

**SPAA GRADUATE WRITING 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- Do not quote in the introduction/ conclusion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