

# A Short Guide to the Formal Layout of Linguistic Term Papers/Internship Reports/BA-Theses/MA-Theses\*

Institute for Linguistics – Goethe University Frankfurt

February 20, 2026

---

\*Please send comments, typos, suggestions for improvement, etc. to [bader@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:bader@em.uni-frankfurt.de).

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Preamble</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Declaration of authorship</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Paper Size and Page Format</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Formal Structure</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Text Body</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Linguistic examples</b>	<b>5</b>
7.1	Examples in the running text . . . . .	5
7.2	Examples that are separated from the running text . . . . .	5
<b>8</b>	<b>Tables</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Experiments</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Citations</b>	<b>7</b>
10.1	Example for a short citation . . . . .	7
10.2	Example for a long citation . . . . .	8
<b>11</b>	<b>Footnotes</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>8</b>

## 1 Preamble

This document describes the typical formal layout of written works in the field of linguistics. The following instructions describe the usual formal layout of a written work. In particular cases, instructions may differ from the guidelines of the lecturer or supervisor.

In general, the following holds:

- **The rules of the study regulations apply at any time in all cases.**
- **The guidelines of the lecturer apply for term papers.**
- **The guidelines of the supervisor apply for theses.**

Please note the following general remarks:

- Whether a term paper has to be submitted in print and/or as PDF-file is specified in each course.
- Written work should not contain grammatical or spelling mistakes. You should always turn on the spell-checker of your text processing software.

## 2 Length

The length of the text is determined by the kind of the written work. Title page, table of contents and bibliography are excluded from the page count. The guidelines are the following:

- Term papers are about 10-20 pages long, depending on course requirements (e.g. presentations) and specifications given in the study regulations.
- Internship reports should be approximately 15-20 pages long.
- BA-theses should be approximately 30-40 pages long.
- MA-theses should be approximately 70-80 pages long.

### 3 Declaration of authorship

The following declaration of authorship must be included at the end of a piece of work:

I hereby affirm in lieu of an oath that this written work has been prepared in accordance with the rules of good scientific practice. I have authored the work independently and have cited all sources and aids used. All passages that are quoted verbatim, approximately verbatim, or paraphrased from publications or unpublished texts by others are clearly indicated as such. This includes the drawings, sketches, illustrations, and similar materials provided in the work. In writing this paper, I have used only permissible aids and have used them in an acceptable manner according to the guidelines provided to me. Generative AI (such as ChatGPT) was not used to create my own text. Any assistance from AI in the work process is disclosed in detail in the appendix of the paper. This work has not been used, even in part, for another course requirement or examination. I am aware that a violation of these rules may be considered deceit in the sense of the study and examination regulations and may be sanctioned accordingly.

### 4 Paper Size and Page Format

- All papers are written in A4 upright format.
- There should be sufficient margins for comments and annotations. Typical margins are 2.5cm or 3.0cm on each side. In the case of theses, somewhat more space is needed on the left side for proper binding.
- Page numbers are printed on the top or bottom of the page.

### 5 Formal Structure

- A term paper consists of a title page, a table of contents, a body part, a bibliography, and a statement of authorship.
- The title page should include:
  - course title
  - name of the lecturer
  - title of the term paper
  - name, matriculation number, course of studies, number of semesters, and contact information of the author
  - submission date

- The table of contents should be labeled in decimal classification (Arabic numerals), e.g.:

1	Chapter Title	8
1.1	Subchapter Title	17
1.1.1	Subsubchapter Title	24
- An outline extending to more than three levels should be avoided.
- The hierarchy of the headings can be made visually salient using font size, **bold print** or *italic print*.

## 6 Text Body

- The text body should be written in Times New Roman with font size 12pt or a combination of font and size of equivalent size. For example, when using Arial, font size must be set to 11pt.
- The line spacing should be 1.5 lines.
- The paper should be written with left justification or with full justification.
- Headings should be distinct from the rest of the text.
- Subchapters should be justified in terms of length and should not vary too much in length.
- Paragraphs have to be indicated either through indenting the first line or by some extra space after a paragraph and should imply a new unit of meaning. The first paragraph after a heading is normally not indented.
- For highlighting text, use *italics*.

## 7 Linguistic examples

### 7.1 Examples in the running text

- Linguistic examples are set in italics in the running text. Example: The noun *bachelor* has often been cited as an example for a lexical ambiguity.
- Non-English examples are given with a translation that follows the example in parenthesis and single quotes: The auxiliary *sein* ('to be') is used for forming the perfect tense of certain German verbs.

### 7.2 Examples that are separated from the running text

- Examples are numbered consecutively. One refers to the examples using the number of the example.

Table 1: The five most frequent verbal lemmata in the DeWac corpus. For every lemma, the absolute frequency (Frequency), the frequency in percentages (%), and the cumulative percentage (cum. %) are shown.

	Lemma	Frequency	%	cum. %
1	sein	14528816	13.68	13.68
2	werden	8942228	8.42	22.10
3	haben	6401021	6.03	28.12
4	können	3830041	3.61	31.73
5	müssen	1612318	1.52	33.24

- Non-English examples are presented in three lines: original example, glossing, and translation. The latter two are written in Latin font.
- The glosses should follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules (<https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>)
- The following example has been taken from Borer (2005, p. 138).

(1) Rakast-i-n                      tei-tä    (Finnisch)  
       love.PSTPST-1SG    you-PL.PRT  
       ‘I loved you.’

Note: When you write a paper about a language that is not English, but the lecturer has sufficient knowledge of this language, it may not be necessary to include glosses and translations.

## 8 Tables

Tables should be set in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Usually, tables contain only horizontal lines; vertical lines are only used in exceptional cases. A prominent exception are the tableaux of Optimality Theory.
- Tables have to be numbered consecutively (Table 1, Table 2, etc.).
- The table caption is inserted above the table.
- Tables are preferentially inserted on the page on which they are first mentioned. If there is not enough place on the current page, the table is put onto the following page.
- Tables are usually inserted on the top or the bottom of the page.
- Table 1 gives an example of a table formatted according to standard practices.

## 9 Experiments

If experiments have been performed for the written work, they are presented using the following outline (X = section number of the experiment):

- X Experiment 1
- X.1 Method
- X.1.1 Participants
- X.1.2 Material
- X.1.3 Procedure
- X.2 Results
- X.3 Discussion

## 10 Citations

- For all citations—whether verbal quotes or paraphrases—appropriate bibliographical references must be given. Citing the work of others without giving appropriate references is plagiarism!
- Bibliographical references in the body part of the text are given in the so-called author-year style:
  - Chomsky (1965)
  - Chomsky & Halle (1968)
- If you refer to particular pages within a text, the page number is added behind the year. Do not use a footnote for this purpose.
  - Chomsky & Miller (1963, p. 299)
- For bibliographical references with more than two authors, the first reference includes all authors, all further references include only the first author and the abbreviation “et al.” for the remaining authors:  
First mention: Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch (2002)  
Second, third, . . . mention: Hauser et al. (2002)
- The complete references are listed in the bibliography, as discussed below. Bibliographical references are not given in footnotes.
- Literal citations of less than three lines are put in quotation marks and are integrated into the running text. Citations of more than three lines in length are printed as a separate paragraph with single spacing and a smaller font size (10 or 11pt). Often, the paragraph has additional space to the left and the right.
- Omissions are labeled as follows: [...].

### 10.1 Example for a short citation

An important point stressed by Chomsky is that “a generative grammar is not a model for a speaker or a hearer” (Chomsky, 1965, p. 9). Instead, a grammar “attempts to characterize in the most neutral possible terms the knowledge of the language that provides the basis

for actual use of language by a speaker-hearer (Chomsky, 1965, p. 9).

## 10.2 Example for a long citation

We thus make a fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations). Only under the idealization set forth in the preceding paragraph is performance a direct reflection of competence. In actual fact, it obviously could not directly reflect competence.  
(Chomsky, 1965, p. 4)

## 11 Footnotes

- Footnotes<sup>1</sup> are used sparingly and only to give important additional information.<sup>2</sup>
- In the text, the footnote number is printed as a superscript. The footnote itself should be portrayed in a font size that is no more than 2pt smaller than the regular font size.
- In the text, the footnote number stands at the end of the text to which it refers (e.g. at the end of a sentence/word).

## 12 Bibliography

- Bibliographies are put at the end of the written work.
- The bibliography has to be in alphabetic order according to the last name of the authors.
- The bibliography must contain all and only those titles that were mentioned in the written work.
- If you cite work that you have read about but were not able to read yourself, you still have to include it in the bibliography. In the running text, you include a note that you cite this work on the basis of another citation.
- Multiple references by one or more authors are ordered chronologically. If several works by the same author(s) have been published in the same year, these are labeled with a, b, c, etc. (Example: Frazier (1987a), Frazier (1987b))
- References that are longer than one line have to be indented from the second line onward.
- The bibliography can be written in single spacing.
- In the bibliography at the end of this document, you find examples for bibliography entries of monographs, articles, papers in edited volumes, and works by several authors:

---

<sup>1</sup>They are numerated consecutively and appear on the bottom of the page.

<sup>2</sup>Footnotes should always consist of whole sentences.

There are different formatting conventions when writing a bibliography. One that is highly recommended is the so-called “Unified Style Sheet for Linguistics” (<http://celxj.org/downloads/UnifiedStyleSheet.pdf>). At least for larger texts, it is recommended to use a bibliography software to organize one’s literature (e.g., Citavi can be used for free by members of Goethe University).

## References

- Borer, Hagit. 2005. *The normal course of events*, vol. Structuring sense, vol. 2. Oxford University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1965. *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, Noam & Morris Halle. 1968. *The sound pattern of English*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Chomsky, Noam & George A. Miller. 1963. Introduction to the formal analysis of natural languages. In R. Duncan Luce, Robert R. Bush & Eugene Galanter (eds.), *Handbook of mathematical psychology. Vol. II*, 269–321. New York, London & Sydney: Wiley.
- Frazier, Lyn. 1987a. Sentence processing: A tutorial review. In Max Coltheart (ed.), *Attention and performance XII. The psychology of reading*, 559–586. Hove, London & Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Frazier, Lyn. 1987b. Theories of sentence processing. In J. L. Garfield (ed.), *Modularity in knowledge representation and natural-language understanding*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hauser, Marc D., Noam Chomsky & W. Tecumseh Fitch. 2002. The faculty of language: What is it, who has it, and how did it evolve? *Science* 298. 1569–1579.

## **Declaration of Authorship**

The declaration of authorship is located at the end of the written work.