



## Why Didn't I Get the Grade I Wanted?

### A Quick Look at Academic Writing

After receiving a grade on a paper, you may be bewildered—especially if you've spent a lot of time preparing the assignment. What you may not realize is that academic writing is, basically, an argument--and like any argument, you must convince your reader (in this case, your professor) of your position. You must convince your reader that you have proven your argument.

***Good writing informs, interests, and persuades the reader and does not confuse, annoy, or frustrate the reader.***

#### Academic writing requires you to:

- read as many academic articles about your subject as possible;
- think about what you want to argue and how you want to present your argument;
- begin your argument with a research question and answer the question using several breakdown points;
- state your evidence to support your points; and
- conclude by summarizing your argument.

***Remember: you must convince your reader that you have proven your argument.***

#### Keep In Mind:

- Academic writing begins with critical thinking and reading. This means you should take the time to think about your subject and what you intend to say.
- Use the various academic databases, such as UDC's Aladin, to find articles that support your argument.\*

\*Go to [udc.edu](http://udc.edu), click on "Library," and then go to ALADIN.

## Now, you're ready to begin:

- Start with an outline headed by a thesis statement.
- Begin your thesis statement with one sentence that tells your reader (a) your argument and (b) a breakdown of the points you intend to argue.
- Make sure that your argument states something more than a known or acknowledged fact. You should avoid any introductory material at this point because you will add this later.
- Match the numbers of units in your breakdown with the number of paragraphs you want or require. Ask yourself if each part of the breakdown logically develops the argument.
- Make sure that each of the points in your breakdown repeats the argument worded in the thesis.
- Discuss your breakdown points fully, with specific examples and illustrations. *Like a lawyer in a courtroom, you are building a "case" for your argument by providing "evidence," that persuades the reader of your argument.*
- Check for unity--does everything in your paragraph *really* belong there? Have you connected all ideas adequately by providing transitions? Is your paper coherent?

## BEFORE YOU TURN YOUR PAPER IN, MAKE SURE THAT:

- you check your paper for correct grammar, errors, wordiness, repetition and clarity
- you conclude the paper properly, summarize the breakdown points, include an analysis of the theme, and sum up your argument
- you prepare a neat and attractive paper that is formatted according to your professor's instructions

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