

Owl Quick Reference:

Following is a list of commonly found problems in papers submitted to OWL. If one of these items has been indicated on your paper, you might want to check a fuller discussion in *The Mayfield Handbook of Technical Scientific Writing*.

1. Title

All papers must have a title and the author's name. Most papers also require course name and date. Titles should be in larger font than text or other headings, centered, and bold faced.

2. Headings

Headings and sub-headings should be in smaller font than title and the same size or larger text. Their appearance should be either bold faced, italicized or underlined. All headings and sub-headings at the same level should be in the same size font and have the same appearance, either bold faced, italicized or underlined. Each level of heading should be in the same or larger font than the next lower level of heading. If two levels of headings are in the same size font, give them a different appearance. Begin each heading at left margin on separate line from text. (In *The Mayfield Handbook*, pay particular attention to the way that book formats headings.)

Title

Heading 1 (level 1)

Heading 2 (level 2)

Heading 3 (level 2)

Heading 4 (level 3)

Heading 5 (level 2)

Heading 6 (level 3)

Heading 7 (level 4)

Heading 8 (level 1)

Heading 9 (level 2)

3. Spacing of text

When single spacing text, begin each paragraph at left margin and leave a double space between paragraphs as well as before and after all headings and sub-headings. When double spacing text, indent first line of each paragraph and leave the same double space between headings and sub-headings.

4. Commas – Introductory

Place commas after introductory words and phrases.

Ex: However, I went straight home after leaving the restaurant.
 After leaving the restaurant, I went straight home.

5. Commas – Parenthetic

Bracket parenthetic words and phrases with commas.

Ex: Bill, the leader of the discussion, opened with a question.
 The leader of the discussion, Bill, opened with a question.

6. Comma Splice –

Two independent clauses cannot be linked with a comma alone as, for example, “I went to the cupboard, I found a glass.” This can be corrected in one of four ways. (*Mayfield Handbook* p. 248)

Ex: I went to the cupboard. I found a glass.
 I went to the cupboard; I found a glass.
 I went to the cupboard, and I found a glass.
 After I went to the cupboard, I found a glass.

7. Equations

Only include main equations in body of text; place derivations and calculations in appendices. Place equations on separate lines from text and only include one equation per line. Number all equations sequentially to right of equation in parentheses, using either a single number, (1), (2), etc., or (Eq.1), (Eq.2), etc. Define any new variables immediately after equation beginning on next line in format, “where V is the velocity . . . , E is the . . . , etc.” (See example on p. 318 in *Mayfield Handbook*.)

8. Figures and Tables

All figures and tables should be labeled in separate sequences as Figure, Fig., or Table followed by number, colon, single space and short descriptive title.

Ex: Fig. 1: Short descriptive title.
 Table 1: Another short title.
 Figure 2: One more example.
 Figure 3: Another figure.
 Table 2: The 2nd table.