A Guide to
Scientific Writing for Nutrition Courses

Introduction

This guide explains proper formatting and writing guidelines for academic papers within the field of nutrition. These guidelines apply not only to research papers and projects but also to case studies, lab reports, written discussion papers and commentaries, and any other type of paper in which one uses, or refers to, another author’s ideas and research.

General Format Guidelines

Margins, Font, Spacing
Use 1-inch margins, standard 12-point font (Arial, Tahoma, or Times New Roman) and double-space type throughout, including the title page, abstract, table of contents, text, and references.

Pagination
Number each page of the document consecutively, beginning with the first page of text. With the exception of the Title Page, which is counted as page i but does not have a visible page number typed on it, all preliminary pages must be visibly numbered with lower-case Roman numerals (e.g. ii, iii, iv, etc). All text pages should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals, beginning with 1 on the first text page. All supplementary pages, including the References page, continue consecutive numbering from the previous text page.

Personal Pronouns
In a formal academic or scientific paper, first and second person should never be used.

Referencing and Citation
All paraphrases, statements, facts, and explanations, regardless of how common they may seem, must be referenced using in-text citation. The only exception to this rule is if one is reporting his own scientific research results (i.e. one conducts a scientific study and is writing a paper on the results of that study). When referring to research results, introduce the study using the author or author’s last name. Examples: In a study by Smith and colleagues, daily consumption of an excess of 500 kcals resulted in weight gain (1). Smith and colleagues found that the daily consumption of an excess of 500 kcals resulted in weight gain (1).

General scientific and nutrition principles that are being paraphrased and are presented as statements or explanations do not require an author introduction unless the principles require further specific scientific support and discussion. Examples: In order to lose 1 lb of fat, one’s kcal intake must be reduced by 3500 kcal (1-3). The body obtains 9 kcal from every gram of fat consumed (2,4,5). Jones and colleagues found this kcal to gram ratio to be true regardless of the type of fat, whether butter, lard, or oil, consumed (5).

Use of Quotations
Unless a quotation is perfectly worded and of key importance, all referenced content should be paraphrased and be documented using in-text citation. Scientific/medical terminology and phraseology, for which there is no paraphrase available, does not require use of quotation marks. For example, it is perfectly permissible to say that cardiovascular disease patients often have elevated lipoprotein profiles without using quotation marks so long as the source of this information is documented using in-text citation.
Numbers
Numbers below 10 are spelled out unless followed by a unit of measure or a percentage. Express all numbers larger than 10 as Arabic numerals (e.g. 24, 100, 1200). Numbers that begin a sentence are always spelled out. The number of significant digits reported should be realistic and supported by the original data (e.g. 2125 kcal, not 2124.8 kcal; 105 lb, not 105.34 lb). Also, do not include a decimal and a zero after a whole percent number (Correct: 72%, Incorrect: 72.0%).

Acronyms and Abbreviations
Always provide the complete form of an acronym the first time that it is mentioned in the text (Note: If an abbreviation has been spelled out in the abstract, it still must be spelled out the first time that it is used in the text). Example: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) is the largest food and nutrition organization in the nation. An acronym or abbreviation is permitted if it is used three or more times within the manuscript text. Avoid excessive use of acronyms and abbreviations. Avoid author-invented abbreviations and acronyms.

Units of Measure and Laboratory Values
Abbreviate units of measure when used with numerals (e.g. 5 g, 1000 kcal). Spell out the abbreviation the first time that it is used [e.g. 5 grams (g)]. The metric system is preferred for the expression of length, area, mass, and volume. The exception to this is the use of kilocalories; kilocalories should be used instead of kilojoules. All clinical laboratory values must be expressed in Conventional Units with Systeme International (SI) units in parentheses in the manuscript text [e.g. triglycerides 100 mg/dL (1.13 mmol/L)]. A table of normal values in both Conventional and SI units and the appropriate conversion factors appears here: http://www.us.oup.com/us/pdf/9780195176339/table_2.pdf. Refer to this table when converting data, and use it as a guide for choosing the appropriate number of significant digits.

Organization of the Document

1. Title Page—Include the following information, centered on the page:
   • Title of the Paper
   • Name of the Author
   • Course Number and Name
   • Date of Submission
   • Instructor’s Name and Credentials

2. Table of Contents (required in a research paper)
   • The page heading “TABLE OF CONTENTS” should be printed in all capital letters at the top of the page with triple spacing following between the heading and the abstract text.
   • The wording of headings in the Table of Contents must correspond exactly to the wording of those headings in the text.
   • Include a listing of the preliminary pages with page number references (except for the Title Page and the Table of Contents pages themselves).
   • The page numbers in the Table of Contents should correspond to the text page on which the heading, or subheading, appears.
   • Ellipsis marks (also called “dot leaders”) to the page number references are required.
   • All main headings should be evenly aligned via left justification. All subheading should be evenly aligned by a 0.5 tab. All page numbers should be evenly aligned via right justification.
3. **Body of the Paper**
   - Include the title of the paper centered and in uppercase and lowercase lettering on the first page of text.
   - Text pages should make use of **headings and subheadings** to assist the reader in distinguishing topical sections.

   **Introduction:** Provides an introduction to the topic(s) to be discussed in the paper. The content should follow a funnel format by progressing from broad to specific content. The last sentence of the introduction should be the thesis, or statement of purpose, of the paper. Ideally, the introduction should be at least one but no more than two paragraphs in length.

   **Discussion:** The discussion portion of the paper is where the topic will be developed and expounded.

   **Conclusion:** Provides a conclusion, or summary, of the topic(s) discussed in the paper. The content should follow an inverted funnel format by progressing from specific to broad. The conclusion should end with a “take away” message. Ideally, the conclusion should be at least one but no more than two paragraphs in length.

4. **References**
   - The page heading “REFERENCES” should be printed bolded in all capital letters at the top of the page with triple spacing following between the heading and the first reference.
   - References should be listed in numerical order, that is, in the order that they appear in the academic work.
   - References should be single-spaced within each listing and double-spaced between each listing.
Title of Paper

By

Student Name

Course Number: Course Name

Date of Submission

Professor Name and Credentials
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**Defining Levels of Headings**

**Level Format**

1. **Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**
   
   Then your paragraph begins below, indented like a regular paragraph.

2. **Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**
   
   Then your paragraph begins below, indented like a regular paragraph.

3. **Indented boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.** Your paragraph begins right here, in line with the heading.

4. **Indented, boldfaced, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.** Your paragraph begins right here, in line with the heading.
A Nutrition Major’s Guide to Nutrients

Nutrition Defined

Nutrition is the scientific study of foods and the nutrients and other substances they contain (1). Nutrition also studies the action of these nutrients in the body (1). Nutrition might also be defined as the study of the physical, chemical, and biological properties of foods and nutrients and their effect on growth, development, maintenance, and overall health of an individual (2). Nutrition doesn’t just focus on what these nutrients are but how the body utilizes them to affect an individual’s health and well-being (3).

The Macronutrients

The macronutrients are the three major nutrients that compose the foods that one consumes (2). The macronutrients are carbohydrates, lipids, and proteins (3). Each of these macronutrients serve unique functions to human health (4).

Carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are chemically composed of carbon and hydrogen (3). They are found in food such as grains, fruits, starchy vegetables, and dairy (4).
REFERENCES

