

# Research

## What is Research?

Research means, “to seek out again”. It is not just a report. Its purpose is to bring together old and new information that has not previously been brought together. The research process includes the ability to gather enough information to develop a good research question, compile information on the topic, examine it, think about it, organize it and communicate your results.

## The Process

### □ Choose a topic.

To select a researchable topic, look at several sources such as Topic Search, SIRS Discovery, PPLD E-Reference, the Internet, current magazines and newspapers for broad subject areas of social, political, economic and/or scientific concern.

Begin a chart. Make a list of what you already know, what you learn as you read and questions that occur as you research.

### □ Get an overview of the topic.

Begin to pre-search your topic. Find an article in a specialized encyclopedia, on the web or in a periodical data base like PPLD E-Reference, Topic Search or SIRS Discoverer. Identify the main issues and questions surrounding your topic and add them to your chart.

### □ Narrow the topic.

Brainstorm the aspects of your topic by reviewing your chart.  
List some key words for further searching.  
Select a question or problem on which to focus.  
Limit your research topically, chronologically and geographically.

### □ Develop a statement of purpose.

Determine the main idea of your paper.  
Write any new questions and review your previous questions and use them to focus and guide your research.

### □ Find and evaluate sources.

Use key words to search the online sources such as the Internet, Topic Search, SIRS Discoverer and PPLD E-Reference.

Scan the summaries of magazine and newspaper articles to determine their relationship to your research question.

Scan the table of contents, indexes and chapter headings in books for relevant information. Determine if there are enough sources on your topic.

❑ **Compile a preliminary works cited list.**

Make a list of your citations in the correct form using the appropriate bibliographic format.

❑ **Read, evaluate information and take notes.**

Determine the main ideas in the source.  
Determine what information the author uses to support these main ideas.  
Take notes in your own words using your chart or another graphic organizer.

❑ **Organize information and write an outline.**

Examine your notes.  
Organize notes or notecards into categories that reflect main ideas.  
Group statistics, quotations and personal experiences in support of the main ideas.  
Arrange the information into an introduction, body and conclusion.  
Consider how best to organize your material. Choose **one or more** organizational patterns depending on how you plan to develop your paper.

**Classification** – Divide topic into groups or parts based on similarities.

**Problem-Solution-** State the problem and then analyze the solutions offered by various writers.

**Cause and Effect-** Identify the most important points related to an issue and explain why something happened or happens and the results.

**Comparison-Contrast-** Take two or more aspects of a topic and show how they are similar and/or how they are different.

**Persuasion-**State an opinion about the topic and support the opinion with the research you have done.

**Chronological-**Present information in time sequence.

Identify possible conclusions.

❑ **Write the first draft of the paper and prepare documentation.**

Arrange your notecards or notes in order and use them as a guide.  
Keep your outline or graphic organizer in front of you to guide your writing.  
Keep your main question and purpose in front of you and refer to it often. It includes the point you are trying to make.

Include an introduction of a few sentences that will help the reader understand the topic and your position. The last sentence of the introduction will include your topic question or purpose.

Write each paragraph so that it is related to your question or purpose and contains only one idea, which is expressed by a topic sentence and supported by the other sentences.

Write multiple paragraphs containing the main ideas supporting your question and purpose with specific details, fact studies, and authorities' views that support the main ideas.

Note your sources as you write.

Write a conclusion that discusses the significance of the topic and/or the findings as well as summarizes your stand.

□ **Revise and Edit the first draft.**

Revise the content for clarity and organization.  
Edit for spelling, grammar and punctuation.