

The following pages will help you organize your thoughts and lead you to some of the recommended **resources** available to you. The workbook was created by **synthesizing** many books and websites which are listed in the **reference list** at the end of the workbook.

Basic Steps to Writing a Research Paper

(Adapted from the Big Six Research Guide
<http://www.lufkinisd.org/lhshome/library/big6write.htm>)

1 – TASK DEFINITION	1. Make a list of possible topics.
2 - INFORMATION SEEKING STRATEGIES	2. List key words relating to the topic. 3. Make a list of possible sources.
3 - LOCATING AND ACCESSING THE INFORMATION	4. Find the sources . 5. Find information within the sources .
4 - USE OF INFORMATION	6. Write a thesis statement . 7. Take notes. 8. Begin to focus on the topic. 9. Make an outline.
5 - SYNTHESIS	10. Write the paper. 11. Write introduction and conclusion. 12. Cite information properly. 13. Write reference list .
6 - ASSESS	14. Did you meet the assignment requirements?

Task Definition

Determine the purpose of the assignment. Do you understand the assignment? What are you trying to do? Define the assignment. How long is the paper? Do you have to use specific assigned **resources**? How many **sources** do you need?

Choose a **topic**. Use the concept map on the next page to help you think about and define your topic. Use KartOO (<http://www.kartoo.com>). Broaden or narrow your topic as needed.

In the space below, write down the information you think you need to find to complete the assignment.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

You will find additional information as you research. To get an overview of your **topic** try using reference books. The reference collection contains encyclopedias, statistical handbooks, and other books that will help you learn about the subject and often list **topics** and **subtopics** that serve as an effective way to narrow your research.

Information Seeking Strategies

The CUI Library website (<http://library.cui.edu>) is a very good source of information. At the website, you can access over 10,000 journals, search for materials in the library catalog, or seek help from the reference librarian.

The Internet also has a lot of information. Please remember to carefully evaluate information you find on the Internet to make sure it is accurate and reliable. Several good places to begin your search are listed below:

Librarians Index to the Internet (<http://www.lii.org>)

Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators (<http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/>)

Much of your information will come from your visits to the classrooms. Don't forget to take notes there. Be sure to list the teacher's name, the name of the school, the grade level, and the date of the visit.

List the best resources to find the information you need. Don't forget the many types of resources: print, electronic, human.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Before beginning to search your **resources**, take some time to determine what subject terms or keywords you will need. The worksheet on the next page will help you with this part of the process (adapted from the Topic Worksheet). **Use the *Visual Thesaurus*** (<http://www.visualthesaurus.com/>).

1. What unique words, distinctive names, abbreviations or acronyms are associated with your **topic**?

2. Can you think of societies, organizations, or groups that might have information on your subject?

3. Can you think of **synonyms**, variant spellings, or equivalent terms for the terms listed above?

4. What broader, more inclusive, terms cover your **topic**?

5. What narrower terms could possibly be used?

Locating and Accessing the Information

Where do I find the **sources**? What is available to me?

Concordia University Irvine Library (see floorplan on the next page)

- ◇ books (can be borrowed for 28 days)
- ◇ journals (print and microfiche)
- ◇ databases
 - Academic Search Premier
 - JSTOR
 - WILSON Education Full Text
- ◇ reference help

Apartment

- ◇ databases (see above)
- ◇ internet

Information Need	Search Strategy
Few good hits fast	Google (http://www.google.com) Yahoo! Search (http://www.yahoo.com)
Broad subject directory	Librarian's Index to the Internet (http://www.lii.org) Infomine (http://infomine.ucr.edu)
Focus your search	AlltheWeb (http://www.alltheweb.com/advanced)
Biographical information	Infoplease Biography (http://www.infoplease.com/people) Biography.com (http://www.biography.com)
U.S. government	FirstGov (http://www.firstgov.gov)
U.S. education	Federal Department of Education (http://www.ed.gov/index.html)
Statistics	National Center for Education Statistics (http://nces.ed.gov) Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (http://nces.ed.gov/timss) National Bureau of Statistics of China (http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/)
California government	California (http://www.ca.gov)
California education	California Department of Education (http://www.cde.ca.gov)

(Modified from Information Literacy: Search Strategies)

Use of Information

Write your thesis statement below. It should be concise and convey the main point of your paper.

Completing an outline is one way of organizing the information. Fill out the outline below. Use the **concept map** from the section on Task Definition.

1) Introduction

2)

a)

b)

c)

d)

3)

a)

b)

c)

d)

4)

a)

b)

c)

d)

5)

a)

b)

c)

d)

6) Conclusion

Begin reading and taking notes. These notes will help you fill out your outline and expand your paper. List the outline number next to your note so you know where to put it when you write your paper. You will be paraphrasing and summarizing the **sources** you found.

Don't forget to add your analysis. If you only repeat what others have written, you are not writing a research paper. Your interpretation of the research is the most important part of the paper.

Whenever you **paraphrase** information from a source, you must **cite** the information. The most common way to **cite** a source within your paper is to list the name of the author and the publication year in parentheses at the end of the sentence. For example:

Test anxiety is a major factor for some students. According to some experts, nearly two-thirds of college students experience some form of test anxiety (Phillips, 2003). Cheek, Bradley, Reynolds, and Coy (2002) state that anxiety can take many different forms including “debilitating psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses” (p. 162).

In the example above, the direct quote is in the last sentence and the **paraphrase** is in the second sentence. This information is also included in the **reference list** which will be discussed in the next section.

Synthesis

Proper citation of your **sources** is a vital part of any research paper. Use the following questions to determine if you need to **cite** your **sources**. If you answer yes, you should list the source in your **reference list** and within the text of your paper.

- ◇ Did you use a direct quote?
- ◇ Did you **paraphrase** a source?
- ◇ Did you include statistical data?
- ◇ Did you include images (cartoons, photos, maps, artwork, etc.)?
- ◇ Did you use someone's ideas?

There are many citation style manuals. These manuals tell you what order the information should be listed and the punctuation marks to use. Educators usually use the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. A copy of the manual can be found in the reference collection at the CUI Library (*Ref. BF 76.7 .P83 2001*). This is the style you will be using for this assignment.

To create the **reference list**, you will need to gather information from your **sources**. You should develop this list as you find and use sources. Every time you **paraphrase** or quote information in your paper, you should add a **citation** to your **reference list**. The information you need can be found in the following table.

Source Type	Information Needed
Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Author's name(s) ◇ Publication date ◇ Title ◇ Place of publication
Journal article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Author's name(s) ◇ Publication date ◇ Article title ◇ Journal title ◇ Volume/Issue numbers ◇ Page numbers
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Author's name(s) ◇ Last updated date ◇ Title ◇ Website address

Examples of the most common types of **citations**, done in APA format, are shown below. Another example can be found at the end of this workbook. The most important thing to remember when creating a **reference list** is to be consistent.

Book

McKelvey, C., & Stevens, J. (1994). *Adoption crisis: The truth behind adoption and foster care*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum.

Article from a print journal

Eisenberg, E. (2001, January). The adoption paradox. *Discover*, 22 (1), 80-89.

Article from a database

Clark, K., & Shute, N. (2001, March 12). The adoption maze. *U. S. News & World Report*, 130 (10), pp. 60+. Retrieved May 17, 2001 from Academic Search Premier database.

Webpage

Department of Health and Human Services. (2001, May 14). National Adoption Information Clearinghouse. Retrieved May 17, 2001, from <http://www.calib.com/naic/>

Assess

Before you turn in your research paper, ask yourself the following questions, to make sure that you have completed what you set out to do.

1. Did I complete the assignment?
2. Is the research **topic** clearly defined?
3. Did I give evidence to back up my **thesis statement**?
4. Did I develop a strong introduction?
5. Does the introduction establish the **subtopics** I covered in the paper?
6. Does the conclusion restate the **thesis statement**?
7. Does the paper show evidence of my research?
8. Is the paper in a logical order?
9. Did I use my own words?
10. Did I enclose other writer's words in quotation marks?
11. Did I properly **cite** all of the **sources**?
12. Did I use correct spelling?
13. Did I proofread for grammatical errors?
14. Did I maintain one verb tense?
15. Did I explain or define unfamiliar terms?
16. Is the paper neat?
17. Does it conform to the proper specifications for margins, fonts, page length, etc.?

Before you submit your paper to your instructor, have a classmate or some other person read through it. They may find errors that you missed. Make sure you use the spell checking feature of your word processing program.

Glossary

Brainstorm (brainstorming) is a process by which you spontaneously and quickly generate a wide variety of ideas.

Citation is the listing of information to guide the reader to where you found your information.

Cite is giving credit for someone else's work.

Concept map is an illustration or picture that shows relationships between concepts.

Paraphrase (paraphrasing) expresses the meaning of an article or book in words other than those used by the author. It demonstrates your understanding of what was read.

Reference list is located at the end of a research paper. It lists all of the sources used to write the paper.

Resources are items that can be used to help or support.

Sources can be books, journal articles, interviews, reviews, etc. Any item you find to help support your thesis.

Subtopics are minor points within a topic. (See topics below.)

Synonyms are words that have similar meaning. For example, the synonyms for dog include pet, animal, breed.

Synthesizing (synthesis) is the act of combining ideas from many sources into a logical, flowing paper.

Thesis statement is the sentence that tells the reader what they will learn when reading the paper. It is usually written at the end of the introduction.

Topics are headings within a paper. For example within test anxiety, we could list the following topics: symptoms of test anxiety, coping with test anxiety, and how it effects grades. Within the topic of coping with test anxiety, subtopics could include relaxation techniques, study habits, and test taking strategies.

References

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