

I-Search Paper for Mr. Taylor's Class

The I-Search Paper will demonstrate your ability to access sources and interpret meaning, organize your thoughts, analyze new knowledge and findings, form reasoned judgments and conclusions, write with skill and communicate effectively what you have learned. Like traditional research papers, *you must use proper citations*, and for this you need to follow the MLA style; <http://citationmachine.net> is a good resource for this. **Be sure to cite sources, use quotation marks around anything you quote from another source, give credit for all ideas that are not your own, and include a correctly formatted Works Cited Page** (See back side of assignment page). **Unlike traditional research, you will actually use the word "I."**

Components of the I-Search Paper:

There are five distinct components to the I-Search paper. This section will take you through the five parts. If you read through this and start writing as it guides you, the process will be a cinch. It even tells you how long each section should be in order to meet the length requirement. **Note all the questions—They will give you lots of ideas.**

Part 1: My Questions--What I Already Know, and What I Want to Know

In this section, you will describe what you already knew about the topic, why you were interested in it, and what questions you began with. Some questions to guide your work in this section include the following:

- *Why have I chosen this topic?*
- *What product will I create, and how does it relate to this research topic?*
- *What do I already know about this topic?*
- *What do I wonder about? What questions do I have? On what particular question do I want to focus?*
- *What do I want to "discover" in order to answer my major question?*

In this section, you will probably 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 2-3 paragraphs long** and provide the reader with a clear sense of why you're researching your topic, how it relates to creating your product, what you already know, and what you hope to find out.

Part 2: My Search Process – How I Prepared to Create the Product

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, on your way to creating your product. 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 should explain your research methods and actually talk about specific sites and sources. Be sure to include your reflections in this section.

- *Explain your research methods and include specific sites*
- *Tell about the primary sources/people you interviewed*
- *Express your successes, failures, and feelings as you researched **Examples: When I went to the library, I looked at... On the Internet, I found three articles that... I soon found that...***

This section of your paper should also be 2-3 paragraphs long.

Part 3: What I Have Learned in Completing the Product/Search Results

This section finally allows you to focus on what you have learned as a result of completing your product.

- *What findings or conclusions have you arrived at?*
- *What sources have you used to come to these conclusions? **You need to be sure to cite your sources here!** Be careful to connect what you have learned to the question(s) you posed in the first section of your paper. You might use comparison/contrast, pro/con, cause/effect, or sequencing as formats to demonstrate your analysis: **After doing the product, I discovered that... I was correct in thinking that... I was confused or mistaken about...***

Be certain to use MLA documentation in this section and cite your sources correctly. Direct quotes must ALWAYS be in quotation marks. You should try to use a **minimum of four sources**. Also, since this section focuses on what you’ve learned. **This is probably the longest section of your paper—4-5 paragraphs in length.**

Part 4: What This Means to Me/My Growth

This section provides the opportunity for you to reflect on how you have developed during the process. You should personalize your new learning and explain how it impacts your thinking on the topic. Draw

conclusions from what you have discovered. Explain what else you would like to know. The following statements may help guide your thinking:

- *What I now know that I didn't know before includes...*
- *The findings that mean the most to me are...*
- *What I've learned will affect me by...*
- *As a result of this research, I've decided to...*

Length for this section should be 2-3 paragraphs.

Part 5: References/Works Cited Page

You will need to cite your sources in two ways. First, you will need to properly cite sources throughout your paper. Also, it is essential that you include a properly formatted (MLA Style) Works Cited Page at the end of your paper. You will need to carefully document ALL sources you use throughout your I-Search process in order to complete this task correctly. From day one, you need to keep a list going of all Internet sites, all reference materials, and any other media sources that you use. There are several online sources that may help you, one of which is the Write Source site, <http://www.thewritesource.com/mla.htm>. There are several other MLA websites, so a GOOGLE search will help.

Helpful Reminders:

- **EDITING IS CRUCIAL:** Do not rely entirely on Spell Check! Read and re-read your work for correct spelling, punctuation, tense, word choice, and sentence fluency. Have others read your paper to make suggestions or corrections. Reading it aloud is the BEST way to catch many of your punctuation and sentence fluency problems.

- **Do NOT wait until the last minute.**

- If you get stuck, remember the paper's ultimate purpose: to tell the story of what you did to create your product.