GUIDE
TO
WRITING
A
RESEARCH
PAPER

GERMANNA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
TUTORING SERVICES

Fredericksburg Area Campus
(540) 891-3017
Locust Grove Campus
(540) 423-9148

What is a Research Paper?

Simply stated, a research paper is a gathering of information from a number of different sources. There are two different types of research papers, the *informative report* and the *researched argument*. The instructor who assigns the paper will usually make clear which type of research paper he or she expects.

In the *informative report*, the student describes, explains, or sheds new light on a specific subject, selecting out what seems particularly significant or interesting and assimilating this information into a focused and original presentation.

In the *researched argument*, the student uses evidence to support an original argument, using his or her research to arrive at a judgment and then defending that judgment before a reader.

A very important thing to remember about research papers is that you <u>must</u> cite the source of all direct quotations as well as any ideas not your own. Citing sources is discussed in a separate section of this booklet.

Selecting a Topic

The most important step in writing a research paper is selecting the topic. It is important to find a topic that is of interest to you. It may be necessary to do some preliminary research on a variety of topics before refining your choice. There are several electronic sources you can use to help you select a scholarly topic.

Articles on the World Wide Web may provide you with some ideas on how you might approach a subject. The College library's *Info-Trac* database can refer you to a variety of sources. You can enter your general subject as a keyword and then refine your search with subtopics, if you wish.

The advantage in using a database to help you select your topic is that you will know whether there is sufficient research material available.

You also want to make sure that your topic is not so wide in scope that you will have difficulty discussing it in one paper. You may need to narrow down your topic. For example, you may find too much information on the topic of "cancer," so you may decide to narrow the topic to "lung cancer." You may then decide to narrow the subject even further to study the high incidence of lung cancer in individuals who have been exposed to asbestos.

Here are a few computer links to research ideas:

- "BookRags Research Topics" at www.bookrags.com/researchtopics/
- Online Writing Workshop at Purdue University, www.purdue.edu
- www.researchpaper.com
- The Old Dominion University Library's "Idea Generator," www.lib.odu.edu/libassist/idea/index.php

Conducting Preliminary Research

Once you have selected a general topic, you will need to do some exploratory reading in reference books, periodicals and Internet articles. As you go through this process, you should pay close attention to the *quality* of reference materials you use. For example, if you are writing an article on lung cancer, more credible information would probably be found in medical journals, rather than in popular magazines. Don't regard your preliminary research as a waste of time. The reference materials that you unearth during this initial process can still be used for your final product.

This booklet has been adapted from:

Mulderig, Gerald P. *The Heath Guide to Writing the Research Paper.* Lexington, Mass: Heath, 1992.

Additional information for this booklet was obtained from:

Lester, James D. and Lester, James D., Jr. *Principles of Writing Research Papers,* New York, Pearson Education, Inc. 2002.

Sorenson, Sharon, *Webster's New World Student Writing Handbook,* New York: Macmillan, 1997.

Purdue University's Online Writing Laboratory, *http://owl.english.purdue.edu/*

Germanna Community College's Library Web Site, *http://www.gcc.vccs.edu/library/*

Tutoring is the Key to Academic Success!

Conducting preliminary research may produce the following outcomes:

- You may find that there is not sufficient information on your topic.
- You may find a similar topic that is of more interest to you.
- You may find that there is too much information available on your topic, and you may need to narrow your focus.
- You may find that your topic is too difficult to understand.
- You may decide that the topic is too controversial.

Developing a Working Thesis Statement

The thesis statement will state the main idea of the research paper. It will always be included in the introductory paragraphs of your paper; however, your instructor may provide you with specific instructions on where it should be placed within that paragraph. The thesis statement should meet the following criteria:

- It must be general enough so that all of the paragraphs in the paper will relate to it.
- It must give direction to your paper.
- It should be specific enough to be clear and interesting.
- It will indicate the specific argument or opinion you wish to make in your paper.
- The final conclusion in your paper should relate back to your thesis statement.

It is important to take the time to create an effective thesis statement. This one sentence will be the central tenet for your paper, and it should be capable of provoking an academic discussion of your topic.

Be careful of the following errors:

- Don't simply make an announcement: *This paper will discuss higher education for women in the 1890's.*
- Don't simply make a factual statement: *Higher education for women was quite limited in the nineteenth century.*
- Don't state your thesis in vague, general, or sweeping terms: *Gender is an interesting concept in the history of higher education.*

Do state your limited subject and indicate the specific point or argument you wish to make about your topic: *Attitudes toward higher education for women in the 1890's hampered their intellectual development.*

Once you start writing your first draft, you may discover some feelings, thoughts, or ideas that contradict your working thesis. Don't resist these new directions! They may help you move toward a clearer statement of your main point.

Locating Research Materials

A good research paper is written by utilizing a variety of credible sources. It is important to find out whether your instructor would like you to use a minimum number of sources and what kind of sources they should be. Primary sources consist of original documents or pieces of writing and secondary sources are opinions or interpretations of others on a particular topic. Most instructors will want you to select a significant number of primary sources in order to allow you the opportunity to come to your own conclusions about your research.

What is a credible source anyway?
A credible source is usually more scholarly in nature. The author is usually an expert in the field, and the author's credentials are always provided alongside the article. Less credible sources are usually found in popular magazines where staff writers author articles on a variety of subjects.

Example:

Andrew, J.A., Capelin, D., Foster, S. L., & Hops, H. (2000). Adolescent and family predictors of physical aggression, communication, and satisfaction in young adult couples: A prospective analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology,* 68, 195.

For more information on how to document printed and electronic references, see the section on "Citing Sources" in this booklet.

A Final Reminder…

The Germanna Community College Tutoring Services staff is here to help answer any questions you may have about writing a research paper. To make an appointment, call (540) 891-3017 for an appointment at the Fredericksburg Area Campus or call (540) 423-9148 to make an appointment at the Locust Grove Campus.

Example:

> "Editors know they can get pictures like the ones they have already published" (Alexander, 1994, p.296).

Reference List
- In APA format, the sources used in the paper are listed alphabetically on a final page, with the heading "References" centered at the top of the page.
- Double-space after the heading and double-space between lines of each citation and between citations.
- Provide a complete biographical entry for each of the sources cited in the text.
- Place the author's last name first, followed by the first initial of the author's first name and middle name. If a work has more than one author, list each author in the same format and use the ampersand symbol "&" in between the authors' names.
- If a work does not include an author's name, alphabetize by the title.
- Do not use quotation marks around the titles of articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers. Capitalize only the first letter of the first word of the title.
- *Italicize* the titles of books and journals. The italics continue through commas and periods. The issue number of periodicals is not italicized.
- The first line of each entry should be flush with the left margin. Subsequent lines should be indented one-half inch. This is called a "hanging indentation."

Scholarly articles are usually reviewed by peer experts in the field, whereas popular articles are not subject to scrutiny by a board of reviewers. Finally, credible sources will include a bibliography or works cited page, whereas popular articles will not usually cite more than a few names or references within the article.

Where Do I Start?
You can access a wide variety of reference sources, periodical indexes and databases, electronic journals, and catalogs on the Internet. Sources can be accessed from any computer on campus or from home; however, you must use your Germanna Community College email ID and password to access some resources. You should familiarize yourself with some of the following references. In addition, you should consider doing some original research yourself, an interview or a survey.

Reference Sources: *"e" = electronic sources; "p" = printed sources*
General Reference
Encyclopedia Americana- p
Encyclopedia Britannica- p,e
Collier's Encyclopedia- p
Oxford English Dictionary- e
Books in Print- e
Associations Unlimited- e
Internet Public Library- e
Reference USA- e

Biography
Current Biography- p
Dictionary of American Biography- p
Who's Who in America- p
Who Was Who in America 1897- (U.S. only)- p
Notable American Women 1607-1950- p

Fine Arts
Encyclopedia of World Art- p
Oxford Companion to the Theatre- p
Encyclopedia of World Drama- p

Government Information
Commonwealth of Virginia- e
U.S. Government- e
Thomas (U.S. Congress)- e
CIS/Lesix/Nexis (Congressional Info and Statistics)- e
Government and Legal Resources- e

History and Current Events
Cambridge Ancient History- p
Cambridge Medieval History- p
Cambridge Modern History- p
Dictionary of American History- p
Encyclopedia of the American Revolution- p
Encyclopedia of the American Constitution- p
McGill's History of North America- p
Encyclopedia of North American Colonies- p
Encyclopedia of the Confederacy- p
History of American Presidential Elections- p
International Library of Negro Life and History- p
The Negro in American History- p
Modern American Women Writers- p
World History Full Text - e
CIAO (International Affairs)- e
ABC-CLIO (American and World History)- e
American Civil War Homepage- e
Opposing Viewpoints- p,e

Literature
Oxford English Dictionary- e
American Authors 1660-1900- p
British Authors before 1800- p
British Authors of the Nineteenth Century- p
Contemporary Authors- e
Cyclopedia of Literary Characters- p
Oxford Companion to American Literature- p
Oxford Companion to English Literature- p
Twentieth Century Authors- p
Granger's Index to Poetry- p
Bartlett's Familiar Quotations- p
Gale Literature Resource Center- e

Research Paper 1

Running Head: Research Paper

How to Write a Research Paper

Jean Germanna

Dr. Tough Grader

English 111

25 December 2005

Parenthetical Citations
- o The APA citation includes the author's name and the year of publication of the source. Elements in an APA citation are separated by commas, and p. and pp. are used with page numbers.
- o See the section on "Avoiding Plagiarism" to see when you should cite your sources.
- o Quotations longer than 40 words should be typed in a block style, indented 5 spaces from the left margin, single-spaced, and *without* quotation marks.
- o The parenthetical citation in the text comes after the closing quotation marks and before end punctuation.

- The title page should also include the title of the paper, your name, and course information centered in the middle of the page.
- Create a header (look under "View" in Microsoft Word) for your paper that will list all page numbers consecutively in the upper right-hand corner of your page, one-half inch from the top. The actual paper will begin on the second page.
- Your paper *may* include the following items in the order listed below. Your instructor will indicate the specific requirements for the assignment.

  - Title page
  - Abstract
  - Text
  - References
  - Appendixes
  - Author note
  - Footnotes/Endnotes
  - Tables
  - Figure captions
  - Figures
  - Reference list
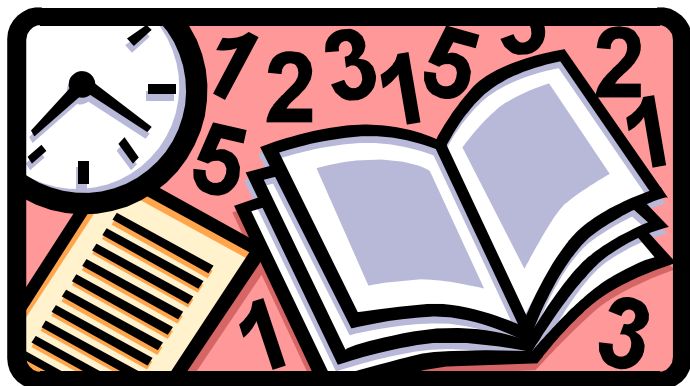
Online Literary Criticism- e
Bartleby.com- e

Natural Sciences
Dictionary of Physics and Electronics- p
McGraw-Hill Modern Men of Science- p
Encyclopedia of Bioethics- p
American Men and Women of Science- p
Harper's Encyclopedia of Science- p
Encyclopedia of Physical Science and Technology- p
Handbook of Chemistry and Physics- p
Van Nostrant's Scientific Encyclopedia- p
Taber's Medical Dictionary- p
Nature- e
Access Science- e

Poetry
American Poetry- e
African-American Poetry- e
English Poetry- e
English Verse Drama- e

Religion
Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology- p
Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics- p
Encyclopedia Judaica- p
Mythology of All Races- p
The Encyclopedia of Philosophy- p
The Encyclopedia of Psychology- p
The Interpreter's Bible- p

Social Sciences
Dictionary of the Social Sciences- p
Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences- p
Standard and Poor's Industrial Surveys- p
Statistical Abstracts- p
Palgrave's Dictionary of Economics- p
Encyclopedia of Criminal Justice- p
Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance- p
Encyclopedia of Education- p

Reference Works:

Search online versions of traditional reference sources such as Encyclopedia Britannica; The Oxford English Dictionary; full-text American poetry, African-American poetry, and British poetry and drama databases; statistical information; style manuals; and history, science, and international affairs resources.

Periodical Indexes and Databases:

Search more than twenty online periodical indexes and full text databases to find citations, abstracts and articles from hundreds of journals, magazines, and newspapers. Some of these sources include:

Ebsco
Newsbank
Factiva
OVID
SIRS
First Search
MathSciNet
Harp Week
Cambridge Scientific Abstracts
Pro Quest
New York Times Historical Newspapers
Washington Post Historical Newspapers

Electronic Journals Online:

Find electronic versions of many journals online either through the Germanna online catalog or through the full text journal search feature.

Germanna Online Catalog:

Search for books, audio-visual materials, and electronic books and journals online by using VCCSLinc, the Germanna Community College online catalog. The catalog will help you locate materials in both the Locust Grove and the Fredericksburg Area campus libraries.

Works Cited List
- Place the authors' last name first, followed by the first name. If a work has more than one author, invert the first and last name of only the first author listed.
- If a work does not include an author's name, alphabetize by the title.
- Use quotation marks around the titles of articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers.
- Underline the titles of books, journals, magazines, and newspapers.
- The first line of each works cited entry should be flush with the left margin. Subsequent lines should be indented one-half inch. This is called a "hanging indentation."

Example:
Lester, James D. and James D. Lester, Jr. Principles of Writing Research Papers. New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2003. Miller, Perry, and T. H. Johnson. The Puritans. New York: Harper, 1963.

APA Guidelines
Paper Format
- Your essay should be typed in number 12 font, double-spaced, on standard-sized paper (8.5 x 11 inches), with margins of one inch on all sides.
- Title page
  - You must include a title page with a running header one-half inch down from the top right-hand side of the title page. The running header should include the first page number.
  - A definition of the running head should also be centered in the middle of the page. Check with your instructor to see if a running head definition is required.

o Your "Works Cited" page should be typed on a separate sheet of paper, following your essay. Double space all entries, but do not place any spaces between entries.

> Germanna 1
>
> Jean Germanna
>
> Dr. Tough Grader
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> English 111
>
> 25 December 2005
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> How to Write a Research Paper
>
> Simply stated, a research paper is a
>
> gathering of information from a number
>
> of different sources. There are two different
>
> types of research papers, the informative
>
> report and the researched argument. The
>
> instructor who assigns the paper will

Parenthetical Documentation
- References in your paper must clearly identify where the original idea came from.
- All internal citations should be included on the Works Cited page.
- The MLA citation includes the author's last name and the page number of the source.

Example:
(Smith 204)

Other Online Catalogs:

Search for materials outside of the Germanna libraries by searching other college libraries using VIVA (the Virtual Library of Virginia) or by using WorldCat, a catalog of books, web resources, and other materials worldwide.

Preparing a Working Bibliography

As you begin your preliminary research, you will discover reference materials that you will eventually want to use to write your final paper. It is important to document the various sources so that you can use them later as you narrow down your topic and begin to take notes for your final paper. As you begin to read books and articles, you will find that they will lead you to other sources of information. The working bibliography will contain all of the references that you consulted during your research. Once you finalize your topic and determine which sources you want to utilize for your final paper, you can create a bibliography or works-cited list.

The easiest way to document which references you have used is to complete a separate note card for each source. On the back of each card you can make brief notes about the source. If you record any passages directly from an author, you should make sure that you use quotation marks so that you don't accidentally plagiarize an author's words when you write your paper. Cards can be sorted in a number of useful ways. For example, when you are ready to prepare your paper's concluding bibliography you can simply remove cards for the sources not used in the paper, alphabetize the remaining cards, and type the bibliographic entries directly from the cards.

On the front of each card, you should record all the pertinent information about the source that you might need eventually for your bibliography. Otherwise, you will find yourself trekking back to the library at the last minute to look up a missing year of publication or to double check an illegibly written author's name. This usually happens on a Sunday night when the library is closed!

Your instructor will specify whether you should document your sources according to MLA or APA guidelines. Neither system is inherently superior to the other and it is a good idea to become familiar with both methods. The Tutoring Center has APA and MLA guides in the reference rack outside the office in Fredericksburg, and immediately inside the door in Locust Grove. More MLA and APA information is discussed further on in this booklet.

You can also find MLA and APA information online by following these instructions:

- Begin in Netscape Communicator or Internet Explorer
- Go to the Germanna Homepage: www.gcc.vccs.edu
- Click on "Library"
- Click on "Reference Sources"
- Look under "Literature"
- Select APA Style or MLA Style

Taking Notes

After you have compiled your working bibliography, you are ready to examine your sources more carefully and take notes.

Please refer to the following references for specific details. Try to use the most recent publications of these texts, as the older versions do not contain sufficient information on citing electronic sources.

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (*5th edition*), by Joseph Gibaldi
Hodges' Harbrace Handbook, by John Hodges, Suzanne
*Webb, Rovert Miller and Winifred Horner
The Beacon Handbook, by Robert Perrin
Principles of Writing Research Papers, by James D. Lester and James D. Lester, Jr.
*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (*5th edition*)
*http://www.apastyle.org
*http://www.mla.org/
*http://owl.english.purdue.edu/

MLA Guidelines
  Paper Format
  o Your essay should be typed in number 12 font, double-spaced, on standard-sized paper (8.5 x 11 inches), with margins of one inch on all sides.
  o Unless requested by your instructor, a title page is unnecessary.
  o Provide a double-spaced entry in the top left corner of the first page that lists your name, your instructor's name, the course number, and the date.
  o Create a header (look under "View" in Microsoft Word) for your paper that will list all page numbers consecutively in the upper right-hand corner of your page, one-half inch from the top. Some instructors do not like to have the first page numbered.
  o Center the title of your paper on the line below the header with your name.
  o Begin your paper two spaces below the title.

Unacceptable Paraphrase:
Whenever government becomes destructive of the rights of the people, the people have the right to alter or abolish it, and to form a new government on such principles and organization of powers as seem most likely to bring them safety and happiness.

Acceptable Paraphrase:
The people have the right to change or do away with any government that violates their basic human rights and to form a new government founded on precepts they feel will afford them these rights.

Citing Sources

The last section of the handbook discussed when it was appropriate to cite the source of your material. There are actually several different methods of citing sources. It is important to find out which method your instructor would like you to use.

The Modern Language Association (MLA) system of documentation is widely used, particularly in English and the humanities. The American Psychological Association (APA) style of documentation was originally designed to guide psychologists in the preparation of scholarly papers. Today it is the standard for professional publication throughout the social sciences. Several disciplines in the fine arts use footnotes or endnotes as a style of documentation. The best approach is to follow closely whatever model your instructor suggests. Your instructor may want you to have experience utilizing all of these documentation styles.

This handbook will provide some general guidelines for citing sources according to MLA and APA rules. However, there are far too many rules to include in a limited space.

What Makes a Good Note?
You should keep the following suggestions in mind as you decide what information to commit to note cards:

- A good note makes a clear point.
- A good note captures the essence of an author's argument, restates the author's main point, or indicates his or her biases.
- A good note presents specific information – facts places, descriptions, examples, statistics, case histories.

How Should Notes be Recorded?
It is best to take notes on separate index cards, four by six inches or larger, so you will have the information readily available when you are ready to write. Writing from note cards will more likely produce an original synthesis of ideas, as you will not have sources before you and will not be tempted to lift large chunks of material. Each note card must be self contained and should include three pieces of information:

- *A reference to your sources.* Key each note card to a bibliography card. For example, you might write the author's last name at the top of each note card. Remember to be careful if two authors share the same last name!
- *A clear, complete note.* Be certain that each note you put on a card is sufficiently complete to make sense to you when you no longer have the source in front of you.
- *The page number.* Be certain that the page number or numbers of the source from which you took the note appear on the note card because you will need to cite those page numbers in your final paper.

Types of Notes
There are four different types of notes, and each note card may contain just one or a combination of all four types.

- *Direct Quotation* - Sometimes you will find a writer who states his or her point so forcefully or succinctly that you want to quote the author's own phrasing in your paper. You <u>must</u> cite its source in your paper. You are not free to omit or add words, or to change punctuation or spelling. If you add a word or phrase for clarity, you must enclose the added material in square brackets like this: [ ]. If you wish to delete a part of a long quotation, you must show the deletion with three spaced periods (…) called ellipses. Otherwise, be certain that everything within the quotation marks is exactly as it appears in the original quotation.

- *Paraphrase*- A paraphrase is a restatement of another writer's ideas in words that are entirely your own. Be sure you do not simply replace some of the words in another writer's sentence with your own. Instead, the very structure of your sentence should be different from that of your source (See the section on "Avoiding Plagiarism").

- *Summary*- Sometimes you will need to note all the particulars of a passage, and sometimes you can simply summarize the passage in a sentence or two. A summary should reduce the work of note taking without sacrificing important information.

- *Notes to Yourself*- Your research will prompt ideas, associations, and responses. Because you can't expect to remember all the peripheral ideas that occur to you as you do your research, write them down as they come to mind. This type of note is similar to a note you might make in the margin of a book. Later, when you review your cards in preparation for outlining your paper, you will be glad for the clarifying, explanatory, or suggestive notes that you made to yourself while you were deep in the research. They will prove invaluable catalysts to thought in the writing stage of your work.

Indirect Quotations

Do not use quotation marks to enclose indirect quotations; however, you must cite the source of the quote. The citation below is an example of APA style.

Example: Genetic engineering is the manipulation of genetic material where it is removed from one section of DNA and reattached to another section (Rosenthal, 2000, pp. 19-20).

Paraphrasing

To paraphrase means to express exactly the same idea in different words and in a different structure than that of the source. You cannot just change a few words in a source sentence and call the sentence your own. Even if you use several words in succession from a source, you are quoting, not paraphrasing. You *must* cite your source.

As a paraphrased idea belongs to another, it must be cited unless it is considered common knowledge. An idea is considered common knowledge if it is found in many different sources rather than one, or if it would be familiar to an average educated person. Whenever you are in doubt, cite the source of the idea.

Examples
   Source:
   That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness (Thomas Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence).*

Avoiding Plagiarism

College students are constantly reading the works of others. When writing a research paper, it is important to distinguish between your own words and the original words and ideas of others. Representing the words or ideas of another as your own is a serious violation known as plagiarism. The Germanna Community College Student Handbook clearly states the College's policy in the section on academic honesty. In order to avoid plagiarism when you are writing a paper, you <u>must</u> give credit whenever you use:

- Another's person's original idea or theory
- A direct quotation from another person's oral or written words
- Facts or statistics from a source that are not commonly known

Direct Quotations

Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations. A direct quote must present the words exactly as they appear in the source unless you use ellipsis marks (…) or brackets […] to indicate you have made changes in the text. All direct quotations must be cited (see the sections on APA or MLA citations). The citation below is an example of MLA style.

Example: Great Britain implemented the Tea Act of 1773 because the East India Company "was failing either to return a profit to its shareholders or to consolidate Britain's hold on India" (Countryman 46).

Writing the Paper

Before you actually put your pen to your paper, you should take a little time to stand back, look at your notes, and assess your objectives.

- Are there connections between your sources?
- If so, where do your different sources intersect?
- Are there different views and interpretations of the same issue?

Think about the key points your research might cover and how these might be organized. Consider how you can use your notes to support your thesis.

Sort Note Cards

Take advantage of notes written on cards. Sort them into groups covering the various issues your paper might cover. You will most likely have a "miscellaneous" group where you can place notes that don't fit neatly into any category. Hang onto these. Often you will find a place for some bit of information from this assortment as you write your paper. Or as your paper becomes more focused, you may end up discarding some notes that do not contribute to your work.

Make an Outline

After you sort your note cards, sketch out an outline of your main points and fill in as many supporting details as you can find from your note cards. The purpose of an outline is to organize your ideas and provide a guide for your writing. Unless a formal outline is a required part of your research paper, create the outline informally, just for you. An informal outline helps you move from idea to idea logically and coherently, so whatever form it takes is fine as long as it works for you.

Divide and Conquer

Now you are ready to write, but the task before you may seem overwhelming. Try to make your work more manageable by dividing it into sections, concentrating only on one section during a composing session. For instance, you might decide to concentrate on writing the background section of your paper.

Write the First Draft

Writing in this first stage is creative and relaxed. Remember, your goal at this point is to create a bare-bones document that will give you something to work with. Let ideas dominate this phase of writing and save concerns with style and grammar for later. However, when you include the words or ideas of another, be sure you mark the material for citation (see the sections on "Avoiding Plagiarism" and "Citing Sources").

Revise

After your first draft, read through the paper to see if ideas flow together logically to support your thesis. You might decide to rearrange some sections of the paper, change some wording, introduce a new idea or include a quote. Good writers usually spend the greater part of their composing time revising their material to make it more effective. It is not unusual for a writer to produce many drafts as he or she refines a paper.

Edit

When your paper is revised to your satisfaction, it is time to edit. This is the final part of the writing process, the time to look at the paper from a grammatical perspective. Check the paper for spelling, sentence structure, paragraphing, punctuation, and grammar. Also check to make sure all quotes and paraphrases are properly cited.

If you decide to do some additional writing composition during this stage, make sure that you go back and edit the revised sections. Follow some of these tips on editing your paper:

- Have a classmate edit your paper.
- Read your own paper out loud; you can often catch your own grammatical errors this way.
- Look for sentence fragments and run-on sentences.
- Check to see if there is a smooth transition of thought between paragraphs.
- Eliminate sentences that do not promote the thesis of your paper.
- Try to keep the verb tenses consistent throughout the paper.
- Utilize a rich selection of vocabulary.

Conclusion

Many students make the mistake of summarizing their research in the conclusion of their paper. This is neither appropriate nor necessary. However, it is important to address the thesis of your paper in the conclusion. You should refer back to the thesis statement in the introduction of your paper. You might indicate that your research supports the thesis of your paper, or you might state that your research dispels the thesis. You should also draw inferences from your research and state your findings in the conclusion. Finally, you may also decide to make suggestions for further research in the conclusion.