

GUIDELINES FOR ESSAYS

1 DATE

Essays are to be completed and submitted to the candidate's institution by the due dates. Failure to complete essays by the due dates will exclude students from sitting for examinations.

2 PRESENTATION

An essay should reveal clear thinking and careful organisation, for while the essay will be marked primarily on content, the format is important. The use of a standard format assists both the examiner and the student. Careful attention should be given to spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Preferably the essay should be word-processed (double-spaced), but neat, readable handwriting is acceptable. The left hand margin should be at least three centimetres wide. All pages should be numbered consecutively. Students should keep a copy of the essay.

3 GENERAL FORMAT

An essay should consist of the following essential features, each to begin on a fresh page.

3.1 Title Page

This should contain the student's ACT number, course and unit, the full title of the essay, the date and the number of words in the body of the essay.

The essay should keep to the set length, within 10% variation. For example, a 3,000 word essay should be between 2,700 and 3,300 words. This count does not include the abstract or the bibliography. However for 8000 word MDiv projects the word limit does include footnotes.

The title page must also contain the following disclaimer signed and dated by the student—

The following essay, of which I have kept a copy, is entirely the work of the undersigned and that all sources of ideas and expressions are duly acknowledged in footnotes or endnotes.

Any essay to be examined externally should not contain the student's name. The signed disclaimer should be lodged with the student's sponsoring institution.

3.2 Abstract

This should occupy the second page of the essay/paper/thesis and should be a piece of continuous prose, not numbered points, about 150 words long giving a summary of the argument of the essay.

3.3 The essay proper

- (i) A clear introduction to the subject setting out the matter to be discussed.
- (ii) the body of the essay setting out in a clear and concise way the subject under discussion.
- (iii) the conclusion summarising what has been said and drawing necessary conclusions.

The essay should be in the student's own words. Where a quotation contributes to the argument the author's words should be quoted exactly, in inverted commas. Where an author's argument is expressed in the student's own words, acknowledgment should be made.

3.4 Consistency

Consistent use of one convention for acknowledging the source of ideas and quotations used in the essay (see #4 below).

If notes are used, these should not exceed 25% of the prescribed essay length. A note should be introduced by a numeral above the line, usually placed at the end of a sentence. Notes may be included at the end of the essay as endnotes (beginning on a new page), or at the bottom of each page as footnotes.

3.5 Abbreviations

Abbreviations for journals or biblical books, for example, should conform to those set out in a recognised style reference work such as *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Biblical books may only be abbreviated when followed by both chapter and verse (e.g., Gen. 5.2; not Gen. or Gen. 5).

3.6 Bibliographies

A bibliography should be included, containing all references cited and important references consulted in the writing of the essay. The items in the bibliography should be listed alphabetically by author's surname.

3.7 Greek and Hebrew

Greek and Hebrew, where used, should not be transliterated. Pointing of Hebrew is not necessary unless it is exegetically significant.

4 FORMAT FOR REFERENCING AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION

The ACT recommends the use of either the author-date or the note system. Students should consult one or more of the following sources for all matters relating to referencing and bibliographic citation. If using the *Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers*, 2002 (6th edition) pages 187-232 should be consulted. Both the author-date and note-bibliography system of referencing as outlined in this resource are acceptable. For details on the author-date system see pages 188-208. There are less extensive guidelines for the note system on pages 208-215.

In the interests of economy of space, punctuation can be minimised. Use italics instead of using underlining or boldface type. If the author-note system is used, the references can be given in a smaller font size than the main text.

For more information on the note system, students may also wish to consult the following general reference works—

- Turabian, K. L. 2007 *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th edition University of Chicago Press, Chicago, and
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 2007 15th edition University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Students may also wish to consult the following more specialised guide—

- *The SBL Handbook of Style, for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*, 1999 Hendrickson, Peabody.

These works are designed to deal exhaustively with questions students might have with the proper referencing and bibliographic conventions of the style they have adopted. The SBL Handbook have been devised with the biblical, early Jewish and early Christian literature disciplines in mind. It is particularly useful for accepted abbreviations of biblical books and journals.

5 CONSISTENCY

It is expected that candidates will be consistent in their referencing, adopting and implementing one of the systems recommended in the standard style guide resources listed above.

6 FORMAT FOR FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

6.1 Author-date system

Each acknowledgment in the body of the essay/paper/thesis is followed in brackets by the author, the date of the work published and the page number, e.g., (Ehrman 1997:200) or (de Boer 1988:100). In the bibliography, the full details of the work are given according to the following schema:

Monographs

Author—surname followed by initials, date, title, publisher, place published.

Ehrman, B. D. 1997, *The New Testament, A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford & London.

Journals

Author—surname followed by initials, date, “title”, journal and volume, page numbers.

de Boer, M. C. 1988, “Jesus the Baptizer: 1 John 5:5–8 and the Gospel of John”, *JBL* 107, 87–106.

6.2 Note system

Each acknowledgment in the body of the essay/paper/thesis is followed by a raised number, usually after the full-stop at the end of a sentence, directing the reader to a footnote or endnote. Here, when the work is cited for the first time, the full details are given according to the following order—

Monographs

Author—initials followed by surname, *title*, (place published, publisher, date), and page number.

B. D. Ehrman, *The New Testament, A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (Oxford & London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 200.

Articles

Author—initials followed by surname, “title”, *journal* and volume, (year), and page number.

M. C. de Boer, “Jesus the Baptizer: 1 John 5:5–8 and the Gospel of John”, *JBL* 107 (1988), 99.

Further citations in footnotes/endnotes of the same work are abbreviated.

Ehrman, *New Testament*, 201.

de Boer, “Jesus the Baptizer”, 100.

In the Bibliography, the work cited is listed in the same manner in which it was first acknowledged in the essay/paper/thesis.

For students using EndNote the ACT recommends that Chicago 15th A be the style that is followed. Please note that works will appear in footnotes with the initials of the author listed first. However, the bibliography will automatically list the surname of the author first.

Publications found on the internet should be referenced in the normal way with the internet address provided instead of the publisher’s name. The date the material was cited should also be included. Internet addresses should not be hyphenated at the end of a line. They can be divided before the “dot” at the end of a line.

For example,

Author-date

Kaye, B. N. 1999, *Head, Heart and Spirit: Shaping the New Millennium*, no pages

<http://www.anglican.org.au/BNKtalks/> Cited 8 May 2007.

Note system

B. N. Kaye, “Head, Heart and Spirit: Shaping the New Millennium”, 1999, no pages,

<http://www.anglican.org.au/BNKtalks/> Cited 8 May 2007.

7 ENDNOTE SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR ACT STUDENTS AND ACADEMIC STAFF

The EndNote® software enable you to automatically format citations, footnotes and bibliographies to a chosen standard. It is one of the industry standard software tools for publishing and managing bibliographies on both Windows and Macintosh® computers.

The Australian College of Theology recommends the use of either the author-date (aka the Harvard system) or the note system.

Using EndNote, ACT students and academic staff could save many hours of typing and interpreting style requirements of scholarly publications by simply selecting the publication by name and generating a perfectly formatted document.

The ACT has purchased a licence for all ACT students currently enrolled in a bachelor’s degree or higher, members of the Board of Directors, the three ACT Departmental Heads, as well as academic staff members and librarians at affiliated colleges, making it possible

to use EndNote software. For more information, or to
download the EndNote software, please visit:
www.actheology.edu.au/resources_EndNote.php

