8 Steps to Effective Research

Step 1: Choose and refine your topic

Choosing a topic is one of the most difficult aspects of a research assignment. This must be done correctly   because it is the first step in writing a paper. Here are some pointers for choosing a subject:

1. Pick a subject that fits the requirements of the assignment. Your instructor will frequently provide you with specific instructions on what you can and cannot write about. If you don't follow these instructions, your instructor might find your proposed paper to be unacceptable.
2. Decide on a subject that piques your interest and learn more about it. If you are writing about a topic you are interested in, the research and writing will be more enjoyable.
3. Decide on a subject that has a manageable amount of information. Make a preliminary search of available information sources to see if they will suffice for your needs. You might need to narrow your topic if you find too much information, and you might need to broaden it if you find too little.
4. Be unique. Every year, your instructor reads hundreds of research papers, many of which are on the same subjects (topics in the news at the time, controversial issues, subjects for which there is ample and easily accessed information). Make yourself stand out from your classmates by picking a fascinating and uncommon topic.
5. Are you still struggling to write about a topic? Consult your teacher for suggestions.

Once you've chosen your subject, it might be helpful to phrase it as a query. For instance, if you're curious to learn more about the obesity epidemic affecting the population of America, you might ask, "What are the causes of obesity in America?" You can more quickly and easily determine the key terms or concepts to use in your research by framing your subject as a question.

Step 2: Conduct a quick information search

Before starting your research in earnest, conduct a quick information search to see if there is enough information available to suit your needs and to establish the context of your study. Look up your keywords in the relevant titles of the library's Reference collection (such as dictionaries and encyclopedias) as well as in other places like our online book catalog, periodical databases, and search engines on the internet. You can find more historical context in your lecture notes, books, and assigned readings. Depending on the resources at your disposal, you might need to change the topic's primary focus.

3. Locate the materials.

You can start looking for resources on your topic now that you know where your research will go. You can look for information in a lot of places:

Use the Aleph catalog's subject search if you're looking for books. If a subject search doesn't provide enough results, a keyword search can be done. Print out or jot down the citation details (author, title, etc.), as well as the item's location (call number and collection) (s). Note the state of the circulation. When you find the book on the shelf, take a look at the books close by because related items are always shelved together. The library's audio-visual resources are also indexed in the Aleph catalogue.

Use the library's electronic periodical databases to find articles from magazines and newspapers. If you need assistance deciding which database best meets your needs, ask the librarian at the Reference Desk. Pick the databases and formats that are most appropriate for your specific topic. There are many full-text versions of the articles in the databases.

To find content on the Internet, use subject directories and search engines like Google, Yahoo, etc. Links to useful subject resources can be found in the Internet Resources section of the NHCC Library's website.

Step 4: Review your references

For advice on determining the legitimacy and Calibri of the information you have located, consult the CARS Checklist for Information Quality. You have every right to anticipate that the sources you use are providing accurate, verifiable, and credible information, just as your instructor expects this of you. When using Internet resources, many of which are regarded as being less than reliable, this step is especially crucial.

Step 5: Making notes

Consult your chosen resources and make a note of the data that will be relevant to your paper. Even if there's a chance you won't use a particular source, make sure to keep track of all the ones you consult. Later, when creating a bibliography, the author, title, publisher, URL, and other details will be required.

Step 6: Write your paper

Start by organizing the data you have gathered. The rough draught is the next step, in which you put your concepts on paper without giving them a final polish. This step will assist you in organizing your thoughts and choosing the format for your final paper. After that, you should make as many revisions to the draught as you deem necessary in order to produce a finished product that can be submitted to your instructor.

Step 7: Cite your references correctly.

Cite your sources and give due credit where credit is due. Giving due credit to the creators of the materials used by citing or documenting them serves two purposes: it enables readers of your work to replicate your research and find the sources you have listed as references. There are two widely used citation formats: MLA and APA.

Plagiarism occurs when sources are not correctly cited. Plagiarism is restricted.

8. Proofread

The last step in the procedure is to proofread the paper you've written. Check for spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes as you read the text. Ensure that the sources you used are correctly cited. Ensure that you have clearly stated the point you want the reader to take away from the essay.

Other research advice:

• *Start with background information and work your way up to more specific sources by starting with the general.*

• *Keep print sources in mind; they are frequently more accessible than and just as valuable as online sources.*

• *The library's call number area LB 2369 has books on the subject of writing research papers.*

• *Ask your instructor any questions you may have regarding the assignment.*

Ask the librarian any questions you may have about finding information in the library.