

## **Writing a White Paper**

CPC, Spring, 2010

### **Topic and Definition:**

For our Central Park Campus Spring, 2010 White Paper theme of “food,” each student or group of students (determined by your professor) is to write a one to two page white paper about some aspect of food. So, what is a white paper? This type of paper was originally a government publication, but today the term is used in business, marketing, industry, and education to describe an informative, authoritative paper that argues a specific position or proposes a solution to a problem.

### **Purpose:**

A white paper typically argues that a certain solution or position is the best choice to solve a particular problem. (You can see how marketing departments could use this as a sales technique to influence decision-making among potential customers.)

### **Audience for a white paper:**

For your assignment on food, your audience is the general public. Usually, in a business white paper, the audience is your potential customers, but here, your audience is “concerned citizens of Collin County, Texas.” Whoever your audience may be, you must shape your white paper’s content to offer solutions to the audience’s problems or needs.

### **Organization:**

A white paper usually begins with an overview and leads readers to the proposed solution. Use clear, specific headings, so readers can quickly skim your paper.

### **Introduction/Summary:**

Use an opening summary to help readers quickly grasp the situation or problem.

### **Background/Problems:**

Give the audience enough background information on the issue to help them make their decision based on facts. Establish your expertise by providing evidence, facts, and statistics. Stay on topic; do not pose problems for which you cannot provide solutions.

### **Solution:**

After providing background and explaining the problem, propose your solution.

### **Conclusion:**

Wrap up your white paper with a conclusion.

### **Works cited:**

Include a proper works cited at the end of the paper. (Make sure you include all of the sources you used in the text of the paper. Follow correct MLA format.)

### **Visuals:**

You may include visuals, charts, graphs, diagrams, and tables to increase the visual appeal of your white paper. Many professionally written white papers also use summary boxes beside the text to help the reader spot key points (sidebars).

*Much of the information in this handout comes from the “The OWL at Purdue”*

*(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>) and “How to Write a White Paper—A White Paper on*

*White Papers,” by Michael A. Stelzner (<http://www.stelzner.com/>).*