

Term Paper Research

How to start researching for an academic paper.

The number of places to look for information in a large research library can be overwhelming. By following these steps, we can guide you through the pool of information available so you will emerge with materials relevant to your term paper.

Understand the topic

Read the description of your chosen topic until you thoroughly understand it.

- **Dictionaries and encyclopedias** can be found in the [Reference Collection](#) near the Reference Desk. If you are still unsure what is required, ask your professor for more details.

Limit the topic

Think about the points you want to discuss in the paper.

- Broad focus = more information to absorb and digest.
- Break the topic into manageable subtopics. For each subtopic ask:
 - What do I know about this?
 - What do I need to know about this?

Do research

Determine the types of information you need:

Facts and Figures

- [Reference Collections](#) and [Subject Guides](#) hold many sources of facts and figures, arranged by subject.

Short reviews

- **Handbooks** and [encyclopedias](#) in the Reference Collection contain reviews of subjects, events or ideas, with suggested additional readings.
- Surveys of current issues are often published in news or general interest magazines such as Time and Psychology Today.

Commentary on events

There are two types of information about an event: **primary** (written at the time) and **secondary** (written later).

Primary: The Killam Library has collected [magazines and newspapers](#).

Secondary: Articles on past events can be found by using a specialized index or database such as:

- [Historical Abstracts](#)
- [America: History and Life](#)

Scholarly articles

Scholarly articles are written by a trained professional or academic and published in a specialized journal.

- **Indexes, electronic databases, and bibliographies** list articles published in a certain field. You can locate such research articles on your topic by using our [advanced search](#).

Books

A book or government report is useful if you require a lengthy and thorough analysis of all aspects of a topic.

- **Find books** through [Novanet Books +](#)
- **Government publications:** federal, provincial or international. You can locate government publications by using this subject guide

Guides to Writing a Term Paper

These books are located in the Reference Collection and are non-circulating. [Contact a reference librarian](#) to get ahold of these books.

Allen, Eliot D. and Ethel B. Colbrunn. A Short Guide to Writing a Critical Review. DeLand, FL: Everett/Edwards, 1964. (PN 98 B7 A4 1964 REF)

Lenmark - Ellis, Barbara. How to write themes and term papers. 2nd ed. New York: Barron's Education Series, 1981. (LB 2369 L385 1981 REF)

Northey, Margot and Lorne Tepperman. Making Sense in the Social Sciences: a student's guide to research, writing and style. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986. (H 91 N67 1986 REF)

Northey, Margot. Making Sense: a students' guide to research, writing and style. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993. (LB 2369 N67 1993 REF)

Northey, Margot and Maurice R. Legris. Making Sense in the Humanities: a student's guide to writing and style. Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1990. (LB 2369 N675 1990 REF)

Robertson, Hugh. The Research Essay: a guide to essays and papers. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1995. (LB 2369 R633 1995 Ready REF)

Valiukenas, Delija J. Writing with Authority: a Guide to the Research Process. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 1987. (LB 2369 V25 1987 Ready REF) edit