

Humanities and Science Writing

University writing has some universal features: crediting the original source material, determining who your audience is, and creating a clear thesis statement. However, some aspects of paper writing can vary depending on whether you are writing a paper for a course in the humanities or in the sciences.

As you are writing your paper or editing the finished product, try to be mindful of the following subject-specific suggestions:

Structure and Formatting

Humanities	Sciences
<p>A humanities paper will generally be structured around one seamless, flowing argument with little to no defined section breaks. Section/heading breaks are allowed in humanities papers, though they are generally only defined in larger papers, and only if they benefit the organization and clarity of the paper and the discussion being presented.</p> <p>Humanities papers generally follow MLA and Chicago style formatting.</p>	<p>Argumentative science papers make use of flowing argument structure. Section breaks are allowed but typically only used for organization in larger papers.</p> <p>Lab reports will have prescribed sections: introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusion. Each section has unique rules (e.g. Any interpretation of results is to be included in the discussion, not the results section).</p> <p>Science papers generally follow APA, CSE, or ACS formatting.</p>

Provision of Evidence:

Humanities	Sciences
<p>Often, the goal is to showcase a particular author's words, so evidence is provided with direct quotes and paraphrasing from sources that range in date. Citation emphasis tends to be on page numbers rather than year of publication.</p>	<p>Scientific writing focuses directly on facts, rather than authors, so quotations are generally discouraged. Quotations should only be used to support already established facts, not to introduce the facts in the paper.</p>

	<p>Scientific papers tend to emphasize more recent sources, to show that the evidence is still relevant and supported. As such, scientific citation styles tend to emphasize the year of publication. More recent sources (typically no older than 5 years) are preferred and should be prioritized (unless referencing a formative study in the field (e.g. Human Genome Project, etc.))</p> <p>Proper citing of references is essential in scientific papers, but when writing a lab report, the student's own data should also be used to support their statements, particularly in the discussion section.</p>
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Format and Focus of Argument

Humanities	Sciences
<p>Arguments within humanities papers often focuses on the author's opinion, forming a discussion based on one's own stance (personal reading) of the text, which is backed up with peer-reviewed primary sources.</p>	<p>A scientific paper should be an objective analysis of the data. Typically, the author's personal opinions should be kept at a minimum in scientific papers, and any statements should be objectively supported by the references or the student's generated data.</p>

Some aspects of good paper writing remain consistent regardless of the subject they are being written for:

- Create a main argument/thesis (for lab reports this could take the form of an objective statement)
- Apply academic + peer-reviewed evidence toward the argument/thesis
- Follow a consistent formatting style
- Organize into paragraphs
- Cite reliable, peer-reviewed sources
- Use academic language and style
- Write in a concise style/language