RESEARCH PAPER GUIDE

These nine steps may be used to write almost any type of paper you may be required to write while you attend college. These steps are:

Step #1 Understand the assignment
1. What is expected?
2. How long must it be?
3. Date due? Penalty if it is late?
4. Special format needed?

Step #2 Prepare a schedule
1. Set deadlines.
2. Take into consideration the time you have available to work on the project.

Step #3 Choose a topic and do some brainstorming
1. Choose a good topic that is:
   a. Narrow enough so you will learn a good deal about a specific topic...
   b. Broad enough so that sufficient information is available for you to use and to write about.
2. Avoid topics that are:
   a. Controversial issues.
   b. Your emotional response.
   c. Scientific and technical subjects.

Step #4 Make a simple, tentative outline to guide your research
1. Write a tentative thesis sentence to refer back to at the top of the outline.
2. Write some titles for main divisions.
3. Research and fill in the outline and develop the various divisions.

Step #5 Accumulate research
1. Place to look for information in the library include: the computer information terminals, periodicals, and reference books.
2. Take notes on cards according to subdivisions in your tentative outline.
3. Record research findings as: summaries, paraphrase, direct quote, or as your own original thought.
4. Maintain a record of the sources used to gather information. These sources are used in the bibliography.

Step #6 Make a final outline to guide writing
1. You should have previously revised your tentative outline throughout the research stage.
2. File note cards according to the headings in your file outline.

Step #7 Write a rough draft, using your outline as a guide.
1. Write rapidly as thoughts go through your mind, using your outline as a framework.
2. Don't worry about sentence structure, spelling or punctuation.
3. Write on every other line. This gives you space to make revisions.
4. Be sure to develop and support each thought clearly.
5. Don’t be afraid to use footnotes. It is much safer to recognize the source than to plagiarize.
6. Include an introduction which states the central theme or your thesis statement.
7. End the paper with a conclusion. Good papers don’t just stop. It may include:
   a. Restating the central theme.
   b. Restating the major point in the paper
   c. Stating an opinion or belief and explain how the information in the report supports it.
   d. Quotes are acceptable if the paper is on literature.
8. Bring the rough draft to the Writing Center for editing help.
Step #8  Revise and rewrite the rough draft
1. Wait a day after writing the rough draft. This will give you time to think of new insights on the paper.
2. Check your organization to see if your ideas are presented in order and make sense.
3. Make sure the paragraphs are linked together so the reader can follow your thought process.
4. Check paragraph construction.
   a. Is there a topic sentence?
   b. One main idea with supporting details?
5. Reread the second draft.
   a. Check for sentence structure and complete sentences
6. Reread a third time and check for mechanical errors.
   a. Spelling
   b. Punctuation.
   c. Poor word usage.
7. Bring the revised rough draft to the Writing Center.

Step #9  Put the paper in final form
1. You should have previously:
   a. Revised for organizational, sentence structure and mechanical errors.
   b. Have footnotes and bibliography in acceptable and consistent form.
   c. Write a title that tells your reader what to expect.
   d. Read it aloud and feel satisfied with the sound of it.
2. Format considerations:
   a. Make certain there are one inch margins on the top, bottom and sides of each page.
   b. Title page should include: title of the paper and your name.