

College 101: English Edition

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Abstract

This paper will go over advice on writing a great academic paper at UNT Dallas for high school seniors coming to study here. The logistics of academic papers, such as the writing style APA and the importance of making an outline of your paper before writing a paper, will be discussed. This paper also explains the different resources available to the students and how to be a confident writer. In the end, students will have a more comfortable perspective for the future papers they will write at UNT Dallas.

Keywords: Academic Paper, APA, Outline

A University Academic Paper is much easier than what many high school teachers make it out to be especially if those teachers taught AP classes. The main differences are in the writing styles and the length of most papers which can also depend on the specific university and professor. In order to be a successful college writer, you must understand everything being asked of you through the instructions, use all the resources available to you, and how to trust your instincts when writing a strong paper.

At UNT Dallas, the writing style used is the American Psychological Association style, or APA, which is much cleaner and nicer than the MLA style commonly used in many high schools. This style includes a cover letter (which isn't as complicated as most people put it to be), at times an abstract or a small paragraph summarizing the paper, and many more changes. Understanding this style can benefit not only your experience in your English class but also in many other classes where a paper is required at least once. Another thing you may notice is that universities call essays "papers" and the length requirement is mostly measured by pages, not by paragraphs. It was very scary coming into college and being told that a short essay (paper) is 3-4 pages long but when you break everything down, it is less work than you may think. Since the first page is the cover page, that takes away a page you won't have to write and fill up. Breaking down the paragraphs into sections also makes it easier to visualize what you are writing and helps you focus more on the content of your paper rather than the length. It can be so easy to procrastinate and stress over an assignment if you see it as something bigger than it is.

Reading the instructions and the rubrics in their entirety many times before and even while writing your paper can help you stay on topic and include all of the information required of

you to write about. Sometimes professors may even add examples of past papers or resources to other websites that can help you get ideas for your own paper. The importance is to pay close attention to the details given to you by your instructor because you never know what information might be hidden between all the information. Another resource given in university is the writing labs. The writing lab, as they put it, “beyond-the-classroom space where students can explore confusing or challenging educational issues through dialogic relationships.” A trip to the learning commons at UNT Dallas can save your entire paper. They help with grammar, organization, formatting, and giving you ideas to improve your paper in general. The best part of it all is that it is completely free and are available for the most part of the day, every single day. Using all the resources given to you is the best thing you can do to keep yourself calm and not constantly lost (like we were in high school) and can bring your paper from a 4 to a solid 9; but, they can only do so much to help- the rest is on you.

The true piece of advice you need to know and do is to trust in your own abilities as a writer and constantly keep trying to improve. Professors are looking for a confident well written paper and you can't give them one without being confident in your own writing abilities.

According to a blog written on *ProofreadNOW.com*, “To become a more confident writer, you need to hone your skills and practice as much as possible. The only way to do that is to write more. Don't wait until you “have to” write something.” (Creighton, 2018) Leaving things to the last minute doesn't give you enough time to go back and have someone proofread it or read over and correct your own mistakes, which at times are inevitable to make. You will make mistakes! It will be okay; what isn't okay is not learning and improving from them.

In the end, you only regret the opportunities you took for granted before receiving that bad grade on a paper. Don't be afraid to ask a professor to walk you through his opinion on your paper and what you may need to correct before turning it in; they're much nicer than high school teachers make them out to be. The smartest path to excel in college is to use what is available to you even if you may be afraid to do so. College is scary; you're in the real world now but there are so many people and resources around you to help you in your path through higher education and all you need to do is accept that help. Remember to be confident and open to the new ways of learning and the new writing style you will experience. Your future papers will be commended and you will feel much more comfortable and less stressed if you follow this advice.