

Extended Research Paper Outline Template

For 10+ Page Term Papers and Major Assignments

I. Title Page Elements

Title: Your paper's complete title

Subtitle (if applicable): Additional clarification

Your Name:

Course Information:

Instructor Name:

Date:

II. Abstract (150-250 words)

Purpose: What question/problem does your paper address?

Methods: How did you approach the research?

Key Findings: What are your main conclusions?

Significance: Why does this matter?

III. Introduction (2-3 pages)

A. Opening Hook

- Attention-grabbing statement, statistic, or scenario
- Establishes relevance and importance

B. Background and Context

- Historical context or current state of the issue
- Key terms and definitions
- Scope and boundaries of your research

C. Literature Review Overview

- Brief summary of existing research
- Gaps in current knowledge
- How your paper contributes

D. Research Question/Problem Statement

- Clear articulation of what you're investigating
- Why this question matters

E. Thesis Statement

- Your main argument or central claim
- Roadmap of how you'll prove it

F. Paper Organization

- Brief overview of each main section
 - How the sections build your argument
-

IV. Main Section 1: [Insert Topic]

A. Primary Point/Argument

Topic sentence:

Key concept explanation:

B. Subpoint 1.1

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:** How this supports your point
- **Connection to thesis:**

C. Subpoint 1.2

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

D. Subpoint 1.3 (if needed)

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

E. Section Summary

- How this section advances your argument
- Transition to next section

Notes/Quotes to Include:

-
-

V. Main Section 2: [Insert Topic]

A. Primary Point/Argument

Topic sentence:

Key concept explanation:

B. Subpoint 2.1

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

C. Subpoint 2.2

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

D. Subpoint 2.3 (if needed)

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

E. Section Summary

- How this section advances your argument
- Transition to next section

Notes/Quotes to Include:

-
-

VI. Main Section 3: [Insert Topic]

A. Primary Point/Argument

Topic sentence:

Key concept explanation:

B. Subpoint 3.1

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

C. Subpoint 3.2

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

D. Subpoint 3.3 (if needed)

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

E. Section Summary

- How this section advances your argument
- Transition to next section

Notes/Quotes to Include:

- -
-

VII. Main Section 4: [Insert Topic]

A. Primary Point/Argument

Topic sentence:

Key concept explanation:

B. Subpoint 4.1

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

C. Subpoint 4.2

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

D. Subpoint 4.3 (if needed)

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

E. Section Summary

- How this section advances your argument
- Transition to next section

Notes/Quotes to Include:

- -
-

VIII. Main Section 5: [Insert Topic]

A. Primary Point/Argument

Topic sentence:

Key concept explanation:

B. Subpoint 5.1

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

C. Subpoint 5.2

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

D. Subpoint 5.3 (if needed)

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

E. Section Summary

- How this section advances your argument
- Transition to next section

Notes/Quotes to Include:

- -
-

IX. Main Section 6 (Optional): [Insert Topic]

A. Primary Point/Argument

Topic sentence:

B. Subpoint 6.1

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

C. Subpoint 6.2

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

D. Section Summary

Notes/Quotes to Include:

-
-

X. Main Section 7 (Optional): [Insert Topic]

A. Primary Point/Argument

Topic sentence:

B. Subpoint 7.1

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

C. Subpoint 7.2

- **Evidence:** (cite source)
- **Analysis:**
- **Connection to thesis:**

D. Section Summary

Notes/Quotes to Include:

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-

XI. Counter-Arguments and Limitations

A. Potential Objections

Counter-argument 1: - What critics might say - Your rebuttal with evidence

Counter-argument 2: - What critics might say - Your rebuttal with evidence

B. Limitations of Your Research

- Acknowledge scope limitations
 - Areas for future research
 - Why your argument still holds despite limitations
-

XII. Conclusion (2-3 pages)

A. Restatement of Thesis

- Reframe your main argument using different words
- Show how you've proven it

B. Synthesis of Main Points

- **Section 1 summary:**
- **Section 2 summary:**
- **Section 3 summary:**
- **Section 4 summary:**
- **Section 5 summary:**
- **Additional sections:**

C. Implications and Significance

- Why your findings matter
- Real-world applications
- Contribution to the field

D. Future Directions

- Questions raised by your research
- Areas for further investigation
- Long-term implications

E. Closing Statement

- Powerful final thought
 - Return to opening hook (full circle)
 - Call to action or broader reflection
-

XIII. References/Works Cited

Format according to citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.)

Primary Sources:

-

Secondary Sources:

-
-

Research Notes Section

Key Sources Tracker

Source 1: - Author/Title: - Main argument: - Useful quotes (with page numbers): - How it supports my thesis:

Source 2: - Author/Title: - Main argument: - Useful quotes (with page numbers): - How it supports my thesis:

Source 3: - Author/Title: - Main argument: - Useful quotes (with page numbers): - How it supports my thesis:

(Continue as needed)

Writing Strategy Tips

Before You Start Writing:

- Complete thorough research and fill in all evidence sections
- Ensure each main section has 2-3 solid subpoints

- Verify all sources are properly documented
- Check that each section connects back to your thesis

During Writing:

- Write body sections first, introduction and conclusion last
- Aim for 2-3 pages per main section
- Use strong topic sentences to begin each section
- Include transitions between all sections
- Cite sources as you write (don't save it for later)

After First Draft:

- Read through for logical flow and coherence
- Ensure each paragraph has a clear purpose
- Check that evidence supports claims
- Verify proper citation format throughout
- Get feedback from peers or writing center
- Revise for clarity, concision, and impact

Final Checklist:

- ☐ Title page complete and formatted correctly
- ☐ Abstract summarizes entire paper
- ☐ Introduction engages reader and states thesis clearly
- ☐ Each body section has clear topic and supporting evidence
- ☐ Counter-arguments addressed
- ☐ Conclusion synthesizes findings without introducing new info
- ☐ All sources cited properly in-text and in bibliography
- ☐ Proper formatting (margins, font, spacing, headers)
- ☐ Proofread multiple times for grammar and typos
- ☐ Meets page length requirement (10+ pages)