

Writing Research Essays: A Checklist

To Start the Essay:

- Understand the writing assignment
- Choose a topic
- Do some preliminary research on your chosen topic
- Begin putting together a bibliography of sources
- Develop a working thesis statement. The thesis statement includes the topic plus the point you are making about or the stance you are taking on the topic.

Preparing to Write:

- Locate sources/complete bibliography
- Read sources
- Reach some conclusions about the topic based on what you've read
- Change your working thesis statement if necessary
- Mark possible quotations or other supporting material

Writing the Draft:

- Brainstorm—freewrite, list, or cluster (or a mix!)
- Start writing the draft—just write. It doesn't have to be perfect, in order, or even make much sense at first. Just get the words out of your head.
- Once you've done that, then you can begin to revise for content. Have you included all the information you needed to? Did you answer the question/follow the assignment?
- Once you're satisfied with the content, then you can proofread (like for grammar errors, missing words, etc.). Try reading the draft out loud to someone—or having them read it out loud to you.
- Come to the Writing Center! We're happy to work with you and answer your questions/address your concerns about your writing.

Be Sure You're Familiar with MLA and Using Sources:

- Include information from sources (quoting and paraphrasing)
- Check in-text citations (after every quotation, when changing sources, at the end of every paragraph that has outside information in it)
- Format Works Cited page and Works Cited entries