How to Expand Your Writing

The obvious way to expand a paper is to increase margins and font size, but those tricks don’t improve the quality of your paper. Consider the following suggestions, if appropriate to your course and issue.

- **Define terms.** If a term may not be clear to your audience or if a term has more than one meaning (e.g., collaboration), define the term for the purposes of your paper.

- **Contextualize your problem or issue.** Some issues require a little history or a fact that shows how serious or important they are.

- **Check your thesis.** Some theses require more than one sentence or additional elaboration. Check to see if you might add another point.

- **Answer your opponents’ objections.** Imagine what someone opposed to your stance on the issue might object to or question.

- **Deepen your analysis.** Ask who, what, where, why, or how of the points or areas you are analyzing.

- **Examine your main points or reasons that support your thesis.** Check to see that they are adequately explained and supported by sources, if necessary.

- **Add description.** Consider adding description of persons, places, ideas, and so on.

- **Check your assumptions.** Be careful not to assume that your audience knows what you know or has read what you have read about an issue. Add explanation, if necessary.

- **Add charts, graphs, or other visuals.** Create your own, if possible. If not possible, be sure to cite your sources correctly. Be sure to refer to the visuals within your text.

- **Add an epigraph, if appropriate.** An epigraph is a quotation, indented from both margins and placed between the title and the beginning of your text. You should refer to the quotation sometime in the first paragraph.