

Guidelines on Length, Format and Style of Homeworks in Business Economics

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Length

Your answer to each question in the homework should be about half a single spaced page (about 250 words) on average.

Format

Your homework should be typed. It is a good idea to spell check your text before you submit it.

At the very minimum you should include which is the homework (e.g., Homework 1 or Practice 1), your name and the number of the question you are answering. You need not repeat the full text of the question because I have the set up of the homework too. Just write 1 or Question 1 and proceed to answer it.

Americans are obsessed with double spacing (god knows why—double spaced text is ugly, difficult to read, and chops down twice as many trees). You are *not* asked to double space your homeworks. You are welcome to apply decent formatting, like I have done with this text, but you are not required to do that—you might just as well type your homeworks within a text editor with a spell checker.

Style

Paragraphs are the building blocks of your prose. Sentences are the building blocks of your paragraphs.

In English sentences are plain and concrete. A sentence typically takes the form “subject + active verb + modifiers”. E.g., “you should avoid passive constructions” is better than “passive construction should be avoided”.

Your sentences should be well connected. The thought should flow smoothly from one sentence to the next, to the next, and so on until the end of the paragraph.

Paragraphs should have points. They should be more or less complete discussions of one topic. They should not be too long.

Good journalists use a particular style that you should adopt. In this style you start the paragraph by stating the point. Next you clarify the point. Next you proceed to provide arguments to support the point.

(Notice that the previous paragraph I wrote has certain connected transitive structure (AB) (BC) (CD). I.e., (journalists' style) (style point) (point clarify) (clarify arguments). This structure is supposed to make it easier for the reader to follow.)

Lastly, do not be verbose. Cut out every word that is not essential. The following example from McCloskey clarifies this:

~~“In composing, as a general rule run your pen though every other word you have written; you have no idea what vigor it will give to your style.”~~

Notice that all the text with the strikethrough is not necessary and it is perfectly well understood from the context—after all we are talking about general rules of composition and style in your writing, so I need not repeat it all the time. Hence the reduced form is preferred:

“Run your pen though every other word; you have no idea what vigor it will give.”

References

Deirdre N. McCloskey: “Economical writing” Waveland Press, 1999.

Deirdre N. McCloskey: “[Economical Writing](#),” *Economic Inquiry* 24(2) (Apr 1985).

Any book on Academic Writing that you find in the library.