**A Guide to Better Writing**

**All Nations Leadership Institute**

**First Edition**



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**Preface**

Have you ever written a paper, confidently handed it in, only to receive a paper covered in red? Many writers experience this. Writing, or more importantly, the process of writing has complex components. This detailed process includes expressing innovative thoughts in a specific writing format. The rules for writing help both the writer and the reader. Writing as an All Nations Leadership Institute (ANLI) student also has the added component of theological writing. This guide provides a snap shot to help you navigate the process of effective writing following formal writing rules and techniques. As writers, we do not want our ideas and thoughts disregarded or misunderstood due to poor formatting. Following the writing process leads you to exceptional writing and analysis.

**Chapter 1**

**Theological Writing Types**

ANLI students will write theology utilizing various types of rhetorical formats. These formats will articulate exegesis and interpretation of assigned scriptures. Below represents just a few of the rhetorical formats.

**Theological Argument**

Mapping out a theological argument encompasses stating the premises, constructing reasons, and supporting the reasons with evidence from Scripture. Tips for writing a scriptural argument include (1) doing your research before you write, (2) understanding the core of the argument, (3) beginning with a strong vision of the premise (a scriptural position), (4) addressing the needs of the audience, (5) writing a statement that is one to three sentences in length, and (5) representing the argument with clear writing.

**Theological Devotional**

A devotional encourages and guides the reader in developing skills and practices to grow and mature a relationship with Christ. Topics derive from everyday issues related to Christians written for a specific audience to stimulate spiritual growth.

**Theological Journal Entry**

Spiritual journaling records your journey towards God. The journal entry provides an opportunity to hear the voice of God. Documenting and reflecting on thoughts of scripture and spiritual matters contribute to your daily walk with Christ

**Theological Response Writing**

This writing type elicits the student’s response to the content of study. The student will discuss and probe truth through personal interaction with it, and then apply this truth into ministry. The response should balance intellectual, spiritual, and emotional engagements with theoretical and practical aspects of the study content.

**Theological Reflection**

A theological reflection asks the student to respond to a situation, based on a biblical truth. Reflection illuminates a situation in the context of Scripture using personal voice. Key aspects of theological reflection include elaboration, connections, and personal self-reflection. Elaboration features the degree to which one analyzes and supports each of the key essay points. Connections highlight one's combined thoughts about the larger Body of Christ with Scripture, rather than merely stringing several passages together. Last, personal reflection self assesses and defines one's own biases, stereotypes, preconceptions, assumptions, and new ways of thinking.

**Theological Research**

A research paper presents your interpretation of a subject and contributing expert opinion and evaluation. It involves searching and reading information from various sources to guide your argument.

**Theological Summary**

A summary informs, describes and explains a biblical subject. The writer synthesizes and reports key concepts from a third-person point of view to produce a concise synopsis with objective information. Length varies according to the summary's purpose. The writer does not interpret, evaluate, or analyze during the process. For the fact that summary writing contains an objective explanation, the writer views the subject from the perspective of an outsider in a non-personalized manner in third person (it, one, they, them, them, theirs, oneself, and themselves). To keep writing objective and non-personalized, the author avoids the first person use of*I*, *me*, *my,* *myself, we, us,* or *our* when summarizing. 

**Chapter 2**

**Effective Writing**

Effective writing sets the stage for the audience to understand the purpose for reading. Many factors contribute to clear expression including focused ideas that enrich the central theme; organization that cohesively enhances and showcases the main idea; words that compel and engage the reader; message conveyed with precision; direction guides the reader through the text; and excellent grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.

**Writing Tips**

* Write in third person (possible exceptions may be journal entries and reflections).
* Understand your purpose for writing and state it clearly.
* State a thesis and main points to elaborate in the first or second paragraph of the paper, and then follow it through in the body paragraphs.
* Do not use cliché’s or jargon. Write for clarity, but not to impress the reader.
* Use an active voice. Avoid words like is, can be, to be, etc. Writing in a passive voice can lead to confusing and boring writing.

Active Voice: I read the Bible daily.

Passive Voice: The Bible is read by me daily.

* Follow APA6e for paper formatting & SBL for citations.
* Space once between sentences. You space twice in a draft copy only.
* Use one space after a colon.
* Place punctuation inside quotation marks.
* PROOFREAD

Give yourself a break from your text before you proofread.

Use a spellchecker.

Read text aloud and backwards.

Look for one type of problem at a time.

* Use direct quotes sparingly.
* Vary word usage.
* Write with gender-neutral pronouns as opposed to he or she.

**Chapter 3**

**Citation Methods**

**APA**

**How to Set Up a Paper**

* Use one inch margins on all sides
* Double Line Spacing
* Font: 12 pt. Times New Roman

**Title Page**

* The title page contains the **title**of the paper, the**author's name,** and the **institutional affiliation**, centered
* Page Header/Running Head: Flush left with page number flush right at top of page.
* Running Head for title page: Running head: TITLE OF YOUR PAPER
* Running Head for pages after the title page: TITLE OF YOUR PAPER
* Page Number Title Page: 1

**References Page**

* Title: References
* Center the word References on the first line.
* Capitalize the first letter of the word References.
* Do not bold or underline the word References.
* Double space all entries within and between entries.
* Indent all lines after the first line of each entry in your reference list one-half inch from the left margin (hanging indentation).
* There are no extra lines between title and first reference entry. Double space all content on the reference page. Do not add a third line in between the title and first reference entry or among entries.
* Identify every source used with an entry.
* Arrange all reference entries alphabetically by the author’s last name. When a work does not provide an author or editor, use the title instead.

**Writing Reference List Entries**

**Single Author Example (book)**

**Example**

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle. Location: Publisher.

Bernard, D. K. (2005). *Understanding God’s word: An apostolic approach to interpreting the* *bible*. Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press.

**Single Author Example (journal)**

**Example**

Pratt, J. K. (2014). Worship wars: John Smyth and the apostolic model of spiritual worship. *Baptist History and Heritage*, *49(1),* 9,27.

**Two Authors**

List by their last names and initials. Use the ampersand instead of "and."

**Example**

Walker, C. R., & Jones, A. D.

**Three to Seven Authors**

List by last names and initials; commas separate author names, while the last author name is preceded again by ampersand.

**Example**

Pierce, L. S., Brown, D. R., Hall, P. K., Baldwin, T., Hamp, F., & Berry, K. H.

**More than Seven Authors**

List by last names and initials; commas separate author names. After the sixth author's name, use an ellipses in place of the author names. Then provide the final author name. There should be no more than seven names.

**Example**

Hunt, A. M., Crist, M. J., Angelos, L. L., Mays, A. A., Stevens, L. A., Towns, S. T., . . . Childs, L. H.

**Citations**

In-text citation capitalization, quotes, and italics/underlining

* Always capitalize proper nouns, including author names and initials: L. Yaghjian.
* Indirect quotes require only the author’s last name and year of publication.
* When quoting an author use the past tense. For example, “Vine (1996) defined revelation as a manifestation of truth or knowledge.”
* If you refer to the title of a source within your paper, capitalize all words that are four letters long or greater within the title of a source: Writing Theology Well. Exceptions apply to short words that are verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs: Writing New Media, There Is Nothing Left to Lose.

**In-Text Citations multiple authors**

**A Work by Two Authors**

Name both authors in the signal phrase or in the parentheses each time you cite the work. Use the word "and" between the authors' names within the text and use the ampersand in the parentheses.

Research by the two aforementioned researchers supports . . . (Scott & Hall, 2014)

**A Work by Three to Five Authors**

List all the authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses the first time you cite the source. Use the word "and" between the authors' names within the text and use the ampersand in the parentheses.

**Example**

(Johnson, Tolbert, Stevens, Jackson, & Harris, 2009)

Following citations, only use the first author's last name followed by "et al." in the phrase or in parentheses such as (Morris et al., 2012)

**Six or More Author:**

Use the first author's name followed by et al. in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

**Example**

Anderson et al. (2001) argued . . .

(Anderson et al., 2001)

**Paraphrasing**

Restating the meaning of another’s idea using other words. Cite the author’s name and year of publication in the body of the paper. APA does not require a page number for a paraphrased quote.

**Example**

Book stated: Since the Bible is the Word of God, our understanding of truth must be rooted and grounded in the text of scripture.

**Paraphrased**

As Christians, we base what we believe on understanding of scripture (Bernard, 2005).

**Short Quotations**

Use direct quotations only when necessary and relevant to the topic. When directly quoting from a work, include the author’s last name, year of publication, and the page number for the work cited.

**Example**

“According to Trimm (2011), ‘Capacity building, in a way, is also about community building. It’s about growing into the fullness of God as a community’” (p. 21).

**Long Quotations**

For the purposes of ANLI, student most likely will not write papers that warrant using a long quote. Place direct quotations that are 40 words, or longer, in a free-standing block of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented 1/2 inch from the left margin, i.e., in the same place you would begin a new paragraph. Type the entire quotation on the new margin, and indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation one half inch from the new margin. Maintain double spacing throughout. The parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark.

**Latin Abbreviations**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Abbreviation** | **Meaning** | **Example** | **APA Notes** |
|  |  |  |  |
| cf. | “compare” or “consult” (used to provide contrasting or opposing information. | Bradley’s (2013) findings provided a divergent opinion on effective leadership  (cf. Lowe, 2009).  His research supports the premise of servant leadership (see also Jones & Walker). | Do not put a coma after or a period between the c and the f. Use “cf” to contrast; use “see” or “see also” to compare like things. |
| e.g., | “for example”  (abbreviation for exempli gratia) | Researchers (e.g., Moss, 2013; Hayes 2014) suggest churches with active children’s ministry experience growth. | Always put a  comma after e.g. |
| etc. | ‘and so on” or “and so forth” (abbreviation for et cetera) | Schools ranked the level of student participation in sports from greatest to least (football, soccer, etc.). Outdoor sports ranked highest (soccer etc.). | Place a comma before if used to end a list of at least two other items. |
| i.e., | “that is,” (abbreviation for id est; used to give specific clarification) | When you are committed to eating healthy there are places you should not visit (i.e., a candy store). | Always put a comma after i.e. |
| viz., | “namely” | We created our program based on earlier research (Hall & Chambers, 2007) and improved it. | Always put a comma after. |
| vs. | “versus” | The editor reported the opposing position (yes vs no) to the new development. | Exception: With legal citations use v. |
| et al. | “and others” | Walker, Washington, and Hill (2013) attempted to embark upon their new journey.  Walker et al. began with writing grants. | Use et al. when a work has more than three authors. Cite all authors the first time, in subsequent instances cite the first author followed by et al.  \*Used inside  and outside of parenthesis.\* |
| Ibid | abbreviation for ibidem used in citations to refer again to the last source previously referenced. | Never used in APA style | Not used in APA Style; instead give each citation using author names as usual. |

**SBL**

**Abbreviating Scripture**

Use the abbreviations for biblical books (listed in next section).

**Citing Scripture**

Cite Scripture within the body of your essay or research paper, but not in your references. The first time you cite a Bible version, you must include it in the citation. If you use a second version, you cite that one. When you return to the first version, you cite it again. Find the correct and incorrect ways to cite the book and verse below.

**Correct Way of Citing Scripture**

* The reasons to apply Scripture can be seen in 2 Tim 3:16.
* The passage, 2 Tim 3:16, shows the reasons for applying Scripture in your life as a Christian.
* Second Timothy 3:16 shows the reasons for applying Scripture in your life as a Christian.
* Did you know that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness?" (2 Tim 3:16 KJV).

**Incorrect Way of Citing Scripture**

* 2 Timothy 3:16 shows the reasons for applying Scripture in your life as a Christian.
* 2 Tim 3:16 shows the reasons for applying Scripture in your life as a Christian.

**Transliteration**

The English letter form of a Greek word.

**Capitalization**

These capitalization terms reflects the most common from the *Christian Manual of Style* and *SBL Handbook of Style* used in ANLI classes. Capitalize all pronouns for God/Jesus.

**-A-**

Abba

Adonai

ancient Near East

Apocalypse, the (Book of Revelation)

apocalyptic

Apostle Paul (but lower case Paul the apostle, apostle (s), the twelve apostles, etc.

ark

ark of the covenant

ascension, the

Assyrian Empire

atonement

Atonement, the Day of

**-B-**

Baal

baptism

Beatitudes, the

Bible**--**Capitalize all terms for the Bible including the Word and Scripture

Biblical

Blood, the

blood of Christ

Body, the

Body of Christ

Book (of Jeremiah, as opposed to Jeremiah's book of prophecies)

book of law

Book of Life

Bread of Life

Bridegroom, the

burnt offering

**-C-**

canon

captivity

chief priest

chosen people

Christian

Christian era

Christianize

Christlike

christocentric

Christology

Church, the (body of Christ)

church (local)

covenant

covenant, the new (except in a title)

covenant, the old (except in a title)

creation, the

Creator, the

cross (salvation event and place)

crucifixion of Christ

crucifixion, the

curse, the

**-D-**

Davidic

Day of Atonement

day of judgment

day of Pentecost

Dead Sea Scrolls

Deuteronomic

Diaspora

devil, the

disciples

Dispersion

divided kingdom

divine

**-E-**

early Church

elect, God's elect

end time, the

Epistles, the

eschatology

eternal life

eternity

evangelist

exile (condition)

**-F-**

faithfulness (fruit of the Spirit)

firstfruits

Flood, the

Former Prophets

Feast of Firstfruits

Feast of Pentecost

Feast of Tabernacles

First Temple period

fall of humanity

fall of Jerusalem

fall, the

fruit of the Spirit

**-G-**

garden of Eden

gentleness (fruit of the Spirit)

goodness

**God --**All pronouns for God: He, Him, Himself, His, Who, Whom -- Do not use They. God is one.

God Almighty

Godhead

godless

godly

Good News

Gospel (i.e., Gospel of Matthew or Synoptic Gospels, as opposed to the four gospels or Matthew's gospel )

Gospel (Salvation message)

**-H-**

hallelujah

He (see God)

heaven

Hebrew Bible

Hellenistic

Him (see God)

high priest

Historical Books

humanity

**-I-**

idolaters

Immanuel

**-J-**

Jehovah

Judah

Judaic

Judaism

Judea

Judea

**-K-**

king of Israel

King of kings

kingdom of God

kingdom, the

**-L-**

Lamb of God

land of Israel

last days

law (as opposed to grace)

law of Moses, Jewish law, law of Israel

Law, the (Pentateuch)

Letters, the

Levite

lordship

**-M-**

Major Prophets

Masoretic

Masoretic text

Matthean

mercy seat

messiah (general meaning)

Messiah (Jesus)

messianic

Minor Prophets

Mishnah

Mosaic law

**-N-**

Near East

Neo-Babylonian period

New Covenant

New Testament

northern Israel

northern kingdom

**-O-**

Old Covenant

oral law

Oral Torah

**-P-**

Pastoral Epistles

patriarchal narratives

patriarchal narratives

patriarchs, the

Pentateuch

people of Israel

period of the judges

Poetic Books

preexilic

priesthood, the

promised land

Prophet Jeremiah

prophets

Prophets, the

psalm, a

Psalms, Book of

**-O-**

Qadesh

Qumran

**-R-**

Roman Empire

Rosh Hashanah

royal psalms

-S-

Sabbath

Sanhedrin, the

Savior

scribe

scriptural

Scripture

second coming

Semitic

Septuagint

Son of God

Spirit of God

Sprit, the

synagogue

synoptic (used as an adjective)

Synoptic Gospels, the

**-T-**

tabernacle

Talmud

Ten Commandments

torah (instruction)

Torah (a division of the canon)

twelve apostles

Twelve, the

**-U-**

Ugaritic

Upper Egypt

united kingdom

upper Mesopotamia

**-V-**

version, the

Vulgate

**-W-**

wilderness

Wilderness of Sinai

wilderness wanderings

Wisdom literature

Word, the

Written Torah

**-Y-**

Yahweh

Year of Jubilee

**-Z-**

Zealots

**Books of the Bible Abbreviations**

However tempting to exemplify the importance of the Word of God by using all capital letters, the specific manner to abbreviate the books of the Bible ensures understanding by all.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Old Testament** | **Abbreviation** | **New Testament** | **Abbreviation** |
| Genesis | Gen | Matthew | Matt |
| Exodus | Exod | Mark | Mark |
| Leviticus | Lev | Luke | Luke |
| Numbers | Num | John | John |
| Deuteronomy | Deut | Acts | Acts |
| Joshua | Josh | Romans | Rom |
| Judges | Judg | 1-2 Corinthians | 1 Cor 2 Cor |
| Ruth | Ruth | Galatians | Gal |
| 1-2 Samuel | 1 Sam 2 Sam | Ephesians | Eph |
| 1-2 Kings | 1 Kgs 2 Kgs | Philippians | Phil |
| 1-2 Chronicles | 1 Chr 2 Chr | Colossians | Col |
| Ezra | Ezra | 1-2 Thessalonians | 1 Thess 2 Thess |
| Nehemiah | Neh | 1-2 Timothy | 1 Tim 2 Tim |
| Esther | Esther | Titus | Titus |
| Job | Job | Philemon | Phlm |
| Psalm/Psalms | Ps/Pss | Hebrews | Heb |
| Proverbs | Prov | James | Jas |
| Ecclesiastes | Eccl | 1-2 Peter | 1 Peter 2 Peter |
| Song of Songs  (Song of Solomon) | Song | 1-2-3 John | 1 John 2 John 3 John |
| Isaiah | Isa | Jude | Jude |
| Jeremiah | Jer | Revelation | Rev |
| Lamentations | Lam |  |  |
| Ezekiel | Ezek |  |  |
| Daniel | Dan |  |  |
| Hosea | Hos |  |  |
| Joel | Joel |  |  |
| Amos | Amos |  |  |
| Obadiah | Obad |  |  |
| Jonah | Jonah |  |  |
| Micah | Mic |  |  |
| Nahum | Hah |  |  |
| Habakkuk | Hab |  |  |
| Zephaniah | Zeph |  |  |
| Hag | Haggai |  |  |
| Zechariah | Zech |  |  |
| Malachi | Mal |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| *(SBL Handbook, 2003, p.75)* |  |  |  |

**Chapter 4**

**Helpful Links**

APA Formatting <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

SBL Citation Style <http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/SBLHSrevised2_09.pdf>

**References**

Alexander, P. H., Kutsko, J. F., Ernest, J.D., & Decker-Lucke, S. A. (Eds.). *The SBL handbook of Style: For ancient near eastern, biblical, and early Christian studies*. Peabody, MA; Hendrickson Publishers.

Amercian Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Ed.). Washington D.D.: American Psychological Association.

Lee, C. (2009, August 20). Formatting APA references with more than seven authors. *APA style* [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2009/08/formatting-apa-references-with-more-than-seven-authors.html