

Department of English, Linguistics and Theatre Studies

The Honours Thesis (English Literature)

A. General Format

1. Length. The target length of the Honours Thesis (HT) is 8,000 words. This target excludes appendices, references, data, tables, figures and footnotes. Quotations ARE included in the word count although footnotes are not. Please do not abuse the use of footnotes by smuggling in material there unnecessarily. Penalties will be imposed if this target is exceeded by more than 500 words.
2. Page size. The HT should be formatted for A4 size page.
3. Margins. Each page should have a margin of 3½ cm or 1.4" all round.
4. Font. Any easily legible font is acceptable; avoid unusual fonts. If in doubt, consult your supervisor.
5. Spacing. The HT should be double-spaced throughout, except for quotations, which should be single-spaced.
6. Pagination. Pages should be numbered with Arabic numerals beginning with the first page of Chapter 1 and running throughout the HT to the end. Lower case Roman numerals, beginning with the Signed Statement page, should be used to number the pages preceding the body of the HT. The title page is not numbered (but is considered page i).

B. Order of Parts

The body of HT is preceded by the following pages which provide essential information (optional elements are asterisked):

Title Page
Signed Statement
Acknowledgements*
Table of Contents
List of Tables and Figures*
Abbreviations*
Abstract
Preface*

1. Title Page. The title page of the HT should include, in the following order: (a) the title of the thesis, (b) the author's name in full, (c) the degree for which the thesis is submitted using the following inscription: 'An Honours Thesis submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honours in

English Literature', (d) the department, faculty and university to which the thesis is submitted, and the city in which the university is located, and (e) the date of presentation.

2. Signed Statement. A signed statement should follow the title page bearing the following declaration:

“This Honours Thesis represents my own work and due acknowledgement is given whenever information is derived from other sources. No part of this Honours Thesis has been or is being concurrently submitted for any other qualification at any other university.

Signed

(See also **C. Plagiarism**)

3. Acknowledgements. This page is for making acknowledgements that have a direct bearing on the HT and is not for indulging in routine gestures of politeness or sentimental attitudinising. In all things, the candidate should be guided by good taste and good sense.
4. Table of Contents. Labelled simply CONTENTS, this page should give, with the page number at which each division can be found, the following information: (a) the title of each chapter or main division, (b) the title of each important subdivision in each chapter, (c) the bibliography, and (d) the appendix or appendices, if the HT contains any.
5. List of Tables and Figures. This page should list all tables, figures, and illustrations in the HT, with their precisely descriptive titles and page numbers.
6. Abbreviations. This page should list any abbreviations frequently used in the HT.
7. Abstract. A summary of not more than 300 words should precede the HT, which should include the main idea(s) or aim(s) of the HT and its principle supporting argument(s).
8. Preface. A preface should provide only preliminary remarks or essential information needed to read the HT. Candidates should not feel bound to include a Preface if they have nothing meaningful to say.

The body of the HT is followed by the following parts (the optional element is asterisked):

Bibliography
Appendix*

9. Bibliography. See **D10**.
10. Appendices. The appendices (if any) should be placed at the back of the HT. An appendix should not be seen as a convenient way to circumvent the regulation limiting the length of the HT and is to be included only after careful consultation with the supervisor, who should then inform the Head of Department of his or her consent in writing. Students are advised to be judicious about what they include in

the appendix. The appendix, or the various appendices if more than one is inserted, should not exceed half the length of the main body of the HT itself (in terms of word count or number of pages), without prior permission in writing from the Head of the Department.

Appendices in English Literature HTs are envisaged to be for the presentation of:

- ❖ raw/primary material used in the argument, and not otherwise readily accessible (e.g. transcripts of tape-recorded interviews, reproductions of pictorial material; video or audio tape recordings of audio-visual material); or
- ❖ data in tabulated form.

Such material is placed in the appendices to provide convenient reference and context for the analysis and argumentation made in the text. Material to be included in the appendices should be that which, if placed within the main text, would disrupt the flow of argumentation there. Any information necessary for following the reasoning in the body of the HT should appear in the main text.

C. Plagiarism

The Department of English Language and Literature regards plagiarism as a serious offence and will enforce rules against it. Pursuant to this aim, each student is required to include in the HT a signed statement that it represents the student's own work and that all sources have been properly acknowledged (see **B2**).

You should observe the following principles (also refer to **D9, 10**):

1. All phrases taken from another text should be placed in quotation marks and acknowledged.
2. All ideas derived from another text, even when paraphrased, should be acknowledged.
3. General indebtedness for background information and data should be acknowledged in the bibliography.
4. If you consult the papers or notes of another student, this fact should be acknowledged and the extent of indebtedness made clear. The same applies to lecture material you may be making use of.
5. Reference can also be made to personal communications, including lectures and other contacts. These should be acknowledged in parenthesis, as "personal communication".

Any student who violates these principles will be subject to punishment up to and including suspension from the Examinations. At the very least, an HT found to contain any significant amount of plagiarism will be given a fail grade.

D. STYLE SHEET

The following represents the Department's stylesheet, but you are encouraged to follow the most recent version of the MLA stylesheet. If doing so, just follow it throughout.

1. Titles. Capitalize but do not underline or italicise the title of your HT. Italicise only titles of published books, plays, pamphlets, periodicals, and classical works (except books of the Bible). Italicise titles of poems if they have been published separately. Otherwise, enclose titles of poems in quotation marks. Use quotation marks, as well, for titles of articles and essays, chapters and sections of books, and unpublished works such as dissertations.
2. Punctuation.
 - a. In general, make your punctuation as consistent as possible.
 - b. Commas. Use them before "and" and "or" in a series of three or more. Never use a comma and a dash together. The comma follows a parenthesis if the content requires a comma.
 - c. Dashes. A dash is typed as two hyphens -- not one hyphen - between two spaces.
 - d. Exclamation marks should be used sparingly in scholarly writing.
 - e. Periods. Place the sentence's period outside the final parenthesis if there is parenthetical documentation.
 - f. Square-brackets. Use square brackets for an unavoidable parenthesis within a parenthesis, to enclose interpolations in a quotation or in an incomplete date, and to enclose phonetic transcription.
 - g. Words discussed. Enclose in double marks words to which attention is being directed (e.g.: The word "buzz" is onomatopoeic). English translations of words or phrases from a foreign language should also be enclosed in quotation marks.
 - h. Quotation marks. For quotations which are included as part of your text, first use double quotation marks, then, for quotations or for reported speech within quotations, use single marks. For the sake of appearance, put all commas or periods inside quotation marks unless a parenthetical reference intervenes or unless exact reproduction of punctuation is of special significance (as in bibliographical description).
3. Numerals.
 - a. In general, numbers of less than three digits should be spelled out except in technical or statistical discussions involving their frequent use, or in footnotes. If Arabic numerals are used for numbers over 99, use them also for smaller numbers in the same sentence or related groups of sentences. Dates and page numbers are rarely spelled out. Numbers beginning sentences (including dates) are always spelled out.

- b. Dates. Consistently follow these examples: "17 August 1951" (PMLA style) or "August 17, 1951," but not both; not "1880's" but "eighties"; "in 1951-52" or "from 1951 to 1952" but not "from 1951-52"; spell out references to centuries.
 - c. Inclusive numbers. In connecting consecutive numbers, give the second number in full for numbers through 999; for larger numbers give only two figures of the second if it is within the same hundred.
4. Spelling.
- a. In general, spelling, including hyphenation, must be consistent, except in quotations.
 - b. Apostrophe. Form the possessive of monosyllabic proper names ending in "s" or another sibilant by adding an apostrophe and an "s" (e.g. Keats's poems, except, by convention, ancient classical names [Mars' wrath]). In words of more than one syllable ending in a sibilant, add the apostrophe only (e.g. Hopkins' poems, Ceres' rites) except for names ending in a sibilant and a final "e" (e.g. Horace's odes).
 - c. Capitals. Capitalize the first word and all principal words -- including nouns and proper adjectives in hyphenated compounds, but not articles, prepositions, and conjunctions -- in titles when mentioning magazines or newspapers (e.g. the *Gentleman's Magazine*, but do not treat an initial definite article as part of the title except when the name is cited separately as a source, e.g. in a list or in a bibliography. Capitalize references to parts of a specific work (e.g. Morley's Preface and Index). Never capitalize entire words (i.e. every letter) in titles cited in the text or notes.
 - d. Italics. Avoid the frequent use of italics for emphasis. But do italicise names of ships, titles of published books, plays, pamphlets, periodicals, and long poems and foreign words used in an English text (except quotations, titles of articles, proper names, and foreign words anglicized through usage).

E. FORMAT FOR QUOTATION

- 1. In general, all quotations should correspond exactly with the originals in wording, spelling, and interior punctuation. Any exceptions (e.g. the italicizing of words for emphasis, or the modernizing of spelling) should be explicitly indicated using square brackets, e.g. [italics mine].
- 2. Unless otherwise instructed, type with single spacing all passages of verse and extended quotations of prose.

3. Ellipsis. For ellipsis within a sentence, use three . . . spaced periods (i.e. a space before and after each period), being careful to leave a space before the first period. Quotations that are complete sentences should end with periods even though matter that was within the original may have been omitted. To indicate ellipsis after the conclusion of complete sentences, use three spaced periods in addition to the sentence period If the extent of the omission is significant, indicate an ellipsis of one whole line (or more) in a verse quotation, or of a whole paragraph (or more) in a prose quotation, by a single typed line of spaced periods; otherwise, simply use three spaced periods after the last word before the ellipsis. Avoid using periods to open or to close obviously incomplete sentences.
4. Interpolations. Interpolation of your own comment or explanation in quoted matter, or adjustment of the grammar to fit the syntax of your sentence, is permissible if enclosed in [square brackets] (never parentheses). A common interpolation is [*sic*], where your reader might otherwise think you have made a typing or factual error, e.g. Mozarts [*sic*] piano concerto.
5. Quoting Poetry. Unless unusual emphasis is required, verse quotations of a single line or part of a line should be run on in quotation marks, but with the verse line-ends separated by a slash (/).

For example:

In Owen's poem, the effect of reality is achieved primarily through the action itself: "Gas! Gas! Quick boys -- an ecstasy of fumbling,/Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time" (*Poems* 78).

When not run on, verse quotations should be separated from the context, introduced (in most instances) by a colon, centred on the page, and typed without quotation marks.

For example:

A few lines describing the coming of the Amazons illustrates Moore's style:

A thousand rode together, posing darts,
Behind them those with other arms came on;
All flaunting down a green-sward valley came
Between Arcadia's gentle holted hills. (*Amazons* 78)

6. Quoting Prose. Unless special emphasis is required, prose quotations of up to three lines (in your text) should be run on in quotation marks. As with poetry (see the example immediately above), longer quotations should be single spaced and indented at least five spaces beyond your own paragraph indent. To indent this way is a visual signal that you are quoting; therefore, do not use quotation marks.

For example:

In Conrad's sea stories, characters, enclosed in the confined space of a ship, are lost in the vast space of the sea:

The passage had begun, and the ship, a fragment detached from the earth, went on lonely and swift like a small planet. Round her the abysses of sky and sea met in an unattainable frontier. (*Narcissus* 35)

If a single paragraph or part of one is quoted, do not indent the first line; if two or more paragraphs are quoted consecutively, indent the first line of each. Use a colon when a quotation is formally introduced but not when a quotation is an integral element of your sentence.

F. DOCUMENTATION

1. Secondary sources. The most logical, convenient, and economical way of documenting sources -- the method favoured by current scholarly journals -- is to put the complete information concerning the book or article at the end of the HT on a page entitled List of Works Cited. In the body of the HT itself, you need include only as much information as is necessary to refer your reader to this page.

For example:

As Ronald Paulson correctly asserts, Pope requires an "other," something to which he can respond and that his response will supersede or correct (88, 99-102).

Because the author has been identified, Paulson's book can be easily located in the alphabetically arranged List of Works Cited (see below) where the reader will find the full title, the publisher, and the date. Thus, the writer need provide only the page numbers in parenthesis. You may, of course, include the title of the book in your text if you want to and if you feel it is important, but it is not necessary.

Note the punctuation: p. or pp. for "page" and "pages" are not needed, and the period of the sentence comes after the parenthesis with no punctuation before.

Another example:

When we inspect it, we find that "the word 'poet' itself means liar in some languages, and the words we use in literary criticism, 'fable', 'fiction', 'myth', have all come to mean something we can't believe" (Frye, *Imagination* 24).

Here, the author's name, Frye, was not mentioned in the sentence, so it must be included in the reference. A shortened version of the title is necessary in this case because there is more than one book by Frye in the List of Works Cited. See below.

Note the punctuation: there is no punctuation where the quotation closes, and only a comma is needed to separate the author from the title.

Another example:

The elaborate scenic devices in Richelieu's theatre constituted what Stephen Orgel calls "a prime instance of royal liberality" (*Illusion* 37).

Here, the author, Orgel, is identified in the introduction to the quotation so need not be repeated in the parenthesis. The short title is given because, as in the previous example, the writer has referred to more than one work by Orgel. See below.

The List of Works Cited includes only those books or articles to which you have referred in your HT. It is not a bibliography. Do not pad the List of Works Cited with books you have not referred to or quoted from. (Place any works used but not cited or referred to on a separate page entitled Other Works Consulted.) Note the format, particularly the punctuation, of the following List of Works Cited. You should think of each entry as comprising three parts: an author, a title, and a publisher, each separated by two spaces. The publisher part itself has three sub-parts: a place, followed by a colon, a publisher's name, followed by a comma, and a date. (The line of ten dashes indicates that the book is by the same author as the one immediately above.)

List of Works Cited

Frye, Northrop. *The Educated Imagination*. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1963.

_____. *The Secular Scripture*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Orgel, Stephen. *The Illusion of Power: Political Theatre in the English Renaissance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

_____. "The Poetics of Spectacle." *New Literary History* 2 (1971): 367-89.

Paulson, Ronald. "Satire, and Poetry, and Pope" in *English Satire*. Los Angeles: Clark Memorial Library, 1972, 57-102.

Sperle, Joseph. *My Village Life*. Trans. George Plummer. Ed. Jessie T. Brescht. 2nd ed. Boston: M.U. Pulford, 1982.

'The Formation of Latin Christendom: The Roman Church', in *EuroDocs: Primary Historical Documents from Western Europe* [database online] (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1996 – [cited 10 April 1996]; available from <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbooks.jtml#romchurch>).

Cliff Richard, letter to author, 19 May 1999.

Lee Kuah Yew, email to author, 7 April 1999.

Note that the fourth entry is an article in a journal, while the fifth entry is an article included in a book of collected articles. Page numbers for the article -- but not for any specific quote -- should be given in the List of Works Cited. The sixth entry shows the correct format for including information on a book which has been translated, edited, and revised (2nd ed.). The surnames of the authors are arranged alphabetically. Note the entries for internet sources, and e-mail.

Unless the List of Works Cited is especially long or unwieldy, you are advised not to sub-divide it into categories such as "Primary Works" and "Secondary Works."

2. Substantive Footnotes. This method of documentation means that you do not have to use footnotes -- and consequently ibid. or op. cit. -- ever. The only time you may need a footnote is to make a point by way of a digression. Such substantive footnotes, however, should be used sparingly, and they should be placed either at the bottom of the appropriate page or, if there are several, on a separate page (entitled "Notes") at the end of each chapter. In most cases, however, if an idea is worth mentioning at all, it is worth including in the text proper.
3. Primary Texts. These conventions for documentation apply to primary works or set texts just as they do for secondary material. In general, if the author of the quotation has been named, and if it is clear which novel, poem, play, or short story you are quoting from, you need only include the precise page numbers(s) in parenthesis following the quotation.

For example:

As the narrator of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* says at the beginning, "I have no other moral than this tag to the present story of 'Vanity Fair'" (11).

In the List of Works Cited the reader would be able to find fuller information about this book, when it was published, by whom, and which edition you have used.

If, however, you are quoting from a number of works by the same author, or if you are discussing a number of works by different authors at the same time, you should include a short title or an abbreviation to prevent any confusion.

For example:

Dickens' ending reminds us of Adam and Eve leaving the garden in Milton's *Paradise Lost*: "I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place . . . as the morning mists had risen long ago . . ." (*Great Expectations* 493).

4. Abbreviations. If you are quoting from a number of primary texts frequently you may, although it is not necessary, use abbreviations for the titles provided that you list them on a separate page in the front matter.

For example:

Dickens' ending alludes to *Paradise Lost*: "I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place . . . as the morning mists had risen long ago . . ." (GE 493)

For additional information on and examples of the conventions of documentation consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (2nd ed. 1984) in the reference section of the Central Library. See also *The Chicago Manual of Style* and the *MHRA Style Book*.

G. Procedures for Submission

1. The candidate should make sure that the HT does not exceed the stipulated length (see **A1**). Violation of this limit will incur penalties. An HT that, after due consideration, is found to violate this limit will have five marks deducted from the total for the first 500 words in excess, and five marks for every subsequent 500 words.
2. You should submit your HT by email attachment to the email address (ellbox13@nus.edu.sg) not later than 12 noon on the Monday of the 13th week of the semester the HT is registered (**9 November 2026** for Semester 1, or **12 April 2027** for Semester 2), unless prior permission has been obtained from the Head of Department for late submission. Take note of these points:
 - ❖ You should submit two files – one in pdf format, and one in doc or docx format;
 - ❖ Please name the softcopy of your files in this format: ie. <full official name>-<HT EN>-<AY & Semester> (eg. Rachel Lee Mei-HT EN-2610 where 2610 refers to AY2026-27 Semester 1).
3. Late submission of HT. Any late submission without prior permission will be viewed seriously and will be subject to the following conditions and penalties, to be deducted from the final grade of the thesis:
 - ❖ Deduct 2 marks if it is submitted on the same day (one hour from the stipulated deadline).
 - ❖ Deduct 5 marks if it is on the next day.
 - ❖ Deduct 2 extra marks per day.
 - ❖ Disqualify if HT is late by more than a week without proper explanation and/or supporting documents.

The deduction scheme is summarised in the table below.

Submission	Penalty
Day 1 (submission deadline), after 12.00 noon	2 marks
Day 2	7 marks
Day 3	9 marks
Day 4	11 marks
Day 5	13 marks
Day 6	15 marks
Day 7	17 marks
Day 8 (one week)	19 marks
After day 8	disqualified

4. Submission appeal. If there are any extenuating circumstances concerning the late submission of your HT or otherwise affecting the final quality of your HT which you wish to draw the attention of the Department to, you may wish to stipulate these in the Honours Thesis Submission Appeal form (available at the General Office). The form must be submitted together with the HT, or within 24 hours of its submission. Medical reports should be attached where appropriate.