

RESEARCH SEMINAR GUIDE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHECKLIST

Step 1: Select a Topic & Devise Your Thesis Statement

Spend some time thinking about your topic: Make sure that it's something you're interested in. If you pick a topic you like, you will find your research to be interesting. This is a very important step, so don't rush it. If you are having difficulty selecting a topic, then see me for a list of topics.

Once you have a topic, ask yourself:

___ Can I narrow down this topic more? For example, if you pick "World War II," you have picked a big topic. "The Manhattan Project," which was the secret U.S. project to build the atomic bomb, would be more focused.

___ What is my purpose? Are you making an argument, like "Drug Addicts Should be Treated as Victims, Not Criminals," or are you informing us, like if your paper is called, "Do women doing the same jobs as men really earn less money?"

___ State your purpose as a thesis statement or question. For example: "Any illegal immigrant willing to serve in the U.S. military should be granted citizenship." Now you make this argument in your paper, using your sources.

___ Topic Approval Form submitted

___ Approved

Once your topic has been approved, get started.

Step 2: Get Organized

___ Create a folder called "Research Seminar" and then create the following Word documents and put them in this folder:

___ Outline (Working Outline & Final Outline)

___ Notes

___ Works Cited

___ Rough Draft

___ Final Draft

_____ Also, make a folder called “PowerPoint” and put this in your Research Seminar folder.

Q: What is the point of all of these documents?

A: The Research Seminar folder is there to keep everything in one place. Organization is important and cuts down on stress — get organized right from the start.

Step 3: Create a Working Outline of Your Research Paper

Create a working outline showing what your paper will cover in each of your body paragraphs. Read a few articles on your topic, get your topic approved, and then create a working outline. It's called a "Working Outline" because you may change it as you get deeper into your research. Don't worry if it isn't perfect—you make it to get *organized*. It's like a Table of Contents for your paper. This Work Outline also helps me to make sure that you've narrowed down your topic to a manageable level, and that it is organized well. Each part of the outline should be independent of the other sections, which will enable you to organize your information better.

_____ Working Outline submitted

Step 4: Find Credible Sources, Take Notes & Create a Works Cited document

The Notes document is there to keep track of the information you are gathering to write your paper. Information you get from your sources, whether you quote it (use quotation marks when you do) or paraphrase it (paraphrase means to put into your own words) will go into this document *first*. NOTE: Every time you take information from a source and put it in your Notes document, add a citation, which says where the information came from.

EXAMPLE: Your topic is “Preventing Teen Pregnancy,” and you find an article from *Time* magazine that says, “the 3 leading causes of teen pregnancy are” X, Y and Z. (Time 56)

The “(Time 56)” tells your reader that your information, which you have quoted, is from *Time* magazine on page 56. Even though you may have gotten the article from EBSCO Host, it was from *Time*. Missing citations can result in a failing grade, especially if you miss a lot of them, so you *must* make a citation every time you take information from a source, whether it is a magazine, book, interview—anything.

Additionally, *every* time you use information, also make a Works Cited reference and put it in your Works Cited document. EBSCO Host makes it very easy to do this: click on “cite” above any EBSCO Host article, and then copy and paste the complete citation into your Works Cited document. When you

use information from this source in your paper, though, you only need the basic information, like in the *Time* example above.

The Works Cited document is where you will keep track of the sources.

____ Located and Printed at least 5 credible sources

____ Submitted Notes taken from the sources

____ Submitted Works Cited document

➔ **You must use the works cited format to complete the works cited cards.**

____ Submitted Final Outline

Step 5: Write your Research Paper

Use the outline and your notes to help you put your research paper together. You must have at a minimum three sources document in the body of your paper. Be sure that you CITE these parenthetically and properly place them on the Works Cited page (MLA format style).

YOU CANNOT HAVE A WORKS CITED PAGE IF YOU HAVE NO PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS IN THE BODY OF YOUR RESEARCH PAPER.

If you have taken the time to do steps 1 – 4, then you will have no problems here. If you have not completed steps 1 – 4, then GOOD LUCK!

Your must have at least five (5) sources listed on your Works Cited Page.

Step 6: Proofread your Research Paper

Reread your research paper for any typographical errors. Ask a friend, classmate, parent, and/or teacher to read and help proofread your paper.

Step 7: Submit your final Research Paper

All research paper materials must be submitted in a binder. It must include ALL of the following – this is the sequence that they should be placed in the binder.

- ___ Final Draft w/ Works Cited Attached
- ___ Final Outline
- ___ PowerPoint
- ___ Topic Approval Form
- ___ Ethical Statement Form
- ___ Rough Draft
- ___ Notes
- ___ Works Cited
- ___ Copies of sources cited in paper



