

Technical Features in Written Work

Giving a favorable impression of your ideas

Many of us think that form is not as important as substance. (This is a reaction to the widespread practice of placing too much importance on form and not placing enough importance on substance.) In real life, though, form is as important as substance. People are impressed, both consciously and subconsciously, by appearance. Good appearance of our writing will prejudice a reader in favor of our ideas, and bad appearance will prejudice a reader against our ideas. Whether we like it or not, it's a fact of life.

Format

Paper

Use **standard** loose-leaf notebook paper. Don't use graph paper or colored paper or middle-school student's stationery with cute pictures.

Margins

Leave a margin of 4 centimeters on each side and at the top and bottom of the page; this leaves room for someone else to write comments on either side. Center your writing on the page.

Every line of the paragraph starts at the left margin and continues to the right margin. (See the right margin of the illustration in "Indentation" below.)

Indentation

Begin the first line of your paragraph the equivalent of 3 or 4 letters to the right of the left margin (as in the illustration below). Every line of writing should start at the left margin and end at the right margin.

XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XX. XXXXXXXXX
XX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXX
XX
XX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XX.

Mechanics

Clear punctuation

Clearly distinguish between a comma (,) and a period (.). The head of the comma rests on the line, and its tail hangs below the line, like any good tail does. The period is a dot, not a short line, and it rests on the line (it doesn't hover above the line or hang below it). Make the comma and the period **bold**. Also, never put a punctuation mark at the beginning of a line (by the left margin).

Letter case

Use an UPPER case letter 1) to begin a sentence and 2) for proper nouns (고유명사). Otherwise, use lower case letters. Distinguish clearly between upper case and lower case. (Many learners do not distinguish clearly between UPPER and lower case k, w, and s.)

Hyphens (-)

Use a hyphen to divide a word into smaller parts (at syllable breaks) if the word is too long to fit inside the right margin.

1. Put the hyphen at the right margin, *not at the left margin*.
2. Divide a word only at the end of a syllable. For example: syl-la-ble (not sy-l), mar- gin (not ma-r).
3. Do not hyphenate words of one syllable, and do not hyphenate a last syllable with only 1 or 2 letters (for example: don't hyphenate liberal-ly). If there are only 1 or 2 letters in the last syllable, it does not violate the margin principle.
4. If you are not sure how to hyphenate a word, look it up in the dictionary. (Native speakers often have to do this.) If your dictionary doesn't present hyphenation, don't hyphenate: either write the word shorter or write the word on the next line.

Study the examples in this article and in the rest of this workbook.

Dashes (--)

A dash is two hyphens. (If you open a phrase or clause with a dash, be sure to close the phrase or clause with the appropriate punctuation—another dash, a semi-colon, a colon, or a period.)

Commas and semi-colons and colons

Know the function and rules of each punctuation tool, and use them correctly. See the articles about punctuation in EXTRAS>General, under Punctuation.

Parentheses

Always provide a space before both the opening and closing parentheses.

Neatness

1. Do not cross out words, do not insert words from above or below the line.
2. Do not use white ink.
3. Use a pencil and eraser, so that you can cleanly erase a mistake and write in the correction.
4. Do not tear your page out of a notebook.

Careless mistakes

A careless mistake is a mistake in hyphenation, spelling or elementary grammar. It is a mistake which the writer can avoid if the writer uses some care in writing. Careless mistakes are very difficult to avoid, but they must be avoided, because careless mistakes prejudice the reader against your ideas; they make the reader think that maybe your ideas are as thoughtlessly produced as is your expression of them.

The one-clause *Because*

Don't start a one-clause sentence with "Because..." If you do this, the clause becomes a dependent clause, and that is an incomplete sentence. This is one of the most common, most persistent and most aggravating mistakes. You can usually combine the Because-clause with the preceding sentence just by using a comma.