# Chapter 7: Writing

There are five resources in this chapter:

* Analyzing a Prompt
* Research Paper Sections
* The Graphic Outline
* Research Organizer
* Reverse Outline

Analyzing a Prompt Worksheet

Assignment Title:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Assignment Due Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* What “set-up” information can you find? (“Set-up” information reminds you of things you’ve already read or learned, or lets you know where you can find the answers to the question they are asking you.)
* What “action words” are present?  (“Action words” tell you what you’re supposed to and include words like “compare,” “describe,” and “summarize.”)
* Write any number or number phrases down. (These include things like “select one,” “use three outside sources,” and “provide two examples.”)
* What are the steps to complete this assignment? Write them in the correct order below.
* What is your instructor asking you to do? Write it clearly below.

Research Paper Sections

Each part, or section of a paper should DO something—provide background, convince your audience there is a problem to address, provide them with solutions, or explain the effects the problem has on a group of people, etc. The point of this exercise is to consider which paper sections YOUR paper will need. This activity will help you generate an outline.

The possible sections of a research paper are:

* Background
* Problems
* Solutions
* Effects
* Counter arguments

The way to decide what sections your paper needs is by thinking through two things:

* **Your goals.** Who would benefit from reading your paper? What do you want your readers to do, know or feel by the time they finish reading your paper? Do you want your readers to have information they can use to do their jobs better? To make better decisions about something? Do you want to persuade them to start doing something? To stop doing something? To understand how a situation affects a group of people or the environment?
* **Your audience.** Many students will say they are writing for “anyone.” But that is rarely true. Here are questions to ask yourself about your audience:
* What do they already know? If you are writing a paper about alternative treatments for Lyme disease, don’t spend the first pages of your paper defining Lyme disease because your reader likely has the disease and knows exactly what it is.
* Are they likely to agree with you? If you are writing a paper for nurses about job safety, you probably don’t need to spend a lot of time making the case that violence against nurses is on the rise. Nurses already know this. Instead, focus on solutions.
* Are they likely to disagree with you? If your audience is likely to disagree with your major conclusions, counter arguments can be helpful.
* How much control does your audience have? Don’t focus your paper on proposing solutions your audience doesn’t have the power to implement. If your audience is teachers and you are writing about how lack of nutrition can affect a child’s ability to learn, don’t include solutions such as changing how SNAP benefits are funded— teachers can’t fix that. Instead, focus on what the teachers would have control over—such as helping kids access resources or finding money in the budget to buy protein packed snacks.

The chart below names and defines section roles on the left side. The middle column provides considerations, and the right column invites you to indicate if your paper should have this particular section and to answer why or why not.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Paper Section/ Component** | **Think about It . . . .** | **Yes/No/ Maybe and How**  Jot a few notes about whether you need this paper section and why. |
| **Background:** The background is right after the introduction. It provides a history of something, a definition of a concept, and/or explains a situation, process, or event. | Would your reader benefit from hearing reading a background of your topic? Or is it likely they know the information already? | Yes      No    Maybe    Explain your answer. |
| **Problem(s):** The “problem” section explains why a particular situation, way of thinking, law, event, etc. is a problem. The writer’s goal is to convince the reader that something needs to change. | Think through the problems you are hoping to propose—how relevant are they to your intended audience? | What problems will your paper discuss? |
| **Solution(s):** The “solution” section of a research paper explains how and why a particular solution would solve the problem or problems. Often, the solution section simply follows the problem section, but sometimes you might have problem/ solution, next problem/ next solution. | Do you have enough knowledge to propose a good solution?  Does your audience have the power to enact solutions? | Yes   No   Maybe    If you picked “Yes” are you confident you have the knowledge to propose a good solution or solutions? Does your audience have the power/ authority to implement solutions? List solutions below. |
| **Effect(s):** Sometimes, the point of a research paper is to name and describe a problem and then explain how that problem affects a particular group of people, the environment, an institution, society, etc. | Do you hope your reader will change their behavior, etc. as a result of finding out how something affects a particular group of people? | Yes    No   Maybe    Explain your answer. |
| **Counter Arguments:** Counter Arguments bring in the opposite point of view with the goal of arguing against it, or using research to explain how the counter argument is completely or partially wrong, or how a different way of thinking would be better for any number of reasons. | If your goal is to persuade people, you may wish to include counter arguments so you can argue against them. | Yes    No    Maybe    Do you have a hostile audience? What would they benefit from hearing? |

## The Graphic Outline

Many students say they often have a sense of relief after completing an outline because suddenly, the paper seems “do able.” This particular outline is different from the traditional outlines using numbers and letters because it encourages you to think about how long the different sections of your paper will be.

How to Complete the Chart

The goal of this graphic outline is think through each page of your paper and consider what you will write about or “say” on each page. Notice that there are 5 rows in the chart below, each one representing a page. (i.e. Page 1, page 2, etc.) However, you can add or subtract pages until it is the length of the paper you have been assigned to write.

In the left column, write in complete sentences or just write enough that you know what you are going to say on that page of your paper.

If your paper requires you to do research and use more than one sources, in the right column, name the sources you will use to prove the point you named in the left column. If helpful, you could also use that column to copy and paste quote you hope to use.

Sample Chart

See the example below for a three-page paper a college student might write on the challenges of students adjusting to college from high school:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Topic/ subject**  **In this column, write down what topics you will cover and guestimate how many pages it will take you to do so.** | **Sources**  **In this column, list the sources you ALREADY have - by author or title or both- to write this part of your paper and make a note about what sources you still need.** |
| Page 1  **Intro and thesis— How long will your introduction and thesis be?**  1/2 of a page    **What will you do to introduce your topic?**   In my intro, I will tell the story about how I failed my first history test because I didn’t understand that college studying was different from high school.  Thesis: When students transition from high school to college, they often are not prepared to do as much reading as college requires and they struggle to manage time. | |
| **Page 1** (half page)  I will compare the amount of reading high school students have to do with the amount of reading college students have to do. (About 1/2 page) | Mary Martin’s article “College Students Who Don’t Read”    Abdi Mahomed’s article “The Jump in Rigor between High School and College.” |
| **Page 2**  On page two I will explain how many students in high school got by with not reading their work and they try to do that in college.    This has led them to have poor reading habits.   (3/4 of a page)    I will explain how students don’t know how to manage time since, in high school, this was done for them. (1 page) | Mora Nguyen and Beth Schmidt’s article “What Do I Do Now? College Students Time Unmanagment.” |
| **Page 3**  Time management continued. |  |
| **Conclusion- how long will your conclusion be?** About ½ page | |
| **Works Cited/ References Page** | |

Blank Graphic Outline Chart

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Topic/ subject**  **In this column, write down what topics you will cover and guestimate how many pages it will take you to do so.** | **Sources**  **In this column, list the sources you ALREADY have - by author or title or both- to write this part of your paper and make a note about what sources you still need.** |
| **Page 1**  **Intro and thesis— How long should your intro and thesis be? \_\_\_\_\_\_**  **What will you do to introduce your topic?**      **What is your thesis?** | |
| **Page 1** |  |
| **Page 2** |  |
| **Page 3** |  |
| **Page 4** |  |
| **Page 5**  **Conclusion- how long will your conclusion be?** | |
| **Works Cited/ References Page** |  |

Research Organizer

RESEARCH GUIDELINES:

**(Put any information that students need to know about guidelines here. This could include how many sources they need, why types of sources, where they should find sources, etc.)**

**Research Question:**

**Thesis Statement:**

SOURCES:

1). Author(s):

Title:

Journal/Publisher/Website:

Year of publication:

Why is this a credible source?

Facts or quotes that I can use to support my thesis:

2). Author(s):

Title:

Journal/Publisher/Website:

Year of publication:

Why is this a credible source?

Facts or quotes that I can use to support my thesis:

3). Author(s):

Title:

Journal/Publisher/Website:

Year of publication:

Why is this a credible source?

Fact or quotes that I can use to support my thesis:

4). Author(s):

Title:

Journal/Publisher/Website:

Year of publication:

Why is this a credible source?

Fact or quotes that I can use to support my thesis:

NOTES/QUESTIONS:

Reserve Outline Worksheet 

**Thesis:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Body Paragraph One**

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Evidence/Support:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How this paragraph supports my thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Body Paragraph Two** 

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Evidence/Support:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How this paragraph supports my thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Body Paragraph Three** 

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Evidence/Support:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How this paragraph supports my thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Body Paragraph Four** 

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Evidence/Support:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How this paragraph supports my thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Repeat for all body paragraphs.