## Academic Paper Format

Here is an example of what an academic paper typically looks like. Using standard fonts, margins, and indentations helps your paper gain credibility with an academic audience; readers who are comfortable with your paper's format can pay close attention to the ideas you're communicating.

Papers are typically in 12 point Times New Roman font with double spacing and one-inch margins all around.

Write your name, the course, the instructor's name, and the date here (unless your instructor says otherwise).

Writer's Name
WRIT 1201
Professor's Name
September 20, 2007

Some papers include a title that suggests the topic.

Writing an Organized Paper

The ability to write a well-organized and insightful paper is very important in order to be successful at the University of Minnesota. Most classes require at least one written assignment, and professors expect a high level of writing skill. A good paper generally includes a thesis, paragraphs that support it, and a strong conclusion.

Academic papers often include a thesis in the first paragraph.

Every paragraph begins with an indentation of five spaces (created with the "tab" or "return/enter" key).

A good thesis is integral to any academic paper and should work as a general summary of the argument or main point of the paper. The thesis needs to be clear, and it should outline the main points to be discussed. Sometimes just making a list of the basic things you plan to write about and then compiling them into a sentence is enough. The rest of the paper should then follow the plan laid out by the thesis.

In general, each paragraph should start with a topic sentence.

In order for readers to be able to follow the logic of a paper, each paragraph should be related to what was introduced in the thesis. A good way to start is by making a topic sentence to begin each paragraph. The topic sentence is often an extended or elaborated version of some part of the thesis statement. For example, this paper's thesis mentions "paragraphs that follow [the thesis]," and the topic sentence for this paragraph expands on that idea. The rest of a paragraph should include evidence to support or explain the topic sentence.

Note how the ends and beginnings of paragraphs work to create a transition between ideas.

Once readers have been led through the paragraphs that support your main point, they will expect to find a solid conclusion that discusses the significance of what they have just read. If the thesis predicts the main point of the paper, then the conclusion emphasizes the importance of your main point in some larger context. In the case of this paper, a conclusion might point out that following the general guidelines for presenting your ideas in an academic setting allows your papers to make an impact on readers. Readers appreciate your presenting a paper in a way that's familiar to them; in turn, they are more likely to be open to your unique perspective.