

RESEARCHING YOUR RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC

With your reader in mind, plan what you need to do to research your paper. Some possibilities may be:

- define key terms
- research findings related to the topic
- find out about the historical background
- explore the implications(cause and effect of the issues or problems connected with the topic)

TAKING NOTES FROM SOURCES:

Make sure that you keep your research question in mind as you do research. Reread it from time to time--this will help you keep focused on what your purpose is.

- As you take notes, make clear to yourself where a source idea ends and where your own comments or interpretations begin
- It may help to divide the page so that you have the notes from each source on the right side with your interpretation or comments on the left side, beside the text notes. That way you will not get confused later on when developing paragraphs from what you have written
- While reading a source, ask yourself how it relates to your research question. Write down comments about this so that you have a record of the thoughts you have as you read the research
- At the end of your note-taking for that source, free-write to answer the question “so what” i.e. Write answers to the following:
 - Does this relate to my research question?
 - Why is it relevant?
 - Does it bring out other points I need to explore as a result?
 - How does it connect with other information I have learned on this topic?
- When you finish making notes from a source, make sure to write down all the reference details for it:
 - For a book, mark down the author, title, place of publication, publisher and copyright date, and page numbers for the quotes you have written down or paraphrased
 - For an article from a journal, take note of the author, title of the article, title of the journal, volume number, date and inclusive page numbers
 - For an internet source, note down the URL (the internet address) and as much detail about the information as is available (author’s name, publication title, publisher, date, etc). Include the date on which you accessed the site: information on the Internet changes constantly and so something that is there to refer to today might not be there tomorrow. Print out pages that you may need to refer to later

If you have already developed a thesis, you can use it to plan the type of research you need to do in order to further develop this topic.