

Research Writing

How do I get an “A” on this paper?

❖ What is a Research Paper?

- Research papers involve critical thinking, forming a thesis statement or argument, and using scholarly sources to support your view.
- A paper that summarizes other views and does not attempt to formulate a new idea or prove an opinion about a subject is NOT a research paper.

❖ Understand the Assignment

- Read your assignment carefully.
- Ask your professor to clarify anything that is unclear to you.
- Start thinking about possible topics for your paper.

❖ Thesis Statements

- Most research paper assignments will require you to develop a thesis.
- A thesis statement conveys the main idea or points of your paper; it is your argument in the paper.
- Thesis statements also serve as a guide to what your paper will discuss.
- They are typically placed as the last line in the first paragraph of your paper.

A well-done argumentative thesis statement will look like this:

High school graduates should be required to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.

(Courtesy of the Purdue Owl Online Writing Lab)

❖ Paper Structure

- The introduction will include your thesis statement, a summary of what you will present in your paper, and/or background information about your topic.
- Body paragraphs are the “meat” of your paper, where you will provide evidence for your thesis with scholarly sources and your own exposition.
- The conclusion reminds the reader of your thesis and summarizes your paper, but also leaves the reader with a strong, final impression or thought.
- Transitions smooth out your paper by providing a connection between paragraphs and ideas. Remember to utilize transitions in your paper!

Contact your Campus Library to get a more in-depth tutorial on this topic!

❖ **Prepare an Outline**

- Outlines help you with the writing process by organizing your ideas and presenting an ordered overview of your paper to guide you while writing.
- Determine the purpose of your paper and your thesis statement to begin your outline.
- Brainstorm ideas and perform some short database searches to make sure you will be able to find sources for your thesis.
- Pick out the points for your body paragraphs.
- Use your thesis and your main points to form the headings of your outline and order them as they will appear in your paper.

❖ **Proofreading and Revising**

- Check for spelling and grammar errors; use Microsoft Word Spell Check.
- Reread your paper for clarity and to check that you supported your thesis statement.
- Make any changes necessary to improve your paper's coherence.

❖ **Resources**

- Purdue Owl
Google: "Purdue owl research writing"

Basic Outline Model

I. Introduction and Thesis Statement

II. Body Paragraph I

a. Main point

b. Sources

III. Body Paragraph II

a. Main point

b. Sources

IV. Body Paragraph III

a. Main point

b. Sources

V. Conclusion

Use this as a model to help develop an outline specific to your paper.