

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.