

Name:
Date:

Period:
Ms. Lopez

Writing Your First Draft

Remember that a research paper has the same format of development as an essay. It has an identical introduction, body, and conclusion; there is just much more of each. The purpose of this paper is primarily to persuade the reader to agree with your side of the argument, but you will do this by somewhat informing the reader about your topic.

Introduction

Begin with an introduction that establishes the purpose of your research. The introduction contains your thesis statement, typically at the end of the introduction, followed by a brief identification of your main points in the order you will address them. This establishes a clear pattern of organization for your argument. As the opening, broad general statement that introduces the reader to your topic, you might want to consider using one or more of the following:

- An opening anecdote [someone's personal story] or quotation
- Background information or any information your reader needs in order to understand your research findings (such as general, startling statistics)
- Definitions of terms or concepts (considered cliché among academics)

An introduction may take just one or several paragraphs depending on the paper's length.

The next step is to prove your thesis statement in the body of your paper.

Body Paragraphs

Use your body paragraph outline sheets (and outline summary report) to write your body paragraphs. Look directly at your sources only when you need to check a specific piece of evidence to prevent accidental plagiarism or inaccurate quoting. Remember that the paper is not just a collection of evidence. The evidence supports your ideas, and you should use the evidence to draw conclusions. With this in mind, close paragraphs with your words instead of with a quotation.

Be sure to use sophisticated transitions, thinking about how ideas relate to one another. (You began to do this on your outline summary report.)

Since your primary purpose is to persuade the reader, use carefully selected language that appeals to the reader's emotions to generate sympathy, outrage, or whatever emotion you want the reader to feel at that moment.

While your reader will read your paper from the first line to the last, you do not have to write your first draft that way. You can start with the body paragraph you feel is the easiest one to write, moving to the next challenging one. As your experience and confidence grows, the challenging paragraphs may become easier to write. You also may fulfill the page and source requirements before you even tackle the most challenging paragraph of your paper, allowing you to eliminate it.

Conclusion

In the final section or conclusion of your paper, you should leave the reader with a clear understanding of the significance of your research. This is usually done by restating the thesis statement in different words, reviewing the important points you have made, and drawing a final conclusion.

You might, however, take a more personal approach to the closing of your paper. For instance, you might discuss how your research has changed or confirmed your thinking about your subject, or you might simply want to discuss what you have learned from your searching and researching. A word of caution must be added here: If you take a personal approach, continue using semiformal English, avoiding use of 1st and 2nd person pronouns. Also, be sure to focus on significant material or unusual surprises you discovered in your research. Do not assume that “personal” means casual in the context of your research paper. Consult your teacher for further guidelines when using this approach.

Whatever you decide, be sure that your conclusion pulls together your entire paper and addresses your thesis as explained in your introduction.