

HOW TO WRITE A RESEARCH PAPER: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

(A) Research

1. Read the text with an open mind and write down your questions and ideas.
2. Find a topic by yourself or by way of a dialogue with your teacher (ideally, your topic should consist in a problem to be solved or a question to be answered).
3. Establish a bibliography of critical studies and obtain these (this might take some time).
4. Make a schedule for the different steps of your work to make sure that you will meet the deadline.
5. Reread the text with your topic in mind, marking the relevant passages.
6. Analyse the marked passages, looking up words, allusions, etc.
7. Draw a mind map to establish your argument on an extra-large sheet of paper.
8. Read criticism and relate it to your own argument.

(B) Presentation

9. Establish an outline, dividing your arguments into larger sense units (chapters) and smaller sense units (paragraphs). Arrange sense units in a logical and effective sequence: place premises before conclusions, simple before complex points, and interesting points where they will create maximum effect.
10. Write. Use topic sentences to indicate the principal point of each paragraph.
11. Revise. Look up words and grammatical problems. Delete superfluous passages.
12. Proofread your paper carefully; have someone else proofread it as well.

Feel free to contact your teacher at any stage in the difficult process of researching or writing your paper.