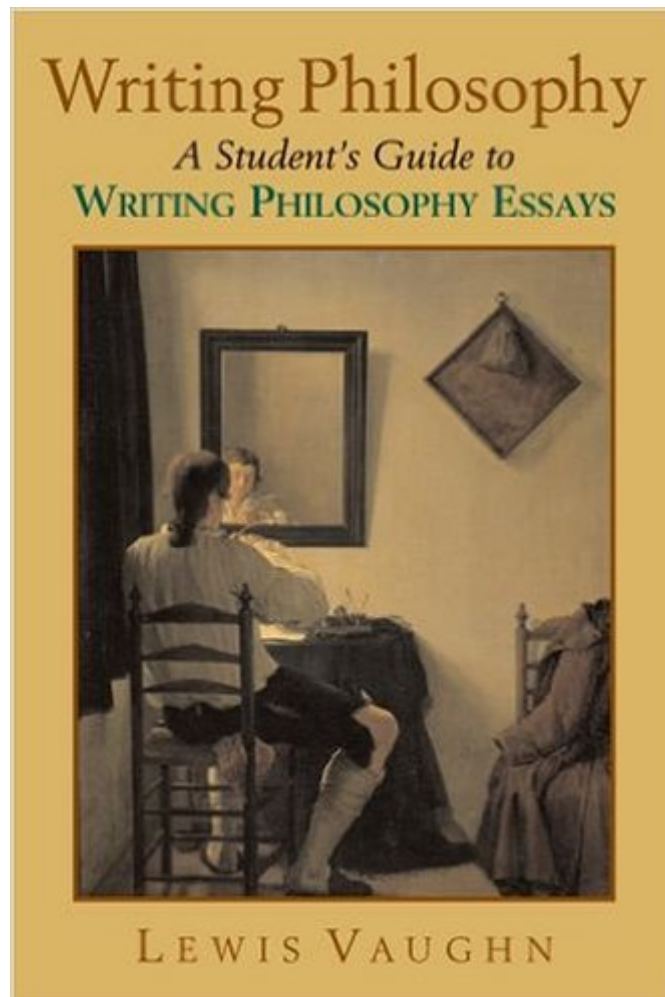


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# Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide To Writing Philosophy Essays



## Synopsis

Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays is a concise, self-guided manual that covers the basics of argumentative essay writing and encourages students to master fundamental skills quickly, with minimal instructor input. Opening with an introductory chapter on how to read philosophy, the book then moves into the basics of writing summaries and analyzing arguments. It provides step-by-step instructions for each phase of the writing process, from formulating a thesis, to creating an outline, to writing a final draft, supplementing this tutorial approach with model essays, outlines, introductions, and conclusions. Skills essential to evaluating arguments, citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, detecting fallacies, and formatting final drafts are dealt with in detail. The final two chapters serve as a reference guide to common mistakes and basic skills in sentence construction, writing style, and word choice. Employing a rulebook format similar to that of the classic *Elements of Style* (by Strunk, White, and Angell), Lewis Vaughn distills helpful writing advice into simple rules that students can easily remember and apply--and that instructors can refer to when reviewing student papers. These rules cover essay organization, sentence structure, documentation styles, plagiarism, grammar, usage, and more. Written in a clear and engaging style and incorporating samples of student writing, *Writing Philosophy* is an indispensable resource for virtually any philosophy course.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a really good book. I bought this book for my Intro to Philosophy class 3 months ago and did not sell it. I am going to keep this book since it's a really informative one. This is not really about

Philosophy at all. It is about how to analyze/interpret text, write good essays, make good arguments and identify fallacious ones. So this is a very practical book. It also helps format your essay and cite your sources effectively with the MLA and CMS citing guidelines.

I had to buy this for a class and I think this is one of the most useful books I have read. Philosophy teachers love to assign many papers and this made my papers much easier to write. There is a very different mindset required to write a philosophy paper from what you are used to and this helped me get rid of the normal English class fluff that I had learned to throw in. My grades on papers went up (I finally had the As that I wanted instead of the Bs I was receiving for "unneeded" information). Definitely suggest it. It's an easy read that really makes a difference.

This philosophy writing book by Vaughn gives you clear examples on what exactly to outline and then write so you can actually speed up the process of all the pre-writing work. I recommend this book especially for Philosophy courses. He dispels the myth of needing to use big words when philosophizing and shows you how you can write an effective essay by just being you.

This well-written manual will be a permanent addition to my reference collection. As a 'Non-traditional Student', that is to say, an old guy who has gone back to school, I needed a guide to bring me back to academic writing (as opposed to the 'business' writing I've been doing for the past decade). This book provides a valuable overview to the academic writing process, as well as excellent guidance to the standards and expectations that will be encountered in the liberal arts.

I read this book thoroughly in about 1.5 hours. It has the advantage of being small, easily digested. It does a fair job of explaining philosophy, and the importance of logic and argument. The other reviews are largely from undergrad students who were assigned this for their class. I do think this might be a good book for an intro level philosophy course, especially for someone who has just rolled out of high school and who may need to know how to write. But this book does not have the depth for graduates. I bought this in part because I thought it would help me write a paper to submit with my application to a Ph.D programme in philosophy at a very respected university. This book, however, will not help you to write publishable philosophy journal articles. Mostly its advice is focused on keeping you and I from making (what should be) obvious errors in our writing - no slippery slope fallacies, no racism, double check your assumptions, no ad-hominem attacks, etc. I should condition my criticism by saying the book does not really advertise itself to do what I wanted

it to do. Its subtitle is "A student's guide to writing philosophy essays" - not "Becoming a master writer in the field of philosophy."

This book poses an interesting puzzle. How can a person described as "...an independent scholar and freelance writer..." (from [...] accessed 8.31.2013) have so many insights into the problems and pitfalls of student essays? Regardless, this book presents a concise summary of the key techniques required to produce good essays. It is written in the style of Strunk and White's classic *The Elements of Style*, Fourth Edition, stating a 'rule' followed by examples of the rule not being followed and then a similar example in which the rule has been applied. Unlike Strunk and White, Vaughn's short book (145 pages) also discusses the structure of an entire essay rather than focusing on sentence structure and word use. As a result, Vaughn's book is highly complementary to this earlier classic. *'Writing Philosophy'* begins by describing how to read philosophy, which is quite different than how one reads fiction. A key point made here is that it is common to have to read sections in a philosophy paper more than once in order to understand the conclusions. Vaughn then discusses how to develop an argumentative essay, starting with the fact that the writer must first know what he or she wants to say. This seems obvious to persons who have made a living with words, but it is not apparent to novice writers including students and junior staff in organizations where clear writing is essential for survival (I came from a research organization where the ability to write well was equal to the importance of carrying out the research itself). Other chapters cover such important topics as the elements of style (written with an intentional nod to Strunk and White), how to evaluate arguments, plagiarism and acknowledging sources, etc. My favorite chapter was *'Writing Effective Sentences'* (Chapter 7), where simple techniques to enhance the clarity of individual sentences were enumerated, e.g., delete the deadwood ( *'due to the fact that'* = *'because'*) and, one of the most common problems I find when cleaning up papers by new writers, communicate pronoun references clearly; that is, make sure the antecedent for the *'who is'* or *'it'* is clearly identified. Although *'Writing Philosophy'* is aimed at students of philosophy, I think the ideas presented are equally relevant to students of science, engineering or any field that relies on words to communicate arguments and conclusions. *'Writing Philosophy'* will have a place next to *The Elements of Style*, Fourth Edition on my bookshelf.

This book was a requirement for a Philosophy class and I have to say it was a fairly easy read. Looks can be deceiving and when I saw how little the text was, I thought, "Wow... Philosophy in a compact book?" It was concise when it needed to be and it sparked a lot of further reading on my

part. I did not re-sell this book after the semester was over. It's a keeper!

This really explains how and why effective writing is so important, especially in philosophy. I highly recommend this to anybody in academic writing, or personal, or professional writing as a way to improve your skills.

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