

CISC 497 Short Paper Common Mistakes List

A - APA Formatting

1. MISSING: Running head or Header on remaining pages.
2. MISSING: Page number in top-right hand corner
3. Improper citation style
 - Should be Author, Year in Parenthesis – e.g., (Dickinson, 2014)
4. References page titled “References”.
5. Not Times New Roman 12pt
6. Not double-spaced

B - Content

1. Unclear thesis statement
 - This is the core of your paper and not a “mystery novel” for the reader. It should be clear, concise, and obvious as to what stance you are taking.
2. Unbalanced Thesis/Antithesis Argument
 - If one side is stronger than another, it seems that you have a bias to one side of the argument.
3. Synthesis does not attempt to unite the two viewpoints.
 - The result of the paper should be a middle ground between the two extremes of the argument that attempts to reach a compromise in the hopes of truth.
4. Hyperbolic Language
 - Using extreme language damages your credibility.
5. Low-quality Citation
 - Citations add credibility to your argument by referring to credible sources. Ensure citations are from subject matter experts.
 - Sources should be impartial third-parties.
6. Unsupported or Unjustified Claim
 - When making questionable or debatable claims, they must be supported by evidence such as a citation or reasonable argument.
7. Quote Requires Further Explanation / Relevance
 - It is not always immediately apparent to the reader as to why your quote is significant. Your quote should be integrated as a part of your reasoning and its relevance explained.
8. Unclear Reasoning
 - If the reader can't follow your reasoning, your point will be lost on them. The reader should not have to infer or guess as to what you are suggesting – make it absolutely clear.
9. Inappropriate Language
 - Informal language (e.g., slang, idioms) should not be used as this is a formal piece of writing.
10. Lack of Conclusion
 - The synthesis is not the conclusion. The paper still needs to be summarized.
11. Over Word Count
 - Reduce number of arguments, or be more direct in making your case.