

This is NOT a Typical Research Paper! It's the I-Search Paper

So what makes the I-Search paper different from a research paper?

1. It's less formal than a traditional research paper!
2. You will choose a topic that has immediate relevance to your life—a topic about which you have a genuine need or a real desire to know more about. It must in some way be **relevant** to your life now: a hobby, a passion, an illness. Pick a subject to which you have a personal connection and write about it from a personal point of view. Steer **CLEAR** of careers to research! We've already done that this year!
3. You will first write what you know **FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE**, with no research.
4. Unlike traditional research papers, you will actually use the word "I" or first-person when writing the paper (for example, "I want to know more about...") We'll talk about varying sentence openers!
5. Finally, your I-search paper will include **1 INFOGRAPHIC** and **AT LEAST 2 text-wrapped PHOTOS or images** all related to your research on the topic you choose. (No larger than 2" x 2").

What are the Components of the I-Search Paper?

There are several distinct components to the I-Search paper that make it **DIFFERENT** from a regular research paper. The I-Search Paper will consist of four major parts:

Part 1: My Questions—Address all three

1-2 paragraphs: Why I Chose My Topic

1-2 paragraphs: What I Already Know or Assume

1-2 paragraphs: What I Want to Know

This 3-4 paragraph section (approximately 3/4 to one page in length) will be written using "I" statements. You will describe why you are interested in the topic, what you already know about the topic, and what questions you began with. A normal starting sentence for this section might be "I chose to write about horses because..."

Some questions to guide your work in this section include the following:

- o Why have I chosen this topic?
- o What do I already know about this topic?
- o What do I wonder about? What questions do I have? On what particular question do I want to focus?
- o What do I want to "discover" in order to answer my major question?

In this section, you will **NOT** cite any research, as it really is just the introduction to your actual work. However, you might refer to particular sources that "hooked" you in terms of interest or from which you have gained what knowledge you already have.

This section should be at least 3-4 paragraphs long and provide the reader with a clear sense of why you're researching your topic, what you already know, and what you hope to find out.

Part 2: My Search Process

In this section, you will DESCRIBE your actual research “journey.” You will need to describe the sequence of steps that you go through as you research your topic. You will explain in detail where you looked for sources, what you found, what worked, what did not work, and how you organized the information. This section, written in "I" form, is usually **one + pages in length**.

You might talk about what sources you begin with, how these help or not, new sources as you find them, what new questions crop up as you learn more, and what frustrations you encounter along the way. This is also the section where you talk about the help and assistance that you get from others, i.e. primary sources: mentors and other people you interview. You should explain your research methods and actually talk about specific sites and sources.

- o Explain your research methods and include specific sites
- o Tell about the primary sources/people you interviewed
- o Express your successes, failures, and feelings as you researched

Examples:

On the web at _____ .com, I found three articles that...

In the EBSCO database, I found one article

I interviewed a golf pro who works at Prairie Green to learn more about...

I watched a video on YouTube of an interview with...

I soon found that...

An important part of The Search:

Interview an expert first. An expert is a person who knows the topic well. The topic need not be his/her occupation. If you can't find a LIVE expert, find a YouTube expert.

- a. An expert can give you the most practical, workable information.
- b. An expert is right there to answer questions as they come to you.
- c. An expert can help you choose the best sources.

In order to complete this section, you will need to keep notes and log your work as you go. Failure to do so will make this section very difficult to do well. Your learning log will be a valuable resource for this section, so keep detailed notes. Again, this section of your paper should be **at LEAST one page but more likely two pages**.

Part 3: What I Learned

Write the actual paper. This portion of the I-search paper should be written using a more formal research structure. It should be **1 1/2 to 2 pages** in length. It should contain a few **complete quote sandwiches** (**Introduce** a quote or passage, **Cite** the quote, **Explain** the quote and what it means to you and your topic). This section must also include the in-text citations.

Part 4: Reflection on My Learning

Reflect on the process. The last section is the reflection of the student, and once again written in "I" form. This gives the student the opportunity to look back and identify the good and bad things that happened during the whole process and to infer what they may do differently in the future when writing for research. This section does NOT contain information about the topic, just about the process! This section is usually **1/2 to 1 page** in length.

My I-Search Log

Keep close track of the steps in your process. This log will become the My Search section of your paper!

| Date | What I Accomplished, Decided, Discovered, etc. |
|------|--|
| | Learned about the I-search paper. Looked at samples. Started thinking about what my topic is going to be |
| | Chose my topic & Checked with Mrs. Renner. I decided to research... |
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