

## 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!!

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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