You may be wondering how your ideas are supposed to shape the paper, especially since you are writing a research paper based on your research. Integrating your ideas and your information from research is a complex process, and sometimes it can be difficult to separate the two. Some paragraphs in your paper will consist mostly of details from your research. That is fine, as long as you explain what those details mean or how they are linked. You should also include sentences and transitions that show the relationship between different claims and evidence from your research by grouping related ideas or pointing out connections or contrasts. The result is that you are not simply presenting information; you are synthesizing, analyzing, and interpreting it.

The final step to complete before beginning your draft is to choose an organizational structure. For some assignments, this may be determined by the instructor’s requirements. For instance, if you are asked to explore the impact of a new communications device, a cause-and-effect structure is obviously appropriate. In other cases, you will need to determine the structure based on what suits your topic and purpose.

The purpose of Jorge's paper was primarily to persuade. With that in mind, he planned the following outline.

I. Introduction
   A. Background
   B. Thesis

II. Purported Benefits of Low-Carbohydrate Diets
   A. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition guidelines
   B. Potential flaws in USDA nutrition guidelines
      1. Effects of carbohydrates on blood sugar, insulin
      2. Relationship to metabolism and obesity

III. Research on Low-Carbohydrate Diets and Weight Loss
   A. Short-term effectiveness for weight-loss
   B. Long-term effectiveness not established

IV. Other Long-Term Health Outcomes
A. Cholesterol and heart disease

B. Blood pressure

C. Diabetes

V. Conclusion

This material is adapted from the following open textbook:

Crowther, Kathryn; Curtright, Lauren; Gilbert, Nancy; Hall, Barbara; Ravita, Tracienne; and Swenson, Kirk, "Successful College Composition"


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