

# HOW TO CONDUCT EFFECTIVE RESEARCH.

Here are our top 10 tips to get the best out of your research:

- Make yourself a schedule - give yourself a finite time limit to do your research, otherwise you could gather too much information and leave yourself with no time to write your paper.
- Wikipedia can be useful - your lectures and teachers may despise it, but Wikipedia can be a really useful place to start your general research. Just remember that it can contain inaccuracies and don't cite it in your work.
- Steal bibliographies - found a real useful book/essay/article? Great! Flip to the back and skim through its bibliography. This will contain the sources the author used in writing their piece of work, so note down the relevant titles and reputable authors and add them to your own reading list.
- Give yourself a research question - this is also known as a thesis and is the question that your paper is going to try and answer. It can be tempting to gather every piece of information on your topic, however this can be overwhelming. Keep your specific question in mind while doing your research and ask yourself whether each source is helping you to answer it.
- Use a system - index cards/colourful notes/complicated software - find what works for you and stick to it. Sometimes people spend more time thinking about how to organise their research than actually doing it.
- Carry a notebook everywhere - a moment of idea brilliance can strike you anywhere - over your cornflakes, on the bus, watching Game of Thrones - so make sure you have a notebook handy to catch those amazing ideas.
- Check the dates on your sources - if all your sources are from the 1960s, your argument is probably out of date. Older pieces of work can provide your work with great context, but make sure to use plenty of sources from this century.
- Break it up - once you get a handle on your topic, break it down into smaller chunks to research. This will help prevent the dreaded 'information overload' and really helps to focus your research.
- It's ok to change your mind - you may find yourself tweaking, or even completely changing your research question as you learn more about your topic. That's fine! Just avoid chopping and changing your argument every time the research gets a little tough.
- Ask for help - feel like you've hit a brick wall? Use your teachers and lecturers, they are put on this earth to help you. Sometimes even just offloading your problem on a friend or family member can help you to see your research from a different angle.