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**How to write a good research paper**

**By Janet Ilacqua**

**How to write a good research paper by Janet Ilacqua**

A good academic paper starts out with a clearly defined topic which is neither too broad or too narrow. For example, "Cactus" would be too broad a topic. On the other hand, A topic is too narrow if you can't find any information about it. For example, suppose your foreign language subject to, "foreign language policy in South Dakota." Although you might have a strong interest in this topic, South Dakota may not have a specific policy about foreign languages. If you have chosen the topic, "teaching Chinese in elementary schools," and your research attempts have been fruitless, it may be that you are considering a topic that no one else has previously presented. In other words, no one has determined that Chinese should be a major language taught as commonly as Spanish or French.

Using an outline can help you organize your material and can also help you discover connections between pieces of information that you weren't aware of when you first conceived the topic of your paper, After you have identified a topic and prepare an outline of the project, you can begin to gather information from authoritative reference sources: pertinent books, encyclopedias, and articles in magazines and journals. Be cautious when using material from the Internet. Before citing Internet sources, check the credentials of the writer. Are they associated with a university or well-known corporation? What experience and training do they have in the field?

Before you turn in your paper, double check it for errors. If you can, after you have checked for errors, let another person (for example, your parent or an older sibling) check it too. Are there any references missing from the bibliography. Is referenced material from sources properly cited? Do the sentences and reasoning make sense. Did you include an abstract or summary of the paper in the case of APA format papers? As soon as you are satisfied with your paper, run a spell and grammar check. (Check your spell checker setting and make sure that they set to Grammar and style). At that point, you can hand in your paper.

Janet Ilacqua is a freelance academic writer. She is available for writing articles, research papers, theses, reports, and dissertations. Specialities: Education, Business, Social Science, History, Philosophy

## **Learning the Rules of Custom Research**

**By Tamara Kim**

### **Learning the Rules of Custom Research by Tamara Kim**

Does research have rules? Surprisingly, or maybe not surprisingly, research does have rules. There are rules for using different biographic citations. There are rules by different instructors concerning the research process. While writing a custom research paper there are rules about deadlines and goals. In fact, not meeting different deadlines can lead to lower grades on the research paper. There are many rules for almost every step of research. Knowing these rules will help make the research process easier.

The instructor often has rules in regard to the format of the custom written research paper. Some instructors want a title page with the name of the research paper, your name, class, and date of the paper. Many instructors want a running head as well as the header on the paper. The instructor will have rules about the margins and the number of pages required. Many instructors want an outline and page of contents.

The research process should include journal articles, books, and often information from the Internet. It is important to know how much and what type of information is required from your instructor. This should include how many direct quotes the instructor wants as well as paraphrased quotes. These should include citation information as to where the information came from. For instance, a direct quote will include the author's name, date, and page number if it is in the APA style or author's name and page number if in the MLA style. Some instructors require different styles of writing such as APA or MLA so ask the instructor which style to use. Often the Internet will have information about the different styles, but be sure the information meets the same requirements the instructor wants.

One way to make sure there are enough direct quotes and paraphrases is to use note cards while researching the material. Write down the direct phrase with the citation and also creating a note card with the biographic information.

A research paper should include information from the original source as well as many paraphrases from the sources. However, it is important to use your own words and comments about these sources. A research paper should never consist of only direct quotes and paraphrases with nothing from the writer. Direct quotes should be used when they are pertinent to the facts of the paper. Be sure to use ellipses when omitting information. Few long direct quotes should be used.

Create an outline of the topic your plan to research. Begin by writing a thesis statement. This may change as you research the topic. Once you have your research material create an outline with the thesis statement and at least three main points.

Do a rough draft of the material using the outline and note cards.

Once the rough draft is completed it is important to run a spell check. However, it is important to remember that the spell check does not correct all spelling mistakes. Read the rough draft out loud

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checking for all spelling mistakes.

In the writing process remember there are grammar rules. Some of the grammar rules to check are verb and subject agreement. It is important to check on the antecedents of the pronouns. One way to find grammar mistakes is to read the draft out loud. Be sure to check for fragments. Often students make this common mistake.

Check the research paper for punctuation errors. This is an area where many students make mistakes. One way to correct any mistakes is to have a friend read the essay.

Rules are a major part of life regardless of what a person may be doing. There are rules to writing a research paper that must be followed in order to create a great research paper. Remember to check all the rules before starting.

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