

245W: Last minute checklist before handing in your term paperⁱ

Make sure you have done all of the following actions before handing in your term paper:

1. Use scientific names correctly.

- Remember that all species names should be italicized. When you mention a species for the first time in your paper, list both the generic and specific names (e.g. *Chrysoperla lucasina*). When you talk about the same species again, use only the first initial of the generic name (e.g. *C. lucasina*) unless this makes things confusing. Never use the specific name alone.
- Articles are not used with scientific names. Consider the following examples (McMillan 2001):

The most common lichen at both sampling sites was ~~the~~ *Lecidea atrata*.

- Taxonomic groups or taxa above the level of genus are capitalized but not italicized (e.g. Chrysopidae).
- Common names, including informal common names that are really taxon names with the ending removed, are not capitalized (e.g. chrysopids, green lacewings).
- When one or more species you are discussing have yet to be formally described, after the generic name use *sp.* for a single species and *spp.* for two or more species (e.g. *Chrysoperla sp.*).

2. Match your in-text citations with your reference section.

Check to see whether you have cited all of the articles in your reference section. If not, remove the offenders.

3. Read your paper slowly out loud, or have a friend read it to you.

This is the easiest way to catch grammatical errors. This is also a good opportunity to check the flow of your paper. Flow can be greatly improved by varying the length of your sentences with a paragraph. For instance, if all of your sentences are short, your writing will seem choppy. If your sentences tend to be too long, well, your writing will either seem boring or will be confusing.

4. Format your paper one last time.

The term paper requirement is 12 point, double spaced, with 1-inch margins and page numbers.

Good luck! It's been a long road, so enjoy your new scientific writing skills and revisit this blog whenever you need to.

References

McMillan, V. E. 2001. *Writing Papers in the Biological Sciences*, 3rd ed. Bedford/St. Martin's

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