

Research Papers

Research papers are where writers explore a given topic by **incorporating** and **critically examining sources**. Writers should draw on what other people have had to say on a given topic to then make their own overarching **argument or analysis**.



Two Main Kinds of Research Papers

Argumentative

- Argumentative research papers propose a topic and declare a stance
- Throughout the paper, the writer utilizes research to back up their argument/thesis
- Persuade the reader to agree with the writer
 - For example, writing a paper that explores why animal testing is bad



Analytical

- Analytical research papers examine a topic by proposing an analysis
- Throughout the paper, the writer examines research at hand to make a larger argument
- Typically, writers begin neutral and create a stance on the subject after writing
 - For example, writing a paper that analyzes social media's effects on youth



Getting Started

Research papers can feel overwhelming, but there are a few key steps to take before writing to guarantee success. Ensure that you understand which of the abovementioned kinds of research you are conducting first.

choose a topic

- Think of something you are interested in learning about! Be open to your topic changing as you learn/write.

identify audience

- Think of who you are writing for. Who is most likely to be interested in your research?

research

- Make use of the resources UNC Charlotte offers! The library offers research guides, database access, and instructions for good research.

outline/map sources

- Outline the conversation you want to explore. You may consider visually mapping this conversation.

Research Papers (continued)

The Research Process

The UNC Charlotte library provides several resources that will help guide your research process. The following links can help you navigate the research tools on the library website:

- [Research Guides](#)
- Databases
 - [By subject](#)
 - [By alphabet](#)
- [Research help webpage](#)
- [Requesting an ILL](#)



Parts of a Research Paper

- There are several different parts of a research paper; below are some examples of these different parts. *Note that your professor may not require all of these, and some parts differ based on citation style.*

Abstract: A brief summary/overview of what your paper is about. An abstract is typically 200-300 words in length.

Introduction: A brief background of your topic and creates exigence, or explains the urgency/importance of discussing this topic.

Literature Review: A summary of what research has been conducted thus far, crafting a synthesis of these sources, and creating a pathway for your research to begin.

Analysis of Evidence: A presentation of what data has been collected and application of what this evidence shows or demonstrates. Evidence is used to further, support, or challenge a research question.

Discussion of Findings: An examination of patterns or trends found in the evidence. This section could also include implications of such findings or draw a comparison to other studies.

Conclusion: A discussion of what key findings this research demonstrated. Conclusions can also be used to discuss limitations of the research and the significance of the work that has been done.

- The type of research paper being written also influences what typical parts of the genre will be included. *Note the different purposes of analytical and argumentative papers to determine which above-mentioned parts are important for your purpose.

Research Papers (continued)

What Should I Keep in Mind as I Write?

- The different kinds of research papers may have different parts, but typically, there is a similar consistency of tone, word use, and structure to follow. Consider the following tips:



- Engaging topic:** Choose a topic that genuinely interests you. It can be hard to **sustain interest** in a concept you are not connected with.
- Objective tone:** When explaining research and findings, it is good practice to remain **objective and neutral** to the information being presented (until there is space for personal opinions). This establishes your **credibility** as a researcher.
- Strong thesis:** A strong thesis is the key to any successful argument/paper. Ensure that your statement is **clear, valid, and arguable**.

- Reliable sources:** High-quality sources enhance your **academic integrity** as a writer. When choosing sources recognize when sources were published, if they are biased, and how you incorporate them into your argument.
- Breadth v. Depth:** Balance the **scope of coverage** for your paper. Having greater depth (more details about a specific topic) than large breadth (mentions of several different ideas) is typically preferred.
- Citation Style:** Make sure you use your chosen citation style **consistently** and be mindful of the research parts of that particular style.