



THE RESEARCH PAPER

Online: <https://www.ufv.ca/asc/>

Research papers vary according to disciplinary, course, and assignment goals. It is best to consult the assignment sheet given by your instructor and to follow the guidelines outlined by her or him. That said, there are features common to academic research papers that are outlined in this handout.

Student and professional research papers:

Student research papers are novice versions of expert activity conducted by academics (your professors). What academic writers do is investigate a very specific topic within the contexts of their disciplines; they

material you need from sources. Many of you will be familiar with the term “thesis.” Some people believe that a thesis must be contained within a single sentence, and some people believe that a thesis can be presented in more than one sentence. Generally, though, the thesis is understood as a statement that signals the topic of your text, your interpretation of that topic, and a “map” for your reader that outlines which sub-topics you will address and in what order. Your thesis will be determined, in large part, by what your sources say about a topic, but it is up to you to summarize and synthesize information in order to advance your own claim.

Features of academic research papers:

Introduction:

Introductions parallel the activities of academic researchers noted above: they begin with statements about what sorts of things are known about a topic; they begin by contextualizing the topic, by describing why it is an important issue to consider and for whom. This is often done through use of citation to demonstrate the body of research being drawn upon. Introductions then point to knowledge deficits which can arise from different situations--from gaps in a body of research about a topic, problems arising from situations in the world, and extensions of knowledge to other contexts. Your introduction should then offer your thesis—the thesis sets up readers’ expectations for your work; it provides them with a map and a set of more precise categories to assist them in interpreting the information you offer. There are no exact rules about the length of introductions, but generally speaking, you want your thesis to arrive on the first page—typically, introductions are half to three quarters of a page in length, and typically, the thesis comes at the end of the introduction.

Student Sample:

As the population of the city of Abbotsford continues to increase, so does its level of criminal activity. Included in this increasing crime rate is an increase in the levels of prostitution. Police forces in small towns do not need to expend a lot of resources to suitably deal with the issue of prostitution. A small town

is use the broader categories laid out in your thesis as sectional guides; the number of paragraphs for each is best decided as you draft, consult sources again, determine what information you want to present, and decide what you want to emphasize.

Conclusion: