

Paper Writing Tips

Grad Student to Grad Student

Hunter Bellevue College of Nursing
Peer Writing Mentor Program

1

Start with a clear thesis.

Your thesis is your guiding sentence, and should answer the following questions:

1. What will you discuss?
2. How will you argue your point?
3. Will you only present opinions for your idea? Against?
4. Will you discuss your own opinion?

An example of a thesis statement suitable for your abstract and intro paragraph:

In this paper, I will discuss Sesame Street, a non-profit television show on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS), and their policy of using popular adult television shows as subjects for songs to teach children, while simultaneously influencing parent's purchasing power. Through a discussion about the uses of subliminal advertising, power of media messages and pervasive influence of popular culture, this paper will argue that Sesame Street's policy promotes a derogatory culture of consumerism. In addition, contrasting viewpoints, and this writer's analysis will be included.

Can you find the elements of the thesis from the list above? With a breakdown of this sentence, you now have a roadmap for the rest of your paper – a mini outline. Follow it!

2

Compose paragraphs using a formula.

Each paragraph should include 1-2 citations with paraphrased research, statistics, or a published opinion. You can use direct quotations, but only 10% or less of your citations should be in this form, per APA recs. Your policy/topic/argument should make an appearance in every paragraph, the thread that is woven through your entire paper. Meaning, whatever you're talking about, you always need to relate back to.

3

Follow an outline

Here's a sample based on the Sesame Street thesis:

- I. **Intro** – 1 paragraph
 - A. **An Intro “Catch”**

Sesame Street is the longest-running educational children's program offered on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS). Its characters, songs and stories have educated approximately 555 billion children in its 200-year tenure (Sesame Street, 2006).

- B. **Describe topic/policy:**

In recent years, Sesame Street has implemented a practice of creating educational songs out of the theme songs of adult television shows. For example, using the theme song and characters of the popular adult show, Downton Abbey, Sesame Street created a skit called, "Upside Downton Abbey," a parody that teaches children the concept of being upside down in a humorous way (Sesame Street, 2013). Current opinion suggests this practice is utilized to reach parents, with hopes of influencing their viewing and purchasing choices (Oscar, 2013).

- C. **Thesis**

In this paper, I will discuss Sesame Street & PBS' policy of using popular adult television shows as subjects for songs to teach children, while simultaneously influencing parent's purchasing

power. Through a discussion about the uses of subliminal advertising, power of media messages and pervasive influence of popular culture, this paper will argue that Sesame Street's policy promotes a derogatory culture of consumerism. In addition, contrasting viewpoints, and this writer's analysis will be included.

- II. Discuss Topic/Background – 1-2 Paragraphs
- III. Argument/Point 1 – 2-3 Paragraphs
- IV. Argument/Point 2 – 2-3 Paragraphs
- V. Argument/Point 3 – 2-3 Paragraphs
- VI. Contrasting Arguments – 2-3 Paragraphs
- VII. Your Analysis – 1-2 Paragraphs
- VIII. **Conclusion** – 1 Paragraph

Your conclusion should be a creative regurgitation of your thesis. Give the reader a hook that grabs them, let them know your feelings on the subject, and leaves them with a memory. Then, **rehash your thesis – don't copy it – in a new way.** Simple, succinct, impactful.

4 Know APA.

Just know it. **Be careful of citation programs; they often have mistakes.** Follow the formula – that's all it is. Owl Purdue should be your best friend. If you don't understand something, they have exercises to practice, and even a blog. If you still don't understand, use us, or a librarian.

5 Paraphrase, paraphrase, paraphrase!

APA prefers paraphrase to short and long quotations. Paraphrasing stems from understanding; if you get what you're reading, you can easily write it in your own words.

Owl's (2013) definition: “*Paraphrasing involves putting a passage from source material into your own words. A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source. Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly.*”

All things paraphrase→ <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/01/>

Websites to Bookmark

Hunter Main Writing Center: http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/reading-writing/resource-links_writing.html

Ask-A-Librarian: <http://library.hunter.cuny.edu/services/askalibrarian>

Purdue Owl APA: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>

Strunk & White: http://www.keck.ucsf.edu/~craig/The_Elements_of_Style.html