

Research Starter

Getting started

Before you start writing your research paper, it's important to plan to your steps. Planning your project will give you a good idea of how much time you need to allow from start.

Planning your project

1. Choose a topic
2. Brainstorm ideas/do background reading
3. Develop your thesis
4. Conduct your research - you may need to revise your thesis
5. Prepare an outline
6. Write your draft - set up your paper for the citation style required by your instructor (MLA or APA).
7. Review & revise
8. Edit & proofread

Choose your topic

1. Read your assignment - questions? Talk to your instructor
2. Make notes of your interests, write down all possible topic ideas
3. Try putting your topic in the form of a question
4. Select a topic & remember your audience - in most cases, your instructor!

Brainstorm ideas/keywords about your topic

1. Helpful to develop your topic - to broaden it or narrow it
2. You will need these keywords for database and internet searching
3. Write down all ideas - it's easy to forget them when you are multi-tasking several course assignments
4. Again, re-read your assignment to be sure you are on track

Thesis statement

- The thesis statement is your point of view - what you intend to prove in your paper
- Whereas a topic usually takes the form of a question, a thesis is a statement
- You may need to revise your thesis as you conduct more research and refine your paper
 - Found in your introductory paragraph
 - Support for your thesis is in the body of your paper
 - Stated again in your concluding paragraph

Outline

An outline is a tool to help you organize the main points you plan to make in your paper.

- Group related ideas together
- List your main points/supporting details
- See where you need more information or less detail
- Arrange your ideas - see how your ideas connect to each other

You can use a bullet approach with phrases or full sentences. As you develop your outline, you'll begin to see your paper develop!