

Term paper checklist

Aufbau level

1 Formatting

1.1 Title page

- top left corner
 - “Ruhr-Universität Bochum”
 - “Englisches Seminar”
 - title of class
 - term
 - name of instructor
- center: title of term paper
 - horizontally centred
 - larger font, bold printing optional
- bottom right corner
 - name of student
 - student ID number
 - e-mail address

1.2 Table of contents

- opens on new page
- chapters, sections, subsections are numbered and given with the page they start on
- can be generated automatically
 - optional, but highly recommended
 - google something like “create a table of contents word” for detailed instructions

1.3 Text body

- opens on new page
- length: 3500–4000 words (excluding graphs and tables)
- font: Times New Roman (size 12) or Arial (size 11)
- line spacing: 1.5
- page margins:
 - 2 cm on the left (inner margin for double-sided printing)
 - 4 cm on the right (outer margin for double-sided printing)
 - 3 cm at the top and bottom
- page numbers (cover sheet is counted, but not visibly numbered; page numbering starts with “2” on the contents page)
- example words appear in *italics*
- numbered headline and new paragraph for each (sub-)section
- indented paragraphs (about 1.25cm) within sections (but not after a headline, table, or graph)
- no space between paragraphs
- paragraphs fully justified (“Blocksatz”)
- tables and graphs are marked as “table”, or “figure” and numbered continuously
- use footnotes parsimoniously and NEVER for citation!

1.4 References

- opens on new page
- contains all sources used in the writing of the term paper (books, articles, websites, ...)
- hanging indent (about 1.25cm)
- for detailed formatting instructions of the individual entries see the Academic Style Sheet on the website of the English seminar
- please note that you are required to apply the “Citation Conventions in Linguistics” as spelled out under section 9 of the “Academic Style Sheet”
- most important requirement: consistency!

2 Structure of main text

2.1 Introduction

- theoretical background and motivation for research question / hypothesis
- research question or hypothesis explicitly spelled out
- general structure of paper outlined

2.2 Main part

- variably structured into sections and subsections
- contains a literature review
 1. summary of research relevant to the question or hypothesis under scrutiny
 2. discussion and critical evaluation of existing research, your own thoughts on the matter
- if applicable (empirical paper): contains the method (research design, participants, data sources, technical details...) and the analysis of your data, as well as your interpretation of the results
- the more your paper is based on data that you have collected yourself, the more basic your literature review may be (but even a heavily empirical paper should be grounded in previous research and therefore also needs at least a few paragraphs of literature review)
- in papers that are exclusively based on existing research, the literature review is expected to be much more detailed and comprehensive; assessment will focus on discussion and evaluation of the sources
- everything should be relevant with respect to your research question / hypothesis!

2.3 Conclusion

- summarises your paper
- spells out the conclusions drawn from your analysis
- re-assesses your research question / hypothesis
- addresses problems and limitations of your paper
- presents ideas on what one could do next

3 Citation

- using someone else's thoughts and ideas without citing the source is plagiarism
- a plagiarised paper is a fail
- direct (literal) and indirect (re-phrasings, summaries) quotations both need attribution
- references appear in running text using the author-year format:
 - direct quotation: "This is literally what I said myself" (Smith 2015: 112).
 - indirect quotation: The author explained that this was essentially the claim that she had made herself (cf. Smith 2015: 112).
- please print and sign the "Declaration of Authenticity" (last page of this document; taken from the Academic Style Sheet) and attach a scan of it to your term paper

4 DOs and DON'Ts

4.1 DOs

- be precise and provide RELEVANT details (your reader should be able to replicate your results on the basis of your report)
 - make sure everything in the write-up is relevant with respect to your hypothesis
- don't stop at the most basic comparison/analysis possible, but also have a look at sub-groups, individual test items etc.
 - especially, but not only, if your hypothesis is not confirmed
- use tables and graphs where appropriate
- consider basic linguistic (phoneme, allomorph ...) and statistical (p-value, t-test...) concepts as known – no need to explain them in your write-up

4.2 DON'Ts

- avoid prescriptive vocabulary
- don't "prove" your hypothesis because you can't
- don't write a chronological narrative but provide a systematic overview
 - REPORT/SUMMARISE retrospectively
- don't digress (too much) from the required structure/formatting (e.g. problems that occurred – and how you solved them – go into the discussion session, not the method section)
- avoid "personal" or emotional statements (like if the project was fun or not)

- don't report only those data that confirm your hypothesis
→ don't try to hush things up; just state what the problem was (and how it could be avoided next time)
- don't give long lists of t-tests etc., but → use tables
- don't just let your graphs and tables speak for themselves
– explain what you can see in your analysis/results section!
- don't use pie charts!

5 Handing in your paper

You will have to hand in an electronic version of your paper. The following formal requirements apply:

- word or pdf format (only ONE file, please!)
- file name: LAST NAME_first name_semester_paper.doc/pdf
(example: SCHMIDT_Sarah_WS2017_paper.doc)

Please upload your file via moodle — do not send it as an email attachment!

Declaration of Authenticity

I hereby declare that the work submitted is my own and that all passages and ideas that are not mine have been fully and properly acknowledged.

I am aware that I will fail the entire course should I include passages and ideas from other sources and present them as if they were my own.

date

signature