

The Basic Outline of a Paper

The following outline shows a basic format for academic research papers. No matter what length the paper needs to be, it should still follow the format of having an introduction, body, and conclusion. Read over what typically goes in each section of the paper. You will then use this information to complete the research paper outline included with this packet.

I. Introduction

Your introduction should include the following components:

- A. Start with an attention grabber (a story, an example, statistics, historical context) think about how your favorite books or movies get your attention from the very beginning.
- B. Give an overview of the issues associated with your topic (for example, describing the general scope of the Holocaust).
- C. Define any key terminology that may not be familiar to the reader (for example, if you are writing about the use of Zyklon B, you would want to tell the reader what that is).
- D. Highlight background information of the topic needed to understand the paper.

Your introduction **must** end with a thesis statement (usually only a sentence or two).

- A. Tell what the focus of your paper will be (what will you be proving?)
- B. Briefly outline the main points of the paper.

II. Body

- A. Clearly present the main points of the paper.
- B. Give strong examples, details, and explanations to support each main point (for example, if you say that the Atomic Bomb was our only option in Japan, prove it).
- C. Use strong evidence from sources with **proper citations**, paraphrase, summarize, and quote sources to support your points.

III. Conclusion

- A. Restate your thesis from the introduction, using different words / phrasing.
- B. Briefly summarize each of your main body points (don't use more than a sentence or two for each)
- C. End with a strong clincher: an appropriate, meaningful final sentence that ties the whole point of the paper together (may refer back to the attention grabber from the introduction).

Before you get going:

- Decide on your thesis and main points first
- You **do not** have to start the writing with your introduction
- Try writing your thesis and main points to help figure out how to best introduce and conclude the topic
- Always keep your thesis in mind, your whole paper is devoted to supporting or proving your thesis

Paper Topic: _____ Audience: _____

I. Introduction

Possible ideas for the introduction (see front side of handout for suggestions):

Thesis Statement (Usually the last sentence(s) in the introduction):

II. Body (A paper may have a few or many main points; decide how many your paper will need)

Main Point: _____

Examples/Details/Explanations:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Main Point: _____

Examples/Details/Explanations:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Main Point: _____

Examples/Details/Explanations:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Main Point: _____

Examples/Details/Explanations:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

III. Conclusion

Reworded Thesis (Usually found near the beginning of the conclusion):

Other Ideas to Conclude:

Clincher Ideas: _____