

The Major Traits of a Masterful College Paper

I. Purpose, Focus, and Development

The whole demonstrates a perceptive understanding of the topic, a judicious definition of the paper's scope, a well-crafted controlling idea, and the artful use of concrete, substantial, and pertinent evidence.

- The purpose and/or focus of the piece are articulated clearly and precisely. The thesis is persuasive, insightful, and/or original, indicating a complex understanding of the topic, and perhaps even a struggle to think through a set of challenging questions.
- There is a cogent analysis of the text(s) that correlates general observations with specific evidence. The arguments, examples, and details convey meaningful information beyond the obvious or predictable. Facts are of a sufficient number and consistently relevant and precise.
- Course concepts are integrated and applied thoroughly and accurately into the analysis.

II. Organization

The whole demonstrates a carefully planned organization that progresses by logical stages.

- The Opening Paragraph(s) introduce(s) the subject in an engaging manner, includes relevant contextual information on the topic, and highlights the main point(s) to follow. The transition from the introductory ideas to the thesis is smooth.
- Each body paragraph includes a strong topic sentence, followed by pertinent summary/paraphrase/quotation, textual analysis, and commentary/argumentation to support the claim in that sentence. The topic and concluding sentences of each paragraph link back to the topic and thesis consistently.
- The transitions between paragraphs are logical and fluid.
- The Final Paragraph is thought-provoking; its conclusions are warranted and judicious. This paragraph may synthesize the previous arguments and/or delineate the implications of the issues discussed, offer a thoughtful application of the ideas discussed, and/or make a forecast.

III. Sense of Audience, Tone, and Style

The whole demonstrates a distinctive, consistent, authoritative voice that makes the reader interested in the topic and confident of its importance.

- The diction is formal, economical, and precise as well as fresh, vivid, and varied.
- The language level is tailored to the audience.
- There may be insightful uses of figurative language.

IV. Research and Documentation

The whole demonstrates a correct selection, use, and documentation of relevant information from sources to support the purpose/focus of the paper.

- Varied and credible sources of information relevant to the topic are summarized/paraphrased/quoted properly and integrated smoothly with the author's own ideas to create a clear, coherent, and convincing argument and/or critique.
- All sources are accurately cited in the text following the latest version of the required style guide. There is an appropriate use of parenthetical abbreviations such as "et

al." and "qtd. in" or comments such as "italics mine. "

- All sources are documented properly in the Works Cited, References, or Bibliography section following the latest version of the required style guide.

V. Grammar, Sentence Structure, Punctuation, and Mechanics

The whole demonstrates a command of the English language.

- The sentences are unified, coherent, and complete. They are carefully crafted in varying lengths and positioned with attention to emphasis, rhythm, and pace to engage the reader.
- There is an exemplary use of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, and other mechanical elements of the language.
- Careful proofreading is evident.

VI. Format

- The paper meets all format, header, and heading requirements.
- The title is appropriate, insightful, and creative.