each page of text. Assume that you do not know anything and that the reader does not know anything and that everything you write must be documented to show where you learned that information. For proper form consult Turabian (see below).
   D. Quotations - Quotation marks go outside final punctuation of a quote. Footnotes go outside the quotation marks. Try to avoid long quotations. If a long quotation is necessary, and it is over 3 lines in length it should be indented from the left margin five spaces and single spaced. When introducing a quotation keep in mind that the author is not currently speaking. Use past tense: Leon Wood said, “xxxx.” NOT: Wood says, “xxxx.”
   E. Formal writing should not use first person (we, us, I) or second person (you). Always write in third person. (Research papers are considered formal writing.) If you are writing a position paper or something of that nature you can be less formal. However, it is still best to avoid excessive use of first person.
   F. Introduce the paper by stating the purpose for the paper and the method for achieving that purpose. The conclusion should state how the purpose was achieved. In the introduction, tell what you will say; say it in the body of the paper; then, in the conclusion, state what you said. A research paper is not intended to be innovative or cutting edge. The purpose of a research paper is to show that you did research on the topic, analyzed the material, and drew your conclusions from that material. A research paper is to tell what the authors said more than to share what you think. Any personal reaction should be limited to the conclusion of the paper. Most research papers are too sermonic in tone.
   G. Watch your use of commas. Introductory clauses and prepositional phrases should be set off from the main part of the sentence with a comma.
   H. Your reference page will be a “Selected Bibliography.” It is unlikely that you will have exhausted all possible resources for the topic on which you are writing. So do not call the reference page a “Bibliography.”

² Wood, p. 85.
³ Wood, Prophets, p. 85.
I. Note the difference between footnote and bibliography entries. One basic difference is that a footnote is like one sentence with information entries separated by commas. In a bibliography, each part of the entry is a separate sentence and separated by periods. The first line of a footnote and the second line in the bibliography is indented 5 spaces. Consecutive entries in footnotes to the same work may use “Ibid.” However, “ibid” should not be the first footnote entry on a page. When two or more works are used by the same author the second and succeeding entries in the bibliography will use 8 space underline instead of the author’s name. If the second entry is a joint work by the author and another writer you must use the full name, not 8 underlined spaces. Titles of books should be italicized or underlined. Titles for articles and chapter titles should be placed in quotation marks and the journal or book title italicized.

J. Internet citations should include the author’s name, title of the article, publication information (if written for other journal or periodical and copied to internet source), location of the URL, and the date accessed.
NOTE: WIKIPEDIA is not a reliable source and should NOT be referenced in formal research. This web driven source may be used to get ideas for research, but can not be considered an authoritative source for any information. Everything you read on Wikipedia (or other web originated sources) must be confirmed through reliable sources.

K. Writing should go to the bottom of the page and not leave large gaps before the footnote separation line. It is not necessary to print more than one line of a paragraph on the top of the next page. The only exception is when you are completing a section and begin the next page with a major heading. Note that most word processors are set to keep at least two lines together on the top of a page. You will need to change that default setting to keep the pages from being too short. Cutting a page short to allow for more pages does not work. You will still be counted off for having too short a paper, AND you will be counted off for improper form.

L. Check and recheck spelling. Spell-check will read some misspellings as words. If you misspell a word with a word that is in the dictionary you must correct it apart from the spell-checker.

M. Within the text of the paper you should spell out most words and avoid using abbreviations. The exception to that rule is in titles (Mr., Mrs., Dr.) and identities following names (Jr., Sr.). Note that names are not separated from such terms by commas. In footnotes and bibliography entries, the proper (traditional) form of abbreviations for states is preferred over the two-letter postal abbreviation (E.g., Ark. not AR; Tex. not TX; Calif. not CA; Mo. not MO). When periods are part of the abbreviation there should be no space after the internal period: e.g., N.Y., Ph.D., N.Dak. Other common abbreviations should be used only in footnotes and bibliographies: ed. for “Editor(s)”, “Edition”, or “Edited by”; ca. for “circa” (approximately); ibid. for “in the same place”; n.d. for “no date”; n.p. for “no place” or “no publisher”; rev. for “revised” or “revised by”; s.v. (sub verbo) means “under the word” (used in encyclopedia and dictionary references); trans. for “translator” or “translated by”; vol. for “Volume.” For dates A.D., B.C., B.C.E., and C.E. should be capitalized. A.D. should precede the date, all the others will follow (A.D. 2006, 515 B.C.).


Sample bibliography entries:
The Relationship of Prophets and Kings in Ancient Israel

A Research Paper
submitted to
Dr. Thom South

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
OT511x: Introduction and Survey of the Old Testament I

BMA Theological Seminary
Extension Campus
Conway, Arkansas

by
John Doe
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