

General instructions for the preparation of term papers

Purpose of a term paper

In a term paper you are to demonstrate:

- that you have understood your topic and can place it in the context of the seminar;
- that you have independently and methodically dealt with the most important sources on your topic;
- that you are familiar with the major papers and research approaches on your topic and can evaluate them based on the sources;
- that you can clearly and understandably present the topic you are working on and argue your own views.

The term paper must be a scientific examination of the topic. This presupposes that all statements are supported by references to sources or the scientific work of others (by references in brackets or in footnotes, see below). These criteria form the basis for the evaluation of your work.

The “red thread”

The following points help the reader to recognize the train of thought leading through the text, i.e. the “red thread” or organizing logic of the term paper. They should be clearly elaborated and linked to each other in terms of content:

- Objective/research question of the paper
- Research history and analytical state of research, relevance of the topic of the term paper
- Description and critical discussion of the relevant sources with regard to the research question and to existing literature
- Discussion and interpretation, if applicable
- Conclusion (including own judgment, if applicable), answer to the research question posed at the beginning

Components of a term paper

- Cover page
- Table of contents with page numbers
- Main text with footnotes for references.
- Use footnotes wisely: not every single sentence and statement needs a footnote/reference. Precise page numbers of the passages you refer to are required, citing a whole book or article is not precise enough.
- Figures in a separate figure section at the end
- List of references
- List of figures, including sources
- Signed declaration that you wrote the paper yourself and did not plagiarize any parts of your work. Plagiarism, i.e. the use of sources created by others including internet sources and AI without indication, will result in a fail (5,0) and in severe cases expulsion from the study program. You can download the declaration here: https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/studium/pruefungsbuero/Plagiate/Plagiate-Erklaerung_N.pdf

Information on the cover sheet

- University
- Institute
- Semester, course, module
- Name(s) of lecturer(s)
- Your name, matriculation number, FU email address Title of the paper
- Date of submission

Structure of the text

Introduction

- Formulation of the research question, usually clearly correlated with an analytical state of research
- Narrowing down the topic
- Outline of the structure of term paper

Main part with logically structured argumentation and systematic division into numbered subchapters (the numbering of the chapters must correspond to the table of contents).

Conclusion

- Summary of results: Introduction and conclusion must relate to each other in terms of content.
- Possibly outlook on new questions and own conclusions/opinion

Citation

All information not based on your own knowledge must be supported by references to sources and literature from which it was taken (footnotes, including page references).

Use verbatim quotations sparingly. If used, these quotations should be placed in quotation marks. Longer quotations are set indented.

Please cite literature in the following format: author year, page number(s).

The rules must be applied correctly and consistently throughout.

Bibliography

Short citations from the footnotes must be resolved in the bibliography. All literature abbreviations used (e.g. Sallaberger 2013) must be completely and correctly resolved in the bibliography.

The bibliography must contain all the literature cited in the paper. It must be arranged alphabetically (sorted by last name of the authors). Literature that you have not used and cited in the text should not be listed in the bibliography.

Please use the [Chicago Manual of Style](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html), currently in its 17th edition (2017), as your style guide and authority on detailed questions of formatting, references and citations and so forth. It is also available online: <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>.

Uniformity in citation and bibliography can best (and fastest) be achieved by using a bibliography management program (e.g. Citavi, Endnote, Zotero, Word bibliography; Zotero is free of charge; for Citavi and Endnote there are FU campus licenses). Please inform yourself about these programs, e.g.

[here](#) (FU University Library, Programs for Literature Management). English titles can be cited in title case, but this is not common for other languages (e.g. German, Italian).

Figures and List of Figures

- Sensible selection of figures illustrating the text in separate figure section.
- Refer to figures in the text at appropriate points (figs. 1, 3, 6) – don't include references in the footnotes.
- Organize figures in the order of mentioning them, e.g. do not refer to fig. 13 in the first sentence.
- Pay attention to the quality and recognizability (size) of the illustrations.
- All figures should include scales and, if applicable, North arrows. If figures use different colors or signatures (e.g. for building phases), make sure to include the legend or to add it in the captions
- Figure captions: Description of what is depicted in your own words.
- List of figures: Proof of the publication from which the figure was taken or indication of the source of the image.

Example:

Fig. 1: Akkadian period cylinder seal depicting an animal contest scene. It belongs to the stylistic group Akkadian Ia (Boehmer 1965, plate III, 24).

If you have edited illustrations or maps, you must mention this:

Example:

Fig. 1: Eanna sanctuary of Uruk (after van Ess 2021, fig. 1, with additions).

If applicable, indication of author/photographer of maps, drawings, photos (if available).

Formatting (suggestion)

- Text: font size Arial or Calibri 11 pt or Times New Roman 12 pt, justification
- Footnotes: Font size 10 pt
- Line spacing: 1.5 lines
- Side margins: 2.5 cm each
- Length: word count as specified in the module description (please check yourself for each module!); the word count (usually between 3000 and 6000 words) excludes cover page, table of contents, bibliography, and list of figures – but it includes the footnotes. Please indicate the number of words at the end of your text.
- Style: clear, understandable language appropriate to the subject matter; clear short sentences.
- Make sure that you do not switch arbitrarily between present and past tense
- Correct punctuation and grammar
- Clear layout with consistent use of formatting (size, bold, italic) or numbering of headings to indicate your paper's structure; text structured in paragraphs

Proofreading

Last but not least: An essential step that should not be skipped: Have your paper proofread by at least one fellow student or an acquaintance (in terms of language: spelling, commas; in terms of content: Is everything comprehensible? Red thread recognizable?).

If you are writing in English, even if you are native or near native, it is a good idea to run your paper through Grammarly and carefully consider its suggestions. It is not always correct, but in general the vast majority of its suggestions are correct or useful.

Please submit work as both a Word document and as a pdf via email.