

# Palomar College Library

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## **The Research Paper Made Easy - 10 Steps**

By following the steps listed below, you will save a good deal of time and avoid a great deal of frustration:

### **Step 1: SELECT A SUBJECT**

Find a subject area you would really like to know more about. If you genuinely like the subject of your research paper the project becomes a challenge instead of an ordeal.

### **Step 2: NARROW THE SUBJECT TO A MANAGEABLE SIZE**

Remember, you are writing a research paper, not a book.

### **Step 3: STATE THE OBJECTIVE**

What are you trying to say to the reader? What point are you attempting to make?

### **Step 4: GIVE YOUR PAPER A WORKING TITLE**

A working title helps you keep to the point of your research. You can assign a final title to your paper after completion.

### **Step 5: PREPARE A PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY**

A bibliography is, simply, a list of sources used in preparation of your paper. Use a separate note card for full information on each book, periodical, etc. used. Write down the "call number" of each book used in case you need to refer to it again.

### **Step 6: PREPARE A WORKING OUTLINE**

Try to break your paper down into major areas using a simple outline format. Use your outline as an attack plan for investigating materials.

### **Step 7: TAKE NOTES**

Use note cards (5"x7" is a good size) to record important ideas and quotations you find in your research.

### **Step 8: OUTLINE THE PAPER**

This second outline should be more complete and closer to the format of your finished paper than the "working outline" described in Step 6.

## **Step 9: WRITE THE ROUGH DRAFT**

- A. Write the introduction:
  - Present the idea to be expressed in a manner which captures the reader's interest.
  - State the thesis. The term "thesis" refers to the point you wish to make, or the argument you intend to present or defend.
  
- B. Write the body:
  - Develop your main ideas.
  - Support your ideas with details, examples.
  
- C. Write the conclusion:
  - Summarize the main ideas.
  - Restate your thesis.
  
- D. Revise the first draft:
  - Check content and organization.
  - Check transitions from one line of thought to the next. Try to make the paper "flow."
  - Double check spelling and punctuation.

## **Step 10: PREPARE THE FINAL DRAFT**