

CRAFTING A TITLE

Sometimes, you may simply restate your original assignment as your paper title (i.e., “Academic Summary”). At other times, however, you are expected to craft and use an inventive title of your own. You will want a title that draws your reader in and sets them up well for your paper. This resource aims to boost your creativity *and* confidence as you craft a title.

Titles depend largely on the style of your paper (i.e., formal or informal) and generally ask a question, propose an idea, or make a statement. Remember that your title *must* align with the rest of your paper.

NOTE: The information in this resource was adapted from a handout provided by the Austin Peay State University Writing Center (n.d.), “Creating Titles.”

DETERMINE YOUR TITLE BASED ON THE ASSIGNMENT

1. **Is the assignment personal?** – Examine your assignment and determine: is it a more personal assignment meant to be written in the 1st person like a narrative or reflection essay?
 - a. Characteristics of titles for personal essays:
 - i. “Definitive
 - ii. [Creatively] descriptive
 - iii. Interesting” (Austin Peay State University, n.d., p. 1)
 - iv. Concise
2. **Is the assignment formal?** – Examine your assignment and determine: is it a formal assignment meant to be written in the 3rd person like a research or argumentative essay?
 - a. Characteristics of titles for formal essays:
 - i. “Definitive
 - ii. Informative
 - iii. Brief
 - iv. Descriptive with little, if any, creativity” (Austin Peay State University, n.d., p. 1).
 - v. Written in the [scholarly tone](#)

BRAINSTORMING FOR YOUR TITLE

There are four main steps you can consider using as you craft your title:

1. **Examine your thesis statement** – It may not be firm yet, but examining your thesis or your paper’s overall purpose can help you better determine your claim. Use that to shape your title.
2. **Ascertain** – Is the purpose of your paper to answer a question, make a statement, or propose an idea?

TIP: If it is to answer a question, consider making that question your title.

3. **Craft a working title** – If you are beginning your paper, simply craft a working title that may or may not be subject to change later on.
4. **Revise your title** – With your paper written, you can now “clean up” your title. Ensure it fits your paper and that the grammar is correct (i.e., all major words and/or names are capitalized).

PRACTICE CRAFTING A TITLE

EXAMPLE 1 (Personal): Your assignment is to discuss how your course materials encouraged you to grow as a Christian leader.

Working thesis/purpose: As the study materials from this past week have shown me, three ways I can grow as a Christian leader who will change the world are spending daily quiet time with God, serving others more, and growing in humility.

Potential working titles:

- i. Christian Leadership to Change the World: Making this Motto My Own
- ii. Growing as a Christian Leader: How Can I Best Serve God and Others?

EXAMPLE 2 (Formal): Your assignment is to compare and contrast waffles and pancakes.

Working thesis/purpose: Consumers prefer waffles to pancakes due to their density, texture, and flavor.

Potential working titles:

- i. Which is More Popular: Waffles or Pancakes?
- ii. Waffles vs. Pancakes: Their Similarities and Differences

PRACTICE NOW