



Research Papers: A Generic Checklist

There are many ways to approach research papers. The following list will give you a *general* idea of how to approach a research paper, but your assignment may call for more (or less) than what appears below. Make sure that you know what your assignment calls for and what your instructor is asking you to do.

Remember: *You can enlist the help of IUP Writing Center tutors as often as you like.*

Getting Started

- 1. Read over the requirements and expectations for this paper. Review the rubric.
- 2. Choose a general topic
- 3. Do some preliminary reading
- 4. Narrow down the topic
- 5. Develop a working thesis statement (you can also do this as you research or take notes)
- 6. Discuss any questions you have at this point with an IUP Writing Center tutor

Gathering Research

- 1. Search for books and journal articles at the library or on their website (iup.edu/libraries)
- 2. Run a search on Google Scholar to find peer-reviewed sources about your topic
- 3. Evaluate the research you find to decide what you should read more closely
- 4. Compile a working bibliography in APA or MLA Style
- 5. Continue developing your thesis statement
- 6. Discuss any questions you have at this point with an IUP Writing Center tutor

Taking Notes

- 1. Develop a working outline and highlight useable quotations as you're reading
- 2. Continue developing your thesis statement
- 3. Avoid plagiarism by clearly marking words/sentences you take directly from your reading
- 4. Discuss any questions you have at this point with an IUP Writing Center tutor

Writing the Paper

- 1. Review your working outline and evaluate the order of your information
- 2. Consider your (real and imagined) readers—should you write formally or conversationally?
- 3. Write the rough draft, following your outline
- 4. Make sure you cite outside research, use signal phrases to transition to outside research, and include APA or MLA in-text citations
- 5. Evaluate the organization and flow of your paper; consider reverse-outlining
- 6. Discuss any questions you have at this point with an IUP Writing Center tutor

Proofreading & Formatting the Paper

- 1. Check the font size and margins
- 2. Make sure you include a title, citations, and a complete bibliography
- 3. Read through the paper out loud and listen for awkward or confusing phrasing
- 4. Read through the paper again and look for misspelled words and grammatical errors
- 5. Discuss any questions you have with an IUP Writing Center tutor before turning it in