

How to Begin Writing a Research Paper

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Introduction

The assignment is to write a research paper to investigate the multiple factors that influence the healthy well-being of individuals living in a particular community at risk. Students select a health topic of interest (HIV, stress, cancer, etc.) and examine why this health issue is more of a problem in the particular community at risk compared to others. Students must address the **problem** by describing the health problem of interest. Students must identify the **community at risk** for this health problem. Students must identify **health statistics** and address how the rates of disease or the health condition differ for the population compared to the overall U.S. population. Students will then discuss any **influencing social factors** such as culture, race/ethnicity, immigration, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. Lastly, students will provide **recommendations** for how the health problem can be alleviated.

This lesson provides students a framework to begin writing a research paper.

Objectives & Materials

After the lesson the students will be able to

- understand the primary purpose of an academic research paper.
- know ways to get started with the writing process.
- understand barriers associated with writing a research paper.
- be able to start writing a research paper.

Materials Needed:

- CD
- Timer
- Laptop
- Tape
- CD player
- pre-printed images
- blank piece of paper for each student
- "How to Begin Writing a Research Paper" PowerPoint handout with slides from the lesson plan.

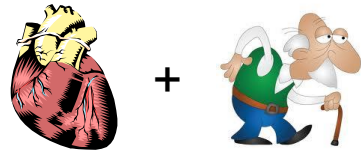
Steps/Procedure

Step 1: Beginning the Lesson Plan with an Image

Step 2: Steps for Beginning to Write a Research Paper

- a. Show the fourth slide and discuss what an academic paper is and how it relates to students who are considered part of an academic community.
- b. Show the fifth slide and verbalize the "nuts and bolts" of getting started with writing a research paper by knowing the requirements of the assignment.
- c. Explain the sixth slide about time management and discuss ways to have enough time to write the assignment.

Step 3: Paired Activity #1. How to Narrow a Category into a Topic by Using Two Images



Topic: heart disease among older men

Step 4: Gathering Data

Step 5: Beginning the Writing Process

- a. Show the slide thirteenth and explain the six journalistic words to help begin a framework for the writing project.
- b. Show the fourteenth slide on nutshelling. This is a tool to put ideas together with the main concepts in a clear, concise format or in a nutshell. Begin to introduce the concept of barriers to writing the first sentence.
- c. Explain the fifteenth and sixteenth slides of overcoming writer's block by providing practical tips.

Step 6: Individual Activity. Free-Writing Activity

Step 7: Closure/Evaluation

Analysis

While in college writing a research paper is an essential component for any student. Oftentimes students do not know how to begin the process and become easily overwhelmed and stressed when a research writing project is assigned. Within this lesson plan I help students to understand and avoid procrastination by identifying ways to help with time management. I give steps on how to break down a broad category into a workable well-defined topic by using visual images. I discuss ways to gather data and to overcome writer's block by an exercise doing free-writing for five minutes. This lesson can provide the student ways to break down an assignment into easier steps that make it more doable. It also helps students understand and overcome the common barriers with planning and writing a research paper.

Getting Started (step 2)

Time Management



- Clear your schedule and "pencil in" time to write, research and revise your paper (this can take weeks from start to finish).
- Keep workplace in order free from distractions.
- Starting when guidelines are given to avoid the pitfalls of procrastination.

Helping with Writer's Block



- Free-write for 5 minutes.
- Tell your ideas to someone.
- Record ideas using your cell phone.
- Carry a small sized notebook with you.
- Get moving! Sometimes getting out of the chair and taking a walk sparks new ideas
- Start in the middle of the writing project or an area that interests you more. Later come back to write the introduction.



Final thoughts when the research paper is done

- Turn in your paper on time with a smile.
- Have fun during the process.
- Show your parents your work.
- Be proud of your accomplishments.

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