Tips for Writing Research Papers

For many of us, this is the season of research papers. The most important piece of advice regarding research papers is to start early; give yourself time to find the best sources, to revise your thesis, and to edit your paper. If your research paper is due during finals week, you should definitely be starting now! Carve out a little bit of time over the next few weeks to begin researching and writing. Then, check out the links below for more advice on making your research paper successful.

For general advice about writing a research paper, including topic generation, read this post from lifehack.org or this overview from academictips.org.

Our library has a ton of resources to help you begin the researching process.

If you need some ideas on how to organize the large amount of material you may be pulling up, this blog post from The Clever Researcher will help.

Are you stuck? Do you prefer a more personalized approach? You can make research appointments with one of our librarians. They can help you at any research stage.

Once you find your sources and begin writing, you will want to make sure that you cite everything correctly and avoid any plagiarism issues. Read Princeton University’s tips on When to Cite Sources and The Purdue OWL’s page about Using Research.

Once you get a draft of the paper, visit the Writing Center for feedback and help with organization, incorporating sources, and more. The Writing Center website also has a set of links to aid your research.

Finally, as you construct your Bibliography or Works Cited page, double-check to ensure that you have formatted your citations correctly. The Purdue OWL will help you with guidelines for APA, MLA, or The Chicago Manual of Style.

Good luck & happy writing!