

# How to write a Research Paper

19<sup>th</sup> Lecture

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# STEP 1. CHOOSE A TOPIC

- Choose a topic which interests and challenges you. Your attitude towards the topic may well determine the amount of effort and enthusiasm you put into your research.
- Focus on a limited aspect, e.g. narrow it down from "Religion" to "World Religion" to "Buddhism". Obtain teacher approval for your topic before embarking on a full-scale research. If you are uncertain as to what is expected of you in completing the assignment or project, re-read your assignment sheet carefully or ASK your teacher.
- Select a subject you can manage. Avoid subjects that are too technical, learned, or specialized. Avoid topics that have only a very narrow range of source materials.

# STEP 2. FIND INFORMATION

- Surf the Net.
- For general or background information, check out [useful URLs](#), [general information online](#), [almanacs or encyclopedias online](#) such as [Britannica](#). Use [search engines](#) and other search tools as a starting point.
- Check out public and university libraries, businesses, government agencies, as well as contact knowledgeable people in your community.
- Read and evaluate. Bookmark your favorite Internet sites. Printout, photocopy, and take notes of relevant information.
- As you gather your resources, jot down full bibliographical information (author, title, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, page numbers, URLs, creation or modification dates on Web pages, and your date of access) on your work sheet, printout, or enter the information on your laptop or desktop computer for later retrieval. If printing from the Internet, it is wise to set up the browser to print the URL and date of access for every page. Remember that an article without bibliographical information is useless since you cannot cite its source.

## **STEP 3. STATE YOUR THESIS**

Do some critical thinking and write your thesis statement down in one sentence. Your thesis statement is like a declaration of your belief. The main portion of your research will consist of arguments to support and defend this belief.

# STEP 4. MAKE A TENTATIVE OUTLINE

All points must relate to the same major topic that you first mentioned in your capital Roman numeral. An example of an outline:

**I. INTRODUCTION - (Brief comment leading into subject matter - Thesis statement on Shakespeare)**

**II. BODY - Shakespeare's Early Life, Marriage, Works, Later Years**

**A. Early life in Stratford**

**1. Shakespeare's family**

**a. Shakespeare's father**

**b. Shakespeare's mother**

**2. Shakespeare's marriage**

**a. Life of Anne Hathaway**

**b. Reference in Shakespeare's Poems**

**B. Shakespeare's works**

**1. Plays**

**a. Tragedies i. Hamlet ii. Romeo and Juliet**

**b. Comedies i. The Tempest ii. Much Ado About Nothing**

**c. Histories i. King John ii. Richard III iii. Henry VIII**

**2. Sonnets**

**3. Other poems**

**C. Shakespeare's Later Years**

**1. Last two plays**

**2. Retired to Stratford**

**a. Death b. Burial i. Epitaph on his tombstone**

**III. CONCLUSION**

**A. Analytical summary**

**1. Shakespeare's early life**

**2. Shakespeare's works**

**3. Shakespeare's later years**

**B. Thesis reworded**

**C. Concluding statement**