# Philosophy Tip Sheet

| AUDIENCE | • Professors  
• Philosophy students  
• “Third graders” |
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| PURPOSE | • Investigate and inquire  
• Criticize  
• Reflect  
• Thought experiments  
• Reasonably defend some claim |
| TONE/VOICE | • Obscurity is not a sign of profundity – tone must be concise  
• Simple prose  
• Appropriate and fair  
• Earnest and patient, with a desire to understand  
• Readers should not be distracted by manner of writing; rather, focused on clarity of content |
| STRUCTURE | • Clear, concise, informative introduction  
• Precisely worded approach to topic  
• Structure should easily translate into an outline that is obvious to reader  
• Evaluation of argument  
• Concentration on specific missteps or response to important objections  
• Focus on thesis – support or refutation |
| RESEARCH/SOURCES | • Class materials  
• Philosophical dictionaries  
• Professional journals  
• Encyclopedias of Philosophy  
• Online Philosophical Resources |
| SOURCE INTEGRATION | • Lead-ins – words or phrases tying quotation logically to preceding  
• Insertions – words or phrases to make a quotation smoothly fit  
• Deletions – ellipsis (...) (and periods at the ends of sentences)  
• Alterations – [T]he first letter has been changed from the original  
• Emphasis – What does it mean? (emphasis added)  
• Long quotations – block quotes with lead-ins and no marks (“) |
| STYLE/CITATION | • Chicago, MLA – Depends on professor  
• Footnotes or endnotes  
• Bibliographic entries with author/editors names, work titles, |

*St. Mary’s College  
CWAC: Center for Writing Across the Curriculum*
**Philosophy Tip Sheet**

and publication information
- Arranged alphabetically by surname
- Underlined or italicized titles for books, encyclopedias, and periodicals
- Quotation marks for titles of essays and articles
- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy
- The Oxford History of Western Philosophy