

## **SAMPLE RESEARCH PAPER OUTLINE**

This outline is only a general guide for your paper. As for other important information, You must use a size **12** Times New Roman font, double-space, with 1" margins at top, bottom, right and left.

- I. Introduction
  - A. State your topic. (ex., "This paper will examine (*your topic*) . . . .")
    1. State why you are interested in this topic (purpose)
    2. State the initial questions that you used to develop your hypothesis
  - B. State your hypothesis. Your hypothesis is the main idea, or focus of your paper. All information that you present must relate to your hypothesis. This means that it either provides support or it disconfirms your hypothesis.
    1. Define all terms in your hypothesis
    2. Identify points for further clarification (if any)
      - a.) sub point a (*as needed*)
      - b.) sub point b           “
      - c.) sub point c           “
        - i. other necessary information (*as needed*)
        - ii. other necessary information           “
- II. Background Information (includes your research)
  1. Discuss pertinent aspects of the research you used.
  2. State the major outcomes of the research you included and how it related to your hypothesis.
- III. Evaluation of your hypothesis (minimum of one page)
  - A. State whether you confirmed or disconfirmed your hypothesis.

**NOTE:** Your objective is to confirm or disconfirm your hypothesis, not to prove some phenomenon or convince / persuade your reader to feel a certain emotion about the topic. Your grade is not affected by your results. Consider that you are a reporter of information who must address both the accuracy and inaccuracy of the hypothesis.

    1. Why did you confirm or disconfirm?
    2. Was your hypothesis accurate? Why?
    3. Was your hypothesis inaccurate? Why?
  - B. Evaluation of your research. (Data and methods)
    1. What was beneficial in your research? [strengths]
    2. What was not beneficial in your research? [weaknesses]
    3. Were you able to find sufficient research? Does the research have a narrow or broad focus with regard to your topic? Why do you think that is the case?
    4. Was the available research insufficient (quantity/quality)? Why might this be the case?
    5. Did you rely on only a few (three or fewer) primary resources? What are the resulting advantages and disadvantages?
    6. Evaluate the quality of the data that you reviewed.
    7. What are the possible explanations for your findings?
  - C. Conclusion
    1. How would you change your hypothesis in a future investigation?
    2. Why would you change your hypothesis?
    3. What do your results suggest?

# PAPER ORGANIZATION

## Page 1: Title Page

Should be specific (can be a statement or ask a question)

Include your dependent and independent variables

Must be less than 20 words

Include your name and Austin Community College

Include a Running Head

The Running Head is a brief descriptive version of the title, placed in the top, left-hand corner of the title page and is written in uppercase letters.

## Page 2: Abstract

The Abstract is a brief description (summary) of the highlights (research, methodology and results) of an experimental study, and is one paragraph in length. Abstracts should be written in an active voice ("Results showed" . . . . **not** "It was found that"), should be 100 words or less, has no indentions, and should be arranged in the same order as your paper.

## Pages 3 - ?? Body of research paper (includes your literature review)

General Structure: **note:** Each statement you make should be supported by research evidence. The information that you present must be directly relevant to your topic.

1. Section one: Topic overview, identify goals of paper
2. Section two: Summarize specific issues / topics
3. Section Three: Critical Evaluation of your hypothesis

**Evaluation of your Hypothesis (should be a minimum of one page)**

Note regarding graphics or other visual aids: It is acceptable to use these devices in your paper. Each item should have a separate, clearly labeled page and is placed after the References page. These devices should be ordered exactly as they appear in your paper and include a brief caption. To identify each device within the body of your paper, place a statement within your paper to indicate the location of the device. For example, "Photograph #1 goes here". In the event that the device has an explanatory statement that is part of your text, you could reference it as: "*Alzheimer's Disease appears to also destroy the axons and dendrites of the cerebral cortex which can be clearly observed (see Photograph number 1).*" If you have questions regarding the insertion of these devices, please consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (fifth edition), or discuss with your instructor.

**Last Page: References:** minimum of four resources (4 points) including two academic journal articles. An example of an academic journal is the "Journal of Abnormal Psychology". Please limit the use of internet / world wide web resources to a maximum of two (2) total resources. **Internet resources must be limited to ".edu" sources. Sources not ending in ".edu" must be approved by the instructor otherwise your paper will not be accepted.** Also, Wikipedia is not an acceptable citation, even though it may lead one to a citable source. You must use American Psychological Association (APA) format, list all sources cited in alphabetical order (i.e., all that appeared in your paper), and double space between and within each citation.