This discussion has included the basic skeletal structure of the simplest form of a research paper. The scholarly researcher/writer has the option of using any of many types of research papers. That is the structure of the paper is malleable based on the way you (the author) wish to lead your reader through the topic, proofs and conclusion.

Here is a short list of various types of research papers:

1. **Argumentative papers**
   a. Presents two (or more) sides of a controversial issue.
   b. Analyzes pros and cons of each argument.
   c. Author favors one side over the other and provides facts to bolster conclusion.

2. **Analytical papers**
   a. Author analyzes differing points of view based on facts/proofs provided
   b. Focuses on findings, methodology or conclusions of other researchers
   c. Includes a summation of the findings and a suggested framework for further study.

3. **Definition papers**
   a. Describe a topic from a factual standpoint.
   b. Includes facts from a variety of sources.
   c. Does not analyze the facts, but merely presents them as (duh) definition.
   d. Difficult paper type for a student to write, but invaluable as a basis for other research work or as the basis for further study (often by others)

4. **Compare and Contrast papers**
   a. Frequently used as literary format used to compare two different authors, characters or stories from a particular genre of literature.
   b. Can also be used to compare two different theoretical viewpoints or
   c. Two different philosophical frameworks or even
   d. Two different leadership/management styles.
   e. Basically, any two parts of the same whole which can be compared and contrasted.
   f. Important that BOTH elements/sides be described succinctly.
   g. Main portion of paper will be the comparison and contrasting of examples provided by the author in support of a thesis.
5. **Cause and Effect papers.**
   a. Used to trace the probable or expected results from a particular action or policy.
   b. MUST be done in a logical progression easily followed by the reader.
   c. Provides a probable/predicted results from the action/situation specified.
   d. Shows the range of results that could arise from one situation through to logical conclusion (where applicable).

6. **Reports**
   a. May follow a specific format or outline, such as a memorandum or similar format.
   b. Often written to outline a case study situation.
   c. Describes key issues of situation.
   d. Includes a summary of situation to date.
   e. Identifies the main issue or concern.
   f. Breaks down the main issue into specific elements.
   g. Provides recommendations on how to address the issue/concern based on research/facts.
   h. Often include an executive summary (takes place of an abstract).
   i. Must include supporting evidence. (ex: appendix, graphs, tables, etc)

7. **Interpretive papers**
   a. Writer uses theoretical knowledge gained during a course of study and applies such knowledge to a particular case study (examples: a piece of art or a poem in literary fields; a business situation in a management course; a psychological case profile in sociology or psychology fields, etc)
   b. Writer uses established theoretical framework and supporting data to back up the thesis statement and findings.

8. **Review papers**
   a. Purpose of a review is to collate and summarize the available information about a particular topic.
   b. Reviews should be conducted in a systematic method.
   c. All relevant data should be included
   d. All opinion should be discarded during the review of others work.
Note also that there are many other types of writing beyond the straight research paper as well, such as essays (editorials are an example of an essay which reflect the viewpoint and/or policies of a publication), consensus statements, clinical practice guidelines, poetry, fiction, obituaries and correspondence (to name a few).

Each of these have a specific purpose, a specific point to transmit from writer to reader, a logical progression and their own basic framework of construction. However, for purposes of writing a scholarly research paper (either for classroom/course work or for publication), this list covers the main types a scholar is likely to need or use.