

Undergraduate vs. Graduate Writing

Similarities in all academic writing:

- Use of evidence from scholarly/credible sources
- Use of academic-style formatting and citations
- Free of sentence-level errors
- Logically organized using academic essay structure
- Concise, declarative, formal, specific & precise, objective & non-emotional
- All information from sources is cited & all types of plagiarism are carefully avoided

Undergrad



VS

Graduate



Topic

Often addresses a specific writing prompt

Often involves coming up with and answering a research question

Presenting Information

Mostly presents what others have said about a topic

Enters the conversation as a scholar with own expertise and insights

Research

Exploratory research required

Extensive & comprehensive research required

Direct Quotes

Use of direct quotes is accepted

Less reliance on direct quotes, favoring summarizing & paraphrasing

Synthesis

Synthesis of research is not typically reached and the full scholarly conversation is not presented

Studies & expert opinions are synthesized to show similarities, differences, etc. of the full scholarly conversation

Audience

Written for a general academic audience

Written for other scholars and professionals in the field of study

Vocabulary

Uses general vocabulary, with defined terms whenever discipline-specific language is used

Uses technical vocabulary specific to the field, with no need to define these terms

Formatting

Basic academic essay structure with introduction, body of ~3-10 paragraphs, and conclusion

Formatting specific to the field, with use of sections such as literature review, methods, results, etc.

Revision

Revision and editing should occur

Time and care should be spent on multiple revisions and detailed editing

Purpose

Writing is done to show that understanding/learning has taken place—as assessment

Writing is done to further knowledge in the field—to contribute to the field of study

Additional Expectations for Doctoral-Level Writing



Students design their own
research methods



Students must analyze their own
collected data and the data of others



Exhaustive research is required with
further synthesis of that research



Need Help? Chat with a writing tutor any time!

It's free and available 24/7! Just click on the ["Writing Center & Library"](#) link within your course.