

RESEARCH PAPERS:

Credit students who are participating in extension courses offered by the **Sunset International Bible Institute** (SIBI) are required to write research papers. Our intent is to help students present research papers in an organized fashion that is easy for the student to organize and is easy for the instructor to understand. Some semblance of consistency is important for the student and the instructor. If this regimen is followed, consistency will result.

This brief "Guideline For Research Papers" will help the student organize the information being presented in a consistent, easily understood format. It will also help the instructor more easily understand the material being presented. If additional information is desired, a good reference book on writing research papers using the MLA method is entitled, How To Write Term Papers And Reports by L. Sue Baugh. Many other good sources are also available.

General Requirements:

Research papers may be either typed or neatly handwritten. If the paper is typed, it should be double spaced and neatly typed. If using a typewriter the standard size type **must** be used. If using a computer the font **must** be 12, and you **may not** use the “Make It Fit” function to arrive at the required number of pages. Both **must** use 1" margins on all four sides. If the assignment calls for a three (3) page research paper, it must be three (3) full pages. (2½ is not acceptable) The title page and bibliography do not count as part of the three (3) pages. Papers not following these guidelines will be returned to be redone.

If the paper is handwritten it should be written or printed neatly and legibly. The same requirements as typing are to be followed. Attention should be given to correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Investing in a good Dictionary and Thesaurus will greatly assist the student in preparing research papers.

Format:

As a person prepares to write a research paper, it is important for the student to identify; 1) who wrote the paper, 2) the title of the course, 3) and the date the paper was written. This information should be placed in the upper right hand corner of the paper. Illustrated below is how this information should be shown:

Student Name
Course Title
Date

The subject of the paper is given in the Student Workbook. The title should be a short statement reflecting the assigned subject and it should be placed in the center of the page following the student’s name, the course title, and the date.

Research Paper Title

The student is now ready to begin writing the main portion of the paper. The paper should consist of three separate sections: The **Introduction**, the **Body**, and the **Conclusion**. A brief explanation of each is given in the following section.

Introduction:

The first paragraph of the paper is the **Introduction**. The introduction should introduce the subject. The introduction is different from any other section of the paper because its purpose is different. The introduction’s purpose is to begin with a broad general statement about the topic and then narrow to a thesis statement which gives the purpose of the paper. The thesis statement should generally be the last sentence in the introduction leading into the main body of the paper. One can think of the introduction as a funnel. It begins very generally and ends with a specific purpose.

Main Body:

The middle or body of the paper serves two purposes:

1. It develops each point supporting the thesis statement.
2. It builds toward the strongest point before the conclusion of the paper. Each paragraph in the body should represent different ideas supporting the purpose of the paper. However, the paragraphs in the body should tie together like chain links. The links (paragraphs) need to be connected by transitional words which tie one idea to the next.

Conclusion:

The **Conclusion** can be pictured as opposite of the introduction. It begins with the thesis or purpose of the paper and ends with a broad general statement. It is an upside down funnel or a pyramid. The conclusion should end the paper with a “bang”. The reader should be left with a formal convincing statement that puts your subject into broader terms. The conclusion is your last chance to convince the reader of your point of view.

Credits or References:

Most research papers rely on information gathered from other sources. It is important for the student to give credit to other sources used in the paper. We have adopted what is called the Modern Language Association (MLA) method of placing credits within the text instead of using footnotes or endnotes. Credits or citations enable the reader to locate full bibliographic information for each reference in the Bibliography. As the writer, you are responsible for providing your instructor with enough information to locate the correct source. When you use ideas or concepts developed by other authors, when you use facts or statistics that are not common knowledge, or when you use direct quotes from published works, you should give credit to the source.

Giving credit to others used in your paper should be shown immediately after you quote from that source. This is done by showing the author’s name followed by the page number in parenthesis.

An example of this technique is shown below:

“The absence of example may be as precedent-setting as any actual example itself” (Smith 167).

The sentence that is quoted is set apart by “quote marks” and the source for the reference is set apart by parenthesis. The Bibliography page gives complete information about the sources quoted in the research paper.

Bibliography Page:

A separate page or pages entitled “Bibliography” should follow the research paper. This page should list the sources used throughout the research paper. The following guidelines should be applied to the names of authors, editors, and translators of books used in your paper.

- 1) Always reverse the author’s name for alphabetizing, adding a comma after the last name and a period at the end of the name (Smith, F. LaGard.).
- 2) Always use the author’s name as given on the title page. Never abbreviate a name given in full. Omit titles, degrees, and affiliations that precede or follow names.
- 3) The title of the book should then follow the author’s name. The entire title of the book should then be underlined as illustrated.

Smith, F. LaGard. The Cultural Church

- 4) Publication information and page numbers should then be given. Publication information should include the city, publisher, and the date. This information is obtained from the title page and the copyright page. Notice that the page number from which the information is gathered is shown after the date.

Smith, F. LaGard. The Cultural Church. Nashville: 20th Century Christian, 1992. 167

The references listed on the Bibliography should be listed in alphabetical order by author’s last name. By giving the information in this format the instructor can locate any reference used in the research paper.