THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Writing Centre

Research Paper Checklist

Below is a checklist for completing a research paper. You should remember that the process of researching and writing is very malleable. It depends on many factors: the assignment requirements, the field of study, the topic, and your personal preferences. This checklist is designed to give you a basic overview of the process. It will also list the TRU resources that are available to you.

- Resources marked ❶ can be found at http://www.tru.ca/writingcentre/resources/writing.html
- Resources marked ❷ can be found at https://libguides.tru.ca/researchhelp (see the Table of Contents on the left side)
- Resources marked ❸ can be found at https://libguides.tru.ca/writingsupport (see the Table of Contents on the left side)

Getting Started

☐ Read your assignment carefully to make sure you understand the question and all the requirements.	
☐ Pick a topic that fits the assignment specifications.	How to Narrow Your Research Topic ❶
☐ Get to know your topic better by doing some basic background reading.	
☐ Formulate a research question. The answer will become your thesis statement.	Thesis Statements ❶ Developing a Thesis Statement ❶

Researching

☐ Search for sources.	Planning Your Research ❷ Finding Resources ❷ Evaluating and Citing Resources ❷
☐ Evaluate the quality of your sources.	
☐ Read and understand the sources you have collected.	Academic Reading Strategies ❶
☐ Identify gaps in your research and search for additional sources to fill the gaps.	

Planning and Outlining

☐ Organize your ideas and develop an argument.	
☐ Construct an outline.	Essay Template ❶ Basic Essay Outline ❶
☐ Use your research to support your argument.	

Writing, Revising, and Editing

☐ Complete a rough draft.	How to Achieve Academic Writing Style ❶ Quotation Integration (MLA and APA) ❶ Writing Home ❸
☐ Revise to improve the content of your paper.	
☐ Proofread for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, verb tenses etc.	Additional grammar, punctuation, and writing resources can be found at: http://www.tru.ca/writingcentre/resources/grammar.html
☐ Check that all quotations and paraphrases are cited correctly to avoid plagiarism.	
☐ Read the paper out loud to ensure that it flows smoothly.	

Citations and Formatting

☐ Format the cover page, page numbers, running head etc.	Citation guides for APA, MLA, Chicago, and CSE are available at ❶ Citation Home ❸
☐ Compile a reference list.	Citation Style Handbook ❶ How to Create a Running Head ❶
☐ Format in-text citations.	Finding and Using the Microsoft Word APA Template ❶