

Conducting and Writing A Good Research Paper

Junior Studies

Why Conduct A Research?

- Obtain extended information on a topic
- Extend individual writing skills
- Focus a topic on general reading and writing skills
- Answer questions about a topic
- Present new information in an original manner to an audience

Five Rules To Follow

- Do background reading, think hard, and speak with a professor/teacher in order to identify a good topic
- Develop a clear research question
- Conduct good research – use multiple resources
- State an argument, search for answers, and provide evidence
- Utilize good writing skills

Selecting A Topic

- Can be assigned to or chosen by the student
- Must be of interest to the researcher
- Must have an abundance of information available
- Should begin as a large concept that narrows to a specific point

Finding Information/Researching

- All websites are not created equal: try to stay with .org/.edu/.gov – try to avoid .com if possible
- Stay away from sites that have political views or personal views – these are not good pieces for supported research evidence
- Feel free to look for sites with encyclopedia evidence, almanacs, atlases, government publications, newspapers, reports, or magazine articles

Research/Thesis Statement

- The thesis statement is a declaration of your main belief on a topic
- The remainder of the research will support and defend this statement
- The statement must have a variety of research sources to back up and/or support the thesis statement (question)

Conducting Real Research

- ▶ Use primary sources of information – not someone's opinion or view of something already written
- ▶ Integrate information from the primary sources to take you as close as possible to people or facts directly involved in the topic you are researching
- ▶ Use resources that are real, proven, and related to your topic

Organizing Your Research

- ▶ Can be:
 - An outline
 - A graphic organizer
 - A series of journals, note cards, notebooks, etc.
 - Color coded for paragraph inclusion (par. #1 – red, par. #2 – blue, etc.)
 - Voice recorded for future use
 - Whatever works for the individual conducting the research

Writing The First Draft

- ▶ Begin with the first topic being the main idea in the introductory paragraph
- ▶ Have your ideas organized and ready to use
- ▶ Summarize, paraphrase, or directly quote each idea in your essay (remember to cite when you quote)
- ▶ Make sure your paper is organized and follows a specific train of thought
- ▶ Use the last paragraph to conclude your paper

Revise And Edit

- ▶ Read your paper aloud to find errors
- ▶ Check to make sure your facts and figures are accurate
- ▶ Arrange and move information if necessary to make a good flow to the paper
- ▶ Make sure your information is clear and concise
- ▶ Be sure you have not plagiarized information in the paper
- ▶ Ensure the reader follows your paper clearly

Revise And Edit

- ▶ Look for grammatical problems:
 - Run-on sentences
 - Subject-verb agreement
 - Transition words from one paragraph to another
 - Spelling or punctuation errors
 - Contractions – these do not belong in research papers so avoid using them
 - Word repetitions – have a thesaurus with you for synonyms
 - Sentence fragments – all sentences need to be complete thoughts
 - Citations – make sure you have given credit to the authors you have borrowed information from

Presentation Of The Final Paper

- ▶ All final papers should be typed:
 - 12 font – Arial preferred
 - 1" margins
 - Double spaced
 - Cover page to include: (1) title of the paper, (2) name of the author, and (3) date paper is submitted
 - Reference page (last page) should include all sources used to research the paper – all sources to be placed in alphabetical order by author's last name