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.