



OBI style guide

So you need to write an assignment. You've done the work. Thought through your arguments. And it's time to start typing it up. But what should it look like? Are there any rules? Any guidelines?

The Open Bible Institute style guide gives you the information you need to set out your written work in a way that is clear, easy to read (easy to mark!) and professional in the way it cites references etc. There are a few basic guidelines to follow:

1. Layout

All essays, exegesis papers, book reviews and other written assignments should be typed or neatly handwritten on one side of A4 paper with generous margins. Single spacing should be used. Each page should be numbered. Care should be taken to remove, as far as is possible, any spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. This will make your work easier to mark and shows that you have put a great deal of care into your preparation.

2. Quotations

Plagiarism (passing off other people's work

as your own) will be treated as 'academic misconduct'. Where a passage is taken verbatim from someone else's work it must be accurately quoted, appropriately identified as a quotation, and the source identified. A close paraphrase of someone else's work also needs to be referenced. Quotations of more than 50 words should be started on a new line, indented and where possible, written in italics:

"a long quotation should look this"

Shorter quotations can be included within the text, enclosed by quotation marks, so that they look "something like this"¹.

If you want to quote the start and finish of a sentence or paragraph but miss a bit out in the middle, you should use three dots: "I want this bit ... and this bit"¹.

Occasionally, for purposes of clarification, you might want to insert additional words or letters. If you do, put the additions in square brackets. For example, a Bible verse may read "he said" but for purposes of clarification you might want to write: "he [Jesus] said".

3. Footnotes

After each quotation or close paraphrase of

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◀ someone else's work, you should insert a footnote. You may have a footnoting facility on your computer. Alternatively, insert a number after the quotation and then at the bottom of the page, put the same number followed by details of where the quotation comes from (see 'Referencing' below). Footnotes should be numbered consecutively from beginning to end. They should always be placed after the quotation mark – not inside the quotation marks.

4. Abbreviations

Abbreviations should not generally be used in the main text except when quoting Bible references. References should be quoted, for example, as: Jn 3:5 (John chapter 3 verse 5). Where more than one verse is being quoted use the following formats: Lk 5:1-3 (the first three verses of Luke chapter 5) or Gen 4:3,12 (verses 3 and 12 of Genesis chapter 4). Abbreviations are completely acceptable in footnotes.

5. Numerals and Dates

Numbers one to ten should be written in words (e.g. the two brothers). Number 11 and above may be written numerically (e.g. the 12 disciples). Though Bible verses should always be quoted numerically as shown above. Dates are to be written as

follows:

- 1st September 2006
- 2005-2006
- the 1990s

6. Italics

As well as quotations, you should use italics for:

- Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic words and phrases
- Book names

Underlining may be used instead of italics if you are typing. Underlining should always be used if you are hand-writing your work.

7. References

When referring to books, the first citation should include the author, date of publication, title and publisher. You will also need to include the page number you are referring to.

Surname of author, initial. *Title in italics* (Publisher, Year of Publication) p. 120

Reid, A. *Salvation Begins* (Aquila, 2000) p.137

If the quotation comes from a book with a whole host of authors, it will probably have an editor. In that case, use the editor's



◀ name and put (ed.) between their name and the publication date.

If you quote from the same book more than once, you may put subsequent footnotes in shorter form:

Author, *ibid*, p.124 (*ibid* is Latin for ‘in the same place’).

Articles from journals or magazines should be cited as:

Surname, Initial. “*Title of article*” [date journal published] Name of Journal. Issue.

Articles from websites should be cited in the same way, though instead of the name of the Journal and issue number, you can include the web address.

handing work in that is in the incorrect form.

- Plagiarism (copying other people’s work) is not acceptable
- Be neat
- Be clear
- Only write on one side of the A4 paper.
- Make sure you reference quotations properly, and that they are in the correct form

8. Bibliographies

Right at the end of your assignment it is good to include a summary of all the sources you have used throughout the essay. Always list books and articles in the same professional way as you would in the footnotes. The words you use in the bibliography and footnotes do not count towards your overall word limit.

9. Summary

- Putting things in the right way is very important. You could lose marks for