

MA assignment common mistakes & writing tips

- Don't forget to format your essay correctly (titles, paragraphs (using tabs), spacing between paragraphs should be 0).
- Margins: use the default layout and do not customize.
- Pay extra attention to citations (both in-text and in the bibliography/works cited section). Google the citation style you prefer for both academic and non-academic sources and use the same style throughout the text and the works cited/bibliography section.
- Beware of long quotations. First, use them sparingly. Second, cite them correctly (indent them).
- Avoid long sentences that confuse readers.
- When you refer to TV shows for the first time, you need to follow the title (in italics) with brackets consisting of the network and the season years, i.e. *Sex and the City* (HBO, 1998-2004).
- When you refer to TV fictional characters for the first time, the character's name should be followed by the actor's name, i.e. Claire Underwood (Robin Wright) is...
- Be CLEAR, imagine that the reader doesn't know about the show/characters, etc.
- Don't focus on descriptions. Descriptive passages of a scene, sequence, etc. do not constitute "analysis."
- Avoid evaluations (great acting, best genre, stupid direction, etc.).
- You should not end a sub-section/essay/chapter with a quote.
- Be succinct. Do not try to add words by stating the same thing twice, yet differently or by using well-known yet superfluous words/phrases (i.e. there is almost no reason to state the title of a book, article or the newspaper of a journalist when quoting. Simply write the author's name).