

Writing a Research Essay: Key Points

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Research:

- Create a working research question to guide your search.
- Use the resource section of the library to find basic information.
- Make sure there are enough sources for your topic.
- Use the resource staff; they know what they are talking about.
- Think critically about the material you are finding, make connections.
- Give yourself enough time.

Collecting Data

- Remember to summarize, not regurgitate.
- Think critically about the information presented.
- Read key sections of the work.
- Use the index and bibliography.
- Ask what the author is trying to do, not just what is being said.
- Compare opinions from different sources- are their opinions similar or contrasting?
- Be aware of the assumptions you bring to your readings.

Structuring the Essay

- Begin with a working thesis statement, this can be modified at any time.
- Remember that most, if not all essays are persuasive.
- Make your structure fit your argument.
- Make sure your argument is logical.
- Address opposing viewpoints and dismantle them, if possible.
 - o But do not minimize the opposition. Your argument is stronger if you clearly recognize the strength of your opposition.
- Use the introduction to draw the reader in, tell the reader why the research is important.
- Remember to connect all points in the essay to the thesis.
 - o Ask how a point or paragraph helps prove your thesis. If it is just interesting, take it out.
- Conclude by restating the thesis and reminding the reader why you have just proved your point.