

Quest Paper Checklist

Whether it's your first Quest paper or your sixth, this checklist will help you remember all the important tips your fellow Questers have learned and shared over the years to help each of us have a good experience researching, writing and presenting another great Quest paper.

Receiving Your Topic

One of the fine traditions of Quest Club is to broadly interpret your assigned topic in a way that is meaningful to you, timely, and/or allows you to say something you believe is important. On the other hand, if you need help understanding the topic, you may seek out the person who assigned it to you and ask for more information and even ask to talk with the person who suggested the topic.

Research

Questers rely on four main avenues of research:

- The Allen County Public Library (either its catalog or the librarians, who are unfailingly good guides to its entire collection of materials)
- Internet searches via Google or through academic databases (which are available through the ACPL)
- Interviews with local experts and other experts you may know or to whom you obtain introductions
- Current events and news reports

Keep bibliographic records of the materials you use in your research because your finished paper should include a bibliography in whichever format you select. Choose one and be consistent. In general, cite author's name, title of work, publisher, location published, and date published. For internet sources, include author's name, website address and date downloaded. For personal interviews, include name of person interviewed, his or her title or reason interviewed and date of interview.

Writing

Writing is the most individualized part of the Quest Club process, so do not hesitate to write in your own voice and your own style. Ideally, your research process will have brought you ideas and knowledge you are eager to share with your fellow Questers, so organize them and start writing your paper.

Your goals should be:

- A paper that can be read at a comfortable speaking pace in 30 to 35 minutes.
- A paper that combines your ideas with information from your research in a good balance. Your fellow Questers are genuinely interested in what you have learned researching and writing this paper, as they are in what you came to the topic already knowing. We are also interested in hearing the best quotes and passages from your research, so feel free to include quotations and paraphrases in your paper and tell us their sources.
- A paper that addresses both the assigned topic and your take on the assigned topic adequately and, ideally, will inspire at least a few questions and comments from your fellow Questers.

Preparing to Present

Practice reading your paper aloud several times well before your Quest Club speaking date. Here's why:

- You need to practice correctly pronouncing any difficult words.
- You need to practice speaking clearly, loudly enough, and slowly enough to be understood.
- You need to be certain that your paper is long enough and not too long.

How to judge the length of a paper:

Using a lengthy magazine article or non-fiction book, set a timer for two minutes and begin reading aloud at what you believe to be the proper pace for your Quest presentation. When the timer goes off, mark where you stopped. Count how many words you read. Multiply that by 15, and you know how many words of that complexity you will read in 30 minutes. Since our word processing programs count words for us, this word count method is very accurate to use no matter what font or point size you use to write your drafts in. Doing this test before you start writing helps you aim for the correct number of words from the beginning and lessens the likelihood of needing to cut big chunks from your paper at the last minute.

Send the club an electronic copy of your paper as soon as it is ready to present. Use Times New Roman (or comparable) type in 12-point size. The cover page should include the title, your name, and the date of your presentation.

Don't forget to include your bibliography at the end of the paper.

Many Questers prefer to create a speaking copy of their papers by printing it out in larger type, often boldface and with more space between lines and possibly in a narrower column on the page so it is easier to scan and find your place after you have looked up to make eye contact with your audience. If you make such a copy, be sure to number the pages (a protection in case they are dropped), and it's a nice idea to put this copy in a binder of some sort so you can simply turn the pages while you are reading the paper, plus it looks nice while you are carrying it to the lectern.

The club president will introduce you before you present your paper, so you will need to send a short bio to him or her no later than the week before your presentation date. You'll find his or her email address and phone number in the Quest Club handbook, and you'll likely receive a reminder email and/or call.

Considerations on Ancillary and Electronic Enhancements for Your Paper

Quest Club presenters are welcome to add printed handouts, and/or visual and/or electronic presentations to their presentations. If you are using electronic equipment of any kind, you will need to make arrangements with the club president to supply your PowerPoint presentation no later than one week before your presentation and you will need to arrive early the day of your presentation to make sure the equipment is working properly.

We strongly recommend you arrange for someone else to operate the equipment for you so you can stay at the lectern during your presentation. If you leave the microphone, people will not be able to hear you.

Familiarity with electronic presentations (for example how to advance PowerPoint slides on a laptop via a wireless advancer and making sure that your presentation isn't set to time out after a set amount of inactivity) is critical to their success in augmenting your paper. If you choose to use an electronic enhancement such as PowerPoint file, you must supply a copy of your paper

that clearly indicates when the images are to be displayed so that your helper can confidently advance the slides as you expect.

Presenting Your Paper

After the president introduces you, walk up to the lectern confidently. If you have not already placed your speaking copy of your paper there, bring it with you. If you have not already placed a glass of water there, bring one with you. Your first act should be to smile. It will relax you and your audience. Second, you should greet your audience and ask the people at the back of the room if they can hear you. This technique enables you to judge if you are speaking properly into the microphone so people can hear you.

If all systems are go, then the moment has finally arrived. It's time to present your paper. Take a deep breath or two and begin. Remember not to rush.

The Q&A Time

As the applause dies down, the club president will join you at the lectern for the question-and-answer time. Questioners and their guests will raise their hands so you and/or the president can call on them. They should stand to ask their questions or make their comments. It is best for you to repeat the question or paraphrase the comment into the microphone before answering or responding to it to ensure that everyone in the room has heard it.

Feel free to say "thank you" every time a fellow Questor praises your paper. You've earned it!

Preserving Your Quest Legacy

All Quest Club papers are catalogued by ACPL for posterity.

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