

### How to Write a Research Paper:

1. Research the Bible to find the information you want to use in the paper. Use a concordance, Biblical commentaries, religious papers and studies or any other sources you can find to research covenants. Write down the verses where you find information about the covenants.
2. Research the information to discover as much information as possible about them. Use sources and commentaries other than the Bible as well. Ask as many questions as possible.
3. Write your paper answering those questions. Answer one question per paragraph. Reference the Bible verses in the paper along with your answers.
4. Add an overview and conclusion to the paper. It is best to write the overview and conclusion after creating the main points, because then you know what you are introducing and the final summary to the main question.
5. Cite the sources at the end of the paper in the "works cited" section, using whatever formatting your school requires. Use Turabian style. Cite the book, chapter and verse for each biblical passage. It is likely that you will have a long source list with a biblical research paper.

### Tips for Writing Your Thesis Statement

1. Determine what kind of paper you are writing:
  - An **analytical** paper breaks down an issue or an idea into its component parts, evaluates the issue or idea, and presents this breakdown and evaluation to the audience.
  - An **expository** (explanatory) paper explains something to the audience.
  - An **argumentative** paper makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with specific evidence. The claim could be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation. The goal of the argumentative paper is to convince the audience that the claim remains truly based on the evidence provided.
2. Your thesis statement should be specific—it should cover only what you will discuss in your paper and will be supported by specific evidence.
3. The thesis statement should appear at the end of the first paragraph of a paper.
4. Your topic may change as you write, so you may need to revise your thesis statement to reflect exactly what you have discussed in the paper.

## **How to write a Reflection Paper:**

### **Thoughts and Reactions**

- When writing a reflection paper on literature or another experience, the point is to include your thoughts and reactions to the reading or experience. You can present your feelings on what you read and explain them. You also can use a reflection paper to analyze what you have read. Like any other paper or essay, it should be cohesive and refer directly to the specific passage or quote in the material that inspired this feeling. You can include personal experience in a reflection paper, but do not depend on it; base your reactions and reflections on the material that is your subject.

### **Don't Summarize**

- Do not use a reflection paper simply to summarize what you have read or done. In addition, a reflection paper should not be a free flow of ideas and thoughts. The idea of a reflection paper is to write an essay describing your reactions and analysis to a reading or other experience; however, it is more formal than a journal entry, so leave out informal language and form.

### **Organize Your Thoughts**

- A reflection paper should be as organized as any other type of formal essay. Include an introduction, perhaps one that describes your expectations before the reading or the experience. You also may want to summarize the conclusions you came to during the process.  
The body of your paper should explain the conclusions you have come to and why, basing your conclusions in concrete details from your reading and experience. End the paper with a conclusion that sums up what you got from the reading. You might want to refer to your conclusions in relation to your expectations or come to some other conclusion or analysis about the text or experience in light of your feelings and reactions.

## **Brief Overview of the 10 Essay Writing Steps**

Below are brief summaries of each of the ten steps to writing an essay. Select the links for more info on any particular step, or use the blue navigation bar on the left to proceed through the writing steps. *How to Write an Essay* can be viewed sequentially, as if going through ten sequential steps in an essay writing process, or can be explored by individual topic.

**1. Research:** Begin the essay writing process by researching your topic, making yourself an expert. Utilize the internet, the academic databases, and the library. Take notes and immerse yourself in the words of great thinkers.

**2. Analysis:** Now that you have a good knowledge base, start analyzing the arguments of the essays you are reading. Clearly define the claims, write out the reasons, the evidence. Look for weaknesses of logic, and strengths. Learning how to write an essay begins by learning how to analyze essays written by others.

**3. Brainstorming:** Your essay will require insight of your own, genuine essay-writing brilliance. Ask yourself a dozen questions and answer them. Meditate with a pen in your hand. Take walks, think, and think until you come up with original insights to write about.

**4. Thesis:** Pick your best idea and pin it down in a clear assertion that you can write your entire essay around. Your thesis is your main point, summed up in a concise sentence that lets the reader know where you are going, and why. It is practically impossible to write a good essay without a clear thesis.

**5. Outline:** Sketch out your essay before straightway writing it out. Use one-line sentences to describe paragraphs, and bullet points to describe what each paragraph will contain. Play with the essay's order. Map out the structure of your argument, and make sure each paragraph is unified.

**6. Introduction:** Now sit down and write the essay. The introduction should grab the reader's attention, set up the issue, and lead in to your thesis. Your intro is merely a buildup of the issue, a stage of bringing your reader into the essay's argument.

*(Note: The title and first paragraph are probably the most important elements in your essay. This is an essay-writing point that does not always sink in within the context of the classroom. In the first paragraph, you either hook the reader's interest or lose it. Of course your teacher, who's getting paid to teach you how to write an essay, will read the essay you've written regardless, but in the real world, readers make up their minds about whether or not to read your essay by glancing at the title alone.)*

**7. Paragraphs:** Each individual paragraph should be focused on a single idea that supports your thesis. Begin paragraphs with topic sentences, support assertions with evidence, and expound your ideas in the clearest, most sensible way you can. Speak to your reader as if he or she were sitting in front of you. In other words, instead of writing the essay, try *talking* the essay.

8. Conclusion: Gracefully exit your essay by making a quick wrap-up sentence, and then end on some memorable thought, perhaps a quotation, or an interesting twist of logic, or some call to action. Is there something you want the reader to walk away and do? Let him or her know exactly what.

9. Turabian: Format your essay according to the correct guidelines for citation. All borrowed ideas and quotations should be correctly cited in the body of your text, followed up with a Works Cited (references) page listing the details of your sources.

10. Language: You're not done writing your essay until you've polished your language by correcting the grammar, making sentences flow, incorporating rhythm, emphasis, adjusting the formality, giving it a level-headed tone, and making other intuitive edits. Proofread until it reads just how you want it to sound. Writing an essay can be tedious, but you do not want to bungle the hours of conceptual work you have put into writing your essay by leaving a few sloppy misspellings and poorly worded phrases.

## How to Write a Compare/Contrast Essay:

Compare and contrast essays are the other big essay types in academic writing. These essays will follow a specific question and are easy to complete. There are several ways to write this type of essay. The most important thing to remember is structure. Many wonderful essays fall victim to the woes of bad structure, making any ingenuity to fall by the wayside. Go over the rules on how to write a general essay, and then structure your compare/contrast essay in one of the following two formats:

1. **Introduction:** Your introduction — like the five-paragraph-essay, should open generally (with a quotation, anecdote, generalization), and lead into the thesis statement.
2. **Topic 1:** This next portion of your essay (which may consist of one paragraph or several) should cover only the first topic of the comparison and contrast. Compare/Contrast essays take two topics and illustrate how they are similar and dissimilar. Do not mention topic 2 in this first portion.
3. **Topic 2:** This next portion of your essay (which may also consist of one or more paragraphs) should cover the second of the two topics. Do not discuss Topic 1 in this section. Since you have already gone into detail about it, you may allude to Topic 1 briefly; however, do not analyze Topic 1 in this section. This portion of the paper is to discuss Topic 2 in detail.
4. **Topics 1 and 2 Together:** Now that you have analyzed both Topic 1 and Topic 2 independently, now it is time to analyze them together. This section may also be one or several paragraphs.
5. **Conclusion:** The conclusion — like the introduction — should be a generalization of the thesis. This paragraph should express your certainty and absolute knowledge on the subject matter. You should reaffirm your thesis (essentially restate it in new words) and show how you have proven it.

OR

1. **Introduction:** Your introduction — like the five-paragraph-essay, should open generally (with a quotation, anecdote, generalization), and lead into the thesis statement.
2. **All Comparisons (Topics 1 and 2):** This section — which should consist of several paragraphs — should go through all similarities you find in the two topics on which you are writing. There should be at least three comparisons (essentially three

short body paragraphs) in which you give an example from both topics of comparisons in each.

3. **All Contrasts (Topics 1 and 2):** This section —, which should consist of several, paragraphs — should go through all differences you find in the two topics on which you are writing. There should be at least three contrasts (essentially three short body paragraphs) in which you give an example from both topics of comparisons in each.
4. **Conclusion:** This conclusion is wrapping up everything you have just proven in your paper. It should restate the thesis in a new, more official way, and you should feel quite confident in your writing.

Here is a quick breakdown on how the Compare-Contrast Essay should appear:

**Type A:**

1. Paragraph 1: Introduction (with Thesis)
2. Paragraph 2: Topic 1 (Comparison a)
3. Paragraph 3: Topic 1 (Comparison b)
4. Paragraph 4: Topic 1 (Comparison c)
5. Paragraph 5: Topic 2 (Contrast a)
6. Paragraph 6: Topic 2 (Contrast b)
7. Paragraph 7: Topic 2 (Contrast c)
8. Paragraph 8: (Optional) — Comparisons/Contrasts together (any topic)
9. Paragraph 8: Conclusion

**Type B:**

1. Paragraph 1: Introduction (with Thesis)
2. Paragraph 2: Comparison a (Topic 1&2)
3. Paragraph 3: Comparison b (Topic 1&2)
4. Paragraph 4: Comparison c (Topic 1&2)
5. Paragraph 5: Contrast a (Topic 1&2)
6. Paragraph 6: Contrast b (Topic 1&2)
7. Paragraph 7: Contrast c (Topic 1&2)
8. Paragraph 8: Conclusion

## **How to Write a Summary in 8 Easy Steps:**

Writing a good summary demonstrates that you clearly understand a text...and that you can communicate that understanding to your readers. A summary can be tricky to write at first because it is tempting to include too much or too little information. However, by following our easy 8-step method, you will be able to summarize texts quickly and successfully for any class or subject.

**1) Divide...and conquer.** First off, skim the text you are going to summarize and divide it into sections. Focus on any headings and subheadings. Also, look at any bold-faced terms and make sure you understand them before you read.

**2) Read.** Now that you have prepared, go ahead and read the selection. Read straight through. At this point, you do not need to stop to look up anything that gives you trouble—just get a feel for the author’s tone, style, and main idea.

**3) Reread.** Rereading should be *active* reading. Underline topic sentences and key facts. Label areas that you want to refer to as you write your summary. Also, label areas that should be avoided because the details—though they may be interesting—are too specific. Identify areas that you do not understand and try to clarify those points.

**4) One sentence at a time.** You should now have a firm grasp on the text you will be summarizing. In steps 1–3, you divided the piece into sections and located the author’s main ideas and points. Now write down the main idea of each section in one well-developed sentence. Make sure that what you include in your sentences are key points, not minor details.

**5) Write a thesis statement.** This is the key to any well-written summary. Review the sentences you wrote in step 4. From them, you should be able to create a thesis statement that clearly communicates what the entire text was trying to achieve. If you find that you are not able to do this step, then you should go back and make sure your sentences actually addressed key points.

**6) Ready to write.** At this point, your first draft is virtually done. You can use the thesis statement as the introductory sentence of your summary, and your other sentences can make up the body. Make sure that they are in order. Add some transition words (*then, however, also, moreover*) that help with the overall structure and flow of the summary. In addition, once you are actually putting pen to paper (or fingers to keys!), remember these tips:

- Write in the present tense.
- Make sure to include the author and title of the work.
- Be concise: a summary should not be equal in length to the original text.
- If you must use the words of the author, cite them.
- Do not put your own opinions, ideas, or interpretations into the summary. The purpose of writing a summary is to accurately represent what the author wanted to say, not to provide a critique.

**7) Check for accuracy.** Reread your summary and make certain that you have accurately represented the author’s ideas and key points. Make sure that you have correctly cited anything directly quoted from the text. In addition, check to make sure that your text does not contain your own commentary on the piece.

**8) Revise.** Once you are certain that your summary is accurate, you should, as with any piece of writing, revise it for style, grammar, and punctuation. If you have time, give your summary to someone else to read. This person should be able to understand the main text based on your summary alone. If he or she does not, you may have focused too much on one area of the piece and not enough on the author’s main idea.