

Research Paper Outline Worksheet

1. **Introduction** (introduces topic in interesting way; introduces key ideas to help explain your argument)

Thesis Statement: (your argument & road map)

2. **Background Paragraph:** (information to help reader understand the broad context of your topic)

3. **Section/Subtopic 1:** _____

Evidence:

a.

b.

c.

How does this prove your thesis?

4. **Section/Subtopic 2:** _____

Evidence:

a.

b.

c.

How does this prove your thesis?

5. **Section/Subtopic 3:** _____

Evidence:

a.

b.

c.

How does this prove your thesis?

6. **Counter Arguments Paragraph:** (explain the arguments against your thesis and refute them)

7. **Concluding Section/Paragraph** (restate thesis, summarize main points, offer insight to the larger significance of your topic and thesis)

Sample Outline – “How did Great Depression affect the unity of the United States?”

1. **Introduction:** Introduce your argument and end with your thesis statement.

- a. Set the scene and include background information that helps the reader understand your position
- b. **Thesis Statement:** 1. provable, 2. arguable, 3. how you will prove your argument (Road map)

Example: **Despite the unifying messages of hope from President Franklin Roosevelt, the Great Depression pulled the country apart as discrimination increased, families were separated, and the division between social classes grew.**

2. **Background Paragraph:** Additional background information on your subject, event, person, etc. that helps the reader understand what you are writing about.

- a. What caused the Great Depression?
- b. The effort the government made to fix it – New Deal
- c. How GD was different than previous decade

3. **Section/Subtopic 1:**

Topic Sentence: Controlling sentence that tells you what the section/paragraph is going to be about. It is kind of like a “mini-thesis” in that it is an argument and you say how you will prove it. (*Example:* **Economic hardships of the times increased the nature and extent of discrimination.**)

- a. Job competition
 1. Mexican Americans—deportations
 2. African Americans—increased racism, Jim Crow laws expand
 3. Married Women—feared they would take away men’s jobs
- b. Increased racial violence—(list specific examples)
- c. Ookies faced discrimination in California (list examples)

Clincher Sentence: This sentence ties what you discussed in this section to your thesis statement.

Example: **The discrimination during the 1930s widened already existing divisions between race, class and gender causing further fractures in the country.)**

4. **Section/Subtopic 2:**

Topic Sentence: Another way in which the country suffered divisions was in the breakdown of the family structure.

- a. Hobos – men left their families to look for work
- b. Kids left to raise themselves
 1. Juvenile delinquents
 2. Fewer children went to school
- c. Women went to work—lower pay, even when they’re sole breadwinners
- d. Statistics reveal family trends: Divorce rates increased, marriage and birth rates decreased

Clincher sentence: The family was a microcosm of the country; as traditional families disintegrated, so did the foundation of the country.

5. Continue with this section format for as many subtopics or body paragraphs that are necessary.

6. **Counter Arguments Paragraph:** Explain the arguments against your thesis and refute them

- a. FDR’s role as a unifying force and inspirational speaker
 - Refute: many felt loyal to FDR, but that didn’t change their relationship with others
- b. New Deal provides range of jobs
 - Refute: jobs are mainly limited to younger white men; causes animosity
- c. Pop-culture (radio, film) expands to unite country with common language, experiences

7. Lastly, include a **concluding paragraph** (or paragraphs) that summarizes your main points, restates your thesis, and offers a connection to the larger historical significance of your argument or issue.