

Sociology Style Guide

by Tom Murphy [Revised January, 2001]

[For a more complete discussion refer to *Making Sense: A Student's Guide to Writing and Style* by Margot Northey or a similar style and essay writing guide. Please note that your other professors may have different style preferences.]

Composition:

- * Use specific, clear, firm language. Omit needless words. Make every sentence count. Avoid repetitiveness.
- * Avoid sexist language. Be gender inclusive. Use words such as *humankind*, *police officer*, *s/he* and so on.
- * A paragraph is a coherent body of sentences that are expressing a basic theme or idea. When changing thoughts, change paragraphs.
- * Try to maintain a logical flow of ideas from beginning to end. One thing should naturally lead into the next. This is achieved by *being organized*.
- * Your paper must have an *introduction*--which informs the reader of your intention and your plan of attack--a *main body*--the heart of your essay--and a *conclusion*--where you draw together your main point. **Do not** simply repeat yourself ...focus on the "big picture."

Perspective and Voice:

- * write in the first person [I will argue; *My* perspective is...]
- * write in the *active* voice
- * put statements in a positive form, make definite assertions.

Grammar:

Check for the following common errors:

- * agreement of tenses (All past *or* all present tense in a paragraph, usually)
- * agreement of verb with subject (*not* "I are going")
- * agreement of pronouns with their respective nouns in both gender and number
- * incomplete sentences, missing words, double words
- * run-on sentences--sentences that go on and on and on and on

Spelling:

- * Use a dictionary. If in doubt, look it up.
- * Except when directly quoting another person, avoid using *contractions* (can't, won't, aren't, etc.)
- * use the correct word: make sure that you know the difference between such words as "**affect**" and "**effect**", "**imply**" and "**infer**", "**it's**" and "**its**", etc.
- * "**media**" and "**data**" are **plural** and must be treated as such [These data *show* that...; the media *are* out of touch]

Punctuation:

- * Be especially careful of comma use. One should naturally pause at a point where there is a comma.
- * Periods and commas go inside closing quotation marks, except when a citation ends the sentence (eg. "Pigs cannot fly," said Max Marx, "because they have no feathers" (1997:221).

Format:

- * All essays must be typed, *double spaced*, on *unlined, unholed plain* white paper.
- * Use a standard **12 point** computer font such as *Times New Roman*. Do not use fancy fonts for the text.
- * **Margins:** One inch or 2.5 centimetres on all sides. Leave three inch (or 10 cm.) margin on the top of the first page only.
- * **Staple** your essay in upper left hand corner. **Do not** bother with fancy covers. Do not use paper clips or other loose fasteners.
- * **Numbering:** Top centre of every page starting at page 2. Do not number (or count) the title page.
- * **Printing:** use a laser, ink-jet, or letter quality dot matrix printer. Do not submit work printed in dot matrix draft mode. Use a new ribbon if need be to ensure a dark, easy to read type.

Title Page should include the following:

- , Title of the assignment (centred, about one third down page)
- , Your name and student number
- , Course and section number
- , Day and time of tutorial (if relevant)
- , Professor's name
- , Date of submission

Please make a back-up copy of your essay!

Warning: Please Read this Note on Plagiarism

*Anytime you directly quote from a book, article, a CD-Rom, a Web site, or some other source, or anytime you lift a major idea or fact from some source—even if it is not a direct quotation—that source must be cited and given credit. If you fail to do this, you could be charged with **plagiarism** which is a very serious offence. Plagiarism is the theft of other people's words and ideas. If you **deliberately** copy other people's words and ideas, you will be given a grade of 0 automatically, and the offence will be permanently noted on your academic records. If you "**innocently**" plagiarize, you will be warned to be more careful, and any subsequent offence will be deemed to be deliberate. To avoid any problem, please be sure to cite any and all sources that you use in your work.*

How to Cite Your Sources:

Giving credit to authors you use involves two steps:

1. Citing your sources within the body of your essay and
2. Creating a bibliography.

The only accepted format now used in sociology (and most other social sciences) is the *bracket method*. That is, the author, date, and page number are included within a bracket at the point of citation. **Do not use footnotes or endnotes for citation.** Footnotes can be used for additional clarification of points in the text, but when used, footnotes must be single spaced, and be clearly delineated from the main body of the text.

Citing your sources involves noting the points in the text where you are directly quoting an author or his or her main ideas. To do this, you enclose in brackets the *author's name, the year of publication, and the page number* directly after a quotation or key idea. **Note the punctuation--a comma after the author's name, and a colon between the year and the page number.** For example:

Reality is a complex phenomenon. "If reality is constructed, then pigs can fly" (Marx, 1987:233). What is Marx saying here?

If you mention the author's name as part of the sentence, then the author is placed outside of the brackets:

According to Max Marx (1987:231), reality is neither here nor there.

If you are quoting from or citing an article in an edited collection (including an encyclopedia), you must credit the author of the article, **not** the editor of the collection.

If you are citing a magazine or periodical, credit the author of the article, if known; if unknown, credit the periodical.

How to Create Your Bibliography

Your essay must contain a bibliography. It is now common to title the bibliography *References* (though "bibliography" is fine too), and it should be on a separate page. All entries must be listed in **alphabetical order** by author, regardless of source (books, articles, periodicals, etc.) and in **chronological order** (from earliest to most recent) for all entries by the same author. The most common sources of references are books and articles. Examples of the spacing and layout for various types of references follow:

References

[All notes in square brackets would not be included in actual bibliography. Notice the spacing and the indentation. Each citation is single spaced, with a blank line between citations.] The first line of each citation consists of the author(s). The second line starts with the date, indented 2 spaces in, followed by 2 more spaces, then the title. If you need a third line, it should be indented to the first character (letter or ") of the second line.)

[To cite books...Note that multiple books by an author are listed chronologically.]

Thomas, Clarence, Arlin Spector, et al.
1992 How to Sexually Harass Women and Still Come Out a Winner. Washington: Old Boys Network. Press.

[If you quote from an edited textbook such as Teevan, you must cite the author of the chapter, not Teevan.]

Harman, Leslie
1999 "Gender Relations" in Introduction to Sociology. A Canadian Focus, ed. James Teevan. Scarborough: Prentice Hall.

[To cite articles in edited books, journals, or encyclopedias...]

Muggins, Maggie
1998 "Motion and Commotion: the Effects of Pigs on Turkeys" in Psychopath 12:3. [which means Vol. 12, No. 3]

Fatuou, Phyllis
1994 "Kant--the Negativity Factor" in The Columbia Encyclopedia, Vol 5.

[To cite newspapers and magazines...when author is known & unknown]

Larson, Gary
1994 "The Far Side," London Free Press, London, Feb. 27:14

London Free Press [author unknown]
1999 "Non Millionaires Worried About Harris Victory-- Millionaires Are Delighted." Sept. 7:B-2.

[To cite Government publications...]

Agriculture Canada
1998 Policies and Programs to Destroy Family Farms. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services. Cat. No. 87/8.

[To cite unpublished works... * n.d. = no date/date unknown,

Raygun, Ronald
n.d. "Blood, Guts and Gore! Who Could Ask for More?" An unpublished thesis submitted to University of Violints.

[To cite the Internet]

Kailie, David
1997 "Prison Reform." [Http://www.cbc.ideas.toronto.ca](http://www.cbc.ideas.toronto.ca)

[To cite CD-ROM reference works]

Starkey, Richard
1996 "The Little Drummer Boy" in The Canadian Encyclopedia, on CD-ROM, Toronto:McClelland and Stewart.

[To cite audio or video sources...]

Hill, Anita
1992 "Clarence Thomas, Pornography, Justice, and Family Values." An excerpt of an address aired on As it Happens. C.B.C., April 27, 1992.

[To cite information available only to you]

Wheel, Daisy
1997 *Phone conversation in the first week of Jan, 1997.*

[To cite lectures]

Reference lectures given the same year as 2000a, 2000b...in chronological order here in the bibliography. In the essay, however, you might cite (Murphy, 2000c) first, then (Murphy, 2000a) and finally (Murphy, 2001b). Lectures in other years would be referenced accordingly.

Murphy, Tom
1999 "Propaganda," *Soc 233 Lecture, March 27*
2000a "Biology as Ideology." *Soc. 230 Lecture, Sept. 28.*
2000b "Education." *Soc 020 Lecture, Oct. 14.*
2000c "The Future is Now." *Public Lecture, Oct. 27.*
2001 "Millennium Fever--Is it Hot in Here?" *Jan 17.*