

Research Paper – College Prep English

Steps of a Research Paper

Decide on a topic. Make sure it is one you are interested in and that it is not too broad or too narrow to analyze adequately.

Research: Scan possible sources and make bibliography cards for the sources you might use and sources you will definitely use.

After acquiring some knowledge of your subject matter you should decide on questions you still have and should answer throughout your paper.

Write a topic outline, sentence outline, rough draft, and final paper.

To analyze something, divide it into parts. Since you are writing about a problem, the body of your paper might look something like this:

General introduction of the problem. This should include the thesis statement, which states your opinion (no I).

History of the problem (including, perhaps, past attempts at a solution). Sources needed

Extent of the problem (who is affected, how bad is it, etc.) Sources needed

Repercussion of the problem is not solved. Sources needed.

You should have led up to a conclusion that your argument is sound. Pull it all together by connecting your argument with the facts. Anticipate objections and make concessions.

Conclusion: Restatement or rewording of thesis and summary of main ideas.

Research Paper Due Dates – These dates are not negotiable. I will not take any assignments late! If you know you will be missing class, you are required to turn the assignment in early! If you have a legitimate excused absence you must bring the assignment in the following class period. Don't fall behind!!

Assignment #1 Topic – 30 Points

Due January 2nd

Assignment #2 Research – 100 Points (10 Cards Minimum)

Due January 4th

Assignment #3 Thesis Statement – 30 Points

Due January 8th

Assignment #4 Topic Outline – 50 Points

Due January 8th

Assignment #5 Final Research – 100 Points

15 Cards – 5 original research/10 final research
(Each original research card needs two final research cards)

Due January 8th

Assignment #6 Sentence Outline – 50 Points

Due January 10th

Assignment #7 Rough Draft for peer review – 100 Points

THIS MUST BE TYPED!

Due January 14th

Assignment #8 Final Draft – 150 Points

Due January 16th

Assignment One: Select a Topic

Select a general topic, which will be refined to a thesis statement later. **YOUR TOPIC MUST DEFEND/PROVE SOMETHING.** Based on your job survey worksheet you should have a topic in mind. Study the topic checklist and keep working on it until it passes all the checklist criteria. Remember, an argumentative paper influences the reader by using evidence and reasoning to express a point of view and uncover a truth for the reader. Magazine and journal articles are arguments. Persuasive papers seek to change the readers' opinion and stimulate an action based on the author's "truth." Debates and advertising are forms of persuasion.

Topic Checklist

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Not too broad | "Preparations for D-Day" not "Causes and Results of WWII" |
| Not too narrow | "Impact of Foreign Car Imports" not "The BMW Hubcap" |
| Interesting to readers | "Ocean Tides-Alternate Fuel" not the obvious "Should We Look for Other Fuels?" |
| Not too technical | "Chemotherapy for Cancer" not "Carcinoma of the Right Central Pancreatic Duct" |
| Scholarly | "Influences on Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan'" not "Skateboards" |
| Interesting to you | Opens a new challenging area to you. |
| Okay with Instructor | Meets subject, length, type, or other criteria |

Assignment Two: Search for Information

Begin to look for information on your topic. Make sure you can find 5 quality books (includes magazines, newspapers, journals, and interviews), as well as 5 quality web sites. This makes a total of 10 sources!

Source Quality Checklist

Primary Sources: First hand material such as letters, documents, plays, novels, news stories...

Secondary Sources: Material written about primary sources, events, or ideas.

Copyright date – most recent unless historically significant

Author's reputation – well-known in field, prolific, university scholar

Scholarship – material footnoted, detailed, accurate. Not sensational, popular books or magazines

Relevance – relates closely to topic

Bibliography – Extensive scholarly sources

Objectivity – Clear point of view. Recognizes other ideas.

Collection of Bibliography Cards

Complete a bibliography card for each book or source containing relevant information. Be sure to copy accurately all publication information. Enter the page numbers where you found material. Jot down a brief note on the back of the card telling what information is contained or how it is treated. For books, list the library call number; for web sites list the address. This can be done on paper or through your flashcard app. **YOU WILL NEED A MINIMUM OF 10 CARDS!**

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Author | | Call Number/Web site |
| Title | | Search Engine |
| (For books) Publication City | | Article Name |
| Publisher/Magazine | | |
| Date of Publication | | |
| Page Numbers | | |
| Editor-Volume | | |
| Other Information | | |
| Comments (onto back) | | |

You should have some idea of how others have dealt with your topic and what the major issues are. Now is the time to bring your own ideas. You should have a point of view on your topic. Do you agree or disagree with your sources? Have you decided on an approach to your topic? Can you apply the information you have gathered?

Assignment Three: Develop a Thesis Statement

You need to refine your ideas and develop a theme or thesis, which can be proved by your research paper. Read through the following list of thesis approaches to see which fits your thinking. You may want to reread your bibliography cards once more since the information you have gathered may suggest an approach. Note that the examples are all in declarative sentences, which can be proved.

Thesis Approaches

Chronologies – The rise of the Imagist Movement can be traced over a period of twenty years.

Procedures – Five steps are required to produce liquid oxygen.

Causes and Effects – Economic factors caused deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations from 1950-1979.

Problems – Problems related to differing Moslem ideologies prevent Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Solutions – The energy crisis can be solved by solar, synthetic, and oceanic power.

Comparisons – Acupuncture is a better anaesthetic than malothane.

Differences – marriage rites differ among Far Eastern, Middle Eastern, and Western Societies.

Relationships – Hemingway's life influenced his work.

Analyses – three major issues are related to the crisis in Iran

Literary Themes – Romantic themes prevail in two major works of Wordsworth.

Pro's – Kennedy's handling of the Cuban missile crisis was a successful political move.

Con's – Four medical theories oppose radical mastectomy in breast cancer.

Categories – Several significant ethnic groups in America have grown in size during the past ten years.

Write your thesis statement in a declarative sentence. Identify which thesis approach you are using. Think the words, "I believe...": just before you write your thesis statement. Again think these words never include them in your actual statement! This will insure that only YOU and YOUR ideas are in the paper. Check your thesis with the guidelines below.

Thesis Checklist

My thesis statement: (I believe) _____

Uses the _____ thesis approach.

It is not too broad.

It is not too narrow or technical unless required.

Can be proved with the material I have found.

Is scholarly.

Assignment Four: Write Preliminary Topic Outline

This assignment gives you a rough strategy to prove your thesis statement. The thesis approach and the information you have researched.

Outlining Hints

Organize and classify ideas under major heading which support and prove the thesis statement. Do not include your introduction and conclusion in this outline. They will be written in the later outline.

Plan at least two subdivisions under each major heading. If you cannot, your outline is faulty. Subheads should also have at least two subdivisions.

The preliminary outline will tell you what information you are lacking. If you cannot find the material, revise your outline. Do not stretch or pad insufficient information.

Use the Harvard outline form – Must have at least four major headings!

I.

A.

a.

b.

B.

a.

b.

Sample Topic Outline

You do not need to include the intro and conclusion paragraphs in the topic outline. Remember this just contains a few key words, it will become sentences later. This is just to determine if you have enough information!

I – History of the problem

- A – Person, Company, Country, Idea, Belief...
 - a – how they impacted the problem
- B – Past attempt at a solution
 - a – how it worked

II – The extent of the problem

- A – Who is impacted?
 - a – specific example
- B – How bad is it?
 - a – specific example

III – Repercussions if the problem is not solved

- A – Result
 - a – specific example
- B – Result
 - a – specific example

IV – Solution (pull your argument together with your research)

- A – What needs to happen?
 - a – specific example
- B – Possible objections or others argument
 - a – defend your position with a solid rebuttal

Assignment Five: Finish gathering all of your research for your paper.

For this assignment you will need to take information from your top five sources, and organize it in accordance with your preliminary outline. Go back to your top five sources and begin to take notes on them. This can be achieved by photocopying textbooks or writing longhand and by printing information from web sites or writing longhand. Summarize, paraphrase, or quote the information on your index cards. Use one side only – you must provide at least two cards for each source. This makes a total of 10 cards. Continue this process until you have enough information to fill in your outline. Make sure you label your cards with the place they go in your outline.

Assignment Six: Revise your outline into a sentence outline.

Take a critical look at your work so far. Do you have enough information, or do you have gaps. Is there too much info for topic one and not enough for topic three? Make sure you are sticking to your thesis approach. Change your topics on your original outline into topic sentences that will direct your paragraphs. Remember, a topic sentence is like a little thesis statement. You must have at least six paragraphs. This outline must include your introduction and conclusion

Sample: Taking a topic outline into a sentence outline!

Topic Outline

I. Romantic Themes

A. Return to nature

B. Sympathy with humble

Sentence Outline

I. Romanticism is associated with several themes, which set it apart from Classicism.

A. A return to nature and its beauty characterize the Romantic movement.

B. The simplicity of the rustic life attracted many Romantic poets.

Assignment Seven: Rough Draft

Plan and write topic sentences and paragraphs based on your sentence outline. Decide how to use your research to support your ideas in your paragraphs. Put your thoughts around your research notes, but be sure the major thesis and bulk of the paper is your own. You will need to include an endnote sheet with your rough draft. You create endnotes to cite others works – quotes or paraphrased – used in your paper.

THIS MUST BE TYPED! MUST HAVE AT LEAST FOUR MAJOR HEADINGS – 6 PARAGRAPHS MINIMUM, INCLUDING AN INTRO AND CONCLUSION!

Assignment Eight: Final Draft

This should be polished and changed from the suggestions on your rough draft. Be sure you pay close attention to your grammar and wording. Read the paper aloud to yourself to find easy errors.

This paper should be a well thought out research paper. If you have picked a topic that fits in the guidelines, you should have enough information to have four to five major headings, remember, each major heading should have two Subheads, and each subhead should have two subdivisions.

I – Major Heading

A – Sub Heading

1 - sub division

a -

b -

2 - sub division

a -

b -

B - Sub Heading

1 - sub division

a -

b -

2 - sub division

a -

b -

Please use the OWL Purdue Online Writing Lab for any additional questions or to view sample papers.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>

Please use the Citation Machine website to properly cite your sources.

<http://citationmachine.net/index2.php>

Both of these websites can be linked to through my website under the writing section.

Final Checklist

1. Is my thesis statement concise and clear?
2. Did I follow my outline? Did I miss anything?
3. Are my arguments presented in a logical sequence?
4. Are all sources properly cited to ensure that I am not plagiarizing?
5. Have I proved my thesis with strong supporting arguments?
6. Have I made my intentions and points clear in the essay?
7. Did I begin each paragraph with a proper topic sentence?
8. Have I supported my arguments with documented proof or examples?
9. Any run-on or unfinished sentences?
10. Any unnecessary or repetitious words?
11. Varying lengths of sentences?
12. Does one paragraph or idea flow smoothly into the next?
13. Any spelling or grammatical errors?
14. Quotes accurate in source, spelling, and punctuation?
15. Are all my citations accurate and in correct format?
16. Did I avoid using contractions? Use "cannot" instead of "can't", "do not" instead of "don't"?
17. Did I use third person as much as possible? Avoid using phrases such as "I think", "I guess", "I suppose"
18. Did I avoid addressing the reader as you?
19. Have I made my points clear and interesting but remained objective?
20. Did I leave a sense of completion for my reader(s) at the end of the paper?

Differences between MLA and APA Styles of Documentation

| | MLA | APA |
|---|---|--|
| Governing Body | Modern Language Association | American Psychological Association |
| Users | Humanities | Social Sciences |
| aka | Author-Work | Author-Date |
| Bibliographic list | Works Cited | References |
| Order of entries in bibliographic list | Alphabetical by author, then alphabetical by work | Alphabetical by author, then chronological by work |
| Names | Last, First, Middle Initial | Last, First Initial, Middle Initial |
| Dates | Not used in-text | Prominent in-text |
| Article Titles | In quotation marks | Not in quotation marks |
| Capitalization | All Major Words Capitalized | First words only capitalized |
| Notes (Foot or End) | Not used for references | Not used for references |
| In-text parenthesis | (Name space page number) | (Name comma year comma p.#) |
| Example | (Levin 13) | (Levin, 1982, p. 13) |
| And | Spelled out | Ampersand except running text |
| Secondary citation | (qtd . in Levin 13) | (cited in Levin, 1982, p. 13) |
| Publisher's names | Many abbreviated | Rarely Abbreviated |
| Trailing punctuation | Not underlined | Underlined |
| Multiple works by same author | Works alphabetical, three hyphens and a period for name | Works chronological, name repeated for each entry |
| Et al | Four or more authors | Six or more authors |
| Tense of reporting | Present: Smith claims . . . | Past: Smith claimed . . . |

Why Use APA?

Aside from simplifying the work of editors by having everyone use the same format for a given publication, using APA Style makes it easier for readers to understand a text by providing a familiar structure they can follow. Abiding by APA's standards as a writer will allow you to:

- Provide readers with cues they can use to follow your ideas more efficiently and to locate information of interest to them
- Allow readers to focus more on your ideas by not distracting them with unfamiliar formatting
- Establish your credibility or ethos in the field by demonstrating an awareness of your audience and their needs as fellow researchers

Who Should Use APA?

APA Style describes rules for the preparation of manuscripts for writers and students in:

- Social Sciences, such as Psychology, Linguistics, Sociology, Economics, and Criminology
- Business
- Nursing

General APA Guidelines

Your essay should be typed, double-spaced on standard-sized paper (8.5" x 11") with 1" margins on all sides. APA recommends using 12 pt. Times New Roman font. Include a **page header** at the top of every page. To create a **page header**, insert page numbers flush right. Then type "TITLE OF YOUR PAPER" in the header flush left.

Major Paper Sections

Your essay should include **four** major sections: the **Title Page**, **Abstract**, **Main Body**, and **References**.

Title Page

The title page should contain the **title** of the paper, the **author's name**, and the **institutional affiliation**. Include the page header (described above) flush left with the page number flush right at the top of the page. Please note that on the title page, your page header should look like this:

Running head: TITLE OF YOUR PAPER

Pages after the title page should have a running head that looks like this:
TITLE OF YOUR PAPER

Type your **title** in upper and lowercase letters centered in the upper half of the page. APA recommends that your title be no more than 12 words in length and that it should not contain abbreviations or words that serve no purpose. Your title may take up one or two lines. All text on the title page, and throughout your paper, should be double-spaced.

Beneath the title, type the **author's name**: first name, middle initial(s), and last name. Do not use titles (Dr.) or degrees (Ph.D.). Beneath the author's name, type the **institutional affiliation**, which should indicate the location where the author(s) conducted the research.

Abstract

Begin a new page. Your abstract page should already include the **page header** (described above). On the first line of the abstract page, center the word "Abstract" (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks).

Beginning with the next line, write a concise summary of the key points of your research. (Do not indent.) Your abstract should contain at least your research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions. You may also include possible implications of your research and future work you see connected with your findings. Your abstract should be a single paragraph double-spaced. Your abstract should be between 150 and 250 words.

You may also want to list keywords from your paper in your abstract. To do this, indent as you would if you were starting a new paragraph, type *Keywords:* (italicized), and then list your keywords. Listing your keywords will help researchers find your work in databases.

APA Citation Basics

When using APA format, follow the author-date method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the year of publication for the source should appear in the text, for example, (Jones, 1998), and a complete reference should appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

If you are referring to an idea from another work but **NOT** directly quoting the material, or making reference to an entire book, article or other work, you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication and not the page number in your in-text reference. All sources that are cited in the text must appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

In-Text Citation Capitalization, Quotes, and Italics/Underlining

- Always capitalize proper nouns, including author names and initials: D. Jones.
- If you refer to the title of a source within your paper, capitalize all words that are four letters long or greater within the title of a source: *Permanence and Change*. Exceptions apply to short words that are verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs: *Writing New Media, There Is Nothing Left to Lose*.

(Note: in your References list, only the first word of a title will be capitalized: Writing new media.)

- When capitalizing titles, capitalize both words in a hyphenated compound word: *Natural-Born Cyborgs*.
- Capitalize the first word after a dash or colon: "Defining Film Rhetoric: The Case of Hitchcock's *Vertigo*."
- Italicize or underline the titles of longer works such as books, edited collections, movies, television series, documentaries, or albums: *The Closing of the American Mind*; *The Wizard of Oz*; *Friends*.
- Put quotation marks around the titles of shorter works such as journal articles, articles from edited collections, television series episodes, and song titles: "Multimedia Narration: Constructing Possible Worlds"; "The One Where Chandler Can't Cry."

Short Quotations

If you are directly quoting from a work, you will need to include the author, year of publication, and the page number for the reference (preceded by "p."). Introduce the quotation with a signal phrase that includes the author's last name followed by the date of publication in parentheses.

According to Jones (1998), "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (p. 199).

Jones (1998) found "students often had difficulty using APA style" (p. 199); what implications does this have for teachers?

If the author is not named in a signal phrase, place the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number in parentheses after the quotation.

She stated, "Students often had difficulty using APA style" (Jones, 1998, p. 199), but she did not offer an explanation as to why.

Long Quotations

Place direct quotations longer than 40 words in a free-standing block of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented 1/2 inch from the left margin, i.e., in the same place you would begin a new paragraph. Type the entire quotation on the new margin, and indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation 1/2 inch from the new margin. Maintain double-spacing throughout. The parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark.

Jones's (1998) study found the following:

Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help. (p. 199)

Summary or Paraphrase

If you are paraphrasing an idea from another work, you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication in your in-text reference, but APA guidelines encourage you to also provide the page number (although it is not required.)

According to Jones (1998), APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners.

APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners (Jones, 1998, p. 199).

Reference List

Your reference list should appear at the end of your paper. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and retrieve any source you cite in the body of the paper. Each source you cite in the paper must appear in your reference list; likewise, each entry in the reference list must be cited in your text.

Your references should begin on a new page separate from the text of the essay; label this page "References" centered at the top of the page (do NOT bold, underline, or use quotation marks for the title). All text should be double-spaced just like the rest of your essay.

Basic Rules

- All lines after the first line of each entry in your reference list should be indented one-half inch from the left margin. This is called hanging indentation.
- Authors' names are inverted (last name first); give the last name and initials for all authors of a particular work for up to and including seven authors. If the work has more than seven authors, list the first six authors and then use ellipses after the sixth author's name. After the ellipses, list the last author's name of the work.
- Reference list entries should be alphabetized by the last name of the first author of each work.
- If you have more than one article by the same author, single-author references or multiple-author references with the exact same authors in the exact same order are listed in order by the year of publication, starting with the earliest.
- Capitalize all major words in journal titles.
- When referring to books, chapters, articles, or Web pages, capitalize only the first letter of the first word of a title and subtitle, the first word after a colon or a dash in the title, and proper nouns. Do not capitalize the first letter of the second word in a hyphenated compound word.
- Italicize titles of longer works such as books and journals.
- Do not italicize, underline, or put quotes around the titles of shorter works such as journal articles or essays in edited collections.

Formatting Your APA Style Paper in Word

Open new page

1. Click on - insert - tab
2. Click on - header - tab
3. Click on – blank- example
4. Look at tabs at top of page: in green, it says header & footer tools
5. Click on “Different First Page”
6. Click on - page number - tab
7. Click on - top of page - tab
8. Click on - plain #3 - example
9. When number 1 comes up on the right top corner of your paper, put your cursor on the left side of the one and back space it to the left twice.
10. Type in - Running Head: Your Title (each word begins with a capital letter)
11. Put cursor in front of the running head and tab once to center
12. Put cursor between last word of title and page number. Tab page number to right.
13. Double click on the body of your paper to begin typing.

Second page

1. Double Click top of page and it will bring up the header.
2. Click on – page number – tab
3. Click on - top of page - tab
4. Click on plain #3
5. When number 2 comes up on the right top corner of your paper, put your cursor on the left side of the 2 and back space it to the left twice.
6. Type in - Your Title (each word begins with a capital letter)
7. Put cursor in front of the Title and tab once to center
8. Put cursor between last word of Title and page number. Tab page number to right
9. Double click on the body of your paper to begin typing.

The rest of your pages will now automatically have the correct header, your Title, and page number.