

## **ENGL 203: Research Paper**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to exhibit your understanding of the various research concepts we have learned this semester: objective summary, source evaluation, literature review, presentation, argument analysis, and APA style. The aforementioned skills have prepared you for this paper and will help you set the foundation for your future academic, professional, and scholarly research.

Your final paper should take a position, select and integrate sources, and develop an original persuasive argument using APA style and documentation. You will be using the content you generated from the research project for this culminating paper.

### **Organization and Development**

Your paper should follow standard APA formatting (see: EW pp. 269 – 309) and must contain the following:

- Title page (1 pp.)
- Abstract (1 pp.)
- Introduction\* (1-2 pp.)
- Literature review\* (this is where 90% of your secondary sources will go) (4-6 pp.)
- Methodology\* (1 pg)
- Results\* (1-3 pp.)
- Discussion\* (basically interprets your perspective on the local situation given the broader discussion presented in your lit review) (3-4 pp.)
- Conclusion\* (describes next steps and limitations) (1 pp.)
- References (1-2 pp.)
- Appendices (1-2 pp.)

The items marked with asterisk should collectively be about 9-13 pages in length (see sample essay on Blackboard). The entire paper will likely be 15-20 pages.

Consider the following questions as you draft each section of your paper:

#### **Title page**

- Should be properly formatted and include only required elements (title, names, date, affiliation)
- Header should be properly formatted

#### **Abstract**

- Header and heading properly formatted

- Provides a brief objective summary of the project (this should be the last thing you write!)

### **Introduction (Background/Context):**

- Header and headings properly formatted
- What is the issue or controversy being researched?
- Who is your audience and how can you “hook” them?
- What is your specific research question?

### **Literature Review:**

- Header and headings properly formatted
- What background does your audience need to know to understand the context and complexity of the issue?
- What are the major components, issues, or topics related to your research question?
- What are the current discussions surrounding each of those components, issues, or topics?

### **Methodology:**

- Header and headings properly formatted
- Objective stance
- Detailed description of process by which primary research instrument was created
- Description of primary research process (distribution of surveys, time/place of observations, time/place/venue/medium of interviews or focus groups)

### **Results:**

- Header and headings properly formatted
- Objective stance
- For Surveys and Observations
  - o Presentation of selected data typically in tabular or chart form
  - o Include narrative summary of each highlighting most important data
- For interviews and focus groups
  - o Summary of topics and answers
  - o Include quotes to exemplify
  - o Include other observations as appropriate

### **Discussion:**

- Header and headings properly formatted
- The discussion section presents your own interpretation of how the broader discussions of the issues impacts the local environment.
- If you are making a proposal for change or a call to action, this is where you make it.
- How do the various perspectives of your sources interact with one another?
- How can you turn others’ arguments into a conversation in your research paper?
- How will you include various perspectives?

### **Conclusion:**

- Header and headings properly formatted

- The conclusion discusses next steps. It often considers limitations in your study and recommends further options.
- What do you want your audience to do as a result of reading your paper?
- What is the future outlook of your topic?

**References:**

- Properly APA formatted list of every secondary source used in the paper.

**Appendices:**

- This is where you will put your rubric and source evaluations.

**Audience**

Consider your audience to be members of the NIU and DeKalb communities.

**Evaluation**

Your research paper counts for 250 points. Your paper should:

- Follow APA guidelines
- Grab your reader's attention and clearly introduces and explain the topic
- Have a well-defined thesis, presenting both the specific issue and the writer's opinion
- Contain an accurate, relevant, clear, and properly-formatted abstract
- Be well-organized into paragraphs and present information in a logical and meaningful order.
- Use effective transitions and create solid cohesion and flow by repeating and expanding upon central ideas
- Thoroughly and persuasively address reader concerns and counter-arguments
- Incorporate evidence for each side of the argument with well-supported, effective, and relevant citations from your sources
- Properly cite all sources on References page
- Conclude by reiterating your thesis, concisely summarizing the main points of your paper, and calling the reader to action
- Review for grammar, spelling, and any other mechanical errors