



Term Paper Checklist

This checklist is meant to help students organize and plan a term paper or research essay. It is important to keep in mind this list is a guide and is not a strict set of rules. We encourage you to make an appointment at the **Writing Center** before submitting your essay. You can make an appointment via our webpage: <https://www.uni-saarland.de/fachrichtung/anglistik/writing-center.html>

Reminder:

Always be aware of timing when working on your term paper. Check your schedule and due dates regularly

- ❑ **1. Reread the Instructions.** Usually, the instructor/professor will provide instructions stating what they expect. This information is not optional. They are communicating what should be in the assignment—do make sure to read carefully. Rereading instructions can refresh your memory and clarify doubts. If you are still struggling to understand, the **Writing Center** is there to help!
- ❑ **2. Select a Topic & Identify the Primary Text(s).** The selected topic must be relevant to the course and meet the requirements. Think about the topics covered in class. Your instructor might have already presented some options or ideas. Look at the course source material again. The instructor/professor will likely assign or suggest primary texts. It is necessary to read and understand these texts to start writing the paper.
- ❑ **3. Write a First Draft of the Thesis Statement.** The first attempt at writing anything is always the *first draft*, meaning it still needs to be revised and polished. In most cases, drafts are reread, changed, and corrected by the student. It is not uncommon for the instructor or professor to provide feedback on a draft. Their feedback should be implemented in the final submission. The **Writing Center** can provide feedback on cohesion, language use, grammar, or structure, but not content.
- ❑ **4. Select and Read Secondary Sources.** Find secondary literature that is related to your primary texts and argument. Take notes while you read. It is necessary for you to fully understand the meaning and background of the sources you are using to use them properly.
- ❑ **5. Draft an Outline.** In your outline, account for your introduction and add the thesis statement draft. The outline should also account for the main body of a text (where arguments and sources are analyzed) and a conclusion. It might be helpful to take notes in these sections and briefly explain what you want to write for each part, then evaluate how the sections fit together.
- ❑ **6. Write an Abstract.** Abstracts are usually sent to the instructor/professor early in the semester to allow them to provide guidance on what you are planning. Once you have received this feedback, you should implement it by revising your abstract and project.
- ❑ **7. Begin Writing the First Draft.** Start writing your paper. It is not always necessary to start with the introduction.
- ❑ **8. Make an Appointment at the Writing Center.** It is always good to have someone look at your *first draft*. Make an appointment at the **Writing Center**. You can make as many appointments as you need/like. We can also help with brainstorming, outlining, and abstracts!
- ❑ **9. Set a Date for Final Edits.** Go over your notes again and check whether you have missed anything. Be aware that final edits usually take longer than you expect.
- ❑ **10. Hand in your Paper on Time and in the Right Format.** Check your instructions one last time and remember to check the **Writing Center** tips webpage about email etiquette!