

SPAA WRITING & CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

WRITING A STRONG RESEARCH PAPER

Short Essay- Long Research Paper Outline

1. Introduction
 - a. Epigraph- opening quotation (optional)
 - b. Hook
 - c. Topic
 - d. Key Authors/ Resources
 - e. Themes
 - f. Thesis sentence/ primary argument (3 main ideas of paper)
2. Body Paragraph 1
 - a. Topic sentence
 - b. Support
 - c. Quotes/ Data
 - d. Analysis
 - e. Transition
3. Body Paragraph 2
 - a. Topic sentence
 - b. Support
 - c. Quotes/ Data
 - d. Analysis
 - e. Transition
4. Body Paragraph 3
 - a. Topic sentence
 - b. Support
 - c. Quotes/ Data
 - d. Analysis
 - e. Transition
5. Conclusion
 - a. Restatement of ideas
 - b. Final thoughts/ Recommendations
 - c. Closing Hook (optional)
6. Reference Page
 - a. Works cited in alphabetical order with proper citations in APA format

Approaches to examining a topic:

Organization types

- Public
- Non-profit
- Private

Levels of Government

- Federal
- State
- Local
- International

Environment

- Internal
- External

Perspectives

- Political
- Social
- Economic
- Cultural
- Communal
- Religious
- Ethical

Key Stakeholders

- Political
- Administrative
- Organizational
- Service providers
- Clients
- Public opinion

Methods to explain topics

- Exposition
- Case studies
- Examples
- Analogies
- Compare/ Contrast
- Analysis of quotes/ data

Notes:

Applying the outline to different paper structures

- Always follow the instructions of the assignment
- Papers inform, persuade and entertain
- Outlines can be condensed to fit a short paper (3 paragraphs- intro/ body/ conclusion)
- Outlines can be expanded to fit a long research paper, rather than paragraphs dedicate each section to topics with subheadings or full pages

Analysis

- Analysis examines the contextual relationship between the quote/data and the paper topic
- Every quote used must be analyzed
 - Your voice is the most important part of the paper
- If more than 1/3 of your paper is made of quotes, you are allowing the author to speak for you
- Do not mix the author's thoughts with your own in the same sentence

Analysis Methods

- Circle key words
- Underline key phrases
- Examine their separate meanings
- Use your understanding of each concept to critique the source

Keeping a strong voice

- Do not quote in the introduction/ conclusion
- Do not use a quote as a topic sentence
- Do not add new information into the conclusion
- All information should have been examined in the body

Opinion vs Fact-based research

- Do not give your opinion in the paper unless explicitly asked
 - Good research is based on evidence
- Do not personalize the paper unless explicitly asked in the instructions

Citations

- Use a source to help correctly format in-text citations and reference pages
- APA Style Guide
- Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab): APA Formatting and Style Guide