

LITERARY RESEARCH PAPER

A literary research paper presents and defends an argument primarily using historical context, objective research, and scholarly sources. Similar to a literary analysis paper, a literary research paper is a thesis-driven paper that comments on a certain element or theme within a text. The central difference is that a literary research paper defends its thesis with research, history, and objective facts instead of analysis.

POINTS OF FOCUS IN A LITERARY RESEARCH PAPER

These important elements of the text will influence your argument and development of your essay. Take the following factors into account as you write, and touch on them throughout your paper to give the reader insight.

- **Prevalent themes**
- **Historical context**
- **Genre**
- **Author's background**
- **Author's message and stance**
- **Religious, political, and social motifs**

STEPS TO CREATING A LITERARY RESEARCH PAPER

1. Examine the text

Thoroughly analyze the text to identify important themes and concepts that will guide your research. You can create an outline of the text to help you identify what those themes are.

2. Do your research

Research will serve as the backbone of the thesis and reinforce the points in your essay. Historical context, the author's background, and information surrounding the text's critical reception and popularity will help you strengthen your argument.

3. Find sources

Strong sources are vital in crafting a convincing argument and supporting your points throughout the essay. Refrain from using less reliable sources like Wikipedia or online forums, as they will detract from the believability of your argument. Use [strong, scholarly sources](#) to provide insight into your argument.

4. Start the writing process!

A. Write your introductory paragraph.

Introduce your thesis and briefly provide any relevant background information that the reader will need. The introduction should draw the reader in and provide a brief overview of the paper's topic and argument. Keep it concise and save more extensive discussion for the body paragraphs.

B. Develop your body paragraphs.

Devote one or more paragraphs to each of your topics. Ensure your paragraphs are organized and unfold in a cohesive manner. Open each paragraph with a topic sentence that refers to a point from your thesis statement. Distribute your sources throughout the body paragraphs to support each individual point.

C. Finish with a conclusion.

In the concluding paragraph, restate your thesis statement. Rewrite it so that it flows nicely from the previous paragraph. Concisely summarize and drive home the points you made throughout the essay.

D. Cite your sources

Make sure you include a works cited page that lists all of your sources at the end of your essay, and that you've included proper in-text citations throughout your essay.

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