

# A Step-by-Step Guide on Writing a Scholarly Paper

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## 0a

It is absolutely necessary that you will have a clear, articulate vision of what you would like to write on. No miracle or magic will happen such that you will be able to write a wonderful paper by just keeping writing and writing without any specific idea or plan. Do not deceive yourself.

## 0b

Should you plan to write a paper on some article by somebody else, it is absolutely necessary to read and re-read it again and again until you have understood it completely and have almost spontaneously come to an idea of what you would like to write. Do not assume that you will get a marvelous idea from the secondary material. Such an attitude will end up with plagiarizing what you plan to write on.

## 1

At the beginning, state clearly and concisely what you wish to accomplish in the paper:

*Example A:*

In this paper, it is intended to accomplish a systematic presentation of Sartre' view of the Body.....

*Example B:*

In this paper, we shall attempt to critically appraise Kant's treatment of causality...

## 2

Write down secondly the program of your paper, i.e., the outline of your endeavor, in the form of the table of content with considerable elaboration of each and every item in the table! Of course, you do not have to state this in the paper itself.

## 3

Should you be explicitly aware of the approach you are employing (if not, try to by all means!), state your methodology with such detail that no reader will misunderstand your method.

*Example A:*

This paper attempts to phenomenologically analyses, elucidate and describe the phenomenon of "power".

*Example B:*

We shall explain why Heidegger failed to comprehend and disclose others' Dasein.

*Example C:*

It is our intention to apply Hegel's dialectical method to uncover the dynamic development of the philosophical thought in African philosophy.

## 4

It is also necessary, if you are aware of them, to make explicit and clearly state your premisses, assumptions and the scope of investigation: Under what assumptions, what presuppositions are you pursuing the task of this paper; and what kind of limitations are you going to impose upon this paper; e.g. State also if this paper consists exclusively of logical arguments, or of phenomenological descriptions, or of a combination of both.

## 5

Should you write about someone else's idea or philosophy, explore and uncover the frame of reference of the author, the implicit assumptions, the logical, epistemological, ontological or even ethical presuppositions, and the naive, unquestioned employment of philosophical principles, concepts and relationships (Try to explore, e.g. assumptions of empiricism as to all knowledge coming from outer world, senses being receptive, while understanding (reason) being active, autonomous, etc. .

## 6a

In case of either elucidating or critically appraising some philosopher's paper (i.e., the object/article), a thesis or a concept, present a well-thought-out summary (on the basis of your own outline of it (if it be a principle or a clear thesis, make sure to quote it at the start of this portion).

## 6b

In case of attempting to present your own thoughts or opinions (to be always justified), make sure to compare them with the neighboring or similar thoughts, or opposite ideas, so that you are prepared to show that these thoughts did not come to your mind out of the blue, but came through long, careful deliberation.

## 7a

Should you develop an argument, make sure to write an outline and carefully examine it so that you will commit neither formal, nor informal fallacies (If you have forgotten what fallacies are, in particular, informal fallacies, go back to a Logic text.) Always try to give an example, whether or not you believe that such an example will assist the reader's comprehension. (Do not assume that the reader knows what you are talking about. Assume that the reader is ignorant. See below!)

## 7b

Should you present a phenomenological analysis and description, choose to demonstrate it by a concrete example which is most familiar to you (& also to any reader if possible) and continue keeping your sight on that concrete, particular example, even if you are attempting to do the description abstractly and in terms of universal concepts. (See the instruction for phenomenological analysis.)

## 8

Clearly and concisely state the conclusion after having summarized the entire enterprise.

## 9

Criticize, if possible, aspects which are a) weak, b) inconsistent, c) contrary to fact, and thereby distinguish the apparent "fact" and the disclosed fact.

## 10

Upon completion of critical appraisal of the "object-article," try to summarize your conclusion in the final form including the immediately above stated critical appraisal of yours.

## 11

### **Quotations:**

There are perhaps four cases in which you may use quotations. a) When you want to attack (or, seldom, elaborate on) the statement at the beginning of the discussion: b-i) When your contention or idea which you have just stated is to be supported, place the quote the quotation right after your construing statements; b-ii) Sometimes, we feel that the author said so well that it seems impossible to state the same by our own words. In this case, quote the author and right after the quotation, make sure to add your own interpretation of the quotation. In this case, you want to confirm or strengthen your own thought by the quotation; b-iii) When you want to reveal certain inconsistency of the author whom you criticize, state the inconsistency and support your argument by quotation.

## 12

### **Repetitions**

Do not hesitate to repeat yourself (whether it is right after you said it once or later) when you consider the point very important. If you do not want to use the same words or expression, use a synonymous word or expression.

## 13

### **Sentences:**

When you write a proposition, try to formulate your statement as concisely and precisely as possible.

## 14

### **No assumptions:**

Do not forget that you are not writing for yourself, but for a reader who may not know what you already know. Do not assume anything when you write.

## 15

### **Avoid the Straw Man Fallacy:**

Make sure that you do not commit the error of the Straw Man argument (by making the original argument (i.e, the argument of the object-article) so extreme or taken out of context so that it is of course easy to attack!).

## 16

### **Be concrete, particular, not abstract nor universal:**

Sometimes it is very helpful to be more precise by beholding right in front of our eye a concrete example when you talk about something abstract.