

HOW TO WRITE A HAUSARBEIT

(compiled by Sabine Lucia Müller, Institut für Englische Philologie, FU Berlin, June 2005)

Please note: This paper represents a guideline, not an authoritative master approach. Please also check further links provided on departmental homepage and observe the suggestions made by your professors.

FIRST STEPS:

- Choose a topic!

This involves quite a lot of preparation - don't underestimate the amount of time you will need.

Reconsider which aspects of the seminar topics/ the texts discussed were of special interest to you (e.g. the ones you were doing presentations on),

- have a look at your notes and the texts discussed,
- ask yourself which topics you would like to know more about, which aspects you would like to examine in a more detailed way,
- read titles listed in the bibliography (handed out to you by your teacher) which are related to the areas of special interest you identified.

FURTHER STEPS:

Talk to your professor about how far you have got in the process of planning your essay –long before the "holidays" start.

Collect further information on the texts and on your topic

- Re-read the texts with regard to aspects relevant to your choice of topic
- Read relevant texts of literary criticism (cf. bibliography)
- Further bibliographical research (MLA)

Ask yourself questions about your topic, these will be a help to you to in structuring your paper. Formulate hypotheses.

Make a first rough draft of the structure your paper will have (and, possibly, discuss it with your teacher).

Write a first draft version of your paper.

After several re-readings and corrections of the paper, write your final version of it (please make sure that your quotes, orthography and punctuation are correct).

DO'S:

- An essay does not simply present and collate information, it **argues** a standpoint. Express your argument in a one- or two-sentence punchline. This thesis should occur at the beginning of your essay so that the reader knows from the outset what you are arguing.
- Give a sketchy overview of your course of action, so that the reader has an idea of where he/she is going with you.
- Recapitulate at strategic points in your essay what you have shown so far, and where you are going next.

DON'TS:

- Please don't merely regurgitate the arguments stated in literary criticism, but apply these arguments to **the specific questions (hypotheses)** you are dealing with in your paper.
- Don't write any summaries of the poems, plays (etc.) you discuss – both you and your professor know them anyway. Neither should you list up biographical details of the authors' lives, unless you are dealing with specific questions related to their biographies.
- If any difficulties should arise, don't hesitate to get in touch!

FORM OF YOUR PAPER:

- Please write in English, 12 pt. (e.g. Times New Roman), double-spaced, number the pages (number of pages depends on PS/HS/Ü course requirements)
- The paper should consist of four parts: Title page, Contents, Text, Bibliography

1. Title page:

Uni, Department, Semester (SoSe/WS 200?), name of your teacher, number and title of course
Exact title of your paper
Name, Address (including email, phone number and registration number), number of semesters

2. Contents

Parts and chapters of the paper (with page numbers)

Recommended structure:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Main part (with subchapters, e.g. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3,...)
- 3 Conclusion

3. Text

Structure: Please explain, in a brief introduction, the question(s) you will be concerned with in your essay and which methods and approaches you will use in solving this/ these question/s.

The conclusion of the essay should sum up your paper's most important results and/ or point out further fields of/ questions for research.

Style: Avoid repetitions. It is vital that you **make a coherent argument**, using phrases like "by contrast", "accordingly", etc.

References: **All sources** used in the text, according to one of the standard bibliographical systems, preferably MLA guide for writing research papers:

<http://webster.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml>

Quotes: Short quotes (less than three lines) should be included in the text. Use quotation marks.

If direct speech is included in the quote, your quote should look like this: "'Cheer up, we won't bite,' their smile seemed to say." (Mansfield 39) Longer quotes should be indented. Use single spacing. No need for quotation marks. Also cf. MLA guide for writing research papers:

<http://webster.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml>

Use the quotes to sustain your argument, i.e. make clear what the quote is about, why you are quoting the passage in this context etc.

Footnotes: Please compare the MLA guide for writing research papers, "Citing sources/ Footnotes and endnotes".

4. Bibliography:

The bibliography ought to contain complete bibliographical data of all the texts (primary and secondary) you used in your paper. Please include complete page numbers of essays (pp. 1-15), even if you refer to one page only. The bibliography is an alphabetical list, starting with the authors' surnames. (E.g.: Armstrong, Nancy...)

Electronic media should include the address of the web page as well as the date when you used the resource. **However, surfing the internet can not replace your using the library!!!** Sparing use of the net is highly recommended. Often, texts published there fall short of scholarly standards. This may affect your grade.

REMEMBER: Be very careful about distinguishing your own ideas from those of others. Even if you only allude to others' research or vary the ideas of other scholars, you have to state this (e.g.: see Brown, 4). Otherwise you will be suspected of plagiarism and not get your *Schein*, especially if you have quoted someone without stating it is a quote. Please append a signed and dated declaration to your submitted work: 'I DECLARE THAT THIS ESSAY IS MY OWN WORK, EXCEPT FOR IDEAS AND QUOTATIONS CORRECTLY ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE TEXT.'