

Title In Normal Capitalized Words:
One Third of the Way Down the Page (about 12 single-spaced lines)

Your Name (halfway down the page, about 8 single-spaced lines)

Name of the Class (about 8 single-spaced lines down)

Your Teachers Name (one line down, double spaced now)

Month(spelled out) Date#, Year#

1. Introduction

You should always have your section heading centered and indent your first line with no extra spaces in between. This section should be your introduction. Make sure you open your paper up with some kind of hook that will catch the reader's attention. This could be a quote, fact, statistic, or even a scenario or narrative. If you use one of the later two you may have two paragraphs for your introduction, but most people will only have one. After your hook you should have a sentence or two explaining it, telling your reader why it's important and what it actually shows or means in relation to your topic. You should then continue this line of thought as you connect your hook to your larger topic, transitioning the information to set you up for your thesis. At the end of your introduction you will write your three-point thesis where you should take a stand on a larger topic and state three things that you are arguing, either because those things are causing the larger topic or because the larger topic is causing those things; either way there should be a cause and effect stated in your thesis.

2. Background and Context

This section is all about the history of your larger topic. Think about how you could label the heading for each part, there are numerous ways to introduce the reader to each section. This one could be simple and straightforward like Historical Context or The History of "Your Topic," but be careful about getting cliché with something like Where it All Started. Always go for something more academic than cute and catchy.

In this section you should be introducing the reader to your topic. What is it? When did it start? What significant historical events took place that shaped the future of your topic to make it what it is now? Were there significant people behind these events and how were they essential?

What laws were created to govern or impact your topic? This should document all the information the reader would need to know about the larger topic to feel informed and education on the subject. The background section should be shorter and more condensed than the problems and perspectives sections of the paper, however it should all be based on research and sources. There should most likely be three to four different sources in this section to support the history you are explaining, and whether you are directly quoting or paraphrasing a source you should always give credit by adding an in-text citation (LastName pg#). This way you won't be liable for plagiarism and the author gets the credit they deserve.

3. Focusing on the Problems

As previously mentioned, the heading title for each section is up to you; see if you can craft something unique to your topic, but if all else fails stick with something simple and formal. This section is about the micro problems you identified in your thesis that are either causing or being caused by your larger topic. These should be arguable problems so that someone else might have a different opinion on the subject and could make a counter-argument, this shouldn't be general knowledge that would fit in your background. What are the causes and effects of each problem, and do you consider the possible bias each one might have? Remember to stay formal, academic, and objective throughout the paper, writing in the third-person. Never use first-person (I, me, my, we, our) or second-person (you, your) in a research paper, it will only weaken your argument because it will introduce a personal perspective and bias. By staying in the third-person your research becomes your evidence, making your arguments become stronger.

For each problem you address it should have its own paragraph or two. This should really be the heart of your paper. Each argument you make should be supported by actual evidence

from sources you have researched and not simply based on personal opinion. Make sure each paragraph fits the powerful paragraph format where you introduce an idea, provide evidence to back it up (with an in-text citation), explain the evidence, connect it back to your thesis/argument, and then transition into your next idea. This may seem repetitive but each of those components is critical in producing a well-written paragraph.

As you plan to write this section, make sure the problems you are stating are organized in a way that will make your ideas flow. This could mean organizing chronologically, grouping by similar topics, or listing them to show how one might contribute to another. Either way, make sure you have smooth transitions and your ideas are always connecting back to the larger standpoint you took within your thesis. Each argument you are making should always have two sides to it as well, so making sure the counterargument is at least mentioned and explained.

4. Perspectives on Change

Again, think about how you would label this heading title depending on your individual topic. This section should be thinking beyond the previous two parts: first you introduced the reader to your larger topic by providing history and background on it, then you went into specific detail on the current problems with the topic, now in this section you should be thinking about the future of your topic. Who (as in a significant person, organization, or group) has a similar standpoint as you and is trying to create change by helping or improving the situation? On the other hand, who may not want your topic to change because they are benefiting from the way things are now OR who is actually trying to make things change in the exact opposite way you think it should? This is a *perspective* on change, as in there could be numerous ways your topic is perceived and many people could be trying to affect it.

Each perspective (person, group, organization) you highlight should be a specific example, not a general term. For example, instead of saying “the people who oppose abortion are pro-life,” you should find a specific group or lawmaker who identifies as “pro-life” and explain what they are doing to affect change on the situation. For each perspective you should explain who they are, what they are doing to create change, what kind of impact or results they have had, and whether they have been effective. You could think of this section as showing the various solutions to your problems and you should have at least three different perspectives: two that agree on behalf of your standpoint and at least one that shows the “other side” of your argument.

5. Conclusion

It is time to restate the main points of your research paper. Some people say to simply restate your thesis, however you should go farther than this and recap the summary of what you have argued and learned from your research. What is the *significance* of everything you have explained, the takeaway information from this paper? After you have reminded the reader about the importance of your topic you should also tell them what you think the best solution should be. This may be something that was mentioned in your perspectives section or it could be based on your own personal opinion. Either way, make sure you describe this information in the third person, stating it as the thing that should happen because it’s the most effective or sensible solution. Next explain what will most likely happen if nothing is done to address the problems you have described in your paper. What consequences and implications will there be if nothing is changed? All of this should lead you to describe a “call to action” or next-step for the reader. What must be done, and who must do it? Leave the reader with a meaningful statement, perhaps reference your hook, and challenge them to be part of the solution.

Annotated Bibliography

Ehrenreich, B. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001. Print.

This nonfiction book is based on a journalist who attempts to find out whether it is currently possible for an individual to live on minimum-wage in America by going “undercover” and taking jobs as a waitress, a maid in a cleaning service, and a Walmart sales employee. A white, educated journalist in real life, Ehrenreich seems aware of the limitations of her experiment, and reflects on these issues in the text. The author explains all of her research and investigative methods and includes extra information on her places of employment, the economy, and the rising cost of living in America to help the reader understand the necessary background context. Though she seemed well written and well informed, I was alarmed at how she dismissed or ignored large topics such as race in her book, sometimes even making racist comments. To me, this showed how she hadn’t internalized the implications of her findings but rather only focused on her own personal discoveries and experiences. This book helped me better understand the survival gap between minimum-wage and living-wage and offered first hand experiences that I could use in my paper to argue why the minimum-wage needs to be raised in America.

A **bibliography** is a list of sources (books, journals, Web sites, periodicals, etc.) one has used for researching a topic. Bibliographies are sometimes called "References" or "Works Cited" depending on the style format you are using. A bibliography usually just includes the bibliographic information (i.e., the author, title, publisher, etc.).

An **annotation** is a summary and/or evaluation. Therefore, an **annotated bibliography** includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources. Your annotations can be written in first person paragraphs, single spaced, and will include the following:

- **Summarize:** Some annotations merely summarize the source. What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this article/book is about, what would you say? The length of your annotations will determine how detailed your summary is.
- **Assess:** After summarizing a source, it may be helpful to evaluate it. Is it a useful source? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Is this source biased or objective? What is the goal of this source?
- **Reflect:** Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to ask how it fits into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

Source:

“Purdue OWL: Annotated Bibliographies.” *Welcome to the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)*. N.p., n.d. Web. 8 Dec 2013. <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>>.