

Top 10 Best Academic & Writing Research Tips

1. Know the **Rhetorical Situation** of your assignment (adapted from the *Norton Field Guide to Writing* by Richard Bullock):

- Know the **PURPOSE**→Why are you writing the paper? What are you trying to do—inform, persuade, express a thought?
- Know your **AUDIENCE**→Who is reading your paper? What are the reader’s expectations? Are they already informed about the topic? What will they need to know?
- Know your **STANCE**→What is your stance? Is your stance reasonable and well researched?
- Identify the **GENRE**→Does your writing situation call for a certain genre and/or discourse conventions? Are you writing a complaint letter? A lab report? A research proposal? Should your paper have a certain organization? Does the genre affect your tone? Should you remain objective? Is it acceptable to include personal experiences and/or opinions?
- Consider the **MEDIUM/DESIGN**→ What type of writing will you produce? A paper, a poster, an oral presentation with a presentation software, a website etc.? A paper with certain required formatting? What type of font should you use? Should you include diagrams, images, tables?



2. Never start writing without thinking about your topic first (The Rhetorical Situation is a good place to start)! Get to know your own writing process→ What works best for you to inspire ideas? Random brainstorming, listing, clustering, outlining, concept mapping?

3. Always use reasons, evidence, and/or examples to support your claims→Never make a claim without offering support to the reader.

4. When in doubt, cite your source→ If you can’t say it better than the scholar or source/reference, quote it and cite it. If you can condense the information or specific quote into your own words, paraphrase it and cite it.

5. Never drop a quote in your paper without an explanation of how it relates to your topic. Follow the hamburger method→ Lead in to the quote. For example, you should begin with “According to X...” or “Feminist scholar Adrienne Rich argues...”. Then give the quote. Last, there should be an analysis of the quote and/or an explanation of how it relates to your main point. Also, use strong action verbs or verb phrases when you lead into a quote or paraphrase→ Adrienne Rich argues, asserts, states, acknowledges, contends, highlights, notes etc..



6. Never write a paper that is a “quote salad”→ **Your** voice should shine in the paper. Not the voices of your sources/references.

7. Use transition signals and strong action verbs→When you transition to making a new point or move to the next paragraph in your paper, use a signal for the reader. Transition Signals- for example, however, thus, first, second, third, last, in conclusion etc..

8. Write with Clarity and Conciseness→Clarity→Don't use flowery language or try to overly-demonstrate your vocabulary skills. Be clear and use language and terminologies you find in the research you conduct. Get to know the discourse conventions. Conciseness→Condense information when possible. Content is more important than length; depth is more important than breadth (although meeting word count requirements is always a plus).

9. Do not let writers block defeat you!→If you suffer from writers block, take a break. Walk away. Revisit the assignment later after you have had time to think and/or talk about the topic with others. Remember that it's GOOD to begin with a rough draft. Improvements can be made through your writing process. Even the most distinguished scholars and writers start with rough drafts.

10. Never give up→Do not be afraid to ask your instructor questions or clarifications. Visit the Student Success Center and ask for a tutor's help as well. We are here to help you succeed as Wright State University-Lake Campus student.