

# Research Paper Checklist

By Nicole Nichols-West

- Choose a Topic
  - Pick a topic which interests and challenges you.
  - Focus on a limited aspect.
  - Obtain teacher approval for your topic.
  - Re-read your assignment sheet carefully to be certain you know what is expected.
  - Select a subject you can manage.
  - Avoid subjects that are too technical, learned, or specialized.
  - Avoid topics that have only a very narrow range of source materials.
- Find Information
  - Use search engines and other search tools as a starting point.
  - Pay attention to domain name extensions (if it ends with edu or org)
  - Be selective of com (commercial) sites.
  - Be wary of personal home pages - their quality vary greatly.
  - Check out public and university libraries, businesses, government agencies.
  - Contact knowledgeable people in your community.
  - Write down full bibliographical information.
- Your Thesis
  - Write your thesis statement down in one sentence.
  - Find arguments to support and defend this belief.
- Outline
  - Think through your topic carefully and organize it logically
  - Include in your outline an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.
  - Make the first outline tentative.
  - In the introductions, state your thesis and the purpose of your research.
  - State how you plan to approach your topic.
  - Explain briefly the major points you plan to cover.
  - In the body, present your arguments to support your thesis statement.
  - In the conclusion, restate or reword your thesis and summarize your arguments.

- Draft
  - Thesis statement is concise and clear.
  - Arguments are presented in a logical sequence.
  - All sources are properly cited.
  - Your intentions and points are clear in the essay.
  - Read your paper for grammatical errors.
  - Correct all errors that you can spot.
  - Get someone else to read it over.