

Writing Advice

Effective Writing Center



UMUC

PLEASE NOTE

Dear Student,

Congratulations on your progress in writing this assignment for your Accounting class. Knock-off handbags sure are big business!

My name is Shannon, and it's my pleasure to work with you today. ☺

You are welcome to come to the Effective Writing Center for help at any stage in the writing process, whether you are having trouble understanding an assignment or want feedback on a rough draft. At the EWC we are attentive readers who help you improve as a writer by explaining and modeling effective writing skills. For a more detailed discussion of our services, please consult the [EWC Web site](#).

- Advisors may not be experts in the topic your paper covers.
- Advisors will not make any judgment about the grade your paper may receive.
- Advisors do not copyedit papers. Sections of your paper will be used to model the editing you should do.
- Advisors know only as much about the assignment that you share. Please provide an assignment description in the submission form.

Advice Overview

Resources to help you revise your writing assignment are hyperlinked within this letter and in the [More Resources](#) section at the end. Before reading this advice, please review the writing that you submitted and have a copy handy. Today we're going to talk about your thesis statement, paragraph development, transitions, and formatting.

Assignment Requirements

Thanks for including so much of your assignment with your paper! That really helps us here at the EWC to assess what you've done so far and whether or not it includes the elements required by your instructor. Next time, it would be even more helpful if you'd include the entire assignment. Take a look at the table below for a breakdown of what we know of the assignment, what you already have completed, and what you might need to add:

Assignment Requires	What You Have	What You Need
7 – 10 pages, double spaced.	Right on with the page count!	You might want to try using the double space feature in Microsoft Word rather than hitting the enter key twice after each line. That will prevent you from having straggling words here and there.
12 point font, 1" margins all around.	12 point font, 1" margins top and bottom, 1.25" margins on the left and right.	You'll need to fix your right and left margins so they are 1" like the rest.
Title page and references page.	Title page and bibliography.	Rename bibliography page "References."
APA style.	A start.	Revise bibliography entries and include in-text citations.
Minimum two graphic exhibits without too much space around them.	Two graphics with appropriate spacing on the top, bottom, and left.	Reduce the spacing on the right. Just by taking your text box over to the right hand margin, so the box is horizontal rather than vertical, it should meet the requirements.

Thesis & Organization

You're off to a good start here! I'd like to talk to you about including a stronger thesis statement, though.

► A thesis statement is the main point of your paper and what you plan to prove to your reader. Generally, it is the last sentence of the introduction. That would mean this is your thesis statement:

Buying products from counterfeiters or from a third party is supporting an illegal act.

That's not a bad thesis statement at all. But it seems like your paper is about a lot more than that. You discuss Coach a great deal, which leads me to believe that your paper is more about how counterfeiters hurt good American companies. What do you think is your main point?

► For more about writing a thesis statement, please take some time to visit our Effective Writing Center's section on [Introductions](#).

If the link doesn't work, copy and paste this URL into your browser window:

<http://www.umuc.edu/ewc/students/intro.shtml>



Development & Research

It is clear you've done a lot of reading and research on this topic. Good job!

► I would like to recommend that you spend some time reviewing your paper to be certain that all of your paragraphs are well developed. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence that is supported by the rest of the paragraph. Let's look at a section of a paragraph from your paper:

Throughout the years, Coach has maintained the highest standards of workmanship and materials. Now, greatly expanded, Coach's exceptional workforce is committed to carefully upholding the principles of quality and integrity which made the company great. Today, Coach is considered a classic part of the landscape of American design. *More than forty years ago, Coach introduced twelve eloquently simple bag designs with classic, well-balanced proportions.* Over the years, they have added a multitude of new shapes, styles and materials, but each collection embodies the same principles of classic design and American style.

Notice the switch from the underlined sentence to the sentence in italics? You've gone from discussing where Coach is today to discussing where they were forty years ago. It is jarring for the reader to go from past to present to past again. Can you try rewriting this so it's in chronological order?

► Having well-organized paragraphs is a very important part of getting your ideas across to your readers. For help on paragraph development, take some time to visit our EWC's [How do I organize my essay?](#) handout. It's quite helpful! ☺

If the link doesn't work, copy and paste this URL into your browser window:

http://www.umuc.edu/prog/ugp/ewp_writingcenter/WC/paragraph_struc.shtml

► I'd also like to recommend that you take a few moments to read about the important aspects of a conclusion (such as restating your thesis). Generally, it's not a good idea to introduce new information in your conclusion. It should be used to recap your paper. Visit <http://www.umuc.edu/ewc/students/conclude.shtml> for more information.

► Finally, I believe your paper would be a bit stronger if you added some transitions in between sections. While headings can be useful, your paper should still flow from one section to the next.

If you'd like to learn more about writing and using [transitions](#), I recommend you take a few minutes to visit the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue, where there is an excellent overview.

If the link doesn't work, copy and paste this URL into your browser window:
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_transition.html.

Formatting & Citations

You're off to a great start here!

▶ You may want to spend a few minutes reviewing APA style, though. I'll give you an excellent resource for APA, but to get you started, here are a few things I noticed that you might want to fix:

- You need a header at the top, right of each page; it should include your page number on the far right.
- In your bibliography, each entry should have the last name first, then the initials of the first and middle name (not the full first name).
- While some footnotes are OK in APA, generally, in-text citations are used. They look like this (Stevens, 2007).

▶ For help properly using APA Style, I often turn to the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue's [APA Formatting and Style Guide](#). It covers everything from layout to proper citation. Check it out!

If the link doesn't work, copy and paste this URL into your browser window:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Grammar & Mechanics

Your punctuation is excellent throughout, and so is your grammar most of the time. I think mostly you need to work on proofreading because you don't have consistent grammar errors throughout, which leads me to believe you have strong grammar skills. 😊

▶ Take a look at this sentence from your introduction:

I know the bags bought at flea markets and Beauty supply stores are fake, but what about the ones costing \$500 on eBay

that **was** \$400 below market value, or the \$1000 bag for \$399 claiming to be guaranteed authentic or your money back on a fashion site online?

Take a second to read the sentence out loud. Do you hear how the word “ones” and “was” do not agree? Try changing the word “ones” to “one” and listen to the difference. Do you see any other sentences in your introduction or the rest of your paper that could use some help in this area?

► If you like, take a few minutes to visit OWL at Purdue and review their [Subject/Verb Agreement](#) section.

If the link doesn't work, copy and paste this URL into your browser window:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/599/01/>

► Proofreading your paper carefully will help you to catch things like that. Reading aloud is particularly helpful – for many things including sentence clarity, grammar and punctuation, and tone. If you'd like to learn more, the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue has an excellent tutorial called [Proofreading Your Writing](#). Check it out!

If the link doesn't work, copy and paste this URL into your browser window:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/01/>

TIP: Avoid using ALL CAPS in academic writing. It could undermine your credibility. 😊

Summary

Good luck! As you continue your work on this project, be sure to:

1. Strengthen your thesis statement.
2. Work on a new conclusion.
3. Check for paragraph development.
4. Consider adding some transitions.
5. Double check APA style (including page formatting, such as 1” margins all around).
6. Proofread.
7. Keep up the great work! 😊

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More Resources

The Effective Writing Center
<http://www.umuc.edu/writingcenter>