

How to Write a Research Paper

Pretend you are a reporter working on a story. If you were reading a news article, what would you want to know about the subject? What facts would you most want to learn? With a little imagination, you might find that you can make research fun.

Step 1. Decide on your topic. What do you want to teach your readers? If you're writing a paper for school, what are your teacher's requirements?

Step 2. Create a schedule. How long will it take you to find your sources? How long will it take you to write your first draft? Marking these days on a calendar can help you stay on schedule and complete your assignment on time.

Step 3. Select your sources. You'll want to use a variety of reliable sources. Aim for at least three of these:

Non-fiction books. You can find these at your local library.

Periodicals. These are publications like news magazines and journals.

Reference sources. Books like encyclopedias, dictionaries and almanacs.

Online sources. Internet encyclopedias, dictionaries, or other websites.

Interviews. Questions you ask of experts on the subject.

Step 4. Write a rough draft. To make it easier, you might want to create an outline first. Write your topic at the top of the page, then list the points you will cover. Under each heading, write a few notes about your ideas and sources.

Step 5. Editing. Make sure your writing is clear, your grammar and punctuation are correct, and you've covered all the facts. Have a friend or parent proofread your paper and offer suggestions.

You can keep track of your sources here:

Source #1: _____

Source #2: _____

Source #3: _____

Source #4: _____

Source #5: _____

Start brainstorming topics and sources on the back of this worksheet.