

Tips for Writing Essays

Writing is now, more than ever, a core component in NCO's weekly responsibilities. The ability to effectively articulate your thoughts and verbal words into writing can ensure that you are able to establish your professionalism and may help you advance through the ranks. Read more about the importance of writing from CSM Teresa M. Duncan from the Army University here.

A paper should be written formally and unbiased. It should convey information in an impartial way. The goal is to base arguments on the evidence under consideration, and all claims should be supported with relevant evidence. Try to avoid using slang, contractions, clichés, and conversational phrases. Also, try not to be too personal in your essays by avoiding the usage of first and second-person pronoun such as "I."

Example:

A lot of these Soldiers are how they are because they have no discipline due to their leadership being so laid back. (x)

Many of these Soldiers lack discipline because their leadership allows them to be. (o)

It should be clear and precise. This ensures the reader knows exactly what you mean. Try to avoid using vague language and being long-winded.

Example:

People have been interested in this thing for a long time. (x)

Researchers have been interested in this phenomenon for at least 10 years. (o)

It should be focused and well-structured. Follow the five-paragraph rule. Introduction that includes a thesis, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. You need a clear purpose which should be stated on your thesis in the introduction of your essay. Try to avoid using emotive, subjective, exaggerated, and flowery language. Read more about the A-S-A Model and Paragraph Structure here.

A thesis statement sums up the main point of your paper. It is one of the most important sentences in your paper. It establishes the purpose of your paper, states your position on the topic, guides the reader through your supporting points, and keeps your writing focused. It is usually one or two sentences long and usually appears at the end of your introduction. Your main body should expand on this statement, support it with evidence, and argue for its validity.

Here are some other tips:

Start a new paragraph when you move onto a new idea.

Use a topic sentence at the start of each paragraph to indicate what it's about.

Make clear transitions between paragraphs.

Make sure every paragraph is relevant to your topic.

It should be well-sourced. You should conduct research to support your claims on the paper. Sources are other texts that the writer analyzes or uses as an evidence. You should use sources that are credible and not Wikipedia. Also, ensure you cite your sources. This means to acknowledge whenever you quote or paraphrase someone else's work by including a citation in the text and reference list at the end. We, at the NCO Academy, utilize the APA style. You can find, more information at: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html. Here is a sample of the Student Paper using the APA Style.

It should be correct and consistent. Grammar, punctuation, and citations are important, but consistency is important as well. Remember verb tenses, introducing abbreviations, numbers, and capitalization of terms.

Example:

Soldier is always capitalized.

Numbers lower than ten should be spelled out.