



Beginning Research

Preliminary Tips

What is Research?

Two Major Types of Research Papers

The Basic Steps

Step 1: Identify and Develop the Topic

**Steps 2 & 3: Preliminary Search for
Information on Topic & Locate
Materials on Topic**

Step 4: Evaluating Resources

Step 4: Brief CRAAP Evaluation

Step 5: Taking Notes: Methods

**Steps 6, 7 & 8: Writing the paper:
outline, first to final draft.**

A Model Outline



Beginning Research: **Preliminary Tips**

Read carefully the assignment given to you so that you are sure of what you are supposed to do.

Look out for words like *define, describe, classify, compare, analyze, argue, and evaluate.*

Ask your lecturer to help if you need more details.

Begin work on the paper as soon as you receive the assignment.

Choose a topic that you are most interested in or which your group can agree upon.

Check the library for the types of resources available to read up on your topic.

Time management and determination is required for doing well.

Get to know basic research skills.

How to develop the research statement; layout the subtopics for the research paper; find resources, using some useful search techniques; use resources correctly and cite them in the text and references of your paper.

There are research tools for us to use.

Start without delay on the first draft of the paper.

**Is the main point clear?
Does each paragraph focus on one main point and have a clear topic sentence?**

**Are there enough evidence for my claims?
Does the order of the paragraphs shows a logical argument for the conclusion?**

Do not plagiarize. Be proud of your own hard work at the end.



Beginning Research: **What is Research?**

Research is defined as:

careful or
diligent
search

studious
inquiry or
examination

collecting
information

investigation
or
experimenta-
-tion

aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws.



Beginning Research: **Two Major Types of Research Papers**

Argumentative Research Paper

on a debatable topic

e.g. does being able to read at an early age ensures that a child does well academically in the years to come.

The thesis statement

clearly reflects what stance or viewpoint the researcher has

The aim of the paper

is to persuade the audience to favor the researcher's stand.

Analytical Research Paper

on trying to answer a question

e.g. how should one interpret the poem Beowulf?

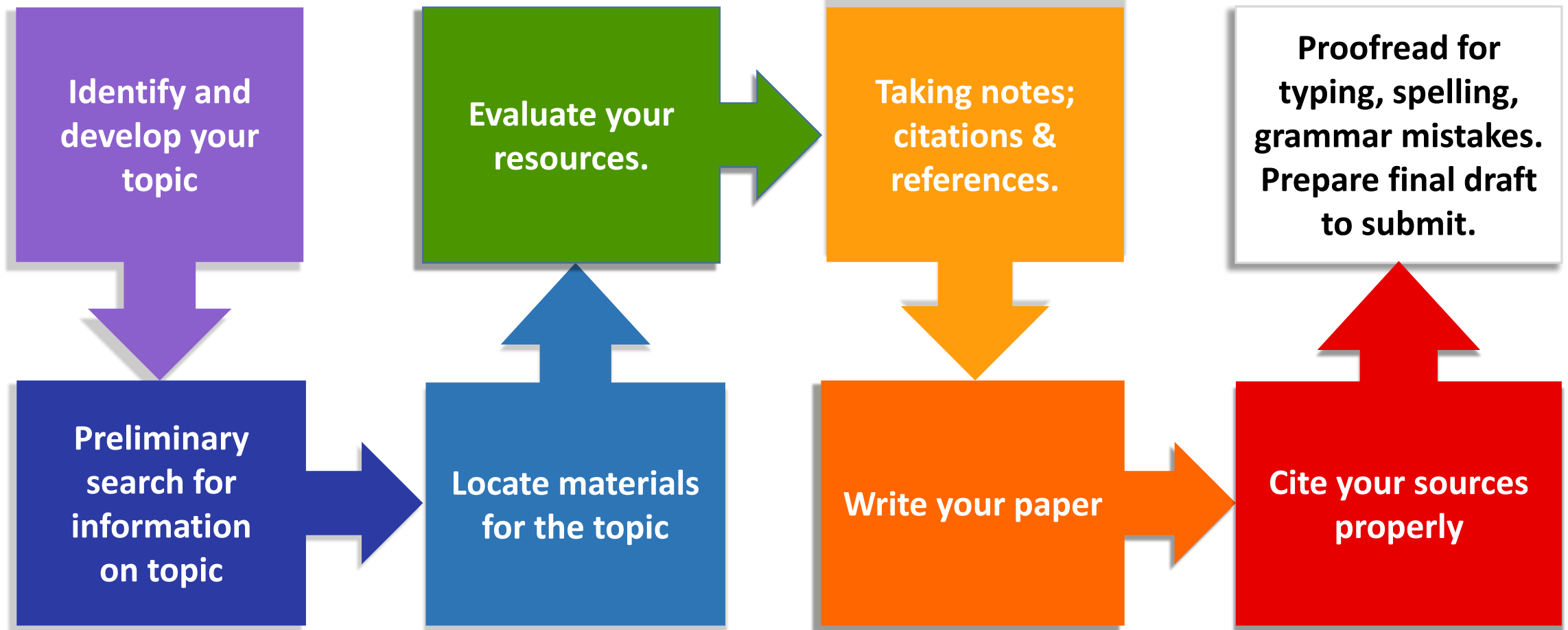
The research question

where the researcher is neutral

The aim of the paper

is to explore and evaluate so as to be able to state a conclusion based on the collected facts or data.

Beginning Research: **the Basic Steps**



Ref: <http://www.nhcc.edu/student-resources/library/doinglibraryresearch/basic-steps-in-the-research-process>

Beginning Research Step 1: **Identify and develop your topic**

Select a subject carefully based on the required length, type, given time to submit.

The topic of the paper is what you want to say about the subject. The topic need to be narrowed for meaningful research.

Example:
Too broad: Sports are enjoyable.
Better: Swimming is enjoyable

The rest of your paper is to prove the validity of the statement that "Swimming is enjoyable because"

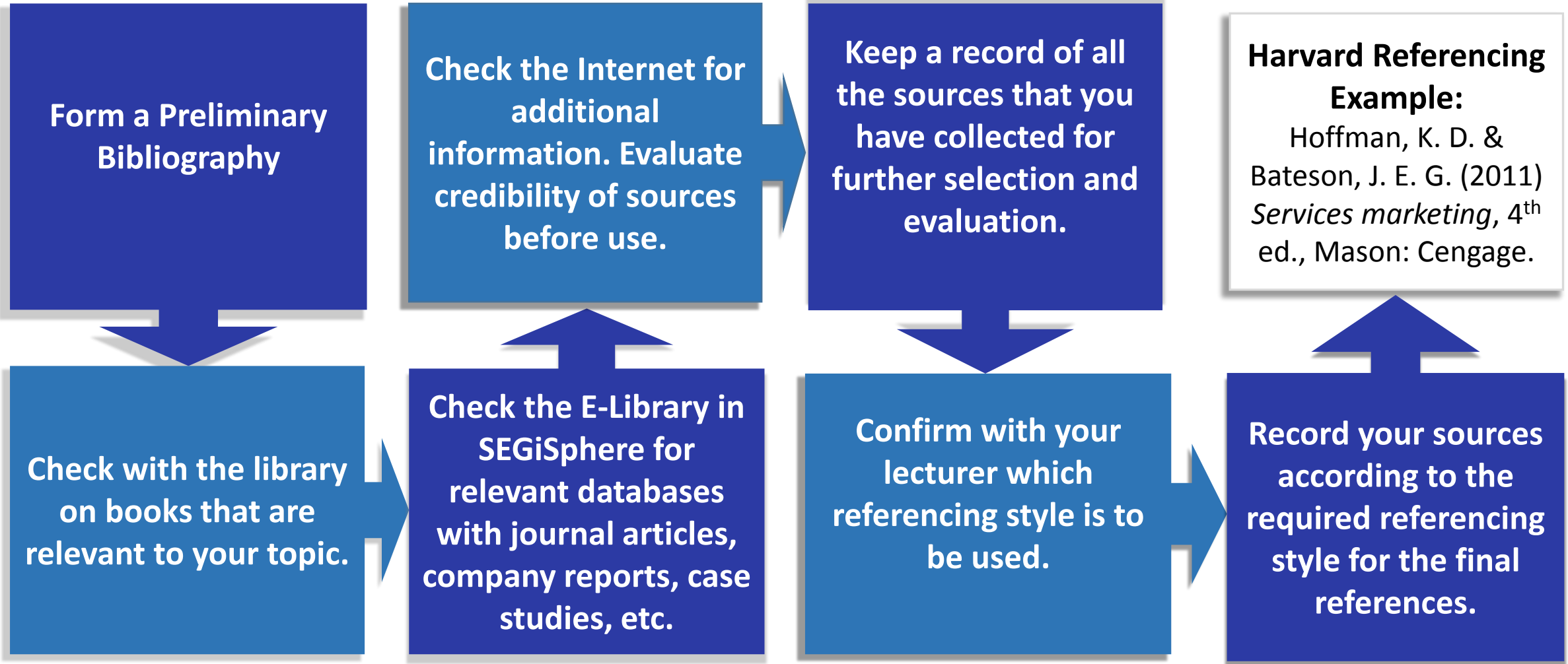
Select a subject that you are interested in, have an opinion or viewpoint on.

Avoid controversial or sensational subjects that are not academic and overtly technical topics.

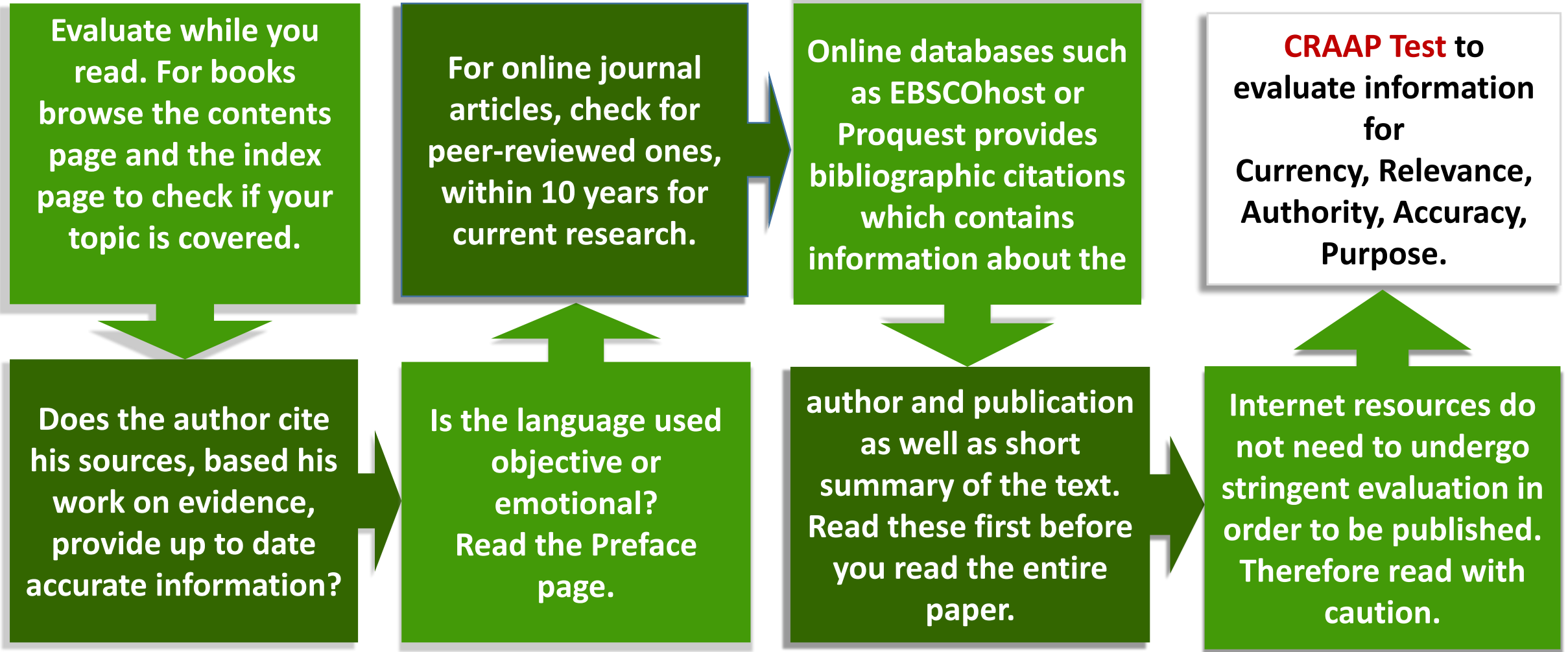
Narrowed topic:
Swimming is enjoyable because ____ .

State your objective.
If you support the viewpoint that swimming is enjoyable because ..

Beginning Research Steps 2 & 3: **Preliminary Search for Information on Topic & Locate Materials on Topic.**



Beginning Research Step 4: **Evaluating Resources**



Beginning Research Step 4: **Evaluating Resources: brief CRAAP evaluation**

Currency: *Timeliness of the information*

- When was the information published or posted?
- Any updating or revision on information?
- Science, IT, and health topics need info as recent as possible.
- For websites, the links must be functional, revised or updated within the last 2 years.



Relevance: *Meets information needs*

- Does the information answers to your topic's needs at the appropriate level; not too simple?
- Have you checked through a pool of sources before selecting which ones to use?
- Do you think that your sources are convincing enough for your audience?



Accuracy: *Reliability, truthfulness and correctness of the content.*

- Where does the information come from and is it supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed especially for journal articles?
- Is the information objective, with proper proofreading?



Authority: *Source of the information*

- Is the author an established expert in his field?
- Who is the publisher, sponsor or source and can they be contacted for verification?
- For websites check the URL e.g. credible ones are .edu .gov



Purpose: *The reason the information exists.*

- Is the information fact or opinion?
- Is it to inform, teach, entertain, sell or use as propaganda?
- Read the preface for book to check author's views.
- Evidence for opinion is supported by facts and statistics.

Ref:

http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf

Beginning Research Step 5: **Taking Notes: Methods**

Direct Quote

- In this case we copy word for word from the source.
- These words must be cited with quotation marks e.g. "XY".

Summary

- To summarize is to shorten a large piece of information into a brief using our own words.

Paraphrase

- Read to understand and put the idea or concept into our own words.
- Make sure our paraphrase is worded totally different from the original while retaining the context and concept.

Dos:

- Consider each direct quote, paraphrase, or summary as a single note.
- Lay the notes out on the table to see the big picture.
- It is easier then to organize them into the various sections and subtopics in our research paper.

Do not:

- Do not plagiarize means do not claim other's ideas and words as our own work.
- Do not replace words in a sentence while retaining the original sentence construction.
- Do not replace paraphrasing with highlighting as the former reflects understanding.

Outcome

Our hard work pays off as our notes constructed out of understanding of the topic, properly cited to give due credit to our sources, systematically organized and connected in a logical flow to a concrete conclusion results in an acceptable research effort.

Beginning Research Steps 6, 7 & 8: **Writing the paper: outline, first to final draft.**

Outline: purpose

- Skeleton of the paper
- Show how the main topic escalates into the subtopics with their supporting evidence.
- Every subtopic in its own paragraph.
- Conclusion

Outline: structure

- Introduction
Introduce the main topic under research in a way that creates interest in the readers.
- Body
3 – 5 points with sub points to support the main topic.
- Conclusion
Brief summary to affirm or confirm main topic or research statement.

First Draft

- Fill in the parts of the outline with notes that correctly paraphrased, quoted or summarized to support the research.
- **Remember to use logical flow of thought and do not do a patchwork of information.**

In Text Citations

- All direct quotes and paraphrases require in-text citations.

Reference Page

- All in text citations must tie up with the Reference Page bibliographical references.

Final Draft

- Revise from first draft onwards until you yourself are convinced that your argument is sound and logical.
- **Self Check for plagiarism. Make sure every source is cited.**
- Final checks for spelling, typo & grammar errors.

Beginning Research: **a model outline**

Title page

- Research title and names of researchers.

Introduction

- The research statement can be a problem which needs to be addressed. It is the basis of all questions asked, data gathered to confirm or negate the hypothesis.

State the benefits of the study which should be in line with the recommendations.

Literature Review

- Logical use of all the sources gathered to explain and reinforce the benefits of this research.

Methodology

- State which research method (survey, case study, interview) is to be employed and why it is relevant.
- Who are the subjects under study.
- Statistical analysis tools employed (SPSS, etc.).

Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

- Tables, charts, graphs.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

- Summary of findings which is the overall interpretation of the data collected.

- Conclusions prove or disprove research statement. Based on that make the recommendations.

References

Appendices



Beginning Research

A Librarian's definition of Research

Research is a process of investigation. An examination of a subject from different points of view. It's not just a trip to the library to pick up a stack of materials, or picking the first five hits from a computer search. Research is a hunt for the truth. It is getting to know a subject by reading up on it, reflecting, playing with the ideas, choosing the areas that interest you and following up on them. Research is the way you educate yourself.

http://www.usg.edu/galileo/skills/unit01/infoage01_03.phtml

**Please connect with the Library so that
we can journey with you on your research.**