

is nothing more incredibly stupid or obvious than putting four inch margins in all directions and triple spacing your essay. If you really, really, REALLY feel you need to shrink your working space, do it subtly!!! Move the top and the bottom margins only. If you don't have the half line choice, leave it alone!! If you have a choice of fonts, it's fair game to use the one that takes up the most space. But you should also consider that if you use a small font (typestyle) it makes your page look more densely written, and therefore more content-filled, and it doesn't look so bad if you're a page-and-a-half under the limit. If you follow these guidelines, you get a little breathing space without doing the equivalent of taping a great big "Kick me in the head, I'm too stupid to live" sign to your nose.

The above screw-ups are the biggies. Please note that these aren't hypothetical boo-boos. I've actually seen people do these things.

PART 3: THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN ALL AROUND YOU ARE LOSING THEIRS

1) Profs are students too, or at least they have been within living memory. They did all the things that you are doing. They understand the problems you're going through with your papers. So just assume they'll recognize all your b.s. techniques and concentrate on putting together an artfully b.s.'ed paper.

2) The usual things you've always been told about handing in a paper: check the spelling, grammar and typing. Most anyone can forgive a few typos, but it should be obvious that you've at least taken the trouble to run your essay through the spellchecker. It's incredibly hard to follow the line of reasoning in a paper that has to be deciphered before it can be read. Getting your prof frustrated by your style before he or she can even get to your argument is not a good idea.

3) It is not necessary that you come up with something brilliant to say, but it is necessary that you know what the hell you are talking about. If you don't understand some point of theory, leave it out of your paper. If you're writing on a book, read the book. I know lots of people don't. You'll wind up tripping up and looking stupid. At the very least, keep the book right next to you while you're writing the essay so you can check key points.

PART 4: SUMMARY

- 1) Be subtle.
- 2) Be creative.
- 3) Be tidy. (a.k.a. the Don't Let the Puppy Piddle on Your Paper Rule)
- 4) Be sensitive to your prof's few remaining nerve endings. Such consideration will preserve both your sanity and your academic standing.
- 5) If all else fails, don't worry, you won't.

What really matters

BY FAITH HUNTER

WE STUDENTS SPEND A FAIR amount of time in class, and, unless we're in philosophy (no offense), the professor probably leads the conversation. So, it's important that we understand what they're saying; however, what people say is not always what they mean, and this often happens with professors; not with the subject matter-- most of that is their specialty, and, although we may not understand it, it's fair to say that it's being said accurately. No, I'm talking about the regular conversational parts of the class, which all faculties have in common: test announcements, paper descriptions, introductions, and so on. We are exposed to this on an everyday basis, and we (and the professors) seem to think that we understand it all, when, in fact, we often do not. Professors, unintentionally of course, do not always say what they mean. Left unchecked, this can be a big problem. But, hey: that's what I'm here for. So, this week, I've decided to share with you an art which we can all benefit from: translating your professors.

I'm afraid that I'm just not talented enough to teach it all to you in one little article (You cannot learn French in one French class, so get that frown off your face), but I will teach you [literally] by example. Here are some classics which will hopefully enable translation of your professors:

1. Professor: "The final exam will be comprehensive."

Translation: "Study everything or you'll fail miserably."

2. Professor: "I think that you'll find this course very interesting, but it is a challenge."

Translation: "This is NOT a bird course. Drop out now or you'll never see your TV again."

3. Professor: "I haven't quite finished grading your papers. I'll get them back to you next week."

Translation: "Professors watch hockey, too, you know."

4. Professor: "The quiz on the next short story will be more detailed than the last."

Translation: "Don't just memorize the characters and their place in the plot; memorize what colour their shoes are."

5. Professor: "I would prefer typed assignments, but I won't take marks off those which aren't typed."

Translation: "If you want that extra mark that can go either way, type your assignment."

6. Professor: "I would suggest that you review chapter two and read it over carefully before our next test."

Translation: "I've taken the essay question worth 78% of the next quiz from chapter two--know it to perfection."

Imagination

untitled

Today you will meet a girl who stops to smell the roses, says hello to everyone she meets, and lives her life to the fullest. She wasn't always like this. There was once a point in her life when she was depressed, insecure and alone. Let me tell you her story...

Her name is June, and when she was fifteen, she went to a party--the first actual "drinking" party she had ever been to. That night she got drunk and loved the 'high' it gave her. The alcohol allowed her to feel free; free from her insecurities, she was able to let out a side of her which no one had seen before. From that night on, she decided that she was going to have that feeling as much as possible. Since she lived at home and went to school, she figured the only time she could drink would be on the weekends, then stay at a friend's house so her parents wouldn't know, so that is what she did.

At first, things were great. Her parents didn't suspect a thing, but the more she went out on weekends, the more she wanted to drink. June started arguing with her parents more and more, until one day she decided she didn't want them to have anything to do with her--they were getting too suspicious. Two weeks after she graduated from high school, she decided to move into an apartment with her best friend, Samantha.

Home free, she thought. Drinking when she wanted, with no worries in the world, all she had to do was get up for work in the morning. No problem.

For months she lived two lives: at night she'd drink to let her guard down and find the love she needed from the men she met at the bars, and during the day, she would go to work with a smile painted on her face, trying so hard to look happy and cover the pain she felt so deep inside.

Eventually, drinking was June's only priority in life. All she wanted to do was find that 'high' she once had in Junior High, but it was long gone.

As much as her friend Samantha tried to get June to slow down her drinking, she didn't want to listen; the power of the bottle was far too great. Samantha couldn't stand to see her friend destroy herself, so she decided, after much thought, to move out.

Bills were beginning to be ignored, rent was getting late, and most mornings June had to force herself to get out of bed for work, but she knew that without money she'd be without a drink. Eventually, she stopped calling her friends-- they were beginning to see past her make up and clothing. They could see the real pain that June was feeling. She figured she didn't need those friends any more, her bottle was all she needed.

One night while at a bar, she met a man, as she usually did and took him home with her. They talked for a while, then they had sex. To June, it was making love, because she really didn't know any differently, but then it changed. The man became very violent, and he wanted her to do things that she didn't want to do. At first, she said no, but eventually she gave in--anything to get the night over with.

The next day June woke up alone, feeling dirty and used. When she looked in the mirror, the person who looked back was someone she didn't know, someone who was scared and had no soul. June figured that a shower would make her feel better-- it worked before; but when she got undressed, she saw bruises; bruises on her body where they had never been before. All she could do was cry, sit on the bathroom floor and cry.

How did life get so bad? Why did she feel like dirt? Why did she let herself get so low? Things must be better than this, somehow. June once knew people who were happy, genuinely happy, and she wanted to be like them.

Knowing that she had no one else to call, that night she phoned a detox center, and they told her how to get help. Although she was hesitant at first, she realized that she had hit her bottom, and the only other option was death.

That night she went into a rehab center, terrified and alone. Things weren't always easy for her. There were nights she sat up crying for a drink-- anything to cover up her feelings of guilt and shame. With help from her family, friends and caring counsellors, June got through it.

Today, June has been sober for five months. She's been able to rebuild the relationships she had once destroyed. She goes to two A.A. meetings a week, where she learns that the past is something she cannot change, she can only live her life one day at a time. June is living at home again, and is even studying to be a psychologist at university!

Every once and a while she stops to smell the roses and smiles because life really could have been a lot worse. If you see her, say hello, maybe stop and talk a while, she'd like that.

—Anonymous