



STEPS FOR WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER



1. SELECT A TOPIC TO INVESTIGATE

Find a topic by viewing your paper as an answer to a question, solution to a problem, or argument for a belief that you feel passionately about. If you are unsure of which topic to select, do a general search and narrow your ideas. Make sure there is enough research to write your paper. The more research you have available, and the higher interest you have in your topic, the easier it will be to write your paper.

2. LOCATE SOURCES

Use credible sources to find relevant information. Depending on the assignment, use peer-reviewed articles, books, or research reports. You can use google scholar or USC Libraries to find your sources. Make sure to do this step early in the process and set deadlines so you have enough time to write your paper.

3. ORGANIZE, ANALYZE, AND SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION

Read through your sources, locate important ideas, analyze information, and synthesize the material. You can organize your information by creating an outline of main ideas with supporting details for your paper.

4. CREATE A THESIS STATEMENT

It is difficult to write a thesis statement if you have not synthesized or analyzed the information from your sources. Your thesis statement should answer your assignment's prompt, offer solutions to a problem, or answer a question.

5. CREATE AN OUTLINE

Use an essay structure to begin an outline that has an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Each of the body paragraphs should have an overarching main idea that is supported through your sources. It might be helpful to outline the body paragraphs first followed by the introduction and conclusion.

6. WRITE THE FIRST DRAFT

Make sure each paragraph has one main idea with supporting details. Use transitions between paragraphs to make your paper flow. Do not worry about using the right words, focus on writing your thoughts.

7. REVISE YOUR DRAFT

Concentrate on appropriate, clear, and academic language. Depending on your requirements, include a title page, a table of contents, an abstract, and a reference page.

USC RESOURCES

USC Writing Center - Helps in improving your writing skills and articulating your ideas.
<https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter>

Ask a Librarian - Helps in finding information and narrowing a research topic.
<https://libraries.usc.edu/ask-a-librarian>

Seli, H. & Dembo, M.H. (2020). *Motivation and Learning Strategies for College Success: A Focus on Self-Regulated Learning*. New York: Routledge.

Paharaj, S. K., & Ameen, S. (2019). How to Choose Research Topic?(Column: Tips on Research and Publication). *Kerala Journal of Psychiatry*, 31(2).