

How To Write A Good Research Paper

Research paper presents and argues a thesis, the writer's proposition or opinion. It is an analytical or persuasive essay that evaluates a position. As such, a research paper tries to convince readers that the writer's argument is valid or at least deserves serious consideration.

As a result, a research paper requires the writer to be creative in using facts, details, examples, and opinions to support a point. The writer has to be original and inventive in deciding which facts best support the thesis and which ones are superfluous.

When you write a research paper, you have to read what authorities have written about the topic and then write an essay in which you draw your own conclusions about the topic.

Since your thesis is fresh and original, you can't merely summarize what someone else has written. Instead, you have to synthesize information from many different sources to create something that is your own.

A term paper, in contrast, is a collection of facts. It does not argue a point; it does not try to persuade readers to think or act a certain way. Since a term paper is a summary of information from one or more sources, you are merely reporting what others have said. This is not to say that a term paper doesn't have many valid uses. For example, it is very helpful for people who need a great deal of data in a condensed, easy to read form. Government workers are often asked to prepare term papers with information on weather, transportation, economics, and so forth.

Research Paper

Argues a point

Formulates a thesis

Is Argumentative/Persuasive

Evaluates

Term Paper

Present data

Reports what others said

Descriptive

Summarizes

What Are the Qualities of a Good Research Paper?

No matter what its topic or length, an effective research paper meets the following ten criteria:

1. The paper has a clear thesis.
2. The writer shows a strong understanding of the topic and source material used.
3. There is evidence that the writer has read widely on the topic, including the recognized authorities in the field.
4. The paper acknowledges the opposition but shows why the point being argued is more valid.
5. The points are organized in a clear and logical way.
6. Each point is supported by solid, persuasive facts and examples.
7. Every outside source is carefully documented.
8. All supporting material can be verified.
9. The paper follows the standard conventions of the genre, including the use of correct documentation and a Works Cited page.

10. The paper uses standard written English. This is the level of diction and usage expected of educated people in high schools, colleges, universities, and work setting.

APA (American Psychological Assoc.)

Rozakis, L. (1999). *Schaum's Quick Guide to Writing Great Research Papers*. New York: McGraw-Hill Professional.

MLA (Modern Language Assoc.)

Rozakis, Laurie. *Schaum's Quick Guide to Writing Great Research Papers*. McGraw-Hill Professional, 1999. *Schaum's Quick Guide Series*. EBSCOhost.