The general purpose of the research paper is to show:

1. That you **understand** the field you study and **the issues** of the field.
2. That you can **generate ideas that prove your understanding** of the field and the material.
3. That you can make **intelligent observations to support or prove** those ideas.

**Sample outline**

Working Thesis: Federal regulations need to foster laws that will help protect wetlands, restore those that have been destroyed, and take measures to improve the damage from overdevelopment.

*Possible finalized thesis statements:*

* *Without regulation there is a grim future for wetlands.*
* *It is time the government stepped in to protect endangered wetlands.*

I. Nature's ecosystem

A. Loss of wetlands nationally

   B. Loss of wetlands in California

      1. More flooding and poorer water quality

      2. Lost ability to prevent floods, clean water and store water

II. Dramatic floods

   A. Cost in dollars and lives

      1. 13 deaths between 1988 and 1998

      2. Cost of $39 million per year

   B. Great Midwestern Flood of 1993

      1. Lost wetlands in IL

      2. Devastation in some states

   C. Flood Prevention

      1. Plants and Soils

      2. Floodplain overflow

III. Current wetland laws – local and elsewhere

   A. Inadequately informed legislators

      1. Watersheds

      2. Interconnections in natural water systems

   B. Water purification

IV. Need to save wetlands

   A. New federal definition

   B. Re-education about interconnectedness

      1. Ecology at every grade level

      2. Education for politicians and developers

      3. Choices in schools and people's lives

Outline for Essay:

Intro / Working Thesis: Regulation is needed **because** drivers using cell phones are seriously impaired and **because** laws on negligent and reckless driving are not sufficient to punish offenders.

*Possible finalized thesis statement:*

* *Current laws against cell phone use while driving are insufficient.*

I. Cell phones have caused traffic deaths and injuries

II. Expert testimony, public opinion, and even cartoons suggest driving while phoning is dangerous

III. A 1998 Oklahoma study

IV. Some claim making laws about cell phone use in cars is unnecessary, but this is misguided thinking

V. There are many laws already on the books which were brought about by a need to protect the public

VI. Traffic and safety are usually considered local issues, but there are problems with that

VII. Cell phone laws have proven to be effective elsewhere

VII. Conclusion