

Guidelines for the Research Paper

TOPIC: Your topic should address some issue (preferably related to your major) that somehow amplifies, extends or counters the themes addressed in *My Ishmael* and/or *Food, Inc* and also advances your personal knowledge. Science and technology change too quickly to rehash old "stuff." Old "stuff," other than as background information, or to show progress in a particular area of research, is not advancing your knowledge and can produce misleading or wrong conclusions.

AUDIENCE: Your paper should be understood by a broader audience than just scholars in your field. You will have to explain concepts and not expect your audience to understand in-house jargon. If you are working on a paper in your field for another class or on the job we can negotiate audience requirements.

FORMAT: Although, there is no formal minimum length requirement, it would be difficult for you to do an adequate job with less than 7 to 10 double-spaced pages of text (not including graphics, cover page, appendices, or reference page). But remember, ten "rambling" pages is not better than 7 clear, fully developed pages.

COVER(title)PAGE - in **APA** style (which should include your name, course and section, date, my name. The title should give your audience a good idea of what your paper is about - not tease y our audience. For example: The Internet - Changing the Way Students Learn and Teachers Teach.

THESIS: must be included in the introduction, generally at the end of the introductory material. Use subheadings, where appropriate, to separate different aspects of your paper which support your controlling idea (your thesis). [The body of your paper should provide supporting evidence to support your thesis, in a logical fully developed, consistent manner. For each new topic that supports your overall thesis, provide a topic sentence or two that is, in effect, the thesis for that subtopic which supports your controlling idea for the whole paper.]

PAGINATION - Put page numbers in top right hand corner of each page, including the cover page. Also include your last name and abbreviated title: Smith - Internet 2

SOURCES: Use a **minimum of 5** varied **CURRENT** sources (at least three from 1995 - for example, journals in your major, Internet sources, interviews with at least **ONE** being a **primary source**. Books (often outdated by the time they get published) are generally poor sources for scientific subjects except for background info. Trade magazines or special interest group sources have built in biases. Check the source of all information for reliability. Is the Internet site sanctioned by a reputable institution or organization? Is the person interviewed experienced in your subject? Does he or she have a built in bias you need to address in your paper? What biases of your own may you have to be aware of to produce a scholarly look at this subject?

Follow the current standard **APA** style for documenting the sources in your text. Use parenthetical citations (citation information in text between parenthesis). Give parenthetical citation information for quotations **AND** paraphrases. Include page number for direct quotes. APA requires the date be included in in-text citations:

As Lester (1993) stated, "beware of biased reporting. In general, scholarly journals offer more reliable evidence than magazines" (p. 89).

OR

As Lester stated, "beware of biased reporting. In general, scholarly journals offer more reliable evidence than magazines(1993, p. 89).

Paraphrased version: Magazines written for the general public tend to have less objective information than that found in scholarly journals (Lester, 1993).

Note: No page number necessary for paraphrases. Paraphrasing means restating in your own words the original author's EXACT meaning - not just rearranging words in the author's original text. You can embed a short quote of a key phrase in paraphrased material and give the page number of the quote.

It is poor form to begin a paragraph or a sentence with a quotation - letting the source speak for you instead of incorporating the source into your text.

Use quotes judiciously - only when paraphrasing will make the statement unclear or a kernel of an idea is so perfectly stated that trying to paraphrase in your own words will ruin the impact of the statement. See the APA form for how to handle long quotes (I expect few long quotes).

A writer of a research paper should synthesize the information gained from sources and weave them into a discourse, using the sources as evidence to support key points. A paper that is just a string of quotes shows that the author made no attempt to come to grips with the subject, but is just regurgitating information.

Conclusion - should not be a regurgitation of your whole paper, but should give it closure. Some summation is okay - echoing your main theme. Your conclusion could project into the future of the technology or research, if appropriate.

Reference page in **APA** style (1995 version). Rely on an APA style manual for the exact style of citation for various sources. If you are unsure about a particular source, we can discuss.

Appendices: Graphics or charts should only be used if they can clarify some concept in your paper. Don't use them just for a "flashy" effect or for "gee whiz" value. If you include large graphics or charts, include each on a separate appendix page and label each one A, B, and so on. Refer to such appendices in the text where you discuss that issue.

Examples of "good" papers:

[Science.marshall.edu/pricew/fys/examples/example_1.pdf](http://science.marshall.edu/pricew/fys/examples/example_1.pdf)

&

science.marshall.edu/pricew/fys/examples/example_2.pdf

Final advice - try to relax

Consult me when needed - I'm happy to help.