

**ADVANCED WRITING
RESEARCH PAPER ASSIGNMENT**
Fall 2009



PURPOSE: To develop and enhance the skills necessary to write effective research papers. Such skills include:

- finding and using library resources (books and periodicals),
- effectively reading sources,
- interpreting information,
- outlining and writing out your own ideas about your topic,
- integrating source information with your own ideas (quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, citing sources),
- drafting and revising.

DESCRIPTION: You will write an argumentative research paper that uses at least **three** outside sources (at least two must be periodicals -- all sources must be originally written in English). The paper must be eight pages long (including your cover page and reference list, APA style).

The subject area for the assignment is **learning**. You must narrow this subject down to a topic which interests you and on which you can conduct academic research (academic research = uses serious sources of information to investigate the topic, e.g. *People* is not considered a serious source of information, but *The Washington Post* or *The Journal of American Education* are). For example, assume you **narrow the subject of learning to the topic of internet learning**. (See pages 3-9 in Hacker)

After you choose your topic, you need to pose a research question. Using the example of **internet learning**, you could pose the question: is an on-line only program a good way to learn English? Once you have an interesting research question, you will collect articles and other sources of reliable academic information with a variety of data and viewpoints on your topic. Your reading will help you decide what your answer to your research question is. In other words, “your thesis will express a reasonable answer to [your] question, given the current state of research in the field” (Hacker, 2007, p. 416). Then you will need to develop a possible, or working, thesis. Using our example, you could choose a **working thesis** such as, “*With the development of the Internet has come a new way to learn English: on-line classes. Although this method of learning English may be appealing to learners because of its reduced cost and increased convince, it is not a good way to learn English.*”

Once you have selected your topic and working thesis and written a preliminary outline, you should begin reading and taking notes from your sources, looking for supporting material for the arguments your present in your outline (see pages 12-13 & 416-418 in Hacker). Remember that all the main ideas in your arguments MUST BE YOUR OWN IDEAS and WRITTEN IN YOUR OWN WORDS. References from sources should only be used as background information or supporting material. You must turn in photocopies of the sources that you use with the specific passages that you quote (directly or indirectly) highlighted.

Often you will find that you need to find additional or different sources after you have begun to read write your paper, so plan accordingly.

DUE DATES:	Research Proposal*	Tuesday, November 3
	First Draft	Thursday, November 12
	Second Draft	Tuesday, November 24
	Final Draft	Tuesday, December 8

* [Be prepared to make an informal, in-class spoken report of the outline you write in your research proposal \(#2\).](#)