GRADUATE WRITING: DO'S AND DON'TS

Graduate writing can feel daunting, especially if you have not been in school for a while. When writing at the graduate level, it is important to understand the writing skills needed for academic writing. Many of the following tips contain links to other resources that can help you hone your writing skills!

Always check your syllabi to find any specific expectations that your professors have for you!

GRADUATE WRITING: DO'S

1. **Write Actively**:** Use the active voice for the majority of your sentences. Active voice makes your writing clearer and more concise.

2. **Use a Scholarly Tone:** Avoid writing in the first-person or second-person perspective unless you are requested to do so. Additionally, avoid using casual language or slang; this makes your paper feel informal.

3. **Practice Concision:** Refrain from using excess wording. Make your points clear and direct.

4. **Have an Organized Flow:** In your paragraphs, begin with simple, more familiar information and progress to more complex, new information. Additionally, your body paragraphs should have clear topic sentences and concluding sentences.

5. **Understand Your Prompts:** Review your assignment prompt multiple times. Ensure you can identify what your professor wants you to discuss and how they want you to discuss it.

6. **Understand Your Style Manual:** Most classes use one of the three following styles: **MLA**, **APA**, or **Turabian**. Your formatting style depends on your degree or major.

GRADUATE WRITING: DON'TS

1. **Don't Plagiarize:** Always adhere to general academic honesty guidelines when writing. Whenever you quote, paraphrase a concept, or are inspired by another source, you always need to give credit to the original source. For direct quotes, you will also need to use "quotation marks" to distinguish the original author's words from yours.

2. **Don't Overly Rely on Spell-Check, Grammarly, or Citation Makers:** These programs are helpful and can add polish to your writing. However, they are not perfect. Spell-check and

Grammarly are tools that assist students, but they should not be substitutes for careful proofreading. Proofreading can help you identify issues with your argument, organization, or the flow of your writing. Additionally, citation machines can aggregate lots of information necessary for your citation entry, but they may miss some aspects. If you use one, review the citation entries to ensure that they contain the correct information and are formatted properly.

3. **<u>Don't be too Abstract</u>:** When covering a topic, make sure you are not just referring to abstract theories and concepts. Provide clear, concrete examples of what you are discussing.

** Any wording in blue font is a clickable link to another resource on that particular topic for your convenience.

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