

10 Most Common Dissertation Mistakes

1. **Microsoft Word software presents special problems in the following areas:**

- a. page numbering
- b. enumerations
- c. spacing before subheads (triple space, not quadruple or double)
- d. leader dots (in Table of Contents and List of Tables).
- e. ellipses dots.

2. **Andrews University uses five levels of subheads.** *These are not APA subheads.* These subheads are shown in *AU's Standards for Written Work*. Also, you need to keep in mind that you cannot divide a section into one part. You have to have a corresponding "B" to your "A." Think of your subheads as an outline to the chapter. The title of the chapter is not a *subhead*. It is a *heading*.

3. **Italics – instead of underlining – is used for titles of books and journals, foreign words, etc.**

4. **There is a difference between a dash (there are 3 kinds) and a hyphen:**

An em dash looks like this: "Now is the time – for all good men . . ."

An en dash looks like this: "Now is the time–for all good men . . ."

The "older" dash looks like this: "Now is the time--for all good men . . ."

All three are acceptable, but I prefer the em dash.

This is *not* acceptable: "Now is the time - for all good men . . ."

Notice the hyphen in this word: "fund-raising abilities."

5. **Quotations that are 40 words or more are "blocked."**

- a. They are single spaced.
- b. They are indented half the distance – not twice.
- c. They use no beginning and ending quotation marks.
- d. All single-quote marks (') in the original need to be changed to double-quote marks (" ") in the Block quote.

6. **Ellipses points:**

- a. Are used only in quoted material
- b. Use either 3 dots or 4 dots. When 4 dots are used, this means that the sentence ended. The fourth dot is the period that ended the sentence.

c. The dots cannot be broken between two lines, except when the period that ends the sentence falls on one line, and the 3 ellipses points then fall on the next line.

d. Are *not* used at beginning of quote or end of a quote. We know something came before the quote. We know something came after the quote. We need to know if you removed something *within* the quote.

7. The indentations in the Table of Contents match the levels of subheads in the dissertation. They are identical, word for word. Three levels of subheads must be included. If you generate the TOC, you will still need to “edit” it.

8. Enumerations and bullets:

a. *Bullets are not allowed.* Use numbers instead.

b. Use enumerations for long and complicated sentences.

c. These can take two forms – long and short.

d. For *long* enumerations, you will use what I call “numbered paragraphs. Return to the left margin for “runover” lines.

e. *Don't* use parentheses around the numbers for long enumerations--or half of a parentheses, like this: 1) or (1).

f. For *short* enumerations – points that are contained within one sentence – use parentheses around the numbers. For example: “Your dissertation will consist of five parts: (a) the preliminary pages, (b) the table of contents, (c) the chapters, (d) the appendix, and (e) the bibliography.”

9. Use your APA manual for proper citation of books, journals, and magazines in the in-text references and the reference list (Chapter 4).

10. The APA manual has a whole section on how to document electronic media/Internet sources. Please read pp. 268-281 carefully.