

TERM PAPER CLUES

THE RESEARCH PAPER MADE EASY: FROM ASSIGNMENT TO COMPLETION

1. SELECTING & NARROWING THE SUBJECT

- Determine what interests you.
- Understand the limits of the assignment in terms of subject, time and length.
- Know your resources. What does the library have?
- Read a background article in a general encyclopedia.
- Ask journalistic questions (who, what, when, where, why & how) to provide focus.

2. STATING THE OBJECTIVE (THESIS STATEMENT)

A thesis must have an argument or special angle on a topic. It should be limited enough so your paper can cover it. It should be broad enough to make a worthwhile point.

EXAMPLE OF NARROWING A SUBJECT INTO A WORKABLE THESIS STATEMENT

Globalization

Child Labour / Sweatshops

Laws prohibiting child labour

How Laws prohibiting child labour are not heeded in many developing nations

Without an effective and comprehensive method of enforcing child labour laws, children will continue to be victimized by working in sweatshops.

3. RESEARCHING THE SUBJECT IN THE LIBRARY¹

- Wikipedia is okay ONLY to get you started (see reference section); it's not a legitimate source
- Google scholar
- Proquest: need a password from library to access from home (Vanier main page → Quick links → Library → Article Database Search)
- Reference section of the library; ask the reference librarian for help
- Books: to save time, use table of contents at the front and index and reference section at the back.
- Class readings: read and take notes

¹ See also LITC's "Seven Research Steps" at <http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/litc/guides/7steps.pdf>

4. TAKING NOTES

- Make a 3 x 5 card for each book or article you use and write down full information to use in your bibliography and footnotes.
- Use a 4 x 6 card for the notes you take. Use a separate card for each thought.
 - ↳ Note cards will facilitate arranging your ideas when you sit down to write the rough draft.

5. MAKING THE OUTLINE

A clear outline allows you to see a condensed form of your paper before you begin to write. It helps you to see the movement from one idea to the next and how everything helps develop the thesis.

EXAMPLE

ALCOHOLISM CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS IN THE HOME. ← THESIS²

A. <u>Kinds of problems</u>	1. Emotional	a. stress on spouse b. confusion among children
	2. Financial	a. resources are used up
B. <u>Solution</u>	1. Alcoholics Anonymous 2. Counseling	

6. WRITING THE ROUGH DRAFT

1. A research paper must have an introduction, body, and conclusion.
2. The introduction must capture the reader's interest, state the thesis, and show the organization of the paper.
3. The conclusion must restate the main ideas of the paper, starting with the topic sentences and then the thesis. End with a final statement calling for more research or suggesting further questions/concerns to be explored. New ideas should not be added.
4. Use transitional words and phrases (for example, "therefore," "on the other hand," "moreover,") to connect ideas.
5. Watch paragraphing. Is each paragraph limited to one main idea? Does each contain a topic sentence?
6. Reread, looking for major changes in organization and development.

7. PREPARING THE FINAL COPY

Note information re: title page, parenthetical documentation and works cited (following APA style guidelines). Parenthetical documentation is required not only for quotations but also for all borrowed ideas, opinions, and factual information summarized in your own words. Failure to footnote is termed PLAGIARISM.

² For a more accurate thesis statement, include the two problems and need for solutions in the sentence:
Research shows that, left untreated, alcoholism can cause serious emotional and financial problems in the home.