

PHYSICS 653: TERM PAPER STYLE SHEET

I have been trying a somewhat rigid format for term papers. My purposes are

1. to keep the length from getting out of hand
2. to make it fairer to compare papers when grading
3. to help clarify my expectations about term papers for you

STYLE SHEET

If you find that you are out of the bounds given below, just write a note explaining why that's right for your topic.

1. Total Length – From 3200-4800 words. (f you need longer, you write me a special request. To calculate this, count the number of characters per line and divide by 6, that is the number of “words” per line. Then multiply by the number of lines/page and the number of pages – allow, of course, for pages which aren't full of lines. Don't count figures, tables, references, or appendices.

This length is similar to that of a Phys. Rev. Letter, and allows about as much material as is covered in a 1.5-hour lecture. It makes roughly 10 typed pages, not including the figures (but this depends on the size of type and line spacing, of course)

2. Front page – Include title, your name, date, course number, and an abstract (about one paragraph).

3. Page numbers. Please.

4. Sections – Use section headings, label them with numbers 1,2,.. (normally 3 to 7 sections in all.)

5. Introductory section – should contain (usually at its end) an outline of the path you are taking.

Each section should have a mini-introduction (about a paragraph), to tell something about the route you are going. (The abstract should be more WHAT you were going to do, not so much HOW).

6. Figures – include between 3 and 6 figures. (*Well, maybe less*) In the draft, they can just be stuck at the end; in the final paper, it obviously looks better if they are interspersed in the text, but you don't need to. Always give the reference when you copy the figure.

7. Equations: Not too many, please! Include from 10 to 20 displayed equations. Usually they should be numbered, [see “What's wrong with these equations” by N. D. Mermin, *Physics Today*, Oct. 1989, p. 9.]

8. References – cite them by number in brackets “[3]”, and put the references at the end (just like PRL). There should from 10 to 20 references.

IF POSSIBLE, THE BASIC REFERENCES SHOULD INCLUDE AT LEAST TWO INDEPENDENT POINTS OF VIEW.

Footnotes – additional explanatory remarks – you may either

- (1) put in the same numbered list as the references, à la PRL,
- (2) put at bottom of the page.

9. Acknowledgments – put at the end of the text, before references.

Please be careful to acknowledge anyone else who led you to central references you would otherwise have missed, who participated in conversations that were essential for your understanding the topics, who contributed an idea to your paper, or who made comments on it that induced significant revisions. *Any direct quotations must use quote marks (and be referenced); any paraphrases/summaries should be identified as such (and referenced).* Note here, too, if this relates to other term papers you have written or to research work you expect to do.

10. Appendices – OK, as long as the main text is readable without them. If you have material which is tangential to your story, but which cost you so much work that you can't bear to cut it, sticking it in an appendix is a good compromise.

DUE DATES:

Draft: Thurs. 10/25

Peer review reports: due about 2 weeks after you get papers.

After Thanksgiving break (Tues. 11/27).