

I-Search Paper - The Story of Your Search

Assignment:

- ✓ Your goal in this paper is to become an expert on a topic of your choice and write a comprehensive “semi-formal” eight to ten page research paper.
- ✓ The audience you are writing for is someone who has an even more limited knowledge of the topic than you had before you began your research.
- ✓ Your paper will not only include the information you learned, but also how and why you learned it.
- ✓ This paper is informal in that you absolutely may use “I” as it is a more personal piece of writing; it will not only present the information you have researched, but also describe the journey you took to acquire your expert status on the topic.
- ✓ It is formal in that it will require many different and reliable sources and must be properly cited according to MLA guidelines including in-text citations and a complete Works Cited page.

Basic Paper Requirements:

- ✓ 8-10 Pages in Length
- ✓ MLA Formatted
- ✓ In-Text Citations
- ✓ Complete and Accurate Works Cited Page

Research Requirements: You must have a *minimum* of...

- ✓ Two Print Sources (Books, Newspapers, Magazines, Periodicals, Encyclopedias, etc.)
- ✓ Three Non-Print Sources (Internet, Documentary, Radio Program, etc.)
- ✓ Two Interview Sources (Personal, Telephone or E-mail)

Remember:

- ✓ While you do have the freedom to choose your topic, you must be realistic in that it must be researchable. For example, you most likely would not be able to find all of the resources you need on international espionage.
- ✓ An I-Search paper should be personal, passionate and is meant to be shared. This is not the standard, formal, dry research paper – it is instead a story and a research paper combined. Considering that, it needs to reflect your personality at the same time that it is thoroughly informative. This will not only give you life skills in organizing and interviewing, but also academic skills in researching and creative and formal writing.

Brainstorm Ideas:

- ~Specific Career
- ~Historical Event
- ~Famous Person in History
- ~Topic Relating to Your Favorite School Subject
- ~Topic Relating to Your Favorite Hobby
- ~Specific College / College Life
- ~Historical Time Period
- ~Famous Person in Modern Day
- ~NOT YOUR IZZIE PROJECT TOPIC!

I-Search Paper Outline

Introductory Paragraphs:

- ✓ **Paragraph One:** Begin with a mini creative writing story about your topic that will hook the reader and give the paper an interesting beginning
- ✓ **Paragraph Two:** Identify the what and the why. What is your topic to be researched and why are you interested in this topic?
- ✓ **Paragraph Three:** What do you already know about this topic before you begin your research?
- ✓ **Paragraph Four:** What do you hope to learn about your topic through the research process? What questions about the topic do you hope to answer?

Body Paragraphs:

- ✓ **Paragraphs Five Through...?:** These paragraphs will be both a narrative and a research paper. Follow the *story* of your research and consider all important aspects of the experience from the initial research to the interviews. Tell it like it happened, perhaps even describing your thoughts and feelings as it happened, and within the telling, incorporate what you learned about the topic.

Conclusion:

- ✓ **Final Paragraph(s):** Close your paper with a reflection on what you did (or didn't) learn through your research and how your perception and knowledge of this topic has changed throughout the course of this process. Also, explain how you might apply this knowledge to your future life.

I-Search Outline

I. Introductory Paragraphs

- A. Creative writing mini story about the topic
- B. What is the topic and why do I want to research it?
- C. What do I already know about this topic?
- D. What do I hope to learn about this topic and how can it apply to me now?

II. The Search – Process and Research

- A. Print Sources
 1. What did I do to research using books, newspapers, etc..
 2. Research – What did I find out?
- B. Non-Print Sources
 1. What did I do to research using internet, documentaries, etc...
 2. Research – What did I find out?
- C. Interviews
 1. What did I do to find experts to interview?
 2. Research – What did they teach me?

III. Conclusion

- A. What did I learn and how can I apply this to my future?

I-Search Proposal

I _____ will research _____

This is what I already know about this topic....

This is what I want to know about this topic....

I will focus my initial research based on the following five questions:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

I-Search Interview Script

- ☆ Whether you are calling or e-mailing a potential interviewee, if it is someone you have never met before, use something close to the following script. Remember to be polite and enthusiastic as this person is doing you a favor by taking time out of their day to talk to or e-mail you.

Hello! My name is _____ and I am a sophomore at Sacopee Valley High School in Hiram, Maine. I have recently been researching _____ and through that research I found your name. Although I have been making great use of the library and the internet, I would love to learn what it is like to be directly involved in _____. I understand that you are very busy, but if I could please have a few moments of your time to ask you a number of questions it would be greatly appreciated. The information you are able to give me will be included in a research paper for my English class and any quotes I use will properly cite you as the source of the information. Thank you so much for considering my request.

Sincerely,

- ☆ On the back of this page create five (or more) open-ended questions to ask the individual you are interviewing.
- ☆ An open-ended question is designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer that uses the individual's own knowledge and feelings. Open-ended questions require more than just a yes/no or one word answer.
- ☆ For example, "Do you like playing baseball?" is *not* an open-ended question because the answer could simply be "yes." What you should ask instead is "What are your favorite and least favorite aspects of being a baseball player?" This will allow for a much more in-depth and detailed answer. The answer may also give you ideas for follow-up questions, so make sure you pay careful attention and take good notes during the interview.
- ☆ While you obviously won't be using *everything* said, you will want to make sure you get direct quotes that will capture the essence of the interview while you paraphrase the rest. Take good notes as you are listening and don't be afraid to ask the interviewee to repeat or clarify something they have said so you can get accurate quotes and information.
- ☆ Begin your interview by saying something along the lines of **"Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me. Anything you have to tell me will be very helpful in my research and make my paper much more interesting and personal."**
- ☆ Once you have asked all your questions, end the interview with something along the lines of **"Thanks again, I really appreciate that you took the time to do this. If you would like to see a copy of my final paper I could e-mail it to you when it is done."** You could also ask if they have any contacts they would recommend you talk to as well.

I-Search Interview Questions

Individual Interviewed: _____ Interview Method: _____

Question #1: _____

Notes/Direct Quotes:

Question #2: _____

Notes/Direct Quotes:

Question #3: _____

Notes/Direct Quotes:

Question #4: _____

Notes/Direct Quotes:

Question #5: _____

Notes/Direct Quotes:

I-Search Notes and Plagiarism

☆ Note-Taking:

- **Summary:** Summarize if you want to record only the general idea of large amounts of material.
- **Paraphrase:** If you require detailed notes on specific sentences and passages but do not need the exact wording, you may wish to paraphrase – that is, to restate the material in your own words.
- **Quotation:** When you believe that some sentence or passage in its original wording might make an effective addition to your paper, transcribe that material exactly as it appears, word for word, comma for comma. Whenever you quote verbatim from a work, be sure to use quotation marks scrupulously in your notes to distinguish the quotation from summary and paraphrase.

☆ Documentation to Avoid Plagiarism:

- You should feel free to use other persons' words, facts, and thoughts in your research paper, but the material you borrow must not be presented as if it were your own creation. When you write your research paper, remember that you must document everything that you borrow – not only direct quotations and paraphrases, but also information and ideas.
- If you summarize, paraphrase or quote directly in your paper, you *must* cite the source of the material.

☆ When Documentation is Not Needed:

- Common sense as well as ethics should determine your documentation. For example, you rarely need to give sources for **common proverbs** (“You can’t judge a book by its cover”), **well-known quotations** (“We shall overcome”), or **common knowledge** (“George Washington was the first president of the United States”). But you must indicate the source of any information or material that you took from someone else. If you have *any* doubt about whether you are committing plagiarism, cite your source just in case.

☆ Source:

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers: Sixth Edition. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

Rules That Will Make You Hate Me

Research writing is not something that you can do quickly or haphazardly and because of this, we will be adhering to the following guidelines.

Note Cards & Folders:

- ★ You will not be cutting and pasting your research from websites to blank documents as this leads to laziness and accidental plagiarism. Instead, and especially since PaperCut has been in use, you will use note cards to organize and keep track of your information. Note cards are a requirement of this process as they teach you the research and organization skills that many of you are desperately in need of. I will provide the note cards and if you are worried about losing them, or any of the papers for this process, I have set up folders for each class which will be housed on the small table beside my desk. At the end of each class you may paperclip all of your information together and place it in the folder so it will be available for you at the start of the next class period. This is going to be a lengthy process and I will not accept the excuse that you've lost or forgotten your work; if you do, you will just have to start over.
- ★ On the note cards you will write the following information:
 - the source the information is coming from
 - the type of notes you are taking (summary, paraphrase or direct quote)
 - the actual information you have taken from the source
- ★ Once this is done for all of your sources, you will number the note cards based on the order by which the information will appear in your paper. This is a longer process than you are used to, but when it comes to actually writing the paper it will be so much easier with all of the information organized and right in front of you.

Laptop Use:

- ★ You will be using your laptops for very few days throughout this process. You will have scheduled days for internet research and you will not use your laptops after that until you have handwritten a complete rough draft that has been proofread by at least one person (see checklist). You may absolutely use your laptops to type or research at home or in study hall, but while in English class, they will only be open on specified days and only I have seen a handwritten rough draft.