

# THE I-SEARCH PAPER

## An Overview

### THE I-SEARCH PAPER (written for Mrs. Searle)

**What is it?** The I-Search Paper is a research-based paper that requires you to THINK rather than just regurgitate information. You will be able to select a focus of personal interest and run with it. Your I-Search Paper will document your journey as you wrestle with a real question/thesis, how you answer/explain it, and how you interact with the information you've discovered. REMEMBER: This is a long process. Do not be impatient, frustrated, or angry—this will just stop you in your tracks. DO READ THIS, yes, read. ALL of it. You can't expect to climb the mountain if you don't know anything about mountain climbing. Prepare yourself for success. Read and pay attention. Once you're in the zone, everything will click.

Your **INTRODUCTION** will provide some necessary background information to set the context, and it will state your **QUESTION/THESIS STATEMENT**. The thesis statement will steer your entire research process. Remember the **3 T's. Topic + 'Tude = Thesis**. This means you combine the topic with your attitude toward it or your spin into one complete sentence. This will probably be the last sentence in your introduction. Remember, a thesis statement may not be written in question form. After writing the thesis, you'll need to start your research and use index cards for source cards and note cards—but right now, I'm going to continue giving you the big picture of what your I-Search will end up looking like.

The first ¶ of the body will deal with how you plan to find the answer to your question/thesis statement...the process—where you will look to find information to answer your question/thesis statement. This would include a discussion of where you tried to find information—books, the Internet, non-print material, interviews, databases, newspaper articles, survivor accounts, whatever. This ¶ will also discuss how difficult you found each mini-search...as well as how you refined your thinking and tried other sources or key words. If you don't want to address this in one paragraph, talk about it throughout your paper.

Subsequent ¶'s will share the information your research has uncovered—broken into paragraphs that start with **topic sentences**. You cannot just recopy big sections of material. If I want a

Xerox machine, I can use one. I don't need you to become one! You need to understand the information you're finding and explain it in a logical, thought provoking manner.

This is also where the “I” factor comes into the picture. You should be interacting with the information by adding personal comments, questioning how you would have reacted, and making connections to things you see in the world today. If you're talking about bystanders, expand that idea and look at bystander behavior you see everyday in school—how you react when you see something happening that you feel is wrong. This is the meat of your paper. This is where you demonstrate your understanding of all the research you've done and all the ideas you've read in the play, seen in film material I've shown, and learned from the appreciation material I've shared with you.

The body is also where I expect to see **in-text citation** (footnotes within the paper) to document where you found specific information. If you haven't done your source cards and note cards correctly, you won't be able to use in-text citations...and you'll lose points.

The final ¶, the **CONCLUSION**, should restate the introduction and draw valid, useful conclusions based upon what you've demonstrated you've learned in the body. Pull it all together in this final ¶. Think of the finale to a fire work demonstration. Go out in style.

Length by itself does not guarantee a good grade. I'm more interested in seeing that you really learned something about how to formulate a question/develop a thesis, do appropriate research, document that research, and use your writing skills to explain in a meaningful way. A 3-5 page well-developed paper is better than an 8-page, rambling, copied paper that doesn't hang together or demonstrate your understanding of the material and the research form.

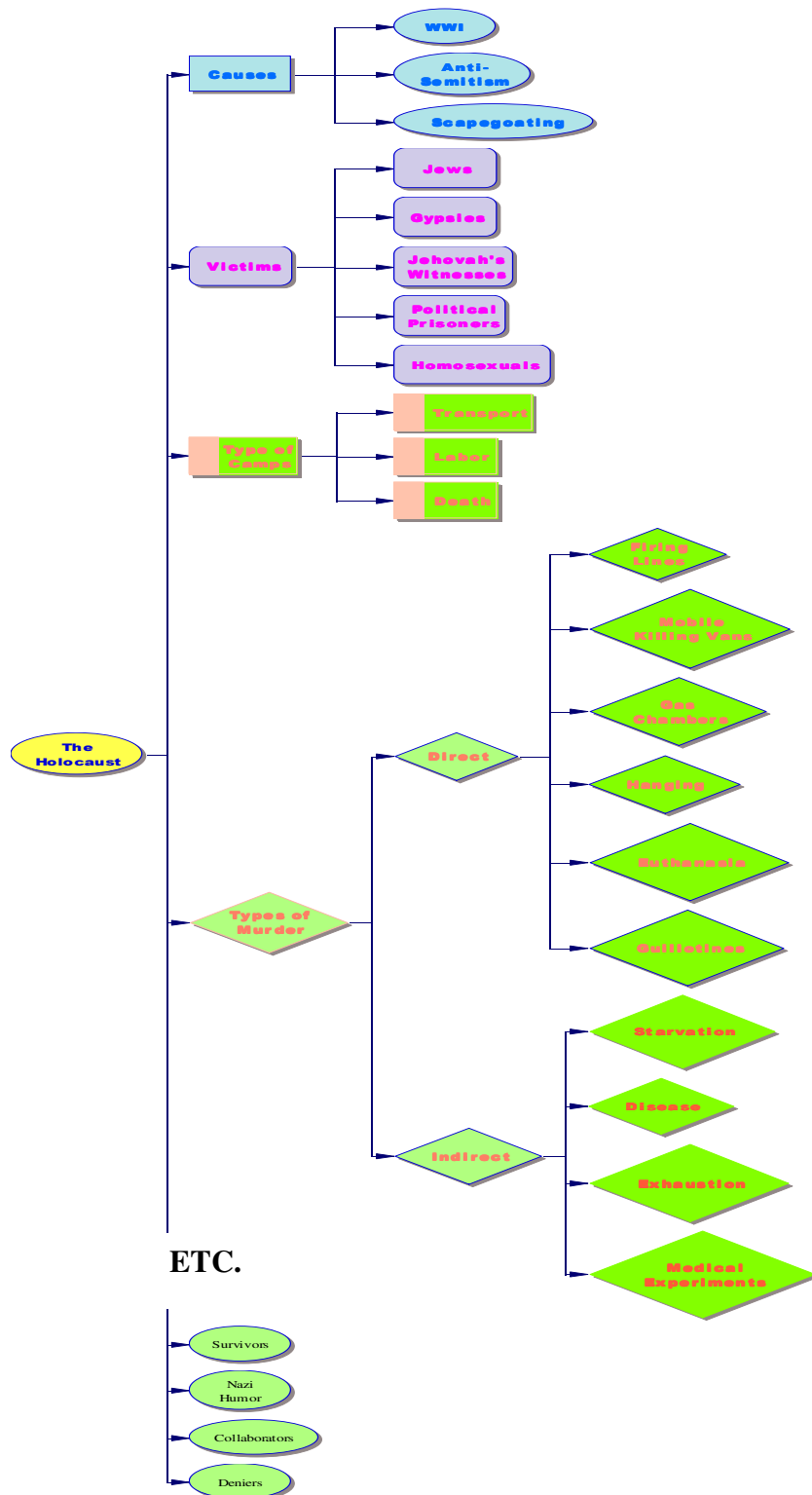
You will also need to complete a **WORKS CITED PAGE** using the District's Research Format. This is simply an alphabetized list of the sources you used...put your source cards in abc order, in other words. Make sure you use the correct margins.

That's the I-Search Paper. Now, how do you start?

The first step is to brainstorm possible topics by creating a mind map or cluster. THEN, to narrow the focus, you need to decide what facet of the Holocaust most interests you. You'll be spending quite a bit of time researching, so select a topic of interest to you personally. See the sample mind map below. If you were to choose victims, for example, you'd write victims in the center of your mind map. You would NOT copy my victims strand...you would really think about the victims and how you would organize what you want to find out about. What categories pop up in your background knowledge? Could you break victims into those who were worked to death, gassed, escaped, hid,

etc? You can see how you need to select your focus and start manipulating what you already know about that focus.

When this is open in AdobeReader, change the size of the document to 200% so you can read the words and see the links in the mind map. Then you can change it back to 100%.



As I said before, once you've decided upon a topic and have written your thesis statement, you're ready to start the search part of the Pathways Research Process, which is explained below. You need to understand that this process is not linear. You don't start at appreciation and go straight through to evaluation. You'll probably be moving back and forth within the process. For example, you might think you have done enough research, but when you start your outline (interpretation), you realize that you don't have enough information on a particular category of information. That means that you have to return to the search part of the process—and that's okay.

## The PATHWAYS Research Process:

- **Appreciation:** Sparking curiosity and imagination. Students listen to/read the literature and pay attention to the film material and handouts provided.
- **Presearch:** Includes exploring relationships, connecting to prior knowledge, and developing questions. Students will brainstorm and create mind maps to move toward developing their own guiding questions. These will be useful in developing the thesis statement and/or topic sentences.
- **Search:** Includes planning a search strategy, selecting resources, and recording information. Students figure out what sources to use, how to use them, and begin taking notes. Students will use my note-taking graphic organizers or the required form for index card use.
- **Interpretation:** Includes analysis, synthesis, & evaluation. Students start thinking about the information they've uncovered and organize it so it is meaningful to the reader.
- **Communication:** Includes using a format & sharing new knowledge. Students write their drafts, creating introductions, bodies, and conclusions. In-text citations must be included. Introductions must contain thesis statements. Students must use the District's Research Format for their Works Cited Pages.
- **Evaluation:** Includes thinking about the research process and assessing the product. Students keep track of how well they have used the process and format required by their teacher.

Students need to be familiar with these six terms in the Pathways to Knowledge Research Process.

Details on how to complete the in-text citations and Works Cited Page can be found in the District Research Paper Packet which I'll provide in the classroom.

I'll be breaking up the process so you aren't overwhelmed and too frustrated—research is in itself a bit frustrating, so be patient.

- The first thing I'll grade will be a minimum of 5 source cards written on index cards, using the form I've given you (you can find it on our Home Page under Internet Lessons).
- The second thing I'll grade will be your note cards. I'll need to see the correct form and a variety of sources represented.

From this point, you'll need to start writing your draft. It would be helpful to start by manipulating your note cards to create an outline. When you start writing, you'll have a plan in place, which will help you organize your research.

Make sure you have completed the following:

- Source cards.
- Note cards.
- Outline.
- Draft—including in-text citations.
- A works cited page
- An author's note, which will allow you to evaluate your process and the end result—the completed I-Search Paper.

Scroll down for the rubric.

<b>THE I-SEARCH PAPER</b>				
<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Source Cards</b>	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but a few are not in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but many are not in the desired format.	Some sources are not accurately documented.
<b>Note Cards</b>	Notes are recorded and organized in an extremely neat and orderly fashion.	Notes are recorded legibly and are somewhat organized.	Notes are recorded.	Notes are recorded only with peer/teacher assistance and reminders.
<b>In-Text Citations</b>	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but a few are not in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but many are not in the desired format.	Some sources are not accurately documented.
<b>Works Cited Page</b>	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but a few are not in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but many are not in the desired format.	Some sources are not accurately documented.
<b>Organization</b>	Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings.	Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs.	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well-constructed.	The information appears to be disorganized.
<b>Quality of Information</b>	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples. The "I" factor is developed and thoughtful.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples. The "I" factor is present.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given. The "I" factor is not developed.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic. The "I" factor is not present.
<b>Thesis Statement</b>	All paragraphs include introductory sentence, explanations or details, and concluding sentence. Thesis is clear and effective.	Most paragraphs include introductory sentence, explanations or details, and concluding sentence. Thesis is present.	Paragraphs included related information but were typically not constructed well. Thesis is confusing.	Paragraphing structure was not clear and sentences were not typically related within the paragraphs. Thesis does not exist or is ineffective.
<b>Mechanics</b>	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	A few grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.

**That's it! Now that you've read and digested all this information, ask me for clarification if you still don't understand. Otherwise, happy researching!**

**Searle '08**

