

Student name  
Name of class, maybe professor too  
Date

Title (if necessary – can **bold** if asked to)

Those previous lines were written single-spaced. This is double-spaced Times New Roman in 12 pt font. It is nice and easy on the eyes of an old humanities professor with nearsightedness. Don't you think?

If I may draw your attention to the start of this paper, notice that there were two things I did not do: 1) Utilize a dictionary to define a word. This is a terrible practice. If you do it, you will make a professor cry; and we get very angry when people make us cry. Crying is bad for the grade of the essay/paper; 2) The Jurassic Opening – “Since the dawn of time, man has wondered about...” Please stop that. No really. Have you wondered about this from the dawn of time? No, you have not. I know it, you know it. So, why are you saying that? Perhaps you are saying it because you think I want to hear that the topic is important. Of course it is, why else would I assign it?

Following from this, contrary to popular belief, you cannot BS<sup>1</sup> your way through a paper. It may make you feel smart to tell your friends that you did no work on the paper, but, come on. We know better. Writing is not easy. Even effective BSing is not easy. Read *Lolita*. It's BS to such a level that it's art. You think that was easy? Wrong!

In closing, your professors do not assign papers because we love to read them. I'd, personally, rather be reading Nietzsche. We assign them because you learn more through the process of writing, editing, revising, and revisiting a paper than from any other exercise. Just be glad you have computers to use and not word processors or typewriters.

---

<sup>1</sup> Or “bullshit,” if you prefer.

Handy tips for writing quality papers:

- Your thesis statement should say what you'll be addressing in the paper, what you'll prove, and why (briefly).
- Nothing in the paper should be stated without having an implicit or explicit reason.
- Everything (including quotations) should support or build on your thesis.
- Use direct citations of the author's text to support your argument in key parts. Don't ever ever ever forget to properly cite the source material. Ever.
- Quotations should never be used out of context. Since most philosophers debate between multiple viewpoints, be very careful that you're quoting a positive statement of the author's ideas.
- Make sure that the distinctions you use in your paper are used consistently so that you do not end up contradicting yourself.
- Give reasons that everyone can understand based on logic. Do not give reasons based on personal feelings, experiences, appeals to tradition, or comments about the ease of reading.
- Finally, give yourself enough time to read over your paper and make corrections before it is turned in.

Thesis

Integration

Citations

Specificity