

Writing a Sociology Paper

Sociology 1
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Organization of Academic Research Papers

- All academic research papers have this format:
 - **Abstract** – Brief summary of theory or concepts of current research in the field, findings of the paper's research and how contribute to the field (one paragraph)
 - **Introduction** – Introduce the research problem, why it is important and what (1-2 pages)
 - **Literature Review** – Reviews current literature and theory and points out in what way the paper's research will contribute to inform theory (3-4 pages)
 - **Methodology** – Methods – experimental, in-depth interviews, ethnography, etc (1 page)
 - **Main Body** – Present the paper's data (5-10 pages)
 - **Conclusion** – Discuss how the paper's research contributes to research in the field and/or theory (1-3 pages)

Structure of Short Sociology Paper

- Introduction (1-2 paragraphs)
 - State the thesis statement of your paper:
 - Thesis statement: A sentence or two that clearly states the argument of your paper. They have two characteristics:
 1. They are debatable, not just facts
 2. They are narrow enough so can be supported with evidence
 - Example: “Youth economic opportunity is an important social problem facing our country since the Great Recession . Power Elite Theory will be used in this paper to explain XYZ”
 - State the objective of your paper
 - Example: “This paper apply theory A,B,C to the analysis of 12 newspaper articles to show X,Y, Z”
 - State the findings of your analysis
 - Example: “The analysis shows that theory A is most relevant to understanding current events because (or whatever is suitable to your analysis) ...”

Main Body

(4-5 pages)

- Objective: Analyze data (newspaper articles) using theory or concepts from the readings
- Use theory (or readings) as your analytical frame:
 - Explain the main concepts of your theory (reading)
 - Theory A has:
 - Concept 1
 - Concept 2
 - Concept 3 ... etc

Important: State why the theory is important to answer the thesis statement of your paper

- Categorize your data into groups based on topic or main concepts
 - Category 1 (i.e. life chances of youth)
 - Category 2 (i.e. restructuring of labor market)
 - Category 3 (i.e. unemployment)
- Use the theoretical frame (or readings) to analyze main concepts of the newspaper articles
 - i.e. explain how theory or readings inform the main concepts, or vice versa.
 - Critique of theories: What theory is most applicable to your paper topic and why.

Conclusion

(1 paragraph to 1 page)

- Start with your main point
 - State the main point at the beginning of the conclusion.
 - You can repeat it from the introduction but more fully (do not repeat it word for word)
- Add a short discussion of what you learned

Abstract

(one short paragraph, about 150 words)

- State the paper topic (and/or thesis statement)
- State what the paper is doing
 - Example: “This paper will analyze 12 newspaper articles using the X,Y,Z readings (or theories)... etc
- State the main findings of the paper

Citations

- All citations within the body of the text should be formatted:
 - End of sentence:
 - (Author's last name, Year)
 - (Breznitz, 1992)
 - Beginning or middle of sentence:
 - Author's last name (Year)
 - Breznitz (1992)

Bibliography

Books:

- Author's last name, first name (year). *Title of book*. Press name.

Newspaper articles

- Author's last name, first name (year, date).
“Title of the article”, Name of newspaper or magazine