HELP! I need to do some research!

Welcome . . . You have just stepped into a dimension of sight and sound that is like no other. Here, time moves faster the closer your deadline approaches; sound becomes distorted as the roaring in your head increases with each milligram of caffeine and sugar; reality is no longer a mere shadow dancing on the cave wall. You have entered “The Research Paper Zone.”

It all starts off innocently enough. A professor, a room, a class, a syllabus. But within that syllabus are denizens waiting to devour the unsuspecting student -- assignments and deadlines. You have many things to do. You have a paper due. Whatever shall you do? Wherever shall you go? Can you really depend on the kindness of strangers?

Yes – at the library!!

~~~~~~~~~

Seriously – let's take things one step at a time in figuring out how to do some research.

1. What is your problem?
   a. What is the question you have to explore?
   b. Does it appeal to you?
   c. Does it sound like you can feasibly work on this?
   d. What are other ways of asking this? Other synonyms, etc.

2. Where are you going?
   a. Do you know where you want to end up? (May not know till you get there)
   b. Start with books.
      i. These can be found on our online catalog.
      ii. These are your link to past information.
      iii. Title key word search is powerful as well as subject key word 
      iv. Search tables of contents and indices
      v. Get the bibliographic data down FIRST
   c. Go to journal articles.
      i. These can be searched on EBSCOhost (passkeys at circulation desk).
      ii. These are your link to past AND current information.
      iii. Try several databases (ATLA, ERIC, etc.)
      iv. Remember 1d above? Try different words.
      v. Get the bibliographic data down FIRST
d. Go to the internet
   i. Can use the library's Virtual Reference Room as a start.
   ii. What is an authoritative site?
      1) Look for references/citations
      2) Look for who/where web site is attached
      3) Beware of strong one-sided opinions
   iii. Search engines
      1) Different engines search different parts of the metadata
      2) Use several (yahoo, lycos, google, dogpile, etc.)
   iv. Print off page with the URL and write date you accessed it
   v. Will need to access before turn in paper

3. Snowbound OR Digging Out
   a. Begin to narrow down what information is most pertinent to your topic
   b. Get organized
      i. Get your problem and introduction worked out
      ii. When you make an observation, support what you observe with your data
      iii. Draw conclusions (no, not those)
      iv. Sister Kate is your new best friend
   c. PROOFREAD before turning in

4. Time Keeps on Slippin' Into the Future
   a. Is this load too much to bear?
   b. Take it in small chunks.
      i. Each day, spend 20-30 minutes at library looking at each resource type,
         gathering what you need
      ii. After a week or so, you can start pulling it together. Set a goal of writing
         one page a day, maybe two, and you'll be done in no time.
      iii. You'll have time, then, to work on other classes as well

5. Who are the people in your neighborhood?
   a. Your professor
   b. Your friendly neighborhood library people
   c. Friends