



Term Paper Research

Doing the research for a term paper is not a linear process. There is no standard list of steps that every student should always do, one after the other, in the same order. There are lots of general tips to guide you in the process.

2 General rules:

- Not every subject has its own book. Sorry, fact of life. You can find it (maybe) in the index of a book or resource related to the topic.
- Not everything comes with a label “This Is What You Need!!” You will have to do the ‘search’ part of the research and the ‘re’ means you will do it over and over.

Good students write good papers in different ways –

- Some begin with a general idea or interest and do research to make their topic more specific.
- Others begin with a very specific event, theory or idea and do research to understand the context into which it fits.
- Other students work from a list of topics assigned by their instructor. No matter where you start your research, you'll need to be able to find different types of information to learn about your topic. Skim through this page, then return to the parts you need, as you need them.

Search for Information

Tip: Don't lose marks for documentation errors! Keep track of where you find information and what's a direct quote and what's a paraphrase. Alert: It is old school but do use note cards or note pages as this will safeguard against “do over” research. It will guard against plagiarism in your work as well.

How soon should I start?: The **day the assignment is made known**, begin thinking about sources, ideas, authors. Consult with your instructor or the Library Director for leads in getting the best information for your topic. Putting off initial information and resources searches insures that all the best resources will be gone when you need to use the. Start early, end happy.

How much info do I need? : Start big, end small.

How much time will it take?: About 50% on research; 50% on writing & revising. Develop skills in time management to insure maximum use of your time.

Why can't I just use Google? : For work at university level, you'll be asked to read the writing and results of scholars and researchers. Most of this information is available only through books or resources on library shelves or through [commercial databases](#) (such as the EbscoHost SCU subscribes to for use by students, faculty and staff).

Tip: Your textbook, book, or instructor may mention the name of an important or noteworthy researcher in the field. Search by author in an [article index](#) (such as EbscoHost) to find a list of articles by this person. Or search by author in the [Athena Library catalogue](#) to find a list of books by this person.

You need	Use	To Search For
<p>To fill in a gap in your knowledge – such as when you are <u>first starting to research topic</u>.</p> <p>To help you determine where your topic fits in the study of a larger subject</p>	<p>Encyclopedias Dictionaries and handbooks</p> <p>Search by keyword: "encyclopedias and your topic" or "dictionaries and your topic"</p>	<p>Over view with definitions, essential concepts and names of important researchers in a field</p> <p>SIRS researcher is one database with encyclopaedic information.</p>
<p>Quick information</p> <p>Current events</p> <p>Everything under the sun</p>	<p>World Wide Web*</p> <p>Straight to Google or newspapers in library</p>	<p>Web pages from governments, companies, institutions, organizations, and individuals</p> <p>Caution: Apply evaluative criteria!</p>
<p>In-depth information</p> <p>A comprehensive analysis of a concept, topic or theory</p>	<p>Library catalog</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Databases</p>	<p>Books, journals, videos, interviews, etc.</p> <p>Videos, DVDs</p> <p>Review articles</p>
<p>Peer-reviewed, scholarly, research-based information</p> <p><i>and/or</i></p> <p>Very current information</p> <p><i>and/or</i></p> <p>Christian, Biblical, Pentecostal theology articles</p>	<p>Indexes and databases</p>	<p>Journal articles</p> <p>Magazine articles</p> <p>Newspaper articles</p> <p>Statistics, book reviews</p> <p>Christian Guide to Periodicals Index (the blue books)</p>
<p>Adapted</p>		

***NOTE:** the web does not include most encyclopedias, full-text books (especially newer ones still under copyright), indexes and databases with scholarly journal articles, older magazine and newspaper articles. Many online dictionaries, encyclopedias and resources are truncated and edited reducing your scope of information significantly.

QUALITY CONTROL WARNING: Needing “everything” is a clear indication that your topic is too broad. Review your research steps:

- 1) Decide on topic or theme
- 2) Read about topic in an introductory source (dictionary, encyclopedia, etc.)
- 3) Find articles, books, videos, websites on your topic
- 4) Take clear, concise notes and document their location
- 5) Write first draft; revise; write final version

Final tips:

Never turn in a ‘rough draft’ as a final copy.
 Get someone to read your paper first.
 Allow yourself time to research, think, write, and re-write.
 Commit yourself to doing above average and be prepared to work to achieve that goal.