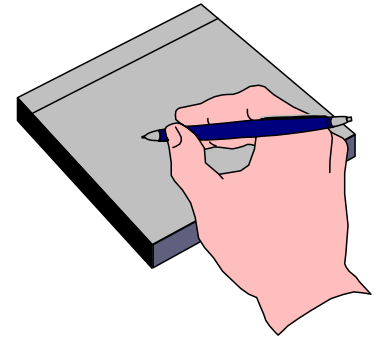


Writing Papers

Writing Clearly

- Outline what you want to say
 - Write all the points you want to make down on 3x5 cards, for those of us who prefer the old fashion way, or a word processor.
 - Divide into closely related groups.
 - Sequence groups: save more important information for first and last.
 - Arrange points within groups in same method.
- Start with where your readers are.
- Avoid jargon.
- Use familiar combinations of words.
- Stick to the point.
- Be as brief as possible.
- Present points in logical ABC format.
- Cut out excess evidence and unnecessary anecdotes.
- Look for passive verbs you can make active.
- When you're done, stop.



Preliminary Steps in Writing Research Papers

- I. Be sure you understand the assignments or create a purpose for your paper if topic selection is totally up to you
 - A. What will your research yield?
 1. Answers to a problem
 2. Arguing one side of an issue
 3. A review of the literature
 4. A review of the literature and analysis of it
 - B. What approach will you use in the paper?
 1. Reading and note-taking
 2. Experimentation
 - C. How deep or broad will you cover your topic?
 1. Survey
 2. Narrow, intense study
 - D. What materials will you use in your research?
 1. Current periodicals
 2. Journal articles
 3. Theses or dissertations
 4. Original documents
 5. Laboratory
 - E. What format does your professor require? (Various formats are appropriate to different dis-

Write Research Papers, continued

- ciplines.)
1. A.P.A. style sheet (for psychology and education)
 2. MLA style sheet (for English and literature)
 3. Style used in a particular journal
- II. Select your topic carefully
- A. Scan the literature for ideas
1. Notice approaches that authors use.
 2. Look for new ideas.
 - a. Unanswered questions the author raises
 - b. Author's suggestions about other areas that need to be investigated
 - c. Related ideas that reading suggest to you
- B. Determine the suitability of this topic
1. Does it interest you enough for you to pursue it fully?
 2. Is your back ground in the area strong enough for you to understand the readings?
 3. Is the equipment you would use readily available?
 - a. Is the laboratory equipped and available?
 - b. Are enough books available? (Prepare a tentative bibliography to check this.)
 - c. Will others be using the same books?
 - d. Can you take the books home?
 - e. Will you need to go to other libraries for books?
- III. Make your topic narrow enough to be manageable.
- A. Write a guiding purpose
1. A problem you hope to solve
 2. A position or interpretation you will argue for
 3. A narrow subject you will survey
- B. Devise a brief, tentative, preliminary outline
1. Main heading only
 2. Steps in order
- IV. Prepare a bibliography of sources yu expect to consult on 3x5 cards
- A. Use the form you will use on final bibliography
- B. Record call number and location in the library
- C. Locate sources
- V. Avoid the following pitfalls
- A. A topic that is too broad to be covered adequately in the scope of the paper.
- B. Turning in a paper that is little more than a string of quotations
- C. Failing to judge the quality of the sources you cite. Not all published material is equally valid or sound.
- D. Failing to distinguish among contrasting theories, viewpoints, or interpretations.
- E. Taking notes that are too long.
- F. Using too many quotations and not enough paraphrases.