

UMSL
Division of Student Academic Support Services

Tips for Writing A Research Paper

- 1. Three main styles of writing research papers (APA, Chicago Style, and MLA).**
 - The format of each paper (Title page, references, and citations) will vary based on the format your professor prefers. Format specifics can be found on the OWL website:
 - APA
 - MLA
 - Chicago Style

- 2. Research papers are one of the most time consuming papers to write.**
 - It is recommended that you begin looking for sources, and start writing your paper, a few weeks before the due date.
 - Working ahead gives you ample to time conduct research, proof-read your paper, or receive outside assistance.

- 3. When searching for sources, it is a good idea to gather more than what is required.**
 - Gathering more sources than what is needed allows for leeway when deciding which sources to use.
 - If 5 sources are required, gather 10. By gathering more sources you are not forced to use outdated information or poorly written books, articles, etc in order to fulfill course requirements.

- 4. Avoid slang, jargon, and contractions**
 - Most research papers should be written in the third person.
 - A research paper should be formally written (do not spell words as you would if you were texting someone).
 - Words such as don't, couldn't, and shouldn't should not be used. Instead use the words could not, should not, and do not. All words within a research paper need to be written out.

- 5. Have someone review your paper**
 - Having someone look over your paper allows for feedback as to whether your writing is clear concise, and error free.

- 7. Utilize outside resources as needed.**
 - If you are unsure of how to write a research paper, or need additional assistance, you can reach the writing center via phone at 314-516-5541
 - The writing center is located at 222 Social Sciences Building (SSB)
 - For times and availability, see the Writing Center website