

Writing Guidelines

1) Format

- All essays should be double-spaced, in 12-point type, and use 1-inch margins. Please make sure to number pages.
- Page limits are firm; we will not read beyond the assigned length.
- Use reference list format for all cited work. (You can find a guide to reference-list format in the *Chicago Manual of Style*).

2) Style

Write for your reader, and make your writing lively and interesting. That means:

- Short, simple sentences are always better than long complicated ones.
- In nearly every case, the active voice is preferable to the passive voice.
- Direct, concrete statements are better than vague, indirect statements.
- Write for an audience that consists of educated generalists who are unfamiliar with the topic.
- Along those lines, avoid jargon.

3) Other

- Submit your essay as a Word document, not a pdf.
- Late essays lose one-half grade a day. We grant extensions only in emergencies.
- Finally, be vigilant about plagiarism, as it is an extremely serious offense and quite easy to avoid. Whether you are quoting another author, or simply paraphrasing her ideas, you *must* cite the source. There are no exceptions, so when in doubt, cite. For guidance see: <http://writing.mit.edu/wcc/avoidingplagiarism>

In addition, please consider using the services of the [Writing and Communications Center](#), which offers free, one-on-one, professional advice from published writers about oral presentations and about all types of academic, creative, and professional writing.

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