

RESEARCH PAPER FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

STEP 1 - DECIDE WHO YOU WISH TO RESEARCH

STEP 2. FIND INFORMATION

Surf the Internet.

For general or background information, check out useful websites, such as online encyclopedias.

Pay attention to domain name extensions, e.g., .edu (educational institution), .gov (government), or .org; these sites represent institutions and tend to be more reliable.

Check out other print materials available in the Library:

- Library Resources, Books, Bibliographies, Autobiographies, AV Catalogs
- Encyclopedias and Dictionaries
- Government Publications, Guides, Reports
- Magazines, Newspapers

STEP 4. MAKE A TENTATIVE OUTLINE by the below or by USING A THINKING MAP

Example of an outline:

I. INTRODUCTION - (Introduce who you selected to research and state **why; state what interested you about this person**) State your thesis (idea or opinion) and the purpose of your research paper clearly. What is the chief reason you are writing the paper? Explain briefly the major points you plan to cover in your paper and why readers should be interested in your topic.

II. BODY - His/Her Early Life, Marriage, Works, Later Years, Importance in History or in a specific time period, contributions to society, why others found him/her to be inspirational. This is where you present your information to support your thesis (idea or opinion) statement. Find 3 to 5 supporting details or pieces of information for each position you take. Use transition words to carry you from one thought to the next.

- A. Early life
- B. Marriage
- C. Works
- D. Later Years
- E. Importance in History or a specific time period
- F. Contributions to society and why?
- G. Examples of works; art; writing; etc.

III. CONCLUSION - Restate or reword your thesis. Summarize your arguments. Explain why you have come to this particular conclusion.

- A. Summary
 - 1. early life
 - 2. works
 - 3. later years
- B. Your opinion(s)
- C. Concluding statement



The purpose of an outline is to help you think through your topic carefully and organize it logically before you start writing. A good outline is the most important step in writing a good paper.

STEP 6. WRITE YOUR FIRST DRAFT

Start with the first topic in your outline. Read all the relevant notes you have gathered that have been marked. Summarize, paraphrase or quote directly for each idea you plan to use in your essay. Use a technique that suits you, e.g. write summaries, paraphrases or quotations on note cards, or separate sheets of lined paper, or a thinking map.

STEP 7. REVISE YOUR OUTLINE AND DRAFT

Read your paper for any content errors. Double check the facts and figures. Arrange and rearrange ideas to follow your outline. Reorganize your outline if necessary, but always keep the purpose of your paper and your readers in mind.



CHECKLIST ONE:

1. Is my introductory statement concise and clear?
2. Did I follow my outline? Did I miss anything?
3. Are my details presented in a logical sequence?
4. Are all sources properly cited to ensure that I am not plagiarizing?

For example: In "A Biography in Poems - Langston Hughes", the author states that the turning point in Langston Hughes life was when Vachel Lindsay reads Langston's poetry and declares it is good. (Scope Magazine, Dec. 2011)

For example: Langston Hughes told his grandma, "If I'm so important, why can't I wear normal shoes, instead of your castoffs?" (Scope Magazine, Dec. 2011)

5. Have I made my intentions and points clear in the essay?

Re-read your paper for grammatical errors. Use a dictionary or a thesaurus as needed. Do a spell check. Correct all errors that you can spot and improve the overall quality of the paper to the best of your ability. Get someone else to read it over. Sometimes a second pair of eyes can see mistakes that you missed.



CHECKLIST TWO:

1. Did I begin each paragraph with a proper topic sentence?
2. Have I supported my paper with documented proof or examples?
3. Any run-on or unfinished sentences?
4. Any unnecessary or repetitious words?
5. Varying lengths of sentences?
6. Does one paragraph or idea flow smoothly into the next?
7. Any spelling or grammatical errors?
8. Quotes accurate in source, spelling, and punctuation?
9. Are all my citations accurate and in correct format?
10. Have I made my points clear and interesting but remained objective?
11. Did I leave a sense of completion for my reader(s) at the end of the paper?

STEP 8. TYPE FINAL PAPER

All formal reports or essays should be typewritten and printed, preferably on a good quality printer.

Proofread final paper carefully for spelling, punctuation, missing or duplicated words. Make the effort to ensure that your final paper is clean, tidy, neat, and attractive.

Your final paper will be due no later than Friday February 3, 2012.

STEP 9. CREATE A BIBLIOGRAPHY PAGE

Be sure you submit your paper along with a BIBLIOGRAPHY PAGE attached.

This should be titled:

Your name Class Period Date

The Title of your paper

And

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Then as you gather your resources, include a list of all of your resources on this page, DOUBLE SPACED. This should include the author, title, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, page numbers, URLs, etc., printout, or enter the information on your laptop or desktop computer for later retrieval. If printing from the Internet, it is wise to set up the browser to print the URL and date of access for every page. Remember that an article without bibliographical information is useless since you cannot cite its source.

I will provide you with specific examples of how to create the BIBLIOGRAPHY PAGE.

HOWEVER, it is important you take notes on the above details for each resource you find and keep the notes until you are ready to create the Bibliography page.