

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)