The Research Process

Presented by the Eberly Writing Studio
Agenda

1. Your research process
2. The Assignment
3. Researching (selecting & note taking)
4. Drafting
5. Questions
6. Resources
What is your research process?
Describe it, from start to finish.
The Assignment
Look (closely) at the assignment

1. What are you being asked to do (purpose)?
2. To whom are you writing (audience)?
3. What are the conventions (look for active verbs)?
4. What are the practical instructions (e.g. page-length, due dates, etc)?
5. What questions do you have?
Sample Assignment

1. What are you being asked to do (purpose)?
2. To whom are you writing (audience)?
3. What are the conventions (look for active verbs)?
4. What are the practical instructions (e.g. page-length, due dates, etc)?
5. What questions do you have?
How much time do you need...

▷ for understanding the assignment?
▷ for prewriting?
▷ for gathering sources?
▷ for writing?
▷ for getting feedback?

FOR QUESTIONS????????
Plan Your Assignment

Start Date * 11/17/2019
Due Date * 12/12/2019

MM/DD/YYYY (e.g. 12/31/2020)

Sign in for due date notification options

By November 19, 2019: Understand assignment. Select topic.

Note: The research and writing process is not always linear. Keep in mind you may need to go forward or backwards.

- Read through and understand your assignment (from UNG).
  - Contact or visit your instructor’s office hours with questions.
- Select a workable topic (from Colorado State).
- Conduct preliminary investigation into topic using Google or other web searches. Work to understand your topic and the issues surrounding it.
  - Try a specialized encyclopedia.
  - Write down 5-10 keywords about your topic including terms, jargon, events, people, places, etc. to use when you search for sources.

https://www.lib.umn.edu/ac
Researching

Selecting Sources
What is (and isn’t) a scholarly source?
Is my source scholarly?*?

*academic, peer-reviewed, refereed

Step 1
Source
Did you find this article in a library database?
- Yes
  - Is the journal peer-reviewed? (See criteria on other side for help.)
    - Yes
      - Most likely scholarly
    - No
      - Not scholarly
  - No
    - Move to Step 2: Author(s)

Step 2
Author(s)
Are the author(s)’ credentials provided?
- Yes
  - Are the authors affiliated with a university or other research institute?
    - Yes
      - Most likely scholarly
    - No
      - Most likely not scholarly
- No
  - Move to Step 3: Content

Step 3
Content
Does the article attempt to persuade or bias the reader?
- Yes
  - Does the article have a works cited or bibliography?
    - Yes
      - Is the topic treated objectively and is the information well-supported?
        - Yes
          - Most likely scholarly
        - No
          - Not scholarly
    - No
      - Is the article longer than ~10 pages?
        - Yes
          - Most likely not scholarly
        - No
          - Most likely scholarly
- No
  - If your source meets the criteria in Steps 1-3 it is Most likely scholarly

More questions? Talk to your instructor or Ask a Librarian*!

*www.library.illinois.edu/askus
Does your source pass the CRAAP Test?

▷ Currency
▷ Relevance
▷ Authority
▷ Accuracy
▷ Purpose

For more on the CRAAP test, visit the [WVU Lib Guide on Evaluating Sources](#):
Taking Notes
Before you take notes...

1. Scan the **title, abstract, introduction, headings, and conclusion** of each source you’ve gathered.

Only **take notes** if a source speaks to your **research focus** or helps you answer your **research question**.
Note-taking

If you think you should read the text in full, use a checklist to help you examine the text in more depth:

- Is the text located in the same field or a different one?
- What aspects of your topic does the text address?
- What are the key concepts or framing used?
- What connections does the text make? What new insights does it offer?

FOR MORE QUESTIONS SEE: Pat Thomson’s blog
Drafting
How do you plan for writing?
To outline OR not to outline?

OUTLINE

I. Introduction
   A. Current problem
   B. Area of Focus
   C. Key Terms

II. Background
   A. Historical Overview
   B. Gap in the research

III. Major Point 1
Make a map or diagram

Image credit: https://www.mindmeister.com/education-software
Make some piles

Put your ideas on note cards or scraps of paper, and move them into different piles.

Image credit:
https://wordpress.oise.utoronto.ca/robertson/portfolio-item/sorting-material/
Write a letter to yourself

Tell yourself what you are planning to write in your paper. Then articulate the evidence you have to support your ideas. Also, remind yourself of which parts still feel rough.

This practice should give you a sense of what you are ready to write and what still might require further reflection/research/thinking.
One and done?

Give yourself time to make changes and/or get feedback.
Questions?
Resources

Slide 8: Planning your Assignment
https://www.lib.umn.edu/ac

Slide 11: Is my Source Scholarly?
https://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/howdoi/scholarly/

Slide 12. CRAAP Test
https://libguides.wvu.edu/c.php?g=418748&p=2854186

Slide 15: Beginning the Literature Review, Taking Notes
https://patthomson.net/2012/03/03/doing-your-literature-review-taking-notes/

Slide 18: To outline or not to outline?
https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/planresearchpaper/

Slides 20 & 21: Making Piles AND Write a Letter
https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/
Visit the Writing Studio

G02, Colson Hall
304.293.5788
https://speakwrite.wvu.edu/students
Thanks!

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