

SOME WORDS ON THE MYSTERY OF WRITING A TERM PAPER

(complete with references ranging from *Star Wars* to advice given to passengers of river crossing vehicles)

INTRODUCTION

So, if you're reading this, chances are that you are going to have to write a term paper for university. You might be here because you want to refresh your knowledge about writing term papers, even if you've already written a couple of them. Or you might be here because this is your first term paper in this subject, though you've written some in other classes and areas. Or, you know, you might be here because this is the first term paper you've ever had to write, the first one in the whole wide world, and you do not yet know what to expect, what to do, where to start or even what to think!

First off: relax. It's going to be fine. It'll be work, yes; maybe confusing sometimes, yes; but you can do it! How do I know that? Well, you're a student at university. You've taken a literature class or two, or are in the process of taking one. And, if you can talk about literature, you can write about literature, right? Right! And that's really all that your term paper is – writing about a certain piece of literature from a certain angle, while exploring a certain question. If you've had a meaningful discussion about a book (or a movie, a play, a poem, etc.) with someone in your life, then you can have the same thing with yourself/the paper you are going to be writing, and the lecturer who is going to read your paper, although he or she only gets to interact with you through your paper and in a time delayed fashion, and you present your argumentation to her or him all at once, rather than in a dialogue like you would in class. But really, that's all there is.

Now, before we get into the nitty gritty details of "How to write your term paper," some general words of advice: Words aren't precious! Don't be afraid to delete things you have written, to rewrite them, to move them to a different paragraph ... you are writing your paper with a word processing program that allows you to do all of this easily, so feel free to do that. If a page of your paper doesn't feel right to you, don't cling to it at all costs. Move it to a blank document to keep it safe, but delete it from the main document and write it again. (Right now, three versions of this very paragraph exist on my computer, and I can pick the one that I think fits best, in the end. Will it be this one? Who knows! [Well, if you read this, then you know, of course, ... but you know what I mean.])

FINDING A TOPIC THAT WORKS FOR YOU (and your instructor)

But I digress into brackets, and we're here to talk about writing a paper. So, the first thing you will need when writing a paper is ... what?

A topic, yes. If you're writing your paper as part of a class assignment, then chances are high that the subject of the class will constrain your selection of the topic in some way (your lecturer will

ask you to write about one of a couple of books, or a certain genre, or a play written about a certain subject or during a certain period, or something like that).

If you're not, then the field you can pick from will be a lot wider, but choosing something might consequently also be a lot harder. I'd suggest that you read the instructions below and simply apply them to a wider field of inquiry, asking yourself if you've attended any classes where you were particularly interested in a certain subject, type of novel, author, ... and go from there.

But usually, you will be writing your paper as a class assignment, so let's get back to that! Think about what topic, what author or what aspect of the class holds a particular interest for you. Was something mentioned in a discussion that you found intriguing? Did you read a passage in a novel that spoke to you? Was one of the characters in a play particularly interesting to you, or did a certain poem grab your attention, or a genre? Ideas for papers can stem from many varied sources, so let your mind wander over things you have read/done in class/discussed and see if anything speaks to you. (Sometimes it is also helpful to ponder things you did not find interesting and do not want to be spending time investigating, as that means you can exclude certain aspects/works from your list on your way to finding a topic.).

An academic paper is a chance for you to get to spend some quality time with a certain aspect of literary studies, so think about it like booking a holiday to a foreign country. Where do you want to travel? What do you want to see? Which mythical ruins or lively cities do you want to be exploring, and then be writing about for other people to read?

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A LEADING QUESTION

Once you have decided on a book, a literary style, a poem or two, a play, ... that you want to write about, as well as on a particular aspect of it that you want to investigate, you need to come up with a more definitive idea of your topic. This is the point in time where you write down a concrete question that you want to be researching. Without this leading question, writing a paper is just not possible. You need it to focus your work, and to focus yourself. It is essential to have a leading question when wading into the sometimes murky waters of research and secondary sources, otherwise you can easily lose track of the course you need to be charting to get out on the other side, and end up lost drifting on the research sea.

At this point also try to come up with a working title of your paper, so you can start writing yourself some notes that go something like

“In my paper titled ‘The unreliability of Montresor’ I will deal with the short story ‘The Cask of Amontillado’ by Edgar Allan Poe. I will investigate the ways in which language and the narrative situation are important to our understanding of the character of Montresor, and how they both contribute to our understanding of him as an unreliable narrator.”

Or

“Ezra Pound’s poem ‘In a Station of the Metro’ and William Carlos Williams’s poem ‘The Red Wheel-Barrow’ are both referred to as outstanding examples of Imagist poetry. In my paper ‘Features of Imagism: two exemplary examples’ I will thus discuss the Imagist features of these two poems and link them into the Imagist context.”

Or even

“‘Hamlet: gay?’ In my paper of this title I will show that a large part of Hamlet’s inner conflict stems from the fact that he was in love with his friend Horatio, explaining how this can be seen in the play, and what consequences this has for an interpretation of his character and his actions.”

Your paper is basically an argument in written form, so make sure that you have a leading question and a thesis statement (following from that question) where argumentation is possible.

DISCUSS YOUR TOPIC WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Once you know which work (novel, short story, poem, play, ...) you want to write about and have come up with a leading question, go talk to the instructor you are writing the paper for and tell her/him what you plan to write about. Don’t start writing before you have received an OK from your instructor! If you are uncertain about your proposed topic (too large for a paper, too unusual, too traditional), again, go talk to your instructor and seek his or her counsel. That’s what we’re here for, after all! (Depending on the disputability of your idea it might be a good plan to have an alternative in mind, should your instructor not agree with your idea.) Also, if you are writing a longer or more complex research paper, going back to your instructor once you have done some work to talk about the current status of your project is something you are of course allowed to do. (For PhD theses and most MA theses, it is a requirement!)

BACK TO THE TEXT

And now? You’d expect me to tell you to go ahead and read all the secondary sources you can find now, wouldn’t you? Not so! Or, as you might be told in *Star Wars*: “Patience, my young apprentice.” No, now it is time to go back to your novel, your movie, your play and re-read/re-watch it again, keeping your leading question and area of research in mind. Take notes on particularly interesting passages, or of questions that come to you while you are reading or watching it. And do take those notes while doing this! Please, please do. It might be annoying and seem unnecessary this early in the game (“I can keep four passages of the novel straight in my mind!”) but trust me, it’ll make your life so much easier down the road.

Once you’ve done this, it is time to boot up your computer (or go to the computer pool at your local university), and log on to the website of your university library. Have a look at the local university library catalogue, online sources and e-journals available to you and maybe also the long distance loan network of which your university is a part, to see what other people have written about your topic. Don’t do any in-depth reading (that comes later in the game), but just browse, look at titles, summaries, first paragraphs, How did they approach your topic, what questions did they ask, what aspects did they focus on?

And while reading your own work and while doing this browsing, take notes about different aspects of your topic, too. What aspects seem most important to you? Why? Do you agree with where others put their focus? Do you disagree? Think they got something wrong? Why? Are there any areas where you will need to do more research in order to write about your topic well (an author’s writing style, the historical context, a theoretical movement, ...)? Can your question be

approached from different angles? Can it be divided into sub-aspects?

I keep mentioning that you should take notes ... but how does one take ‘good’ notes? Well, methods of note-taking vary from person to person, so it’s impossible to point you towards any kind of ‘one true system’, but some general rules might be the terrible truisms of ‘legibly’, ‘long enough to be understandable’, and ‘following some sort of system.’ Thoughts are flighty and shifty things, and so a note that says “language = world!” next to a passage of text, while perfectly clear and obvious today, might not mean all that much to you a month from now, while a note like “how is language used to construct the world?” or “language as an aspect of world-building” might be more decipherable then. It doesn’t matter where you write down these notes (I personally write into the margins of my own books a lot, which seems to be a system that works for me, whereas other people react to the mere thought of doing that with horror). Note cards, brainstorming software, doodling in the book ... it’s all equally good or bad, depending on whether or not it works for you.

THE PRELIMINARY OUTLINE

So now you have re-read your book, browsed the library catalogues, and maybe even looked into some books in the library ... and you’ve still not really started writing or doing anything towards finishing your paper (or so it feels), so now what?!?

Now you make a preliminary outline.

Again, there is no one true way of writing a preliminary outline, it just needs to be something that works for you. Some people need to gather and sort all the material they have looked at so far, and then make an outline along the major topics found in there, while others prefer to write down the main aspects of their questions and then divide them into finer points. What this outline should do is give you a feeling for your topic – “What is it I am writing about? What do I want to show? Where do I want to end up? What do I need to do to get there?” When I was a student one of my teachers taught me that you could tell that a good outline (and thus, a good research project/undertaking) made sense by asking yourself if you could write down one or two sentences for each point on your outline to tell others what this part of the paper will be about, and then read it from top to bottom in one go with it making sense and showing the beginnings of a progressive argument running through it. If it does not, maybe your outline needs some restructuring, or maybe you promoted one aspect of your topic too much while neglecting another. Again, words aren’t precious – and no-one will know if you tried out six different outlines before you got to the one you will work with.

SECONDARY LITERATURE

Once you know what exactly you will be investigating and what steps you want your argumentation to take it is finally time to truly enter the limitless, always wondrous and often confusing world of research. You have been looking at books and researching articles while coming up with your question and writing your outline (there’s nothing bad at all about doing this), but if you approach secondary literature without a clear question at hand, you very easily get lost at sea, jumping from thought to thought, with questions piling up in front of you and no way

out and more and more things you think you still need to read. Don't get lost! Take your map (outline!) and your compass (leading question!) along for the ride, and listen to them! Don't let fascinating – but unrelated – articles lead you astray. Stay focussed on why you are here, what you want to find out, and where you want to go. And read critically, investigatively, thoughtfully - don't just look for confirmation of your thesis - dig deep. It is also perfectly legal to disagree with a secondary source - as long as you can clearly show why you are disagreeing, and cite appropriate passages etc., of course!

And again: take notes. And, trust me, it really really really helps to always, always, always (three times is the charm!) write down the source of everything you are writing down, be it a quote, a thought, a summary of someone's thoughts ... because if you don't, you will end up sitting there (I promise!) at some point in the future, with a quote where you cannot remember the text it is from – and thus having to look at all the secondary texts you ever read on this topic yet again. A lot of time can be wasted like this, and it's time you really don't need to be wasting, when you could be writing!

Also, go back to your primary text from time to time with the new knowledge you have gained from your secondary sources, and re-read passages of it. (Or the whole work, if you think it will help you/you have the time.) New questions might come up, new aspects might move to the foreground. And don't be afraid to re-do your outline accordingly! (It's only a preliminary outline, after all, and meant to be re-done!)

Once you think you have your outline well in hand, and a firm grasp on the secondary sources (and WAY before you come close to thinking "I have read everything I needed to read to fully understand my topic" – because if you wait until then, you might still be reading six months from now), sit down, sort out all your notes, quotes, thoughts, match them up with your outline, grab a cup of tea/coffee and

START WRITING!

Keep in mind some of the following size/structure rules that come with writing a term paper:

Introduction:

This is where you introduce your reader(s) to the general topic of your paper and then go on to introduce your leading question and the specific thesis you are going to discuss in your paper. Please state these clearly in the introduction. This is also the place where you tell your audience how you are going to go about your task, letting them know the structure of your argument. In general the Introduction should take up no more than 10% of your text corpus, so for a paper of 10 pages it should not be longer than 1 page, for a 20 page long paper, it should be about 2 pages in length,

Main Part:

This is where you prove your thesis, where you make your case for it, where you really argue your question. You've introduced it to your readers above, now go and convince them! Make sure that your arguments follow a logical order – and that they make sense in and of themselves, too! Paragraphs, in general, should not be shorter than three sentences, and consist of one coherent aspect of your argumentation. Give examples from both the primary and secondary material you read that pertains to your text, but always, always, *always* acknowledge the sources you are

quoting from, no matter if you are doing so directly or indirectly.

Quotes that are longer than three lines (or, roughly, 40 words), need to be justified (Blocksatz), indented (eingerückt) and are put into single line spacing. Also, they don't get any quotation marks. Some people also use a smaller font for them, but that is not a necessity.

Quotes shorter than those three lines belong into the regular text and are put into double quotation marks. Quotes that will now be quotes within quotes (where, for instance, the secondary source you want to quote uses a quote from your primary text) turn double into single quotation marks for the interior quote.

Also, keep in mind that quotes alone never ever replace argumentation. So when you are quoting material, make sure that you explain what you are trying to show with this quote and why this quote is relevant to your paper and thesis. Never let other people's argumentation overshadow your own work, so cite when it makes sense, but don't overdo it because it might seem easier than coming up with your own words. A term paper should not read like a string of quotations with some connecting sentences in between them, but rather showcase your own work, your own thoughts, underfed with quotations when necessary.

Examples:

Use double quotes when quoting something: "At five o'clock I was in the Hotel Crillion waiting for Brett."
(Hemingway 36)

Turn double into single quotes within a quote: "'He's got a left and a right,' he says of one bull, 'just like a boxer.'" (Ganzel 3).

In the age of the internet, google and e-journals, online research and digital resources are becoming a part of every researcher's life. Keep an eye out for the reliability of the sources you find online! The internet makes publishing easier than it ever was before, and thus many sources can now be found that have low quality standards for publication. Thus, whatever source you use – but especially when using internet sources – look out for quality standards like peer reviews, author qualifications, sources cited, ... "I found it on the internet, so it must be true!" is not an approach to take when writing an academic paper (wait, you mean Bonsai Kittens aren't real!?!).

Chapters and Captions:

Depending on the size of your paper, it might make sense to divide different aspects you are discussing into different chapters (and maybe even sub-chapters, though those are really only necessary in longer works). If you do this, all these headlines need to be turned into a 'Table of Contents' that goes in front of your paper, usually on a separate page.

Conclusion:

Summarize your initial thesis and show how the main part ties into it and leads to the conclusion you have reached. Don't present any new material in your conclusion. The conclusion should also, like the introduction, take up around 10% of your paper. In a lot of the term papers I have read so far, the conclusion was 'the weakest link' – yes, you're almost done with your paper and so I get that you might want it to just be over with – but don't sell yourself short and throw away a good grade by writing a bad conclusion. Sum up your argumentation, return to your thesis, show what you have set out to prove, and why you did prove it. What are the ramifications of your argumentation? What does it imply? What is the result? Write it down!

Titles:

Titles of books, journals and movies are always put into *italics*. Titles of poems, internet articles or journal articles go into “double quotation marks”.

HOW TO QUOTE STUFF

The quotation rules I am going to explain to you here are those laid out by the Modern Language Association (MLA) in their 2009 update and the most commonly used ones in the field of American studies. Older works you find in your research will still be using a footnote system of sourcing quotes¹, but in the last years in-text sourcing has become more and more common, and this is the system I am going to introduce you to right now.

To quote the masters: “In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what is known as parenthetical citation. This method involves placing relevant source information in parentheses after a quote or a paraphrase.” (Russell)

The general rule here is that whatever you quote in-text must also be referenced in your bibliography (which we will talk about a little bit later). The MLA rules follow what is called the “author page” style of citation, meaning that, for whatever source you cite, you give the name of the author and the page the quote can be found on in brackets right after the quote. If you mention the author in your text, sometimes only giving the page number might be enough. Confusing? Here are some examples to make it clear:

Citing works with one author:

“It was always pleasant crossing bridges in Paris.” (Hemingway 36)

Or, as Hemingway says, “it was always pleasant crossing bridges in Paris.” (36)

Citing works with multiple authors:

“Thus transformative media events do not respond to situations of urgency.” (Katz and Dayan 168)

Citing more than one work by the same author:

To avoid confusing the reader as to which of the author’s books you are taking about, include a shortened form of the title to distinguish one work from the other.

"Who is the higher authority? Who do I call? Who saves me." (Doctorow, *Daniel* 188)

"I wanted to log as many miles as I could before Bennett got up in the morning."
(Doctorow, *Loon Lake* 141)

For different cases and more examples, see the MLA style sheet referenced below.

WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE DONE WRITING (but aren’t, really – not yet)

Proof read! Spell check! And if you have the time, let the first draft of your paper sit on your computer for a day or two without looking at it, and then go back to it with fresh eyes. Read it like a stranger would read it, and check for internal coherence and consistency. Does your argumentation follow a logical line from the introduction through the main part and into the conclusion? Does the conclusion really conclude your argumentation, or does it mention new aspects you did not talk about previously? (If so, move or delete them.)

¹ If you want to mention some extra information that would distract from your current argumentation but that is relevant to your argumentation, then that might be something to place into a footnote.

It is also a good idea to find someone else to read your paper (another student in your class, for example) and to ask her or him to point out places that confuse them or that sound strange to them. There is nothing wrong about doing this! On the contrary! In academia this is called the “peer review process” (used to decide whether or not an article should be published) and the modus operandi of most academic journals, both on- and off-line (albeit there the audience usually is a less forgiving one than you will probably encounter).

SOME WORDS ON EVERYONE’S FAVOURITE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET: PLAGIARISM

Yes, you’ve heard about it before, and yes, I do need to talk about plagiarism, although what needs to be said about it can be summed up in three small words (that are not only relevant when pondering the advance payment of ferrymen when crossing stormy rivers): **don’t do it!!**

Plagiarism does not only apply to the direct, word-for-word quotation of a text without sourcing it properly. Other forms of plagiarism also exist. Here are some examples of what does – and does not – count as plagiarism:

The following is a paragraph from Richard Kerridge’s Introduction to *Writing the Environment*:

“The ecocritic wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces. Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis.” (Kerridge 5)

Student W writes a paper about ecocriticism, and includes the following sentence:

As you will see in my paper, the ecocritic wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces. Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis.

☹ **PLAGIARISM** – Student W quotes Kerridge without indicating this or naming the source.

Student X writes a paper about ecocriticism, and includes the following sentence:

As you will see in my paper, the ecocritic wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces. Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis. (see Kerridge 5)

☹ **PLAGIARISM** – Student X quotes Kerridge verbatim without putting the direct quote in quotation marks – while he includes a reference to Kerridge’s text, the “see Kerridge” only says

that student X got the *idea* for the second sentence “Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis” from Kerridge.

Student Y writes a paper about ecocriticism, and includes the following sentence:

As you will see in my paper, ecocritics wish to track environmental ideas and representations no matter where they show up, so they can see the debate that seems to be taking place more clearly, even if frequently concealed in part, in a great many cultural spaces. First and foremost, ecocriticism wants to evaluate ideas and texts as responses to environmental crisis. How useful and coherent are they for this?

☹ **PLAGIARISM** – Student Y paraphrases Kerridge without making this visible. Also, the paraphrase is too close to the original text. Paraphrases should sum up the original text in your own words – it is not enough to swap some words around and change the sentence structure a little.

Student Z writes a paper about ecocriticism, and includes the following sentence:

As you will see in my paper, ecocriticism is a literary criticism movement that investigates the relationship between literature and the environment. As Richard Kerridge points out, “ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis.” (Kerridge 5) However, these responses and appearances of environmental ideas within everyday culture do not always have to be clearly visible. (see Kerridge 5)

😊 **NO PLAGIARISM** – both the direct quotation and the paraphrase have been clearly labelled in this example.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A bibliography is the list of all the sources that you used in your paper. Not all the sources you *read*, but only the sources you used in your paper (everything you sourced in-text). It goes at the end of your paper, and the pages you use for it do not count towards the page count of your paper.

There are rules for how you refer to different kinds of works in your bibliography – here is a list of some of the more frequently found ones:

1. A book with a single author:

Lastname, Firstname. *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Some basic rules:

Capitalize each word in the titles of books, movies, articles,... - except for articles, short prepositions, or conjunctions (unless one is the first word of the title). Examples: *The Sun also Rises*, *Modern Criticism and Theory*, *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*.

2. A book with more than one author

Lastname, Firstname and Firstname Lastname. *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Dayan, Daniel and Elihu Katz. *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992.

3. More than one book by the same author

Moylan, Tom. *Demand the Impossible - Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*. New York and London: Methuen, 1986.

-----, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky : Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*. Cultural studies series. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2000.

4. A reprinted book

If it's a book by one author, then cite it like you would a book with a single author, but add the date of the original publishing after the author's name, like this:

Doctorow, E.L. 1971. *The Book of Daniel*. New York: Plume, 1996.

5. A work in a collection (an article in a book)

Last name, First name. "Title of Essay." *Title of Collection*. Ed. Editor's Name(s). Place of Publication: Publisher, Year. Page range of entry.

Kristeva, Julia. "The Ethics of Linguistics." *Modern Theory and Criticism – A Reader*. Ed. Lodge, David and Nigel Wood. Harlow: Peason Longman, 2008. pp. 349-58.

6. An article in a journal

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume. Issue (Year): pages.

Buehrer, David. "'A Second Chance on Earth:' the Postmodern and the Post-Apocalyptic in García Márquez's Love in the Time of Cholera." *Critique* 32.1 (1990): 15-26.

7. Citing a website

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available) as Last name, First name. *Name of Site*. Version number (if available). Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available). Medium of publication. Date of access.

Russell, Tony. *MLA 2009 Works Cited: Electronic Sources (Web Publications)*. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2009. Web. 01 December 2009.

8. Citing a movie

Title. Dir. Director. Perf. Performers. Company, Year. Medium.

Igby goes down. Dir. Burr Steers. Perf. Kieran Culkin, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Goldblum. MGM Home Entertainment, 2002. DVD.

These are only some few examples that will not cover all the sources you are going to use. For a complete reference guide, see the MLA 2009 Formatting and Style Guide.

Some useful links:

MLA 2009 Works Cited Page: Basic Format. The OWL at Purdue, 2009:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/>

Literaturverwaltung und Wissensorganisation mit Citavi:
<http://www.citavi.com>

Bibliography

(the notes in the [square brackets] are not part of a bibliography, but given here to tell you what kind of work it is, so you can use these as further examples):

- de Burgh, Chris. "Don't Pay the Ferryman." *The Getaway*. A&M Records, 1982. [song on a CD]
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- Galaxy Quest*. Dir. Dean Parisot. Perf. Tim Allen, Sigourney Weaver, Alan Rickman. DreamWorks SKG, 1999. DVD. [movie on DVD]
- Ganzel, Dewey. "'Cabestro' and 'Vaquilla': The Symbolic Structure of *The Sun also Rises*." *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (Winter, 1968), pp. 26-48. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 October 2009. [Article in a journal, found in an online database named JSTOR.]
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- Dayan, Daniel and Elihu Katz. *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992. [book by two authors]
- KAAM—*Kölner Anglistische und Amerikanistische Mitteilungen*, Nr 305, Mai 1999, AS. [A publication by the English Department of the University of Cologne.]
- Kerridge, Richard. "Introduction." Eds. Richard Kerridge and N. Sammells. *Writing the Environment*. London: Zed Books, 1998. pp 1-10. [an article in a book]
- Russell, Tony. *MLA 2009 In-Text Citations: The Basics*. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2009. Web. 01 December 2009. [a website]
- Star Wars*. Dir. George Lucas. Perf. Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford. Lucasfilm, 1977. DVD. [movie on DVD]

A Style Guide (anon/MJ/AS in KAAM)

- Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.
- Be more or less specific.
- Don't use no double negatives.
- Kill all exclamation points!!!!
- No sentence fragments.
- One should NEVER generalize.
- Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary. Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.
- One word sentences? Eliminate!
- Clichés should be avoided like the plague. (They're old hat!)
- Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.
- Absolutely always avoid annoying alliterations!
- Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.

And some final words of advice: "Never give up, never surrender!" (*Galaxy Quest*)

My thanks go to Jela Schmidt for bringing the KAAM Style Guide to my attention and to Dr. Heike Schäfer, whose „Wie schreibe ich eine wissenschaftliche Hausarbeit?“ (unveröffentlichtes Manuskript, Mannheim, 2005) inspired me to come up with my own version of a term paper guide.