
Research Paper Outline

Paper Structure: The structure of the paper will include four main sections.

I. Introduction

- A. Introduce specific topic to be analyzed
- B. Provide any relevant historical information pertaining to the respective issue(s), theory (or theories) and policy. Remember that at least one theory must be incorporated into your paper.
- C. Thesis statement – The thesis statement should be a concise and declarative statement illustrating your assessment of the issue (i.e., what you have to say about your chosen topic, what is your position?)
- D. Briefly describe your plan of action to analyze your chosen topic, and underscore your thesis (i.e., lay out a “road map” for the reader).

II. Literature Review (The following describes an integrated literature review)

- A. Provide an in depth analysis of your chosen topic, identified in the introduction, utilizing information garnered from scholarly sources, combined with your own original thoughts (i.e., critical analysis)
 1. Summarize prior research
 2. Critique prior research
 3. Present pertinent conclusions (in brief) – more substantive conclusions will be addressed in Part III of your paper
- B. Provide a summary that will naturally lead into your Conclusions.

III. Conclusions

- A. Summarize your assessment of the issue (i.e., chosen topic); the utility of existing theory and data; and the efficacy or futility of current policy in place to address the issue.
- B. Reference back to substantive examples from your sources
- C. Provide your concluding thoughts on:
 1. What policy changes need to be made, and what the implications of those changes might mean with respect to better addressing the issue (you must include at least 3 recommendations)
 2. Future research needs

IV. References (APA-style references for all scholarly sources used in your paper)