

Research Paper Outline Template (Extended Papers)

Designed for longer, source-driven papers with multiple sections and levels of argument.

Title Page

- Title, Your Name, Course, Instructor, Date.

Abstract (if required)

- A single paragraph (150-250 words) summarizing your research question, methods, findings, and conclusion.

I. Introduction

- **Research Context & Problem:** Introduce the general field and the specific problem or gap your research addresses.
- **Research Question/Thesis Statement:** Clearly state the central question your paper answers or the argument you will prove.
- **Significance of the Study:** Explain why this research/question is important.
- **Roadmap:** Briefly outline the structure of your paper ("This paper will first... then... finally...").

II. Literature Review

- **Overview of Key Themes/Schools of Thought:** Organize existing research into thematic categories, not source-by-source.
- **Topic A:** Summary of what key scholars say about this sub-topic.
- **Topic B:** Summary of another relevant sub-topic or debate.
- **Gap Identification:** Explicitly state how your research fills a missing piece, resolves a conflict, or addresses an unanswered question in the existing literature.

III. Methodology (More common in sciences/social sciences)

- **Approach:** Describe your research method (e.g., case study, textual analysis, experiment, survey).

- **Materials/Sources:** Explain what primary texts, data, or historical documents you analyzed.
- **Procedure:** Explain the steps you took to conduct your analysis or gather data.

IV. Analysis / Argument (The Main Body)

- **Sub-section 1: First Major Point Supporting Your Thesis**

- Topic Sentence
- Evidence from sources + your interpretation and analysis.
- Connection back to the thesis/research question.

- **Sub-section 2: Second Major Point**

- (Same structure as above)

- **Sub-section 3: Third Major Point (or Counterargument)**

- (Same structure as above)

- *(Add as many logical sub-sections as needed)*

V. Discussion & Conclusion

- **Summary of Findings:** Concisely restate your answer to the research question based on your analysis.
- **Interpretation of Significance:** Explain what your findings mean in the broader context of the field.
- **Limitations:** Acknowledge any limitations in your study (scope, methodology, sources).
- **Suggestions for Future Research:** Propose questions that logically follow from your work.
- **Final, Concluding Statement:** A strong closing thought on the importance of your research.

VI. References / Works Cited

- List all sources in the required citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.).

