



# The Research Process

A general guide to researching for a formal essay.

- 1. CHOOSE a topic.** This may involve brainstorming ideas in the classroom, or beginning with an assigned topic from your teacher.
- 2. EXPLORE general sources.** Define any terms in the broad topic that you do not understand. Acquire a general understanding of this topic.
- 3. NARROW your focus.** Refine your topic so that your research becomes focused. Consider specific questions within your general subject.
- 4. LIST questions.** Create a list of as many questions as possible which seem to have research potential. Consult your librarians!
- 5. WRITE a brief plan.** Write a brief statement of purpose. Try to organize your questions in a logical order with this initial plan.
- 6. LOCATE potential sources.** Locate potential sources of information from appropriate sources. Ask your librarians for help.
- 7. READ, VIEW, ANALYZE.** Scan sources for terms from your statement of purpose. Consider each work's authority and intellectual level.
- 8. SELECT the best sources.** Note all sources in your working bibliography. Ask your librarians for help with your chosen bibliographic style.
- 9. DEVELOP a working thesis.** Write a thesis which relates all of your questions. However, be prepared to change it if necessary.
- 10. TAKE notes.** Take notes to support your questions. Note potential quotations by using quotation marks. Beware plagiarism!
- 11. ORGANIZE notes.** Organize notes into categories. Consider your order of ideas. Begin first draft. Do you need more information?
- 12. REVISE drafts.** Follow the writing process method to complete your research paper. Always find a good editor to help you.
- 13. PRESENT final paper.** Formal research papers should follow a style manual, such as APA. Ask a librarian for help.

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