



Writing Center Academic Affairs

Guidelines for Writing Research Papers

Writing a research paper requires time for researching, formulating research questions, outlining, drafting, and revising multiple times. The following guidelines are geared toward **student** research papers. [Resources for developing professional research papers and dissertations can be found in the References below.](#)

Prewriting process

Choosing a topic and research question(s): If the professor does not provide prompts for research topics, reflect on topics that are of interest to you. Write a list of ideas to narrow a topic, considering how the topic connects to the goals of the course and assignment. Write key words that relate to your topic and conduct preliminary research to gain an understanding of what scholars have written about your subject. Brainstorm on one or two questions that you could answer by researching and creating the report (“Concise Guide,” 2021; “Writing a Research Paper,” n.d.). The [UHCL Writing Center](#) tutors are skilled at prewriting services and are available to help!

Research: Professors often require peer-reviewed sources. [UHCL Neumann Library](#) is an excellent source of scholarship. Enter keywords or topic in OneSearch and press enter. Next, use the features on the left navbar to limit your results. Tip: for research assistance, be sure to visit, call, or chat with extremely helpful UHCL librarians!

Outline: Purpose is to collect one’s thoughts and develop a roadmap or framework that enables a writer to organize reports effectively and transition through paragraphs and sections smoothly. Create subheadings in your [outline](#) and write short bullets (“How to Write an Essay Outline,” n.d.).

Drafting, Organizing, Results, and Conclusion

Quoting Kallet (2004), Ammon (2022), and Ware (2014), the following tips will help with writing a research paper from drafting to the conclusion:

Title Page: See [Purdue Owl Student Sample Paper](#) for APA 7 formatting, organization and tips for drafting content. Title should be interesting and inform the reader of your topic.

Abstract: Within 150 to 250 words, write a concise summary of the key points of your research. Summarize your research topic, research questions, participants, methods,

results, data analysis, and conclusions. Writers sometimes write the abstract after writing the research paper.

Introduction: Briefly introduce and state your topic or issue to be researched. Include and underline your **thesis** statement which is the *direction* of the paper.

Body: Each paragraph includes a topic sentence that maps back to the thesis or main idea. The body clearly conveys the argument/critique/analysis and follows a logical sequence that the introduction outlined. Transitions link paragraphs together and unite the overall position of the argument. Paragraphs are between four to six sentences (Kallet, 2004).

If applicable, include methods / data analysis, results, and conclusions.

Methods / Data Analysis: This section describes “...what was done to answer the research question, describe how it was done, justify the experimental design, and explain how the results were analyzed. Scientific writing is direct and orderly” (Kallet, 2004).

Results: This section relays the facts without interpretation, analysis, bias, or opinion. This part prepares the reader for the discussion section [summary, implications, and recommendations] by informing the reader of the facts of the study (Ammon, 2022).

Conclusion: Reiterate main points of the essay. Explain what was suggested in the body. Reiterate your thesis statement and show that it has been proven or that more research should be conducted (Ware, 2014).

This document touches on the basics of writing a research paper; if you have any questions, the UHCL Writing Center can help. Schedule a session today with a [Writing Center](#) Peer Consultant to strengthen your writing skills and improve your academic performance!

References

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