

# Research strategies

Planning ahead to make effective choices while researching

“  = true honest  original ”

# The research & writing process

- 1 Choose a topic
- 2 Specify your topic
- 3 Gather general background information
- 4 Craft a research question
- 5 Find and evaluate sources
- 6 Choose only the most credible sources
- 7 Record citations for all sources
- 8 Draft your essay
- 9 Edit and revise your essay

## Finding the best approach for YOU

There are many different strategies that can be used during the research process. Sometimes an educator will encourage or require the use of certain strategies. However, in the long-term, the trick is to find the approach and strategies that work best for you and your process.



# Effective research strategies

- 1 Make a plan
- 2 Brainstorm keywords and phrases
- 3 Assess your sources
- 4 Take good notes
- 5 Cite your sources
- 6 Manage your time wisely
- 7 Keep yourself organized

## Make a plan

- Don't dive right in! Take some time to think through a plan.
  - While it may seem like that takes more time, having a plan (and sticking to it!) will pay off in the end.
- Think about your project and make a plan for how you will approach it.
  - Consider things like:
    - deadlines and other obligations
    - the length and depth of the task
    - time with available resources (library, databases, interviews, etc.)
- Write out your plan, and--if possible--detail important deadlines on a calendar.

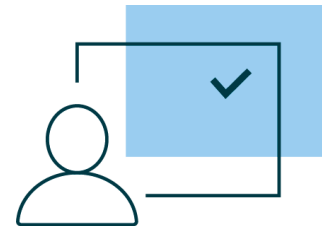


## Brainstorm keywords and phrases

- Think about your topic and make a list of possible keywords and phrases that you can use while searching online or in books.
  - Sometimes you will need to try a variety of keywords before you find the best approach to locating valuable information.
- Use search engines, databases, and print sources to your advantage.
  - Search engines and databases: try your keywords and phrases in different combinations until you find information that best answers your research question.
  - Print sources: utilize the table of contents and the index of books and periodicals to find mentions of your keywords and phrases.

## Assess your sources

- Once you locate sources, use the [Turnitin Source Credibility Guide](#) to assess each source.
  - Consider the origin, author, purpose, perspective, scholarliness, and relevance of each source before committing to including it in your writing.
- Choose only those sources that meet all requirements of a credible source.



## Take good notes

- As you read each source, use the [Research Planning Worksheet](#), notecards, or some other organizational tool to take effective notes.
- Notes from your sources should include:
  - details about where each piece of information was found (page number, subheading, etc.)
  - what it says word-for-word
  - why you think it connects to your topic
- This information will help you remember why you thought it was important at a later time.



## Cite your sources

- Create your citations early.
  - This is an easy element to save until the end, but if you run into timing issues, neglecting to include citations can make or break your writing.
  - Taking the time to create bibliographic and in-text citations early leaves less room for mistakes later on.
    - There are many reputable internet programs that help you create and keep track of this information. Consider using one of those resources to help you in this area.
- Include in-text citations as you write.



## Manage your time wisely

- Pay attention to your original plan and stick to your deadlines.
- Keep track of deadlines and other time commitments on a calendar.
- Consider enlisting an accountability partner to help keep you on track, a roommate, classmate, or family member.
  - Schedule regular check-ins and make sure they are holding you accountable for the work you should be doing.
- Block out time each day to work on a little bit at a time, rather than trying to accomplish large chunks of work in one sitting.
  - This will eliminate the potential for burnout and procrastination.

## Keep yourself organized

- Use checklists, to-do lists, worksheets, etc. to keep your plan and your sources organized.
- Keep all information from each source together and labeled effectively.
- Use folders and binders to organize physical papers, and sort digital information into organized folders.



## Make a plan for your next project

- Consider all of the strategies that we have discussed so far. Choose one or two that you'd like to try during our next project.
  - 1.
  - 2.
- Remember that not all strategies will work well for every person.
  - Be willing to do some trial and error to find the strategies that work best for you.