

Writing a Research Paper

The process of writing a Research Paper is slightly different from how you approach other types of writing because there are more components to a Research Paper. Following these steps will help to organize your research and ideas, resulting in a strong finished product.

Step #1: Determining your Research Question(s)

- this will help focus your research; see following units for more information

Step #2: Finding Sources

- use the library catalog and databases to gather a variety of materials that address your Research Question(s); see previous unit for more information

Step #3: Reading and Taking Notes

- finding sources and engaging with sources are two different things; each source must be read thoroughly in order to be used effectively in your paper; see following units for more information

Step #4: Outlining and Creating a Thesis Statement

- creating an outline *before* you begin writing the actual essay allows you to focus on building a strong argument and deciding what evidence from your sources you will use, instead of splitting your attention between the content and how you are writing about it; this also allows you to be sure you have enough information from steps #2 and #3 before you begin writing; see following units for more information

Step #5: Drafting the Research Paper

- now that you have a solid outline, you can focus on *how* you will talk about all the information you have gathered; you already know *what* you are including, so you can just work on your writing

Step #6: Creating a Bibliography

- put together a list of ALL the outside sources you have used and referenced in your Research Paper; they will need to be formatted according to the citation style used in your class; see previous unit for more information

Step #7: Revising

- just like any other piece of writing, the Research Paper will require many rounds of revision and proofreading; see previous unit for more information



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