

Drafting Your Paper

As you begin to write your paper, you should first review your notes. Doing so, you will re-fresh your memory about the materials you had found during your research.

A formal outline can be difficult and time consuming to write and for some individuals might not be necessary. But taking the time to do an outline will give structure to your paper and often makes the writing go easier.

For many people, writing the opening paragraph of a research paper is the hardest part of the writing process. However, if you take time to write a good opening paragraph, it will be easier to draft the rest of your paper.



When you are writing your first draft, you should not be overly concerned with structure, support, grammar, and so forth. Instead, you should write quickly getting all of your thoughts down on paper. After finishing the first draft, you can concentrate on organizational issues as you prepare your second draft.

Too often, students believe that the only way to incorporate sources into their research papers is to use direct quotes. However, this is often the worse strategy you can use. Direct quotes have their place in a research paper, but summarizing and paraphrasing are generally superior techniques.

The conclusion of your paper should summarize your main points. Be sure not to introduce any new material into the concluding paragraph.

Core Skills Writing Rubric

The Core Skills Writing Rubric developed by the faculty at Schoolcraft College will provide you with a general guideline as to what professors consider when evaluating a research paper.

- Core Skills Writing Rubric
<http://writing.stevenberg.info/tutorials/core/index.html>



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Proper Formats

Part of writing a research paper is following the correct formats established by your academic discipline and your professor. Many years ago, I submitted an article to a journal. It was promptly rejected simply because it was written in MLA format instead of the APA style that the journal required.

I am sure that the editor did not bother to read the article I had submitted. Instead, he rightly took the position that if I were so ignorant not to understand such a basic requirement, he could not trust the credibility of what I had written. After all, from the first glance at my paper, I had shown myself to be a sloppy scholar. So why bother with the rest of it?

Suggestion for Success

After reviewing your research notes, write the first draft of your paper without looking at them. Then, as you prepare the second draft, you can add appropriate citations. This will help you avoid some common problems which instructors identify in student papers; especially having too many quotations and inappropriate paraphrasing.

On-Line Resources

- Draft Your Paper
<http://writing.stevenberg.info/research/step06.html>
- Three Common Types of “Accidental” Plagiarism
<http://writing.stevenberg.info/handouts/h005.html>
- Basic MLA Format
<http://writing.stevenberg.info/tutorials/mla>
- Writing a Proper Citation
<http://writing.stevenberg.info/tutorials/citations/index.html>
- Core Skills Writing Rubric
<http://writing.stevenberg.info/tutorials/core/index.html>

