

How to write a dissertation

When we think of the dissertation or the internship report, the writing represents the culmination of the work. Writing takes time, which is why we recommend three essential things:

- Keep all drafts, preparatory notes and copies of abandoned versions; this will prevent you feeling like you have missed something.
- While writing, make lists: abbreviations, words to place in a lexicon, ideas for the introduction and conclusion, things to check or complete.
- Before you begin to write a chapter or part, gather all the documents so that you have them at hand, and reread them.

In all cases, it is strongly recommended to adopt a clear, classic, airy and pleasant presentation, that makes you want to read the assignment.

Here are some tips that will help you when writing your dissertation.

The structure of the dissertation

Introduction, conclusion, transitions, and internal cross-references are there to help you demonstrate what you are saying. The sections must also be well balanced.

The introduction is written last, after the conclusion. It is usually made up of three points:

- The scenario (in a few sentences, you need to introduce your study topic).
- The problem (avoid "Our problem will be ...", rather go for something like "We can ask ourselves if ...").
- The outline of the plan (the whole thing is to present the questions that will be asked without revealing the answer).

The conclusion is written once the assignment is finished but before the introduction. It is good that the conclusion addresses the problem and provides an answer. It is often recommended to end with an "opening": invite the reader to expand on your findings, by following your recommendations.

Transitions are very important for a report, or brief, because of the length. You need to hold the reader's attention by forcing him to keep the entire demonstration in mind, using formulas such as "We will come back to this point in the following parts", "As mentioned previously", etc. This will make your work look more constructed.

The choice of pronouns

For an internship report that tells about a discovery internship, you can use the "I". On the other hand, for more scientific or technical work, it is advisable to adopt the "we" or the "they". Thus, dissertations, theses, research and summary reports should not be written in the first person.

Improve the syntax

The syntax is the structure of the sentence. To avoid mistakes and have a better style, here are some tips:

- Keep sentences simple. Reduce the number of conjunctions ("whose", "in order to", "because" ...), avoid "who, what, what, which ...", cut your sentences and repeat the subject, in order to avoid lengthy sentences.
- To vary the sentence constructions do not always use the same linking words.
- After "Thus" at the head of the sentence without a comma, we reverse the order of the subject and the verb, "So be it".
- "Etc. is already a suspensive formula, it must be followed by the abbreviation point, and never by three small points.

For an exercise such as the dissertation and the internship report, you must keep a certain restraint in the terms: we no longer say "enormous" or "gigantic", but "considerable" or "consequent". In general, be careful not to use emotional or familiar vocabulary.

Formatting

The font size is generally 12 to 24 point for headings, and 12 points for body text. Simple fonts, such as Times or Arial, are easier to read. Colours, bold and underlining in the text are to be avoided as the important elements must stand out by themselves, and not artificially.

Do not forget to indicate your quotes in quotation marks and in italics, and to cite the precise source in the footnote.

Finally, be sure to respect the order of the sections: non-paginated cover page, acknowledgements, summary, the body of the dissertation, bibliography, table of appendices, appendices.

Mistakes to avoid

There is no space after parentheses, before a comma, before a period, before and after a hyphen and there is no period after a title.

When it comes to spelling, a few typos are inevitable; however, repeated misspellings are unacceptable. Consider using a spelling and grammar checker.

Do not hesitate to support your findings with diagrams, histograms and summary tables, in order to provide summary information to your reader. It will also be useful to you when preparing for your defence.

Finally, you must clearly state all the bibliographic resources that have enabled you to carry out your dissertation. Indeed, your data must be dated and verifiable, this contributes to the professionalism of your work.

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