

# EPM Writing Guide

v. 9-1-20

*Clear, concise writing is a fundamental skill for policy analysts and managers!*

## **Writing Expectations for Essays, Policy Analyses or Briefs**

### **Writing Review Resources**

Plan for time to review and edit your writing. Having another person critique your draft work before submission is a useful strategy. Besides utilizing your fellow students, you may find writing assistance at the [Student Academic Success Center](#). The Center offers free drop-in or appointment-based assistance with any writing assignment.

### **Formatting papers**

Include your name, the date and paper title at the top. Typed (1.5-spaced), double-sided, length as specified

### **Style, Spelling and Grammar**

Refer to the *The Chicago Manual of Style* regarding questions of style or grammar. Grammar, spelling, punctuation and mechanics are important. Always spell check your work. To improve grammar and readability try reading your paper aloud. Make paragraph topic sentences clear and precise. Paragraph transitions should flow naturally from one to the next.

### **Content**

Many of the ideas expressed below will be found in writing guides, e.g. *Successful College Writing* by Kathleen McWhorter (2005) specifically chapter 18, "Writing Arguments".

Targeted Audience--Write for your intended reader/audience. Generally, think of your audience as open but skeptical, looking for incisive, analytically sound arguments supporting each point. Unless otherwise specified, you might imagine that your job is to generate an executive brief using reasoned argument for the general public or a political leader like a state governor.

Tone--The writing should be formal and in third person. Understand the difference between writing an analysis or an advocacy piece and be clear what type of document you are writing. An analysis should minimize bias and not have a personal tone. An advocacy piece might have a personal tone.

Style--In most EPM courses, writing assignments will be inquiry, analysis or policy review, not *advocacy*. Policy analyses of economic, scientific or social questions emphasize objective critical thinking versus emotional appeals or persuasion. The intended format and style is not a public speech (rally, graduation, etc.) or an editorial. Emotional appeals or grand calls to action are out of place: "The future is up to us." "We owe it to our children." These objects (the future, our children) are valid subjects but the stylistic approach is not appropriate for policy analyses.

Focus --\_Focus on a thesis (central argument) and support it with analytically sound arguments and references (as needed).

### Using References--

- References should be used to substantiate your arguments (not as a substitute to making your own point). Directly quote material sparingly.
- In some cases it is important to introduce the source that you are referencing to communicate to the reader a sense of who the source is and why their work deserves consideration. This is particularly important when using quotes from a source.
- To save paper, please place the “References” directly below your final paragraph instead of on a new page.

### **Plagiarism**

Please review this UC Davis Student Judicial Affairs handout on avoiding plagiarism: [SJA Plagiarism handout](#). It is your responsibility to fully understand what plagiarism is and that violations of UC Davis plagiarism standards may lead to dismissal from the University.

### **References**

Gaughan, Judy E. n.d. “Do you have enough analysis?” Accessed January 4, 2013.  
<http://lamar.colostate.edu/~jgaughan/advice/examples/AnalysisWords.htm>.

McWhorter, Kathleen. 2005. *Successful College Writing*, third edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.