Student Study Helps and hints

Almost everything you need
To know to be a successful
Vision student

Vision Colleges

Vision Colleges

Student Study Helps and Hints

A guide to completing assignments for Vision Colleges hints for better study

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to advise and assist students of Vision Colleges[1] as they undertake their studies, to lay a reasonably level playing field and ensure that students understand what is required to complete their units successfully.

Here you will find a broad scope of student advice, requirements for formatting and completing assignments, helpful hints for effective study methods, building a library and a range of other help.

There is often a tension between what a student would like to submit and what the Vision Colleges requires. While we do not wish to stifle students' creativity, we also need to determine the minimum required standards to ensure an appropriate level of professionalism in a student's presentation. These standards are the minimum guidelines for everyone.

We advise you to read through this book before undertaking your first assignment. You will probably need to refer to it repeatedly to meet our requirements.

For many people submitting an assignment is a daunting task. Whether it is a multiple-choice assignment, a written essay, a discussion paper or a study guide, it does not need to be so. To ease you into the tasks that lay ahead, we have produced this booklet with a few hints that will help you gain the best possible advantage and pleasure from your course.

Clearly, not all of this advice will apply to every student for every subject, and the comments need to be taken in context.

We pray the Lord will bless you as you prepare yourself to be a workman or woman who will not be ashamed as a co-labourer in the harvest of the Kingdom.

[1] This document serves as a guide for all students of "Vision Colleges". It is the unbrella body for Vision Christian College, Vision International College, the Internet Bible College. This document also serves degree students with the Internet Bible College.

Study Guidelines

Distance Education

By its very nature, distance education is among the most rewarding yet challenging of all forms of education. As a student, you must seek out knowledge and answers to the issues presented to you from the resources we provide and from your own resources.

Distance students do not enjoy the benefits of classroom camaraderie. They cannot bounce ideas off fellow students. The dynamics of college life do not exist for distance students. For these and other reasons, some who begin their studies fail to complete them as they feel isolated and without help. We want you to know that you are not alone with Vision Colleges. We understand these issues. We are here to help.

If you need help or assistance, contact us at any time by telephone at 02 9603 2077 or by email to support@visioncolleges.net or principal@visioncolleges.edu.au. We will respond to you, support and guide you to the best of our ability. You must know and understand that we are available to you and that you contact us no matter how "small" the issue may seem. We are pleased to help.

What Do I Need To Succeed?

The first question to be addressed is the one most overlooked. "What do I need to do to study my subjects?" It is at least a two-part answer.

1. You will need the following items. They are required to complete any subject successfully:

    a. Your own Study Bible. You will need to select and purchase your preferred study Bible; the version is not essential to us as the subjects are not version-specific. The additional value of a good Study Bible lies in the informative notes and references provided.

    b. A good dictionary. Dictionary.com is a good source if you have access to the internet, if not a good quality dictionary.

    c. Your textbook, provided by Vision Colleges

    d. Your assignments, provided by Vision Colleges

2. A comfortable place to study.

For the student who seeks to excel, you may wish to consider obtaining these optional aids to study:

a. We recommend www.e-sword.net. It is free software and offers a wide range of optional study help. Some resources have to be purchased but are not required.

b. A vast range of excellent bible study software is available as an alternative to e-sword.

c. A Strong's or Young's concordance

d. Access to libraries on the College website:

http://www.visioncolleges.edu.au/study-options/student-resources

e. Someone you can talk to who will challenge and encourage you, for example, a mentor

The following guidelines will help you get the best possible enjoyment and benefit from studying your textbooks and completing the assignments.

As a distance education student, you can be sure that the principles outlined will help you achieve your ministry goal.

1. Give a high priority to your learning until you have obtained the award you desire, which means

   a. you should write your study times into your calendar and keep those times free from other commitments; and

   b. you should be willing and prepared to sacrifice other activities, entertainment, etc., if necessary, for your course duration. *(I do not mean you should forsake entertainment, sport, work or family but be aware that **sometimes** you have to choose to study to be successful.)*

2. Accept the discipline of reading your textbook three times within the month allocated to the subject and completing your assessment by the end of the month.

   a. 1st time: Scan and read very fast, do not mark or check the work. The purpose is to give you an overview and "points of reference" as you study.

   b. 2nd time: Read and study the material, mark as you wish to do so, it is your book, and check the references.

   c. 3rd time: Go through the book with the questionnaire looking for the answers from the book. It is an open-book assessment methodology. **Hint:** when you find the answer to a question, mark the paragraph with the question number for easy reference if you need to check your work.

3. Begin each study period with a brief and simple prayer. Recognise that only the presence and illumination of the Holy Spirit can turn your study time into a supernatural event. As you study, anticipate that you will hear from God. Expect your mind and spirit to be instructed. Scripture promises that the Word of God will transform your life.

4. Set aside a period each week to make study your top priority. Choose a time when you have the fewest interruptions, away from other activities and family traffic. Try to keep to the same time each day or each week to develop regular study habits. Some

students take a particular day or evening; others make the commute to work an opportunity to study.

5. Develop a familiar environment, as free as possible from distractions, is a great help to concentration. Find, if you can, a reasonably quiet and private spot. Turn off the radio and television so that you can have quiet. You will need to meditate on and pray about the things you are reading. At the least, you should try to set up a corner that you can use consistently as a place of study. Use a desk or table without clutter and a comfortable chair. Avoid lounge chairs. The attitude of the body helps to determine the perspective of the mind. A lazy body tends toward a slumbering mind.

6. Let your family, or those you live with, know that you are studying so they can avoid interrupting you. If phone calls come, arrange for messages to be taken or return the call later.

Researching Your Subject

Base the research on the primary textbook as the assessment, and the Study Guide tests your comprehension of the textbook. Note: You are free to study other materials in addition to your primary textbook and to refer to any additional material in the context of the subject.

Documentation

Style

Write in a generally formal style, avoiding slang or colloquial expressions, but don't be too impersonal, abstract, or indirect. Use active sentences as much as possible, not passive ones. For example, the paragraph just above could have been expressed passively, thus: "It is not expected that your work will be entirely original." It reads livelier when it is cast actively: "We do not expect" . . . Sometimes, a passive structure is less obtrusive, as in the first part of the previous two sentences.

Referencing

You must refer to books, magazines, or other sources in your comments. These comments provide evidence of research and are used to support your statements. Use footnotes to reference sources, do not use endnotes. See example 1[2]. It shows the book's name, author, publisher and where in the book the citation is found.

When you support your comments with an explanatory statement from a book, use the format in example 2[3].

You can often refer to your textbook for reference examples.

When writing a length essay, a large document or a thesis, a bibliography must include the book's name, Author, Publisher, location of citation, and other relevant information in

[2] City of God; ed. By David Kowles; Penguin Classics, 1972; Bk 11, ch 2

[3] The Ascencion is anticipated in Jn 6:62; 20:17; and it is affirmed in Ac 2:32-33; Ro 8:34; Cl 3:31; He 1:"3; 6:20; 8:1; 9:12,24; 10:12; 12:2; 13:20; plus many other references, which either declare or imply that Christ is now seated a the Father's right hand in heaven.

addition to footnotes. You should include particulars of any Bible versions you quoted. See footnote1

Handling Your Textbook-

1. Scan through your textbook to get a general sense of its contents and layout and how it's ideas are developed. Then choose the particular section you plan to study and read through it quickly, without pausing to look up Bible references or take notes (unless an important idea occurs to you).

2. Next, reread the same section carefully, looking up all the references, making notes, working on difficult points until you understand them, making your section outline, and re-writing the key ideas in your own words.

3. Make sure you understand what you are reading. If something is not clear, ask the Lord to give you understanding. If you come across unfamiliar words in your textbook, look them up in a dictionary. Read the scripture verses mentioned in your textbook. Use a modern translation of the Bible. It is a good idea to have several different translations on hand, all of which you should aim to read at least once from cover to cover.

4. Close your book and meditate on what you have read. Try to recall the main ideas and the sequence in which they were developed. Build the arguments again in your own mind. Join prayer with your meditation, for this is when the things you are studying can become a revelation of God in your spirit.

5. Open the book again and answer your assessment paper's questions related to the section you have just studied. Remember, the assessments are all "open-book", indeed. You will not be able to answer many of the questions unless you refer to your textbook. So make full use of the book as you answer each question. You are not expected to work from memory alone.

6. You can probably pass the assessment without doing all the above. However, surely you have a higher goal than merely achieving a passing grade? If your larger purpose is the glory of God and personal enrichment, don't forget that you will get out of your study only what you put into it.

7. We have striven to achieve two things about the textbooks you will use: a high level of spiritual revelation and (in most of them) a high literary quality. Therefore, you may find it helpful to have a good English dictionary and a Bible Encyclopaedia or Bible Dictionary at hand.

8. There are not many points in going to Bible College if the only book you don't read is the Bible! You should establish a programme to read through your Bible. You should do so over and over again for the rest of your life.

Samuel Johnson

In a letter to his friend James Boswell, dated December 8, 1763, the great lexicographer Samuel Johnson wrote —

> There was once a young man who hoped that he should appear to attain, amidst all the ease of carelessness, and all the tumult of diversion, that knowledge and those accomplishments which mortals of the common fabrick obtain only by mute abstraction and solitary drudgery. He tried this scheme of life awhile, was made

> weary of it by his sense and his virtue; he then wished to return to his studies, and finding long habits of idleness and pleasure harder to be cured than he expected ... resolved the common consequences of irregularity into an unalterable decree of destiny, and concluded that Nature had originally formed him incapable of rational employment[4].
>
> Let all such fancies, illusive and destructive; be banished henceforward from your thoughts forever. Resolve, and keep your resolution; choose, and pursue your choice. If you spend this day in study, you will find yourself still more able to study tomorrow; not that you are to expect that you shall at once obtain a complete victory. Depravity is not very easily overcome. Resolution will sometimes relax, and diligence will sometimes be interrupted; but let no accidental surprise or deviation, whether short or long, dispose you to despondency. Consider these failings as incident to all mankind. Begin again where you left off, and endeavour to avoid the seducements that prevailed over you before.
>
> This, my dear Boswell, is advice which, perhaps, has been often given you, and given you without effect. But this advice, if you will not take from others, you must take from your own reflections, if you purpose to do the duties of the station to which the bounty of Providence has called you."[5]

[4] Over the years I have myself met many like that young man, who blame God, or Providence, or Parents for their supposed inability to study hard and therefore hold themselves blameless for failing to advance in knowledge and maturity

[5] James Boswell, Life of Johnson, Aetat. 54; Thursday, 8 December, 1763

ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

In all cases, the student should refer to the instructions provided with the assignments. The requirements presented below are general and offered as a guide.

All written assignments (essays, study guides, reports, thesis, etc.) must follow our formatting requirements. They have been prepared to:

- Guide you with the various types of written assignments.
- Ensure our formatting requirements are as consistent and professional as possible throughout our assignment options.
- Help you develop invaluable skills in preparing documents that will benefit you long into the future of your ministry.
- Establish a level playing field for students.
- Assist the assessors as they work through your submissions.

Not every student will need to complete all the assignment options for every assignment. The College will provide specific instructions with each assignment.

You are not expected to demonstrate the skills of a professional writer; however, your work does need to be legible, orderly and structured. You must utilise the spell check and the grammar checker if you are unfamiliar with spelling or grammar.

As a minister or someone involved in senior levels of ministry, you may be called on to make submissions to your church board or denomination, perhaps to a business or government agency or such. Yet, sadly such petitions often fail purely on the issue of presentation; if a document is poorly presented, it is often deemed unworthy of attention. Indeed as a minister, we should offer a high standard.

Learning to create a professional-looking presentation while you are a student can give you an enormous advantage in the future.

We are ready to help you to understand these requirements if you need help. We encourage you to contact us by telephone at 02 96032077. You can even do so while sitting at your computer so we can walk you through the issues.

We insist on these basic guidelines for written assessment submission. If these instructions are not followed, your work may be returned to you unmarked for resubmission.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious issue. We encourage students to research and seek answers to their assignments from other sources and quote or refer to the work of others appropriately. However, we view plagiarism as a serious offence; it is not condoned by the College in any way, shape or form.

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary[6], to "plagiarise" means:

- To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own.
- To use (another's production) without crediting the source.
- To commit literary theft
- To present a new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

Plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves stealing someone else's work, claiming it as your own, and lying afterwards. Any student who engages in plagiarism will be expelled from the College, and all academic standing will be forfeited, at least for the plagiarised subject. In addition, anyone who engages in plagiarism risks legal action from the original author of the work

Formatting Requirements

The Purpose Of Formatting

Written assignments should be completed on a word processor, sent to the College as an electronic file or printed and sent by mail. We prefer the work to us electronically as it is easier to assess and store.

These requirements serve several purposes,

1. They establish a level playing field against which all students can be assessed.

2. They develop a minimal level of professional presentation skills that will be useful throughout your developing ministry and career.

3. They make the task of assessment easier for our assessors and speed up the assessment process.

You do not need to be an expert with your word processor. However, suppose you are not familiar with it, we recommend investing in a "Teach Yourself Book" or an "***Idiots Guide to...***[7]" for your particular word processor. There are many such books available on the market for every word processor. You will find one best suited to your taste with a bit of patient comparison. We have no particular preference or recommendation.

[6] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarize

[7] These are only two of many such excellent self-help books available through your bookstore. Vision Colleges has no particular preference or recommendation of any such book nor does our comment endorse them. It is for the student to find the self-help option that best suits their particular need.

Document Formatting

The following formatting options provide the student with an acceptable standard of presentation which will be helpful in their professional life while making the assessment task easier for the assessor.

If these simple formatting options are not followed, the work may be returned to you unmarked.

Soft Copy And Hard Copy Submissions

Pages:	A4 portrait
Margins:	2.5 cm top, bottom, left and right
Binding edge:	1 cm left
Footers and Headers:	1.5 cm font to be 10 points Times New Roman
Footnotes:	10 points Times New Roman
Headings:	Arial of an appropriate size and taste.
Paragraphs:	Single-spaced with an extra line of space between the paragraphs
Body text:	12 points Times New Roman
Embedded Scripture:	12 points Times New Roman, italicised and indented 1 cm from left and right margin
Embedded quote:	12 points Times New Roman, plain, indented 1 cm from left and right margin
Poetry, Song:	12 points Times New Roman, each line centred.
Header:	Must contain the subject, course number, title and name of the student on every page and be underlined
Footer	Must contain the page number and number of pages on the outside edge of each page

Your name, the unit name and the id number must be in the header of every page.

Page numbers should be in the footer in the form of Page X of Y (see the page number style at the bottom of this page).

A hard copy must be a document print-out using the same requirements.

Vision Colleges does NOT accept handwritten assignments

Word Count

Most written work will require a specific word count. The assignment determines the actual word count. The word count does NOT include the following:

- Title page or table of contents.
- Embedded scripture or quotes.
- Endnotes or footnotes.
- Bibliography.

- Indexes
- Introduction

The word count number refers to the number of **your words** in **your assignment**.

Scripture Quotes

We are a Bible college, and the scripture must be included in all assignments. Scripture must be italicised for emphasis. There are three options for referencing scripture.

1. "Inline reference" is used when the scripture is a part of a sentence. The reference is a footnote, and the scripture is italicised. For example, "Nicodemus came to Jesus at night-time, and Jesus told him he "*must be born again."*[8]"

2. Paragraph reference is the most common form. The scripture is inserted into the document with its reference. The paragraph is to be indented by 1 cm from the left and the right and italicised. The paragraph style is used for one or several verses together. Do not separate verses. They should be inserted as a block. Such a paragraph should not take more than 1/3 of a page. See example below

   > *Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:7-8)*

   A significant benefit is the "final opportunity" to ensure that the scripture you quote is correct and appropriate to the answer. Once the paper is submitted, it will be marked as is.

3. Large blocks of scripture sometimes need to be referenced, perhaps an entire psalm or passage from one of the prophets or even a whole chapter. Including the scripture would take up too much space. In such cases, use a footnote reference. See below.

   "The day will come when men stand before God for judgement, and his books will be opened[9] , and God will judge us all…. "

Non Scripture Quotes

Quoting the textbook alone is not sufficient. A level of applied research is required, as demonstrated by quoting from other works and the Bible.

Insert quotations into the document as a separate paragraph. Indent the paragraph by 1 cm from the left and the right and not italicised (see the section on document formatting). Such paragraphs should not take more than 1/3 of a page with a footnote reference to the quote. The reference is required to avoid plagiarism[10] while adding authority to your work. See the example below.

> Plagiarism is a serious issue. We encourage students to research and seek answers to their assignments from other sources and quote or refer to the work of others

[8] John 3:17
[9] Revelation 20:11-15
[10] See comments on plagiarism or go to http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarize

appropriately. However, we view plagiarism as a serious offence; it is not condoned by the College in any way, shape or form.

Footnotes & Bibliographies

Footnotes and bibliographies are not required in every document. They are usually most suited to an extended essay, a thesis, or a report. Footnotes are used to present additional information or references and look professional when used correctly. A student cannot lose points for using these tools and can gain extra credits when used correctly.

Footnotes

These comments apply both to *Footnotes* and *Endnotes* —

1. A direct quotation from another work must always be marked either.
    a. By quotation marks if the quote is short and part of one of your paragraphs; or by
    b. putting it in a separate indented paragraph (without quotation marks), unless it includes a piece of direct speech; and by noting the source of the quote in a footnote or endnote.
2. A footnote may also be used to make an additional comment or insert supplementary material that would be disruptive if it were placed in the body of the essay. You may indicate a footnote by a number.
3. For a work that has not previously been quoted in your essay, use the style shown in the footnote below[11], and note the following —
    a. the author's name is given first (unless you have already given the full name in your text).
    b. Followed by the name of the work (underlined).
    c. Publishing details (including the date, if known); if required, the details (in quotation marks) of a chapter title, magazine article, etc.; the page number.
    d. And note the use of commas and semicolons.
4. For a work that you have quoted before, use either ibid. Or op. Cit.
    a. Ibid. ("the same") is used when no other work has been cited between this footnote and the one preceding it (even if several pages have intervened between the two quotations). Here is an example[12].
    b. Op. cit. ("the work cited") is used when one or more footnotes stand between the original quotation and the present one. The author's last name must be included unless you have mentioned it in the text. Here is an example [13].

[11] Jonathon Browne (editor), Dictionary of World Religions, article "Islamic Prayer"; Thompson & Thompson, London, 1987; pg. 335.

[12] Ibid., pg 398

[13] Anderson, op. cit., pg. 35.

Bibliographies

Your essay/thesis must contain a bibliography listing all the sources you referred to while preparing it. The bibliography should be the last item in your essay, and it should be set out as follows, showing where appropriate a book, article, author, editor, compiler, etc. —

Blacker, G. J., Dynamics of Grace; Blonheim & Sons, New York, 1974.

Conrad, C. C., art. "Christ & Culture", New Faith Journal, April 1993; The Foundations Society, Glasgow.

Davids, G. H., et al. Eight Scholars Speak; J. J. Brown, London, 1976.

Ender, K. V., ed., Songs of Love; Lock & Co, London, 1991.

Preparing Assignments

Always read the instructions in the assignment before answering the questions.

We refer you to the excellent advice in the "Handling Your Textbook" section of this book.

You can probably pass the assessment without taking all of the advice offered. If your goal is higher than merely achieving a passing grade, it is helpful to realise that you will get out of your study only as much as you put into it.

For those students who wish to achieve more than a simple pass, a certain level of diligence is required the study. The advice offered is not "law" but a guide and should be taken as such and applied appropriately at an individual level.

In brief, read the textbook three times.

1. The first read is a scan read to familiarise yourself with the subject.

2. The second read is to study the text, mark it, question it, make notes and comments, and learn the subject.

3. The third read is with the questionnaire to seek out and find answers to the questions.

Preparing For Multiple-Choice Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, all of the questions are consecutive. They are deliberately couched in such a way as to test your comprehension of the question and the textbook. It is essential to understand the question before attempting to answer it. Is the question positive or negative? Look for double negatives.

We suggest that when you find an answer to a question, you should place the question number in the margin alongside the paragraph in which you found the answer. Marking the paragraphs will make revision and review more manageable and help you locate answers to more complex questions.

For instance, suppose you find answers to questions 1-7 and mark the paragraphs as you go. If you cannot find the answer to question 8, move on to question 9. When you find the answer mark the paragraph as 9. You will realise that the answer to Question 8 is between the responses to Questions 7 and 9 and help narrow your search area for Question 8.

When answering multiple-choice questions, you can send your answers to Vision Colleges using the template supplied or your email editor in a document.

Template

You will receive an answer template with the assignment.

You can use the template by placing an "X" in the appropriate boxes (or other expressions if indicated as a requirement). Please enter your name and subject details at the top of the form and send it to us with the cover sheet to exams@visionbiblecollege.edu.au

Document or Email editor

You can answer the questions directly in your email editor, or you can use your use your word processor. Send only the question number and answer indicator in a single COLUMN, for example:

1. a
2. c
3. d
4. b
5. t
6. f

The following principle should be followed when a word is required for the answer.

8. love
9. joy
10. peace

Notes:

1. Do not send the answers to us in rows. They will be returned unmarked.

2. Do not send the questions with the answers. Send only the answer sheet.

Vision Colleges is not a "Version specific college". We do not require the student to use a specific version of the Bible to satisfy college requirements.

In some multiple-choice assessments, the student must provide a word or a verse from their Bible as the answer. You must advise us of the version of the Bible you are using with the reference. If you do not, you will be assessed on the version used in the textbook, which can result in a wrong answer.

Short Answer Assignments

With all short answer questions, the question must be included with the answer.

You are completing a Bible College course, and your knowledge of the Bible and the subject is being tested. The student is required to answer the questions in their own words. You must refer to your textbook, and use biblical references and other sources, wherever possible, to strengthen your answers.

It is impossible to predetermine how long an answer should be. The response should be of sufficient length to demonstrate that you understand the questions, have provided a correct answer and why the answer is correct.

Very lengthy answers may be rejected.

Unless specified, a simple “Yes” or “No” or single sentence is rarely a sufficient answer.

You are required to follow the **Formatting Requirements** as previously outlined.

Preparing A Written Assignment

A written assignment will be an essay, discussion paper, report, thesis, or other written work. If you take note of our guidelines, you are more likely to present a piece acceptable in the first submission.

Not all written assignments are lengthy. Some are only a few hundred to 50,000 words.

The points provided below assist a student with written work of substantial length. Many of the points will be helpful in smaller submissions.

1. Read all you can about your topic, take notes as you read, and jot down an outline or preliminary plan for your paper.
2. Gather primary ideas based on your own experience and thought.
3. Make sure that your notes contain full details of each book, source, interview, etc., from which you have drawn material.
4. Use scripture references and other external sources to support your comments.
5. Refer to your textbook by title, page number and paragraph for reference.
6. Organise your notes to match your outline (you may find it helpful to put each group of notes on separate sheets of paper).
7. Write the first draft of your paper, and put it aside for two or three days.
8. Get someone else to review it, then revise and correct your first draft.
9. Repeat the previous three steps until you are comfortable with the result.
10. Type or print out the final version.
11. Please send the completed paper to our office with the cover sheet.

You must follow the Formatting Requirements as outlined in this document. See **Soft Copy And Hard Copy Submissions.**

Preparing A Study Guide

Study guides are part of the assessments in theology subjects with accredited studies, from Certificate IV to the Advanced Diploma and in the Degree programs. They are also an optional extra for non-accredited students.

Read the instruction before starting the study guide. Not all students need to complete the whole study guide. The unit and award determine how many chapters are required and are specified in the assignment instructions.

The Study Guide is provided to the student in a Word file. Use it as a template to answer the question. It is not necessary to delete unused pages. Send the completed study guide to Vision Colleges for assessment.

Preparing Supporting Evidences

Elective units in the Accredited Awards will require supporting evidence. You must provide as many "Pieces of evidence" as possible to support your answers. These pieces of evidence help to demonstrate your competency. They are required to support your work and demonstrate competence. Without evidence, you are simply telling an unsupported story that will not suffice as evidence of competency so remember, "more is better".

"**Evidence of Competency**" is the documentary evidence to show that you have undertaken the actual task or simulated the task in a "classroom environment". Your work and the pieces of evidence you provide will demonstrate your competence in this field.

If you refer to memos, provide or make them if you need to. If you refer to a chart and do not have one, create it. Make it if you refer to something but do not have it.

1. Answer all of the questions in the report.
2. Ensure that the work is correctly formatted and written in a professional manner
3. Provide documentary evidence to support your responses to the issues raised in the questions. (below, you will find a list of "examples of evidence").
4. Provide biblical references to support your answers and demonstrate your understanding of biblical theology.
5. If you refer to memos, provide or make them if you need to. If you refer to a chart and do not have one, create it. If you refer to something that you do not have, make it.

Providing evidence may seem to be a lot of work. However, you will quickly complete the tasks with some thought and discipline. If you have any problems or concerns, contact the college, your pastor, or your mentor for assistance or advice.

In addition to your work, we suggest you provide information from your ministry experience.

Pieces of evidence may come from the suggested list below. Please note this list is not exhaustive, and you may have other evidence to provide.

- Case studies; remove all personal identifiers such as names or I.D. numbers.
- Relevant workplace documents you have completed or used.

- Relevant workplace documents you have created.
- Third-party reports from a supervisor, pastor, or mentor affirm your skills.
- Print-out of an electronic diary or journal.
- Any other supporting document.
- Copies of tickets, boarding passes, and an itinerary of journeys undertaken as a part of your study.
- Itinerary of a mission trip showing actual involvement.
- Photographs must be annotated with a date stamp and clearly show their purpose.
- Transcripts of messages delivered.
- Video, CD or other electronic evidence.

Supporting evidence from one area can also be applied in other areas. It is most appropriate to use them in this way. Identify the evidence and note it in the relevant part of the report. The assessor cannot assume to know where supporting pieces of evidence should be applied. We suggest a numeric system as it is most flexible and helpful, provided that the evidence bears a corresponding number.

Examples

a. Within your work, you may need to refer to a teaching program you are using. It would help if you referenced it as "the teaching program (Item 2)". The teaching program must be attached and have "Item 2" clearly marked on it. This identification will help us find your evidence and apply it, no matter how often you use it.

b. Suppose you have used a relevant newspaper advertisement or clipping. In that case, you might use a statement such as "newspaper clipping (Item 4)" in your report. A copy of the newspaper clipping words "Item 4" on it will provide similar related evidence for your list of supporting evidence.

Please keep a record of every document, file, receipt, photograph or other supporting evidence, you may not need all of them. You can discard those that are not required. The more evidence you provide, the less explanation you need to offer. No matter how trivial, it can be significant evidence of your competency.

How Much Work Is "Enough"?

Accredited Studies

It is impossible to provide a definitive answer to this question. Several factors impact the answers, including the nature of the questions, the subject matter, the level of studies undertaken, your desire to study, motivation to succeed and more.

Theology subjects:

Answers should have sufficient depth and breadth to show that you understand the question and response. A short explanation, unless specified, is insufficient. Answers must be accurate and meaningful with supporting evidence.

Supporting evidence is the appropriate use of scripture and other sources as required. They may be specified in the instructions supplied with the subject.

Elective Assignments: Students have two options, our online portal or with hardcopy document.

Elective subjects are sourced from the Community Services or Business sectors. These units form the "business end" of ministry. They are completed online through our training portal.

1. The online training portal has a teaching/training section and an assessment section. It is interactive and self-explanatory.

2. A hard copy version of the training portal with a teaching/training section and an assessment section is available for students who cannot access the online portal.

When answering the questions, the student should use the teaching section and their ministry experience together as often as possible. Combining the two helps to tailor the studies to the student's specific needs.

The student must provide Biblical references to support their answers and other references such as work documents, related sources from the internet, or tailored documentation.

Submitting Assignments

Feel free to contact us at any time by telephone at 02 9603 2077 or by email to principal@visionbiblecollege.edu.au or contact@visionbiblecollege.edu.au

We are available to help you at any time.

We will accept evidence in electronic or hard copy format.

1. Mail hard copies to Vision Colleges, P.O. Box 84, Macquarie Fields, N.S.W., 2564, Australia.

2. Email soft copies in Word or PDF to exams@visionbiblecollege.edu.au

3. Ensure that you have completed the cover sheet and include it with your work.

Please keep a copy of any work you send to the office. You will need to resubmit your assignment if it is lost in the mail. The College cannot take any responsibility for assessment material lost in the mail.

Note: If you advise us by email or telephone when sending assignments by mail, we will be able to notify you if we do not receive them.

COURSE GRADING POLICIES

Recognised Assignments

After more than 50 years of experience in a worldwide ministry reaching 155 nations and over 3 million graduates since 2000, we are confident about our assessment processes.

A 70% pass mark with a Vision Colleges subject has proven to be a satisfactory grade. The result is affirmed throughout the many churches and denominations using Vision Colleges for training as they see the fruit of our standards worked out in the life of the students.

If all subjects are completed and attract 96% or above, the student's award will be issued as an "Honours."

For Recognised students who undertake the multiple-choice questionnaire, the following grades apply

1. **Multiple-choice Assessment** Pass mark is 70%.

0-69%	F	=	Fail
70- 79%	C	=	Pass
80=89%	B	=	Credit
90-95%	A	=	Distinction
96-100%	A+	=	High Distinction

2. Essay, Discussion paper, etc.)

Element	**Possible Total**
Formatting	10
Length	10
Scripture Reference	15
Supporting references	15
Content Relevance	50
Total Possible Result	**100**

Accredited Assignments

The pass mark for a subject is 70%. For an accredited subject, we deem 70% as "Competent". This 30 % margin can encourage students to develop their skills further and have their level of excellence recognised in their chosen study.

"Competent" is the standard required of a student to successfully complete a subject being.

Competency requires the completion of at least two assessments determined by the subject being undertaken.

1. Textbook Assignment. The pass mark for a subject is 70%. For an Accredited Vision Colleges subject, we deem 70% as "Competent".

2. Student Study Guide

Element	Possible Total
Formatting	10
Scripture References	10
Supporting References	10
Chapter Summary	10
Chapter Reflections	10
Depth of Answer	25
Relevance of Answers	25
Total Possible Result	**100**

3. Assignment Report

Element	Possible Total
Formatting	10
Scripture Reference	10
Supporting Evidence	30
Content Relevance	50
Total Possible Result	**100**

4. Other Written Reports (essay, discussion paper, etc.)

Element	Possible Total
Formatting	10
Length	10
Scripture Reference	15
Supporting references	15
Content Relevance	50
Total Possible Result	**100**

ONLINE TRAINING PORTAL

Vision Colleges only uses an Online Training Portal for elective subjects for Vision International College students. The portal is not used for theology subjects. It is a complete online teaching tool.

The benefit of the portal for elective subjects is the rich source of information that assists students through the interactive training program.

Three short videos are listed below to help the student understand how the system works.

How-to videos

1. **Logging into the L.M.S.**
   https://vimeo.com/354140384/07f1bd470d
2. **An overview of your resource**
   https://vimeo.com/354141555/1a83c2082e
3. **Completing assessments**
   https://vimeo.com/355258787/cf72981162

Vision College is a Bible College for ministry training. While these elective subjects are secular, they are equally appropriate to ministry as much as they are to the secular workplace and are the "business end" of ministry.

As the subjects themselves are secular there is a need to address issues of relevance for them to the Christian workplace.

1. Everything we do has or should have a biblical basis. To make the subject relevant to the workplace you ares required to add relevant supporting scripture to your answers. This practice is also called Practical Theolgy" that is the practical application of the word of God to your work.

2. To further develop relevance, you must support your answers from the perspective of your ministry.

Using the portal.

In the first place you should use the three videos above.

Complete the first column as it will help you to identify exisitng skilll and may save you a lot of workAs you work through the exercises, you will need to "submit" your work from time to time for assessment. Your first submission should be after the first two (2) questions. It will allow us to provide you with early feedback, pick up on issues that could become repetitive errors, and work with you to gain the competency.

While the work is assessed, you cannot work on the rest of the questions as that section is locked to you, but you can continue to study.

After the assessment is completed, the system is unlocked, and you can continue to study and answer questions. Continue to submit no more than two (2) answers at a time for assessment.

Follow this pattern, learn from the site, answer questions, provide evidence, submit answers, and rework if required until you have completed the course. This process allows us to assist you as you go, and you will complete the course more quickly.

You must upload evidence to support your comments and provide links to online information supporting your answers. Without evidence, you are merely telling an unacceptable story.

It is not sufficient to be correct. You must provide enough information to show that you understand the question. Answers must be accurate with evidence to show why it is correct.

BUILDING A BASIC LIBRARY
SUGGESTED BY KEN CHANT

Suppose you want to build a useful theological library but have a limited budget. In that case, these are the books I would recommend you purchase, listed in order of priority. Buy the books at the top of the list first; then work through to the end, as your finances permit or your interest guides you.

The Bible

You should have

1. An accurate translation for formal use, especially if you are a teacher or preacher; then
2. A free translation (or paraphrase) for private and devotional reading; and also
3. Various other translations and paraphrases for comparison, as many as you can afford to buy.
    a. There are at least 25 significant translations on the market at present.
    b. They all have strengths and weaknesses; there is no perfectly reliable English translation.
    c. You need to be aware of what to look for; which means you should especially read the *preface* and discover the following:
        i. What text is this translation based upon?
        ii. What was the guiding philosophy of the translators? Consider, for example, the following selections below.
    d. The prefaces show the rules and principles followed by the translators. They can help you assess the value of the translation and what place it might have in your studies and Christian service. Thus —
        i. Some versions are suitable for quick and easy reading. In contrast, others possess the dignity desirable for pulpit use but require more careful reading.
        ii. Some are scrupulously accurate renderings of the original text but read ponderously.
        iii. Some always use the same English constructions to represent the original documents' various grammatical features, which may be useful as a study tool but may fail to convey the real meaning of a passage.
        iv. Others are free paraphrases, helpful in catching the life of the text, but not so reliable for the formulation of doctrine, and so on.

The New King James Version

> "Bible readers should be assured that the most important differences between the different versions are due to the way translators view the task of translation: How literally should the text be rendered? How does the translator view the matter of biblical inspiration? Does the translator adopt a paraphrase when a literal

rendering would be quite clear? The New King James Version follows the Authorised Version's historical precedent in maintaining a literal approach to translation except where the original languages' idioms cannot be translated directly into our tongue. The NKJV has been based on the 'Received Text', thus perpetuating the tradition begun by William Tyndale in 1525, and continued by the 1611 translators in rendering the Authorised Version."

The New American Bible

"(It) has become increasingly desirable that contemporary translations of the sacred books into English be prepared, in which due reverence for the text and strict observance of the rules of criticism would be combined. *The New American Bible* has accomplished this... From the original and oldest available texts of the sacred books, it aims to convey as directly as possible the thought and individual style of the inspired writers... (However) the problem of marked literary peculiarities must be met... (The) limited vocabularies and stylistic infelicities of the (writers) cannot be retained in the exact form in which they appear in the originals without displeasing the modem ear... Similarly, the syntactical shortcomings of Paul, his frequent lapses into anacolouthon[14], and the like, are rendered as they occur in his epistles rather than 'smoothed out'. ... The *Gospel, according to John*, comprises a special case. Absolute fidelity to his technique of reiterated phrasing would result in an assault on the English ear that would be almost unendurable."

The Living Bible - The Way

"The present volume departs radically from (the past) history of Scriptural translations. It is born out of a sincere desire to have the Word of God reach as many people as possible and in a language that is our own. Perhaps more than other translations, this translation cannot be used as a basis for doctrinal or traditional disputes. More than other English versions of the Bible, this one freely departs from a literal translation from the original languages. ... Most readers of the Bible who choose this translation will not be interested in ... technical, theological considerations. They will be looking for spirit and life from the Word of God."

Concordances

Bible concordances are available for the various major English translations, but be sure you purchase *a complete* concordance.

Note: the concordances printed at the back of some Bibles have a limited scope. You would do better to buy a plain Bible and a separate concordance.

You should first purchase key items from the categories listed below; then, you may want to add to your library some Greek & Hebrew reference tools, such as the following –

[14] Also spelled "anacoluthon". It means starting a sentence in one way and finishing it in another, or mixing grammatical constructions, or leaving phrases or clauses unfinished. "Why would you want - oh!, just do it!" "Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Ro 7:24-25). See also Ro 5:12-13; 2 Co 7:5-7; Ph 1:29-30; C13:16.

1. The New Englishman's Greek Concordance gives you access to the Greek text of the N.T.
2. The Englishman's Hebrew & Chaldee Concordance, to give you access to the Hebrew text of the O.T.
3. For adequate Greek and Hebrew study, you will also need lexicons that explain the meanings and roots of each word.
    a. For example, Vine's Expository Dictionary is an excellent tool for those who have no knowledge of the original languages.
    b. Then various other one-volume or multi-volume lexicons are available for those who can read Greek and Hebrew words.

Bible Dictionary Or Encyclopaedia

These books will give you masses of information about people, places, events, flora, and fauna, background summaries of biblical books and ideas, historical and geographical data, etc. Two kinds of "dictionaries" are available -

1. Single-volume: such as *The New Bible Dictionary* and many others.
2. Multi-volume: such as the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible.*

Topical Concordance

This is not a list of *words* but *topics.* For example, a topical concordance will list the occurrences of the word "love" and the places in scripture where the *idea* of love is found. It will not only show you the areas where the Bible contains teaching about love but also where people are seen behaving lovingly.

Some study Bibles, like the *Thompson Chain Reference Bible* and others, include a concordance. They are helpful but inadequate. A comprehensive *topical concordance (e.g. Zondervan)* will give you a much more extensive list of the passages in which a given theme can be found.

Another handy volume is a concordance of parallel passages keyed to the biblical text (e.g., *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge).* Once again, this book contains a far more extensive list of references than any study Bible can have.

Commentaries

There is an almost endless choice! Your task will be made easier if you recognise that there are four kinds of Bible commentary:

- **critical,** which determines and clarify the actual text; that is, what does each passage say?: *"he was(t)alking/(w)alking .. . air!"*
- **Exegetical,** which interpret the original meaning of the text; that is, what does each passage mean?: *happy/unburdened/lively/exalted.*
- **Expository,** which expands the theology of the text; that is, what does each passage teach?: *the possibility of a joyful and free life.*
- **Homiletical/Devotional,** which applies the text to life; that is, what does each passage preach?: *It is wrong to walk around gloomy!*

Many commentaries contain elements of all those categories; others more clearly belong to one domain.

You should probably begin with a general one-volume exegetical and expository commentary.

- Then you could advance to multi-volume commentaries in all categories.

Further Books

Serious students, teachers, and preachers will include in their library the following:

1. *Systematic theologies* present the whole body of Christian doctrine in a coherent and orderly form.
    a. Note the plural: you should not lock yourself into one view of doctrine.
    b. Be open to different ways of perceiving the great themes of the Bible.
2. *Studies on ethics;* dealing with proper behaviour at home, the church, and the world.
3. Groups of books that reflect diverse viewpoints on various topics (e.g. eschatology, the church, history, church history, healing, salvation, faith, God, etc.).

Vocabulary

Anyone who intends to use words professionally in speaking or writing will need the following:

- *A good English dictionary* has extensive definitions, including the etymology of at least the significant words.
- *A thesaurus,* that is, a dictionary of synonyms and antonyms.
- *Books on correct English usage* that explain the rules of grammar, sentence construction, and anything to do with using the language vividly and effectively.
- *Books of popular quotations* give you access to what some of the greatest thinkers and writers have said about a multitude of themes and also help you track down the source of a familiar saying.

You should also set a reading program in good literature (see the recommended list in *World Book).* There is no better or more enjoyable way to develop a lively vocabulary.

Include ***poetry*** in your reading program, for nothing else will give you a better encounter with the noblest and deepest human aspirations.

Homiletics

- Study the sermons and outlines of great preachers; read C. H. Spurgeon's *Lectures To My Students.*

- Purchase from time to time the latest books on techniques of sermon preparation and delivery (styles change from time to time, even within one lifetime - cp. your *homiletics* lectures).

AIDS TO BETTER READING

A helpful study approach is the **PQ4R,** which stands for **P**review, **Q**uestion, **R**ead, **R**eflect, **R**ecite, **R**eview (Thomas & Robinson, 1972). The process is as follows:

1. *Preview* - introduce yourself to the material to obtain a general view of the course or assignment. It is a skill called scanning. Scan the table of contents, the introduction, headings, emphasised sections, summaries, exercises, and final paragraphs.

2. Think of *Questions* related to the purpose of your study and allow yourself to read with anticipation (e.g., "Why does the author divide up his material in this way?").

3. *Read* the material. Read at a pace appropriate for the type of material to be read. Lighter material can be read more quickly. The more solemn theological discussion should be read carefully and at a rate that allows comprehension. Remember, you are reading for comprehension and recall. Do so while paying attention to detail that supports your purposes. Furthermore, learn to read prayerfully. (This is not part of the PQ4R method but is undoubtedly a good idea!)

4. Reflection is a very significant step. Stop at the end of each section to Reflect on what you read, and make notes regarding the main ideas and the necessary details. During this time, you allow thoughts to "roam around" within your mind so that they connect with other ideas, facts, and life experiences. As you do, you may have new ideas and a unique synthesis of the material that may help you grasp the material's interrelatedness. This stage of reflection is creative and is extremely valuable.

5. After some reflection, go back to your questions and purposes. *Recite* these and attempt to connect them with your thoughts in the previous step. This second attempt at making cognitive connections is a significant step that will significantly facilitate long-term memory (recall). This step seals the learning process and moves one from the memorisation stage into learning. Thus the ability to recall at a later date is enhanced.

6. *Review* what you have read, and quickly test your notes for accuracy by reviewing the previous five steps.

During the Read Stage

1. Look for the author's framework of ideas—the plan upon which they constructed the material. The flow is often revealed by the headings, which may also indicate a flow.
2. Pick out the main ideas in each paragraph, which are often contained in the first or last sentence.
3. Do not ignore the author's diagrams and illustrations. They make things clear where the text may not.
4. Think of your examples. Look for applications in your personal experience.
5. Be critical. Do not take the author's work on trust. Look for them to justify the statements they make. If they don't, and the point is essential, check with another book or fellow student.

6. Work out what the results would be if theories other than the ones you are reading about were true.
7. Do not be afraid to skip paragraphs and whole sections if you see that they are irrelevant to your purpose. (No law says you must read every page of a book.)
8. If you still find a section difficult to understand after reflecting for some time, take a break. Then, come back and reread it, two or three times if necessary. Try to discuss the difficulty with other students or find another author's treatment of the topic.

How to Make Useful Notes

It helps to make notes, as described earlier in this book. For the moment, consider the usefulness of note cards and notes.

1. Note-taking will keep you active and help you to concentrate (so you learn and remember better).
2. They provide a written record for review purposes.
3. They protect you from the immense frustration when you recall a quotation or a source of information that fits precisely with what you have to say, but you cannot use it because you have not written it down.

Working Effectively

There are no secrets to success for an adult student in distance learning. Although not always so, the study can be hard and demanding work. There are no tricks or shortcuts that can make it easy. However, we must aim to ensure that your hard work produces results—that is, *effective* and *rewarding* work. To be a productive student, you will need the following:

1. Clear and realistic goals. Whether you are studying for career advancement, to broaden and illuminate your everyday life, or to equip yourself to cooperate more with others, you must identify both short-term goals and long-term goals that can give urgency to all your work (e.g. completing an assignment, attaining skills, starting on a new career).

2. Support from those close to you. You undoubtedly have many roles besides being a student. You are a spouse, parent, friend, employee, etc. When an adult returns to studying, it can be difficult for the husband or wife and the children. It may require a necessary reallocation of duties and responsibilities. These issues need to be faced beforehand. Be willing to discuss them and come to a mutual agreement openly. If those others share your goals and progress, the going will be much easier.

3. A business-like approach. Many successful students would argue that good organisation rather than academic brilliance is the key to effective progress in their studies. You will be less anxious about your work if you try to:

- Plan what you want to achieve in the next day, week, and month.
- Stick to your plans, or modify them only for good reasons.
- Make the best possible use of available spare time.
- Realise that you must sacrifice something in order to find time for the course.
- Pray about your plans. "The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage" (Proverbs 16:3). Time spent planning and praying is very important.

4. A desire to learn. You will enjoy your studies more if you can:

- Open your mind and senses to new, perhaps conflicting, ideas and experiences.
- Read and write about and discuss questions that may or may not have answers.
- Look for principles and the basic unifying ideas on a subject.
- Establish links between new subject matter and your own practical world experience.
- Learn to study for a purpose. *"Be diligent to show thyself approved unto God"* (II Timothy 2:15).
- Study "*to renew your mind"* toward God's purpose and will for your life (Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:17f).

USEFUL WRITING HINTS

Electronic Copy

We prefer you send your work to us by email. In this case, single sentence spacing is sufficient, with an extra line between paragraphs. Please include a title page containing your name, the essay's title, and the date of its completion. See the section on **Formatting Requirements.**

Hard Copy

Hard copies should be a print-out of the electronic version, with the lines double-spaced.

Include a title page, containing your name, the thesis title, and the date of its completion. Make sure each page is numbered correctly, and staple or bind the sheets together.

You are required to follow the **Formatting Requirements** outlined in this document's "Formatting" ection and use scripture references to support your answers.

Handwritten work is never acceptable for a written assignment.

Writing A Word-Study

1. Choose the word, e.g., *reconciliation.*
2. Use a word concordance to list the important occurrences in your Bible of *reconcile(d), reconciling,* or *reconciliation.*
3. Use a topical concordance to list verses or passages which contain the idea of *reconciliation.*
4. Look up the meaning of the word in *(a)* an English dictionary; *(b)* Greek or Hebrew dictionaries; *(c)* Greek or Hebrew word books; *(d)* Bible dictionaries or encyclopaedias. Write down these definitions and any other ideas or information that you find or come to mind.
5. Summarise the information you have gathered under 4 or 5 different headings; e.g., *what is reconciliation; how are we reconciled; with whom are we reconciled; when are we reconciled; what are the results of reconciliation, both now and in the future;* etc.
6. Use at least 1 paragraph per heading in point form with sub-paragraphs if required.
7. Expand your summaries with your comments, illustrations from scripture or life, and the like.
8. Write a final version of your study.

Note: many study Bibles contain examples of word studies that you could use as a guide. Also, the word studies in your lecture notes will show how to outline and present your study.

Writing An Essay

This document deals with writing a small essay of under a thousand words. For longer documents, see our guide, "*On Writing a Thesis."*

Research

Even for a short essay, you should try to do some research beyond your primary textbook, including the study of sources that give a contrary view. If you find it challenging to develop a theme for your essay, read a book of at least 200 pages on the subject you are studying and write an overview of the book with at least three quotes. Ask yourself these questions: Do I agree with all that this book is saying? Do I disagree with some parts of it? Does it contain information I did not find in my primary Vision Colleges textbook? Then include the answers to these and other questions in your essay.

Structure

Your essay should have a clear beginning (an *introduction),* followed by the body of your argument, and then the conclusion. Please use the formatting requirement under the section (Submitting Assignments).

Your introduction should tell what the essay will be about, followed by at least two or three main headings in the main argument. This layout will help readers to know what you are trying to teach. Make sure to back up your statements with scripture.

The assessor will look for three things in particular: *quotes from the book(s) you have read on the subject, supporting quotes from scripture, and some original ideas of your own.*

Documentation

A bibliography (list) of the books, magazines, or other sources you have studied or used in writing your essay must be placed at its end. List all your sources of information. Each listing must contain the author's name, publisher, year of publication, page number, and any other relevant information. Also include particulars of any Bible version that you have quoted.

Use footnotes to identify each quote (again, follow the style of your VCC textbooks).

Originality

We do not expect your work to be entirely original. You are free to draw from other materials (with proper acknowledgment). However, you should include as much original thought or experience as possible. But remember that an essay is not a personal testimony or biography. Use anecdotes about your own life or other people sparingly.

Style

Write in a generally formal style, avoiding slang or colloquial expressions, but don't be too impersonal, abstract, or indirect. Use active sentences as much as possible, not passive ones. For example, the paragraph just above could have been expressed *passively,* thus: "It is not expected that your work will be entirely original." It reads livelier when it is cast *actively:*

"We do not expect . . ." But sometimes, a passive structure is less obtrusive, as in the first part of the previous two sentences.

Writing A Discussion Paper

This document deals with writing a discussion paper of around two thousand words.

The Purpose

A discussion paper must present at least two (2) opposing points of view, thus allowing the student to assess their understanding of a subject or issue from both points of view and providing an opportunity for a balanced understanding.

This may be achieved either by columnising the different points for easy comparison or by presenting in order each point in successive paragraphs

Research

Even for a short paper, you should try to do some research beyond your primary textbook, including the study of sources that give a contrary view. You should be able to read a book of at least 200 pages on the subject you are studying and ask yourself these questions: Do I agree with all this book is saying? Do I disagree with some parts of it? Does it contain information I did not find in my primary Vision Colleges textbook?

Structure

Your paper should have a clear *introduction*, followed by the body of your arguments, which should be the pros and the cons in your view, followed by the conclusion.

Your introduction should tell what the paper will be about, followed by at least two or three main headings in discussion. This layout will help readers to know what you are trying to present. Make sure to back up your statements with scripture.

The assessor will look for three things in particular: *quotes from the book(s) you have read on the subject, supporting quotes from scripture, and some original ideas of your own.*

Documentation

A bibliography (list) of the books, magazines, or other sources you have studied or used in writing your paper must be placed at its end. List all your sources of information. Each listing must contain the author's name, publisher, year of publication, page number, and any other relevant information. Also include particulars of any Bible version that you have quoted.

Use footnotes to identify each quote (again, follow the style of your VCC textbooks).

Originality

We do not expect your work to be entirely original. You are free to draw from other materials (with proper acknowledgment). However, you should include as much original thought or

experience as possible. But remember that a paper is not a personal testimony or biography. Use anecdotes about your own life or about other people sparingly.

Style

Write in a generally formal style, avoiding slang or colloquial expressions, but don't be too impersonal, abstract, or indirect. Use active sentences as much as possible, not passive ones. For example, the paragraph just above could have been expressed *passively,* thus: "It is not expected that your work will be entirely original." It reads livelier when it is cast *actively:* "We do not expect . . ." But sometimes, a passive structure is less obtrusive, as in the first part of the previous two sentences.

Writing A Student Journal

This section deals with completing a Student Study Journal.

The Purpose

To show the level of comprehension a student has attained in their journey as a student of a subject.

A student journal is essentially a detailed diary of their study program. The journal should be kept on a day-to-day basis showing:

- Describe your expectations from the subject at the beginning of the journal
- How much time has been spent in the study each day?
- What has been studied each day from the required text?
- List supplemental texts or resources you have referenced.
- Show the impressions you have gained gained from the text.
- List the discoveries you have made as a result of the study.
- Show the impact the subject has on your personally.
- Show if your course expectations have been met concerning the first bullet point.
- List positive criticism in a constructive and concise manner.
- List negative criticism in a constructive and concise manner.

Writing A Thesis

A thesis is for students undertaking the Bachelor, Master or Doctoral program.

Topic

Before starting your thesis, a faculty member must approve your chosen theme. Please send us the title and a summary of what you propose to write (two or three pages). The topic would normally deal with the following:

1. A biblical theme.
2. An exposition of some areas of Christian doctrine.
3. Some specific aspects of Christian service, ethics, life, or ministry.
4. An element of the church's structure, work, worship, history, future, etc.

Structure

Your thesis should be set up as follows -

1. A title page, which should contain your name, address, the subject, and the date of completion.
2. A table of contents, or outline, which should reflect as closely as possible the headings and subheadings used in the thesis.
3. Acknowledgements where appropriate (of your typist, illustrator, etc.).
4. A list of abbreviations (if any have been used).
5. Then the body of the thesis, broken up either into chapters, or sections, with appropriate headings and sub-headings.
6. Any appendices that may be needed.
7. A note on your methods of research.

Documentation

A complete bibliography must be provided of the sources you drew from and researched.

RESEARCH

A thesis is a major work, especially for a doctoral project, it is a demanding task. You will be required to research a large number of currenbt substantial volumes depending on the purpose of the Thesis, eg Bachelors, Masters or Doctorate. The research should examine materials that agree and disagree with your position and where possible offer new opinions and insights. Constantly ask yourself these questions:

Do I agree with all that this book is saying?

Do I disagree with some parts of it?

Does it contain information that I was not already aware of.

There are at least 5 steps to researching and completing a thesis[15].

Step 1. Develop a topic

- Select a Topic
- Develop Research Questions
- Identify Keywords
- Find Background Information
- Refine the Topic

Step 2. Locate information

- Search Strategies
- Books, eBooks, Articles
- Videos & Images
- Databases
- Websites
- Grey Literature

Step 3. Evaluate and analyze information

- Evaluate Sources
- Primary vs Secondary
- Types of Periodicals

Step 4. Write, organize, and communicate information

- Take Notes
- Outline the Paper
- Incorporate Source Material

Step 5. Cite sources

- Avoid Plagiarism
- Annotated Bibliographies

[15] We have quited from the excellent source at Elimire College from the Gannett-Tripp Library. https://libguides.elmira.edu/c.php?g=184944&p=1221045

Footnotes

A system of footnotes should be included. The reference style should be standard: *book title, author's name, publisher, place of publication, date, and the page number.* You must identify any part of the thesis that does not strictly contain your ideas or words. Direct quotes from another work must be set in quotation marks, with the source identified in a note. Passages that substantially echo another person's ideas or words should also be identified in a footnote.

Originality

It is not expected that your work will be entirely original. You are free to draw from other materials (with proper acknowledgements). However, you should also introduce as much original research, thought, or experience as possible. Credit will be given for the following.

1. The *number* of books or sources researched.
2. The manner in which you have *organised* your material.
3. The degree to which you have successfully *analysed* and *understood* your material.
4. And the extent of your *creative* or *original* thought or presentation.

To gather materials, you should use resources like the following —

- Published books.
- Unpublished writings.
- Interviews.
- Journals and magazines.
- Leaflets, brochures, etc.
- Government publications.
- Audio and video tapes, etc.
- Your local library.
- Computer resources, such as C.D.s and the internet (which, if you do not have your computer, are available in most major public libraries.).

Style

Write in a formal style, but avoid being too impersonal, abstract, or indirect. Give attention to correct spelling. Although the *VCC* program is not a course in English grammar, you can lose marks if your thesis indicates carelessness or laziness. After all, spelling help is no further away than a dictionary. If you find writing difficult, use short and simple sentences. Don't try to be more clever than you are. Ask a friend who is more literate than yourself to check your work and offer suggestions for correcting faulty grammar or spelling.

Throughout the thesis, the marker will look for some measure of original thought and a good writing style. This is particularly true for a thesis required for higher awards. A master's thesis (for example) is expected to show a substantial measure of creative analysis and a better-than-average understanding of the subject. That is even more so for a doctoral thesis, which is expected to display superior handling of the subject and a high level of originality.

Quotes

The use of direct quotations can add interest to your writing. A ***short passage,*** no more than three or four lines, can be included as part of the paragraph you are writing, but make sure to put it inside quotation marks.

However —

> A longer passage should be separated from your paragraph and indented (as this one is). If your equipment allows it, use a smaller typeface. Since it would not be appropriate for another author's work to be graded or corrected, more extended quotes can be typed in single spacing. You will, of course, acknowledge the source of the quote, either in a Footnote or an Endnote. Note also that quotation marks are not necessary. The indentation and the smaller typeface are sufficient to show that the passage is a quote.

Scripture

The use of scripture can add interest to your writing. A ***short passage,*** forming part of a sentence, can be included as part of the paragraph you are writing, but make sure to put it inside quotation marks.

A longer passage should be separated from your paragraph, italicised and indented as the example below.

> *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:1-10)*

Biblical Poetry should be set out at poetry.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil; For You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (Psalms 23:1-4)

Poetry

Poetry should be centred and set out like this Sonnet by William Shakespeare. Do not use double spacing.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds Admit impediments. Love is not love Which alters when it alteration finds, Or bends with the remover to remove. Oh, no! it is an ever-fixed mark

That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;

It is the star to every wand'ring bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come; Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks, But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me prov 'd,

I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

Method

Follow this procedure. Some of these things may not be applicable to you now, but will be good to know as you progress to higher levels -

1. Read all you can about your topic, take notes as you read, and jot down an outline or preliminary plan for your paper.

2. Gather primary ideas based on your own experience and thought.

3. Make sure that your notes contain full details of each book, source, interview, etc., from which you have drawn material.

4. If your paper contains quotes from, or passages that closely echo, other writings, reference them in footnotes (see your textbooks for examples of how they should be set out).

5. Use scripture references to strengthen your points wherever possible.

6. Organise your notes to match your outline (you may find it helpful to put each group of notes on separate sheets of paper).

7. Write a first draft of your paper, and put it aside for two or three days.

8. Then get someone else to review it for you to revise and correct your first draft.

9. If necessary, repeat the previous three steps once, twice, or three times.

10. Type or print out the final version.

11. Type or print the number of words in your paper on the title page[16] (unless you have a computer, don't count the words individually; but work out the average number of words on one page, then multiply that by the number of pages).

12. Send the completed paper to the Vision Colleges office.

[16] Unless you have a computer that will give you an instant total, do not count the words individually. Work out the average number of words on one page, and multiply that by the number of pages.

TYPES OF THEOLOGY

There are various forms of theology, each with its purpose of helping our understanding of God and His word. With Vision Colleges, you will encounter ***Biblical Theology, Practical Theology*** and occasionally ***Systematic Theology***. We have outlined them to help you understand where they apply. For the most part, you will find that Vision Colleges prefer using Biblical Theology in studying the word. If you are undertaking the accredited program, you will find a mix of Biblical and Practical Theology. Occasionally, you will discover Systematic Theology in the study program.

Biblical Theology

Biblical theology is the study of the doctrines of the Bible, arranged according to their chronology and historical background. In contrast to systematic theology, which categorises doctrine according to specific topics, biblical theology shows the unfolding of God's revelation as it progressed through history. Biblical theology may seek to isolate and express the theological teachings of a specific portion of scripture, such as the theology of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament) or the theology contained within John's writings, etc. Or it may focus on a particular period of time, such as the theology of the unified kingdom years. Another branch of biblical theology may study a particular motif or theme in the Bible: a study of "the remnant," for example, might search out how that motif is introduced and developed throughout scripture.

Many credit J. P. Gabler, a German biblical scholar, with beginning the field of biblical theology. As he was being inaugurated to a professorship in 1787, Gabler called for a sharp distinction between dogmatic (systematic or doctrinal) theology and biblical theology. For Gabler, biblical theology must be strictly a historical study of what was believed and taught in the various periods of biblical history, independent of modern denominational, doctrinal, philosophical, or cultural considerations. In general, the principles that Gabler espoused were correct, and he influenced the development of biblical theology for many years to come.

However, it should be noted that there is no such thing as a study of the Bible with complete objectivity. Every interpreter brings certain presuppositions to the task. These biases have considerable influence upon the process of interpreting the Scriptures. As a result, the field of biblical theology is checkered with every imaginable opinion and variation of what the Bible teaches. Biblical theology is utterly dependent upon the hermeneutics of the theologian. The methods employed in interpreting scripture are crucially important to biblical theology. One's biblical theology can be no better than the methods used to interpret scripture.

Here is a basic difference between systematic and biblical theology: systematic theology asks, "What does the Bible as a whole say about angels?" and then examines every passage that concerns angelic beings, draws conclusions, and organises all the information into a body of truth called "angelology." The final product is, from Genesis to Revelation, the totality of God's revealed truth on the subject.

Biblical theology asks, "How did our understanding of angels develop throughout biblical history?" and then starts with the Pentateuch's teaching about angels and traces God's progressive revelation of these beings throughout scripture. Along the way, the biblical

theologian draws conclusions about how people's thinking about angels may have changed as more and more truth was revealed. The conclusion of such a study is, of course, an understanding of what the Bible has to say about angels, but it also places that knowledge in the context of the "bigger picture" of God's whole revelation. Biblical theology helps us see the Bible as a unified whole, rather than as a collection of unrelated doctrinal points.

Recommended Resource: A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New by G.K. Beale.

Practical Theology

Practical theology, as its name implies, is the study of theology in a way that is intended to make it useful or applicable. Another way of saying it is that it is the study of theology so that it can be used and is relevant to everyday concerns. One seminary describes Practical Theology Program as "being dedicated to the practical application of theological insights" and "generally includes the sub-disciplines of pastoral theology, homiletics, and Christian education, among others." Another seminary sees the purpose of practical theology as helping to prepare students to translate the knowledge learned into an effective ministry to people. Doing this involves both personal and family life as well as the administration and educational ministries in the church. They state that the goal of practical theology is to develop effective communicators of scripture who have a vision for the spiritual growth of believers while being servant leaders.

Some consider practical theology to simply be a more technical name for the doctrine of Christian life. Emphasis is on how the teaching of scripture should affect the way we live today in this present world. The emphasis of practical theology is not simply to contemplate or comprehend theological doctrines but to move beyond that to applying those doctrines in everyday Christian life so that we "contribute to the world becoming what God intends it to be."

The premise behind practical theology programs is that future Christian leaders need to be equipped not only with theological knowledge but also with the necessary professional skills to minister effectively in the modern world. Often these programs use preaching, Christian education, counselling and clinical programs to provide opportunities to equip and prepare future Christian leaders.

Recommended Resource: ***The Moody Handbook of Theology by Paul Enns***.

Systematic Theology

"Systematic" refers to something being put into a system. Systematic theology is, therefore, the division of theology into systems that explain its various areas. For example, many books of the Bible give information about the angels. No one book gives all the information about the angels. Systematic theology takes all the information about angels from all the books of the Bible and organises it into a system called angelology. That is what systematic theology is all about—organising the teachings of the Bible into categorical systems.

Examples of such are ***Theology Proper*** or ***Paterology*** is the study of God the Father. ***Christology*** is the study of God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. ***Pneumatology*** is the study of God, the Holy Spirit. ***Bibliology*** is the study of the Bible. ***Soteriology*** is the study of salvation. ***Ecclesiology*** is the study of the church. ***Eschatology*** is the study of the end times.

Angelology is the study of angels. ***Christian Demonology*** is the study of demons from a Christian perspective. ***Christian Anthropology*** is the study of humanity. ***Hamartiology*** is the study of sin. Systematic theology is an important tool in helping us to understand and teach the Bible in an organised manner.

Recommended Resource: ***The Moody Handbook of Theology by Paul Enns***.

Online Resources

For a vast array of study helps, libraries. Some are free, and some will require a fee, go to our website:

https://visioncolleges.edu.au/study/online-resources/

E-sword: electronic Bible www.esword.net

Dictionary: www.dictionary.com

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