

Five Tips for Good Writing

1. Be sure that you *carefully* read the instructions for the paper assignment – underlining, circling, and highlighting parts of the assignment if necessary to call your attention to specific details. Keep it next to you as you write your paper, and refer back to it often to check whether you are still focused on the assignment and are addressing EVERYTHING that it asks you to address. Reel yourself in if you have lost your focus.
2. Provide correct or appropriate citations. UW libraries have a free reference sheet that can help you with APA style, or check the Web for an APA crib sheet. Here is a good one to use as a reference: <http://www.docstyles.com/apacrib.htm>
3. Proofread the paper carefully – line by line and word by word – before turning it in. Giving it that one final “close read” will help you catch and correct grammatical and stylistic errors.
4. Provide evidence and support for your assertions. For example, if you state that there are more females than males in the field of social work, you should let your reader know how you know this. Did you count them yourself? Probably not. You relied on a source other than yourself to provide this information. You need to cite that source and perhaps discuss its credibility.
5. Write clearly. You do not want your reader to read a sentence over and over again in an attempt to figure out what you mean. Long, elaborate sentences often run the risk of being unclear. Have someone read over your paper and tell you honestly whether it makes sense and what you can do to improve your writing.