

Writing an I-Search Paper

Chances are that the last time you were asked to write a research paper, you had a list of topics from which to choose. In this Writing Workshop, you will choose a topic that has immediate relevance to your life—a topic about which you have a genuine need or a real desire to know more. You will write a personal research paper, sometimes called an I-Search paper.

To write an I-Search paper, you pick a subject to which you have a personal connection, and write about it from a personal point of view. Your paper will consist of three major parts:

- **The story of your search** This section tells readers what you knew about your subject before you began your research, what you wanted to know, and the research steps you went through to find out what you wanted to know—including both the steps that led to useful information and the steps that turned out to be dead ends.
- **What you learned** In this section, you give readers the results of your search—both the answers you found and the answers you did not find.
- **Your reflections on the search** You use this final section to tell readers what the experience has taught you about conducting and documenting a search.