

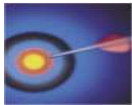


How to Write a Research Paper



Establish Your Topic

1. Try to pick a topic that's fun and interesting. If your topic genuinely interests you, chances are you'll enjoy spending time working on it and it won't seem like a chore.
2. Finding a topic can be difficult. Give yourself plenty of time to read and think about what you'd like to do. Trying to answer questions you have about a particular subject may lead you to a good paper idea.
3.
 1. What subject(s) are you interested in?
 2. What interests you most about a particular subject?
 3. Is there anything you wonder about or are puzzled about with regard to that subject?



4. Once you have a topic, you will probably need to narrow it down to something more manageable. For example, say you are assigned to write a 10-page paper, and you decide to do it on Ancient Egypt. However, since Ancient Egypt is a big topic, and you only have a limited number of pages, you will have to focus on something more specific having to do with that topic.

Too general:
Ancient Egypt.

Revised:
The building of the pyramids of Ancient Egypt.

5. One method for coming up with a more specific focus is called brainstorming (or freewriting). Brainstorming is a useful way to let ideas you didn't know you had come to the surface.



1. Sit down with a pencil and paper, or at your computer, and write whatever comes into your head about your topic.
2. Keep writing for a short but specific amount of time, say 3–5 minutes. Don't stop to change what you've written or to correct spelling or grammar errors.
3. After a few minutes, read through what you've written. You will probably throw out most of it, but some of what you've written may give you an idea that can be developed.
4. Do some more brainstorming and see what else you can come up with.



Look for Sources of Information

1. Take a trip to the library. Use the electronic catalog or browse the shelves to look for books on your topic. If you find a book that is useful, check the bibliography (list of sources) in the back of that book for other books or articles on that topic. Also check indexes of periodicals and newspapers. Check with a librarian if you need help finding sources.
2. Try to use as many different types of sources as you can, including books, magazine articles, and internet articles. Don't rely on just one source for all your information.
3. Keep a list of all the sources that you use. Include the title of the source, the author, publisher, and place and date of publication. This is your preliminary, or draft, bibliography.



Organize Your Ideas Using the information collected on the note cards, develop an **outline** to organize your ideas. An outline shows your main ideas and the order in which you are going to write about them. It's the bare bones of what will later become a fleshed-out written report.

1. Write down all the main ideas.
2. List the subordinate ideas below the main ideas.
3. Avoid any repetition of ideas



Write a Bibliography

A bibliography is a list of the sources you used to get information for your report. It is included at the end of your report, on the last page (or last few pages).

You will find it easier to prepare your final bibliography if you keep track of each book, encyclopedia, or article you use as you are reading and taking notes. Start a preliminary, or draft, bibliography by listing on a separate sheet of paper all your sources. Note down the full title, author, place of publication, publisher, and date of publication for each source.

Also, every time a fact gets recorded on a note card, its source should be noted in the top right corner. (Notice that in the sample note card, *The World Book*, Volume 2, page 21, has been shortened to: WB, 2, p.133.) When you are finished writing your paper, you can use the information on your note cards to double-check your bibliography.

When assembling a final bibliography, list your sources (texts, articles, interviews, and so on) in alphabetical order by authors' last names. Sources that don't have authors (encyclopedias, movies) should be alphabetized by title. There are different formats for bibliographies, so be sure to use the one your teacher prefers.



General Guide to Formatting a Bibliography



For a book:

Author (last name first). Title of the book. City: Publisher, Date of publication.

EXAMPLE:

Dahl, Roald. The BFG. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982.



For an encyclopedia:

Encyclopedia Title, Edition Date. Volume Number, "Article Title," page numbers.

EXAMPLE:

The Encyclopedia Britannica, 1997. Volume 7, "Gorillas," pp. 50-51.



For a magazine:

Author (last name first), "Article Title." Name of magazine. Volume number, (Date): page numbers.

EXAMPLE:

Jordan, Jennifer, "Filming at the Top of the World." Museum of Science Magazine. Volume 47, No. 1, (Winter 1998): p. 11.



For a newspaper:

Author (last name first), "Article Title." Name of newspaper, city, state of publication. (date):
edition if available, section, page number(s).

EXAMPLE:

Powers, Ann, "New Tune for the Material Girl." The New York Times, New York, NY. (3/1/98):
Atlantic Region, Section 2, p. 34.



For a person:

Full name (last name first). Occupation. Date of interview.

EXAMPLE:

Smeckleburg, Sweets. Bus driver. April 1, 1996.



For a film:

Title, Director, Distributor, Year.

EXAMPLE:

Braveheart, Dir. Mel Gibson, Icon Productions, 1995



CD-ROM:

Disc title: Version, Date. "Article title," pages if given. Publisher.

EXAMPLE:

Compton's Multimedia Encyclopedia: Macintosh version, 1995. "Civil rights movement," p.3.
Compton's Newsmedia.



Magazine article:

Author (last name first). "Article title." Name of magazine (type of medium). Volume number,
(Date): page numbers. If available: publisher of medium, version, date of issue.

EXAMPLE:

Rollins, Fred. "Snowboard Madness." Sports Stuff (CD-ROM). Number 15, (February 1997): pp. 15-19. SIRS, Mac version, Winter 1997.



Newspaper article:

Author (last name first). "Article title." Name of newspaper (Type of medium), city and state of publication. (Date): If available: Edition, section and page number(s). If available: publisher of medium, version, date of issue.

EXAMPLE:

Stevenson, Rhoda. "Nerve Sells." Community News (CD-ROM), Nassau, NY. (Feb 1996): pp. A4-5. SIRS, Mac. version, Spring 1996.



Online Resources



Internet:

Author of message, (Date). Subject of message. Electronic conference or bulletin board (Online). Available e-mail: LISTSERV@ e-mail address

EXAMPLE:

Ellen Block, (September 15, 1995). New Winners. Teen Booklist (Online). Helen Smith@wellington.com



World Wide Web:

URL (Uniform Resource Locator or WWW address). author (or item's name, if mentioned), date.

EXAMPLE: (Boston Globe's www address)

<http://www.boston.com>. Today's News, August <http://www.boston.com>. Today's News, August 1, 2005