

Instructions for writing a paper

The research paper is intended to provide you with the opportunity to more fully explore your class discussion topic, as well as examine it from a more empirical perspective. The paper should be approximately 10 pages in length (not including a cover page or references). It should consist of at least 3 empirical research articles from reputable journals. Inclusion of materials from popular magazines or the web can be used in the paper, but do not count toward the article requirement. You should strive to find articles from the past decade. You are also required to attach the first page (that includes the abstract) of the articles to the end of your paper. The paper will be written in APA style for review articles.

Things to do list:

1. Try to find review articles and other basic information to use for background (outside of what is provided in textbook)
2. Find 3 empirical articles (papers have method/results sections)
 - a. I prefer that you use Pubmed database to search for articles
3. Write the paper
 - a. Background information to topic; research question/hypotheses
 - b. Use methods and results from these papers on selected items
 - c. Critically analyze topic; synthesize findings from articles
 - d. Propose future directions/research (be as specific as you'd like)

Requirements: 1. The 3 “empirical papers” must have methods/results sections. You may use as many extra review articles or other empirical articles as you would like, but there must be at least 3 studies that are discussed and critiqued in detail.

2. Describe the background, method, results, and conclusions of the 3 empirical papers.

3. Provide your own “take” on the topic in the form of a critique and future research ideas.

You MUST show that you have gone beyond a summary, and have critically thought about the topic.

Content

Organize your paper into sections with headings. For a term paper the sections might be:

Abstract

Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

References

(Figures –have to be embedded in text)

- Length is not the most important factor in judging your paper. A short and well-written paper is far preferable to a longer one which rambles and repeats itself (not less than 8 pages and not more than 15 pages).
- Make sure that when you turn in your paper, you have read through it in its final form. This may prove difficult to do after the many editing sessions that you have already enjoyed with it. It is often very helpful to have a friend read it through as well as this lends a fresh perspective.

Format

- Please double-space all your text. That way it is much easier for the instructor to annotate your work.
- Use 1" margins all round. Use 12 pt font. Number your pages.
- Expensive binding and finishing is unnecessary and will not earn you extra points. The final copy should be clean and neat, with a cover page.

Style

- Try to write in the third person whenever possible. For the most part you will be presenting facts. Avoid repeated use of the first person.
- Avoid clichés. ("the bottom line", "at the end of the day", "all in all" etc.)
- Avoid slang and informal terms of expression. ("Well, ...", "It was like, we went...")
- Avoid rhetoric. ("How should I interpret these results?", "I asked myself - What do people think about global warming?")
- Do not use direct quotations in your text unless absolutely necessary. In general it is better to paraphrase or explain the ideas in your own words and simply refer to the original work.
- If you use equations in your paper, make sure that every symbol in the equation is explained. Number equations sequentially for easy referencing.

Grammar and spelling

- Don't rely on the spelling checker to find all your spelling errors. You must also read through your document to check that "their", "there" and "they're", for example, are correctly used.
- Read and re-read your manuscript. Edit it more than once or twice. Avoid the repetitious use of the same word in a sentence or a paragraph. Edit away all redundancies. I do not want to read the same information over and over again, simply expressed in a slightly different way each time. Remove unnecessary words. Be clear and succinct. DO NOT WAFFLE – I will not be impressed by length.

References

- Cite articles by author(s) and year within your text. If there is a single author, the last name and year will suffice – e.g. (Hutchinson, 1995). If there are two authors, include both names and the year of the publication – e.g. (Hutchinson and Osborne, 1978). For more than two authors, use the first author with et al. – e.g. (Hutchinson et al., 1984).
- Include the list of references at the end of your paper. Do not include references you have read but not cited. List the references alphabetically by the first author's last name.

Figures

- Number figures consecutively, and give each a caption. Refer to them in your text by their number. Figures can be embedded in the text but if you find it too frustrating to coax them into the right place in *Word*, feel free to place them all together at the end of your document.
- Make sure that you include all the information necessary to interpret your figures. In the case of graphs this would include the axes and units used, a legend for multiple lines or points displayed in different colors or patterns. Since figures are taken from other works, make sure you cite their original source.

Good writing tips

USE OTHER LITERATURE REVIEWS AND ARTICLES AS A GUIDE QUOTATIONS:

Quotations should generally not be used.

VOICE: AVOID 1 ST PERSON

Ex. **Improper “voice”** for academic writing In this review, I will show that the literature on treating juvenile murderers is sparse and suffers from the same problems as the general literature ... Unfortunately, I have found that most of the treatment results are based on clinical case reports of ...

Ex. **Suitable “voice”** for academic writing The literature on treating juvenile murderers is sparse and suffers from the same problems as the general literature... Most of the treatment results are based on clinical case reports...

AVOID SLANG. USE PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE “conducted a study” instead of “did a study” “examined” instead of “looked at” “utilize” instead of “use” (where appropriate) “great deal” instead of “a lot” “furthermore” instead of run-on sentences

ORGANIZE THE PAPER BY TOPICS NOT CHRONOLOGY: Build paper with a clear thesis. Good writing should provide clear and organized evidence for your argument or theory.

BE CONCISE: Delete unnecessary words, phrases, and sentences to drastically improve your writing. Scientific writing is concise and to-the-point!

REVISE AND REWRITE: Good writing takes hard work. Give yourself enough time to take a break from the paper. Time away from the paper provides perspective regarding organization and allows the opportunity to find technical errors.

CITATIONS: It is imperative that you use good citation habits. It is plagiarism to use other writers’ words and IDEAS

Grading scheme includes:

Content: **40 pt** Full explanation of topic Introduction to topic Background, method, results, conclusions of 3 studies Conclusion to paper

Depth of thought: **30pt** Provided own conclusions and thoughts Critical analysis of research Provide future directions

Clarity: **20pt** Written in clear and understandable language Logical order Provides connections among papers

Succinct language Grammar/Technical aspect: APA style / other requirements: **10pt** Includes section headers. Referencing within paper, Reference page at the end (with all references from paper) Attached 1 st page of empirical papers.