

A Good Paper . . .

Formatting

- follows the prescribed guidelines
- is line-spaced evenly and according to the guidelines
- uses the proper point size and font according to the guidelines
- uses one-inch margins on all four sides
- shows that you know how to properly format titles and quotes:
 - Quotation marks for poems, articles, stories, essays, and songs
 - Italics for books, movies, magazines, newspapers, and albums
 - Quotation marks around words and lines taken directly from the text
- includes a title that underscores the idea behind your thesis

Argumentation

- establishes a clear thesis in your opening paragraph
- is organized into paragraphs, each with a main idea that builds upon your thesis
- includes examples and details from the text that support and clarify your thesis
- supports its assertions through evidence
 - After each line, ask yourself “So what?” or “Why?” or “How?”
 - Try this formula: **assertion + analysis + example = evidence**

Finish

- is revised
- is proofread
- is polished

Common Mistakes

- Avoid extended or unnecessary definitions (*Webster’s* is not analysis)
- Possessive nouns and plurals—watch your apostrophes!
- Commas
 - *Let’s eat, mom.* vs. *Let’s eat mom.*
- Prepositions aren’t one-size-fits-all
 - *Kosinski’s purpose of writing this novel . . .*
 - *Because of the media we often judge ourselves on unrealistic standards.*
- Be graceful in your analysis—avoid clunky and unnecessary throat-clearing:
 - *An example of this would be . . .*
 - *This shows . . .*
 - *This includes . . .*
- Be graceful in general
 - Don’t say *got killed*
 - Say *died* or *lost their lives*