

## How to Write a Research Paper

### Course Description

Welcome to Athena's How to Write a Research Paper class. This class will walk with you through the process of writing a research paper from topic to final draft. While writing can be an individual pursuit, in this class it will be a community effort. You will work together with classmates and teacher step-by-step until you have a finished product you can proudly share with others. Writing a research paper may seem like a self-explanatory task, but there are several twists and turns that could cost you unnecessary time at best and leave you at a loss for the next step at worst. Together, we will discover the most effective and enjoyable path to success.

This class does not require a certain writing level, beyond serving students who are able to write a paper independently. We are studying the writing *process*. In that framework, you are free to decide what topic you would like to write about and encouraged to find something that interests you. After all, writing about something that sparks your curiosity makes it so much easier to learn the process deeply enough to apply it to an assigned topic in another class. We will work on refining your topic to a manageable size that still leaves room for a paper extensive enough to be called a research paper, but the topic itself is your choice.

### Format

*Instruction—Sharing—Check-up*

We will follow this process for our class:

*Instruction* - You will read your text and listen to instruction regarding basic concepts in the process of writing a research paper. You will then complete and turn the assigned step in your paper's progression that is associated with that instruction.

*Sharing* - You will spend the next week discussing your assignment with your classmates and working together to refine each other's work.

*Check-up* - During the third week, each student will have an assigned time to meet with the teacher to discuss the step you completed and make certain that you are comfortable with moving forward to the next step.

For example, the class will read about and listen to instruction on Organization Plans, Databases, and Reference Works during Week 4 of class. Each student will then complete and turn in an Organization Plan and Reference Material List for their chosen topic. During Week 5, the class will share their Plan and List with each other and, together, help each other refine their work and brainstorm how to improve. During Week 6, each student will have an assigned time to meet with the teacher to discuss his/her Plan and List as well as any improvements that might be made to make it the best it can be going forward.

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In this way, each student can confidently move to the next step when the process begins again in Week 7 on Prewriting and Outlining. This process will also give each student ample time to complete their paper during the class's 16 weeks.

*Final Draft* - During Week 16, following the deadline for the final draft, students will get together to discuss their papers and their journey through the planning, researching, and drafting process.

### Topics

We will cover the following topics throughout the class:

Topic	Evaluating Sources	Physical	Block Quotes
Thesis	Recording Data	Reorganization	Graphics
Main Ideas	Prewriting	Drafting	APA Style
Main Points	Outlining/Running	Opening	Self Review
Sources	Outline	Closing	Peer Review
Prospectus	Topical Map	Borrowed Material	Transitions
Organization	Working Outline	Summary	Cohesion
Internet Skills	Where to Write	Quotations	Voice
Databases	First Draft	Punctuation	Concise Writing
Reference Works	Free Writing	Blending	Format

### Assignments

#### *Steps*

We will break the research paper into the following assignments:

Weeks 1-3 - Prospectus

Weeks 4-6 - Organization Plan & Reference List

Weeks 7-9 - Prewriting

Weeks 10-12 - First Draft

Weeks 13-15 - Second Draft

Week 16 - Final Draft

*Note: We will be writing formal, academic research papers. This will include third-person pronouns, no contractions or colloquial speech, and the type of diction and syntax that you would use on a paper assigned by a college professor.*

It is expected that you will use multiple, credible outside sources for your essays. We will use APA Style for citations, references, and formatting. Please see the Purdue Online Writing Lab<sup>1</sup> for further information on APA Style.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>

## How to Write a Research Paper

### *Investigate Links*

Outside URLs will give you background in research papers, writing techniques, and various skills required in formal research paper writing.

### *Forums*

A forum topic that reflects the week's focus is opened so that you can add an individual opinion and participate in a group discussion.

### **Grading**

Grades will be based on the following scale:

90-100% A

80-89% B

70-79% C

60-69% D

50-59% F

0-49% No Credit

A rubric will accompany each writing assignment to inform students of the requirements and scores given based on those requirements.

### **Late Assignments**

To keep the pace of the class, writing assignments will have specific due dates for each assignment.

### **Materials**

*Research Papers, Spiral bound Version, 16th edition (2012)*

William Coyle & Joe Law

ISBN-13: 978-1111839512

Cengage Learning<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.amazon.com/Research-Papers-Spiral-bound-Version/dp/1111839514> —OR—  
<https://www.cengage.com/c/research-papers-spiral-bound-version-16e-coyle>