UTEP MBA: WRITING WORKSHOP

Conducted by: Isela Ocegueda, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Student Professional Development at UTEP
Before you start to write...

- Clarify your purpose: “Why I am writing this document?”
- Put yourself in the reader’s shoes
- State your key message clearly
- KISS

“There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter & bleed.”

~ Ernest Hemingway
Scoping your writing project

“Being a writer is a very peculiar sort of a job: it’s always you versus a blank sheet of paper (or a blank screen) and quite often the blank piece of paper wins.”

~ Neil Gaiman

- Scoping: determine the breadth of your subject and decide how deeply you will cover it
- Broad versus limited
Getting started

“The scariest moment is always just before you start.”

~ Stephen King

- Questioning
- Formal outline & informal outline
- Brainstorming (idea chart)
- Freewriting
- An abstract
Organization

“How do I know what I think until I see what I say?”

~ E.M. Forster

- Order of importance
- Chronological
- Process and procedure
- Spatial arrangement
- Compare and contrast
- Specific to general or general to specific
- Analytical
The First Draft

- Begin where you feel comfortable
- Write in categories
- Make technical information accessible

“The first draft of anything is shit.”

~ Ernest Hemingway
“Nothing’s a better cure for writer’s block than to eat ice cream right out of the carton.”

~ Don Roff

- Paragraph basics
- Transitions

Proponents of expanding the theatre seating have failed to provide any estimates of construction, operating costs, and taxes. Without those estimates, any attempt to evaluate their proposal will be a waste of time.

Even if construction costs were reasonable for the operation, we would still be facing a high level of revenue uncertainty. No one knows how a doubling of seating will affect annual revenues. Is it reasonable to assume that revenues will double, or is a 75 percent increase more likely?
Transitions

Our inventory managers have kept a tight lid on finished goods stocks. Consequently, working capital requirements have dropped by 8 percent.

- Other useful transitional words:
  - as a result, in addition, likewise, meanwhile, for example, finally, on the other hand, furthermore, nevertheless
Editing for Content

- Put your message in focus
- Review for clarity
- Sequence your key message strategically
- Answer your readers’ question: “Why?”

“If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write.”

~ Martin Luther
Editing for Style

- Visual enhancements
- Match your tone to your audience
- Check for conciseness
- Active voice
- Edit/proofread

“One day I will find the right words, and they will be simple.”

~ Jack Kerouac
Tips for business documents

"I’m sorry I wrote you such a long letter; I didn’t have time to write a short one.”

~ Blaise Pascal

- The proposal
- The memo
- The business letter
- Email
The Proposal

- Planning session with recipient
- Customer is the focus
- Answer the “Why” question.
- Be specific
- Design for visual impact
The Memo

- One topic
- Specific subject line
- Clear, specific headlines
- Cluster ideas
- Visual impact
- Active voice
- Tone
The Business Letter

- Begin on a personal note.
- Grab reader’s attention with the key message in the first sentence
- Sentence length
- Paragraphs
- Active voice
- Positive tone
- Visual impact
- Toward the end, summarize points
- Not overly formal
- Perhaps: friendly personal touch at the end
Email

- Common problems
- Subject line
- One topic
- Clear purpose
- Concise & attachments
- Remember audience
- Simple formatting
- When not to send an email
Writing for the MBA program

“Academic writing is analytical writing.”

~ Dr. Ocegueda

Professors want to see that you understand course concepts, not by repeating the concepts back to them, but by explaining how the concepts work and what their implications are in broader contexts.
To analyze something is to ask what that something means. It is to ask how something does what it does or why it is as it is.

It requires breaking a subject into its constituent parts and determining the relationship between these parts (between each other and to the whole).

Analysis is different from judgment.

Analysis is different from summary.
Analysis involves asking questions such as:

- What does this mean?
- What is the significance of this detail?
- What does this pattern mean?
- What else might it mean?
Developing a topic and writing analytically:

- Begin with questions rather than preconceived notions or obvious answers.
- Avoid descriptive or summary questions like “what,” and use questions involving “how” or “why.”
- Don’t just repackage what others have written. Analyze what has been written on your subject and look for preconceived assumptions.
- Always ask yourself “So what?”
- What is the significance of your topic?
APA ~ THE RULES OF THE GAME
What is APA, and why do I need to know it?

- APA stands for American Psychological Association, and it is a set of style rules and standards that must be applied to scholarly writing in the social and behavioral sciences.

- Formatting your work in APA style means paying attention to mechanical details such as typeface, line spacing, margins, and page headers.

- Why do you need to know it? APA standards are the rules of the game, no matter where you go, if you plan on writing scholarly work in your field.
Running head: SHORT TITLE ALL CAPS IN HEADER

Full Title of Paper: Sentence Case, Centered Left to Right

Name of Author

Author’s Affiliation

Author Note

Author note with more information about affiliation, research grants, acknowledgments, special circumstances, and how to contact.
General formatting guidelines

- **Margins**: 1 inch around

- **Font**: Times New Roman – 12 pt.

- **Line spacing**: double spaced throughout

- **Word spacing**:
  - 1 space after commas, colons, and semi-colons
  - 1 space after period in name (A. B. Smith)
  - 1 space after period separating parts of reference citation
  - 1 or 2 spaces after periods in sentences in text
Headings (3.03)

- In academic writing, sound organizational structure is the key to clear, precise, and logical communication. Headings help effectively organize ideas within a study. Concise headings help the reader anticipate key points and track the development of your argument.
# Headings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Heading</th>
<th>Formatting of Heading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Method (Level 1)

In this paper I used two types of methods to figure out the results of my experiment.

Sample and Participant Selection (Level 2)

The first type of method I used was the sand collecting method.

Assessments and Measures (Level 2)

Various assessments were applied in order to measure the effectiveness of the methods utilized. What follows is a detailed breakdown of these methods.

Q-sort measures of inhibition and aggressiveness. The first assessment measured levels of inhibition and aggressive in the subjects of the study. The various degrees of inhibitions and aggressiveness were objectively measured using a psychological tool. (Level 3)
A citation is giving credit whenever you use someone’s ideas, figures, unique approach, or specific reasoning. This is done whether you paraphrase another’s ideas or use direct quotes.

The purpose of using citations is twofold:

1. to give credit to the person whose material you are using and
2. to offer a way for readers of your work to find out more information about that source.
Paraphrasing within text:

In a 1989 article, Gould explores some of Darwin’s most effective metaphors.

Author cited in text:

Gould (1989) attributed Darwin’s success to his gift for making the appropriate metaphor.

Author not cited in text:

As metaphors for the workings of nature, Darwin used the tangled bank, the tree of life, and the face of nature (Gould, 1989).
Direct quote from author:

Gould (1989) explains that Darwin used the metaphor of the tree of life “to express the other form of interconnectedness—genealogical rather than ecological—and to illustrate both success and failure in the history of life” (p.14).

Direct quote without name of author:

Darwin used the metaphor of the tree of life “to express the other form of interconnectedness—genealogical rather than ecological” (Gould, 1989, p.14).
General format for long quotes:

- indented 5 spaces/1 tab key
- do not use quotation marks
- citation appears one space after last punctuation of quote
- Double-space the quote

Example:

Friedman (2006) draws connections between two seemingly disparate events: The November 9 (dismantling of the Berlin Wall) and September 11 (attack on the World Trade Center) represent the two competing forms of imagination at work in the world today: the creative imagination of 11/9 and the destructive imagination of 9/11. One brought down a wall and opened the windows of the world. . . [while the other] put up new invisible and concrete walls among people. (p.543)
Example:

Several studies (Balda, 1980; Kammil, 1988; Pepperberg & Funk, 1990) confirm the use of metaphors increases learning.
One work with multiple authors (6.12)

First citation in text:
- Wasserstein, Zappula, Rosen, German, and Rock (1994) found...
- The use of metaphors was found to be helpful (Wasserstein, Zappula, Rosen, German, & Rock, 1994)

Subsequent citations (3 or more authors):
- Wasserstein and colleagues (1994) found
- Wasserstein et al. (1994) found
- The use of metaphors was found to be helpful (Wasserstein et al., 1994)
Seidenberg and McCelland’s study shows significant findings (as cited in Coltheart, Curtis, Atkins, & Haller, 1993).

References (2.11)

- References are listed on a separate page.
- Only citations that appear in the text should appear on the reference page.
- Everything cited in the text should appear on the reference page and vice-versa.
- References are double-spaced, flush left with subsequent lines indented 5 spaces.
Digital Object Identifiers (DOI)  [6.31]

DOIs are unique strings of numbers used to identify online articles’ content and provide a persistent link to their location on the Internet.

1. When DOIs are present, no longer have to include URL.
2. When DOIs are not present, include URL
Online periodical when DOI is present (7.01)

General format:


Example:

Online article when DOI is not present (7.01)

General format:

Author, A. A. (date of publication). Title of article *Title of Journal, volume*(issue), page numbers. Retrieved from URL

Example:

Technical & Research Reports (7.03)

- General format:

**Example:**

General format:

Example:
Book, edition, multiple authors (7.02)

General format:

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (year of publication). *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle (number ed.). Location City, State Abbreviation: Publisher.*

Example:

Chapter in book (7.02)

General format:


Example:

APA Resources


APA Website: [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)

*(These 2 resources are indispensable! It is definitely worth purchasing the APA Publication Manual.)*
Other APA Resources

- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl)

(Purdue’s Online Writing Lab is well-renowned and has good reason to be— a great, classic online source for APA and other writing topics.)
APA: It’s all in the details…

- If you do APA well, it will be meticulous work, a little time-consuming, but it will show how conscientious and careful you are with your work—it will reflect that you are a true scholar and that you take pride in your work.

It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen.  ~ John Wooden

Never neglect details. When everyone's mind is dulled or distracted the leader must be doubly vigilant.  ~ Colin Powell

Success is the sum of details.  ~ Harvey S. Firestone