Term Paper Tips

1. GET STARTED NOW!

2. THINK ABOUT YOUR ASSIGNMENT. What guidelines has your instructor given you?

    – How long does the paper have to be? How many words or pages in length?
    – Do you have to cite a minimum number of sources?
    – Are you required to use books? Scholarly journals? Newspapers?
    – Does the paper have to be argumentative? Should you discuss both sides of an issue?
    – Do you need statistics? An historical overview? Recent information only?

3. BEFORE YOU GO TO THE LIBRARY – GET ORGANIZED. Make sure you have …

    – plenty of paper, pens, and pencils.
    – your student I.D. card.
    – a couple of dollars in change or a photocopy card.
    – the term paper assignment sheet, if your instructor handed one out.

4. TALK TO A LIBRARIAN BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR RESEARCH. Librarians are skilled at helping students with research assignments. They can help you …

    – determine if your topic is too broad or too narrow in scope.
    – decide where to begin looking for information and which subject headings will work best for your topic.
    – determine which library would most likely have the materials you need.
    – figure out how to do footnote and bibliography references.

The worksheet on the opposite side of this page will help you get started. Fill out the first section and show it to a librarian when you go to the library.

5. BEFORE YOU HAND IN YOUR PAPER …
    – proofread your work carefully. It's a good idea to let a friend read your paper. If something you've written doesn't make sense to your friend, it might not make sense to your instructor either.
    – NEVER, NEVER, NEVER hand in a paper without first making a copy!

6. GOOD LUCK!

Term Paper Worksheet

Course: _____   Instructor: _____

Assignment details:

      Number of pages: _____   Minimum number of sources required _____

      Date Due _____

Kinds of sources required: Background sources: _____

(check the categories that apply)   Books: _____

                                                   Magazines: _____

                                                   Scholarly journals: _____

                                                   Other: _____

Preliminary topic: _____

_____

_____

Library of Congress subject headings
that fit your topic: _____

(a librarian can help)   _____

                                                   _____

Librarian's suggestions:

      Indexes: _____

_____

      Other: _____

_____

_____

Other notes:

_____

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