

Writing Center Handouts

Research Papers

Most instructors will have their own guidelines for page length, formatting parameters, and citation style. Make sure to follow them closely to avoid unnecessary points off from your paper. Remember your intended audience when writing; research papers are academic and formal language should be used. Here is a general structured outline to help get you started.

Instead of thinking that a research paper is taking research articles and putting them together like a puzzle, a summary, think of a research paper instead as using research and your informed judgment to add on to the conversation.

The Introduction:

- Contextualizing
Why did you choose this topic? Why should the reader care about this topic? Setting up your thesis and your essay, what the reader should expect to read about and will determine whether or not the reader wants to continue reading. Think: Relevancy
- Thesis Statement
Think: Research Question in Statement form. This is the main focus, argument, point, that your essay is trying to make. All body paragraphs, evidence, and research should somehow relate back to this sentence. A reference point for both you while you are writing, and for your audience while they are reading

The Body:

- Literature Review
A brief summary of the research you have conducted. Explanation of why it is important and how it relates to your thesis and your larger essay.
- Evidence; connection between research and thesis
Not just summarizing sources, but using research to back up your informed conclusions on the topic, creating links between research and your thesis.
- Methods
Describe how you conducted research, who the participants were,
- Results
Results of the research you have conducted, how do your results relate back to your thesis and research that you have completed

The Conclusion:

- Where do we go from here?
- Miscalculations/Known errors/Future building