Seven Steps to Writing a Research Paper

1. Identify the general topic
2. Locate a resource for the focus of your research topic
   - Look over possible resources searching for keywords related to your topic focus
     - skim read headings and information
     - use electronic find features (Ctrl-F)
3. Read parts of a source that have information that relates to your topic and focus & take notes including:
   - MLA source citation
   - Quotes
   - Paraphrase / Summary
   - Comments / Connections
   - as you read, record your thoughts that may help you write your paper
4. Organize research notes for each source that you plan to use
   - place brief labels in the margin to identify different concepts, such as pro or con arguments, topic introduction, powerful conclusion...
5. Outline – decide on an order for incorporating the information from your research notes into your paper
6. Write a thesis statement making a claim that directly answers a question related to the focus of your research
7. Put the pieces together to write your paper!
   - Do not forget to include:
     - in-text citation(s) for each source used
     - Works Cited as your last page

Avoiding Frustrations

- **Presearch** – Do not commit to research a specific topic before checking availability of resources
- **Set Goals** – Give yourself a due date for each step in the process and try to stay ahead of schedule!
  - Enjoy the sense of accomplishment as you complete each step!

Checkpoints

___ Research notes from one very helpful source (Step 1 towards getting it all done!)
___ Research notes from additional sources (identify keywords in your notes – use margin or highlight)
___ Outline & thesis statement (use keywords to assist with order and thesis)
___ Works Cited page (in-progress – pull from research notes)
___ Rough draft (with in-text citations & Works Cited)
___ Final paper (check for proper formatting of heading, in-text citations, spacing... & Works Cited)

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