

RESEARCH PAPER ASSIGNMENT

Many of you have written a research paper during your high school career. This is your opportunity to do so again. Some of you have not written such a paper yet—here's a chance to work on this valuable skill. Quality is the goal with this research paper. We want you to research the past, present, and future of the career you are focused on.

Listed below are the aspects that you need to address in the paper. You are certainly not limited by these ideas, but be sure to include **ALL** of the listed topics below. Don't expect full credit if you neglect to address a topic. Some of the answers are difficult to find, but they **are** out there. Remember, you've had a long time to work on your research!

The **minimum** length of this in-depth research paper will be 10 - 12 pages. There is a 15 page maximum. **A Reference List and in-text citations using APA guidelines should be included. Correct citations are extremely important. Papers that stray too much from this requirement will NOT be graded (review the rubric for more information)!**

The due date can be found in the course syllabus. Review the grading rubric and "Research Paper Helpful Hints" carefully to make sure you've covered all your bases well.

Topics to Address

1) History of the Profession/Career

- a) How did this career come into existence?
- b) How and why has the profession evolved over the years?

2) Present

- a) What are some of the trends in this career field today?
- b) What are the prospects for obtaining an entry level position in this career field?
- c) What is the level of competition among job seekers?
- d) Are extra incentives currently being offered to entice people into this field?
- e) What are some statistical trends?

3) Future

- a) Are there opportunities for career advancement (i.e., promotions)?
- b) How will this career field be changing, if at all, in the future?

4) Characteristics of the Profession

- a) Describe the work environment.
- b) Address quality of life issues, including hours, family time, etc.

5) Qualifications

- a) What skills and abilities are needed to be successful in this career?
- b) What level of education and/or training is required?
- c) What work experience and/or volunteer opportunities are available to people interested in pursuing this career?

6) Discoveries/Findings

- a) What have you discovered about the career you've researched?
- b) How have your opinions changed about the career?
- c) Do you still think this is the right career for you? Explain.

(over)

RESEARCH PAPER HELPFUL HINTS

Here are some things (in no particular order) to keep in mind as you write this (and future) papers. Hopefully you'll find these suggestions useful. Remember, good writers are always learning new skills!

1. **Write several rough drafts and proofread them.** This is a cardinal rule of writing! Do NOT turn in something you wrote the night before. Double- and triple-check your spelling and grammar. Failure to do so may cause some professors to overlook the hard work you've done and concentrate on your poor language skills. The end result will be a (much) lower grade! Some professors have even been known to throw these papers away! Take pride in your work. As the saying goes, "Every job is a self portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence."
2. A research paper is not something that provides a brief overview. It is an in-depth study. Short papers will probably lack the detail needed to score an "A" or "B." That said, long-winded, repetitive papers are equally bad because they confuse, rather than inform, your reader. **You want to be thorough, yet clear.**
3. **Be 100% certain that all work in your paper is your own.** Plagiarized papers (in whole or in part) will receive a zero as per school policy.
4. A research paper is not a collection of quotes from various sources. Don't copy a huge string of text, plop a citation after it, and assume you've covered your butt. You haven't. That's not a research paper; it's a collection of quotations. **Put the material you've gathered into your own words and use APA in-text citations to show where you got the ideas from.**
5. Your **cover page** is designed to contain your name, the title of the assignment, the date, etc. Do not include this information on the first page of your paper. The cover is the appropriate spot for it, unless you're told otherwise by a professor. Most will expect you to know this.
6. Most college professors will want you to use **1" margins** all around (not 1.25" on the sides, which is the Microsoft Word default) and **12-point Times New Roman font.**
7. Do not begin a new paragraph on the end of a page if you won't be able to fit at least two lines of it on that page. Insert a **page break** and start it on the next page instead. This is the one time it's acceptable to play with the margins!
8. **Avoid contractions** in a formal research paper (like this one). Write the words out instead. Of course, if you are quoting someone, contractions are okay.
9. **Use quality sources.** The Internet has caused us to rely on people who may not be qualified to provide "factual" information or opinions that "matter." Make sure you use **reputable** websites. Don't rely too heavily on Wikipedia!
10. Good research papers **utilize multiple sources.** This gives you better insight into the topic you're studying (a career, in this case) and provides a more balanced look at the issues. In college, five to ten sources will be recommended for a paper of this size.
11. **Don't refer to people in your paper by their first names.** You're not hanging out with them! You and "Bill" (Gates) aren't buddies. Call him "Gates" in your paper.
12. When including a large amount (over thirty words or so) of **quoted text** (which you shouldn't do unless absolutely necessary), make sure you format it using a block quote. Consult a writer's handbook (You do own one, right? If not, get one!) for more specific guidelines.