

Writing Tips

First and foremost use your resources here at Kirkwood wisely!

Go to the Writing Center and have them look over your work and help you out with your writing.

It is located at:
115 Linn Hall
Ph: 398-5055

Do not use then or there or again. Usually you can remove the word and it can sound just fine.

While getting her degree **there**, she found an interest in architecture.

While getting her degree, she found an interest in architecture.

In papers of two to three pages, do not use quotes longer than a phrase and make sure it is an important quote and not something that can be paraphrased.

When citing projects or awards, put them in chronological order.

In general, when writing about historical events put them in chronological order.

Avoid making the whole paper a shopping list of accomplishments.

They tell me nothing of the architect and it is boring to read.

It is better to use a few top accomplishments and elaborate on them.

If spell check gives you more than one choice of words, and you don't know which is correct, use a dictionary.

Don't tell me what you're going to do – just do it.

...and now I will tell you about the architect

Here are some impressive statistics...

When talking about architects, usually use the last name after introducing them in the paper.

Frank Lloyd Wright, should be written as Wright, not Frank after introduction.

Avoid the use of "to me" or "what I read" or "I think".

This is your paper, right?

Avoid ending a sentence with the words to, of, for.

This is something she is good at.

This is something at which she is good.

If you use quote a text, put the source in parenthesis behind the quote in the format (page, name) and make sure you cite this author in the bibliography.

In text:
"Blah, blah, blah." (p. 100, Rifkind)

in Bibliography:
Rifkind, Carole. A Field Guide to American Architecture. New York: New American Library, 1980

Architecture is not capitalized unless it starts a sentence. If you use Microsoft Word, it has a setting that will capitalize text that needs to be capitalized automatically.

For example, type the word **English** in Word and see what the program does.

Use words carefully. Ask, is this truly what you mean?

Sullivan **built** several structures in Chicago.

Sullivan **designed** several structures in Chicago.

Avoid exaggeration.

The architect has a building **on every corner of Los Angeles**.

Be careful with expressions.

The Chrysler Building **pulled a trick out of its sleeve**.

Did it really?

When writing sentences, assume the reader knows nothing about architecture. Clarify.

Morgan won the institute's highest honor.

Which institute, what honor?

Pei completed the program.

Which, where?

Write everything in the past tense. It works.

Avoid phrases as if giving a tour.

Now on to the interior...

Instead write:

As for the interior...

Avoid "you." Use instead one - or rewrite the sentence entirely.

You should see the architecture at night.

One should see the architecture at night.

The architecture should be seen at night.

Try to make each paragraph one thought. Don't try to cram too much into one paragraph.

Examples of types of thoughts:

About the architect

About the building

Historical items in date order

Descriptive items about design

Multiple items with a single theme

Single item looking at something from different angles

When making list of things, make sure they begin with the same type of word.

Key features Saarinen used were expanding (adjective) terminals, adding (verb) horse-shoe-shaped configurations, automated (adjective) transit, having (verb) considerable costs savings.

Key features Saarinen used were expanding (adjective) terminals, horse-shoe-shaped (adjective) configurations, and automated (adjective) transit. This created considerable costs savings.

Don't put words in the paper that you don't understand.

These buildings are powerful essays in primal geometric form and materials.

Facts don't need quotes.

✕3.5' deep at the west end✕

Avoid using extra sheets of paper, at least for my class.

Don't use a separate sheet for cover sheet or bibliography.

This MAY be a requirement in other classes but not in any of mine (ask your instructors). We need to use our resources carefully.

Finish writing your paper one to two nights before it is due.

Then re-read the paper out loud to yourself or have a friend read it out loud to you. See if it makes sense or if you or your friend get tongue-tied.

Edit as necessary.

Do not use the instructor as an editor.

Any work turned in should be the best you can offer.

If not, you're wasting your time and you're wasting the instructor's time.