

Handy All-Purpose ILP/IRP/Research Paper Hints!

This “one size fits all” outline may help you to understand how your paper should be organized, but

- **Be sure to follow the instructions your advisor gives you**
- **Every paper is different, and none will fit exactly into this model**
- **Research papers and Capstone papers do not require all these sections**

Cover Page

- Does the title tell what your paper is about?
- Did you include all of the required information in proper APA format?

Abstract

In no more than one-hundred fifty words, summarize:

- What issue or problem did you address?
- What argument did you try to prove OR What solution did you give?
- How did you do your research?
- What were the results?

Acknowledgments Page

Thank anyone you wish. This is optional.

Table of Contents

There is an automatic Table of Contents tool in Word. It takes some time to learn, but can be helpful for a long paper.

Introduction

Briefly answer these questions to tell your reader what your paper will cover.

- What issue or problem are you addressing?
- What are the circumstances in which it occurs?
- Who does it affect?
- How does it affect them?
- What history does it have?
- What causes it and why?
- Will it get worse in the future?
- What argument will you try to prove? OR How will your ILP help solve this problem?
Present a thesis statement which includes your opinion about the issue or problem and the main points you will make to prove your argument or main ways you believe your project will solve the problem.
- How will you do your research?
- How will you present your findings?
- Who do you think will want to read your paper?
- Why is this issue or problem important to you?
- How will your work be helpful to others?

Literature Review

- Have others studied this issue or tried to solve this problem?
- What did they do, such as research or creating a model program?
- How did they do their research?
- What did they find out?
- How did others respond to their work?
- What is the current state of knowledge about this issue or problem?
- Are there any controversies?

Methodology

Explain how you gathered your information and/or produced your product.

For all papers:

- What sources of information did you use?
- How did you evaluate the quality of research studies?
- How did you evaluate the credibility of researchers or theorists?
- How did you know your research was adequate?

If you did a questionnaire, survey, focus group, or interviews:

- What questions did you ask?
- Why did you choose those questions?
- How did you decide whom to question?
- How did you find the people to question?
- How did you administer the survey or hold the interview?
- How did you analyze your data?
- What were you trying to find out?
- What was the goal of your questions?

If you did a business plan:

- What instructions did you use? Cite source in APA style
- How did you gather local information, if included?

If you presented a case study:

- How did you decide whom or what to observe?
- How did you conduct your observation or data collection?
- What were the sources of your information on the case?

If you produced a manual, brochure, workshop agenda, or curriculum:

- How did you determine the need for the product?
- How did you decide which media to use?
- How did you determine your learning objectives?
- How did you decide what content was appropriate?
- Where did you get the information you presented?

Substantive Chapters

Every paper will be different here, ranging from none to eight or more chapters.

- What else does the reader need to know to understand the issue, its history, or your research?
- How can you organize this information into chapters?

Presentation of Product

Business plan, manual, curriculum, etc. goes here.

Presentation of Data

Results from questionnaire, survey, interviews, etc. go here.

- What did you find out? Give results, but don't draw conclusions
- How was each question answered? Give the numbers, but don't interpret them
- What was said in the interviews? Give a summary, but don't analyze

Analysis and Discussion of Data

- How do the data you presented prove or disprove your argument?
- What is your interpretation of your data?

Conclusions

Summarize your paper by bringing together the findings of the literature review, data collection, and your analysis. Do not add any new information in the Conclusion!

- Did your research confirm your argument or suggest a solution to the problem?
- What other issues did your research make you aware of? Based on your results, what do you recommend?
- How might you do this paper again differently?
- What were the paper's limitations?

Statement of Learning

- What new skills did you learn from doing this project?
- Did you gain research, interviewing, writing, computer, or time management skills? Self-confidence?

References

Every direct quotation, fact, and paraphrase which you cited must be listed here with complete bibliographic information in APA style. Only include books and articles cited in your paper.

Appendix

Provide a copy of your questionnaire or transcripts of interviews; copies of other documents such as flyers or charts which you did not write but referred to in your paper.

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Materials compiled by Maida Tilchen, Project Manager for Library Services Cambridge College © 2010