How to Write a Research Paper

General style

To make a paper readable

- Type using a 14 point standard font (Times New Roman)
- Text should be double spaced on standard white computer paper
- Start each new section on a new page
- Adhere to recommended length

Mistakes to avoid

- Placing a heading at the bottom of a page with the following text on the next page
- Dividing a table or figure - confine each figure/table to a single page
- Submitting a paper with pages out of order
- **PROCRASTINATION**! Good research papers take time and if you wait until the night before the paper is due, you're in for an ineffectual paper and a low grade

In all sections of your paper

- Use standard grammar and spelling
- Stay focused on the research topic of the paper
- Use paragraphs to separate each important point
- Indent the first line of each paragraph
- Present your points in logical order
- Use present tense to report well accepted facts - for example, 'the grass is green'
- Use past tense to describe specific results - for example, 'When weed killer was applied, the grass was brown'
- Avoid informal wording, don't address the reader directly, and don't use jargon, slang terms, or "texting" language

Paper Format

Title Page

- Select an informative title.

Introduction

- Your introduction should not exceed one page. The purpose of an introduction is to acquaint the reader with the reason you are writing your research paper. Describe the importance (significance) of the paper - why was this worth doing in the first place?

Body

- The body of your research paper contains the majority of the information and facts.
- Several paragraphs will be required to thoroughly discuss your topic.
- Organize your ideas, making one major point with each paragraph.
- Avoid the phrases "I think" or "I feel." As you are the author, people already know the opinions expressed are yours.
- Avoid the passive voice. For example: instead of writing "America was discovered by Christopher Columbus" write: "Christopher Columbus discovered America."
- Read your paper aloud. Do you stumble over the words? Do they flow nicely? Do the sentences sound natural? This is a great way to develop sentences and tell if you need revisions. You can also find grammatical errors by reading your paper aloud.
- Always have someone else read your paper. They will catch errors and provide useful advice.
- Use Spelling and grammar tools in your word processor.

Conclusion

- Your conclusion should include your final statements and sum up the paper. It shouldn't be any longer than your introduction.

Literature Cited

- List literature cited in your paper according to the following guidelines:

Book:

Freds, L. (2014) Finding the way back to Earth. Washington, DC.
Smith Press

Williams, L. & Harvey, P. (2014) Life in Outer Space. New York, N.Y.
Falmer Press.

Newspaper/Journal/Magazine Article:

Handel K. (2014) The International Space Station – Mans' Biggest Leap Into the Future, or Mans' Biggest Mistake? Mars Society Quarterly, v. 36, p. 63-78.

Website:

http://www.nasa.gov September 3, 2015