

TERM PAPER INSTRUCTIONS

Level: Your term paper should be written for a reader at the level of a graduate student. (Your fellow graduate students should be able to understand it. Basic geology need not be explained.)

Requirements

- **Title page** with the name and affiliation of the author, and the name of the journal whose format will be followed
- **Abstract** of 400 words or less
- **Subtitles** in the format of the selected journal
- **References** in the format of the selected journal
- **Paginate** (number pages)
- Figures and tables should be neat and must include **captions**. Be economic with space.
- All manuscripts must be **double-spaced**.
- Text should be 8 to 10 pages **not including** figures, tables, and references.
- **Fonts:** 12 point Times, 12 point Times New Roman, 10 point Helvetica or Arial.

Organization

- **Abstract** which includes a brief statement of purpose, study area, and methods, as well as results and conclusions.
- **Introduction** –Should: 1) convince the reader that the problem this paper addresses is important, 2) show how this research relates to and improves upon existing knowledge (i.e., previous work).

• Study Area and Samples

• Analytical Methods

- **Results**—Data presentation; point out trends and relationships in the data
- **Discussion**—Data interpretation; supporting arguments; comparison with other studies. Subtitles can be used to break this section up into specific topics.
- **Conclusions**. Present only the important conclusions. Do not introduce new concepts in conclusion section and avoid citing other papers. Avoid adding unimportant conclusions; they will detract from your important conclusions.

Writing Instructions (Consult Strunk and White, "The Elements of Style", for more information.)

- **Omit needless words**—any words that can be omitted without affecting the meaning of a sentence should be omitted.
- Use paragraphs to organize topics.
- Use topic or transition sentences to begin paragraph. Transition between paragraphs.
- Use definite, specific, concrete language.
- Read your text aloud. Does it sound reasonable? Does it flow?
- Read the first sentence of each paragraph. Does the sentence indicate what the paragraph is about? Do the first sentences show a progression of thought?

CRITERIA FOR GRADING TERM PAPERS

Format. Does paper include abstract, page number, references, etc.?

Content

- Accuracy
- Depth
- Original thought

Presentation—writing and figures

- Organization
- Coherence
- Sentence structure
- Grammar
- Typo's
- Use and quality of figures

Most common writing errors on previous papers

- Topics appear out of place.
- Paragraphs mix disparate topics.

- Wordiness. Omit needless words. If you can say the same thing with fewer words, do it. That will leave room for real information. Example: poor: "depth dependent nature of"; better: "depth dependence of"
- Paragraphs lack topic sentence or transition.
- Imprecise or vague language.

Plagiarism-- Plagiarism: As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. Copying of complete sentences from published papers is plagiarism and will not be accepted.