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
  o 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• Do not quote in the introduction/ conclusion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
  o 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