

Writing an Academic Essay in Nine Steps

1

Choose Your Topic

Select the general topic of your research paper.
PRO TIP: Choose a topic that interests you.

2

Preliminary Research

Start researching your topic.
Look for what kinds of sources are available and what research has been done before.

3

Research Question

Come up with a research question that you would like to explore, based on the sources that are available to you.

4

Research

Do further research, focusing on sources relating specifically to your research question.
PRO TIP: Keeping detailed notes that include citation information will make the writing process easier.

5

Thesis Statement

Your thesis is the answer to your research question.
It should clearly lay out your argument.
It should be based on the evidence you have found.

6

Outline

Create an essay outline which organizes your arguments into a logical sequence.
Every argument should relate to your thesis.

7

First Draft

Use your outline and research notes to write your first draft.
PRO TIP: Even if you do not write out full citations, keep track of where you are getting your information.

8

Edit, Edit, Edit

Be on the look out for grammatical errors, logical inconsistencies.
Ask, have you given enough evidence to convince the reader of your thesis?
Ask for help from outside sources: Family/Friend, The Writing Centre.

9

Final Draft

Always do a final read-through after incorporating editing suggestions.
Make sure nothing has been overlooked in the process.
Check for any formatting errors, such as inconsistent fonts, numbering (footnotes), etc.