

SMHS Library Research Paper Checklist

1. **Understand your overall subject** by first reading basic information sources like textbooks and encyclopedias.
2. **Create a workable topic** by developing focus questions, which help answer your primary research question.
 - Primary research question:
 - Focus question #1:
 - Focus question #2:
 - Focus question #3:
 - Focus question #4:
 - Focus question #5:
3. **Plan on using different types of information sources** (e.g., books, reference books, periodicals), because some sources are more reliable than others.
4. **Create search terms** for OPAC and database searching, since neither can be searched like Google.
 - Search terms:
5. **Search for information** in the library's books, databases, and eBook collection. **Stay organized** by entering all sources into **EasyBib**.
 - Print books found:
 - eBooks found:
 - Periodicals found:
 - Other sources found:
6. **Take notes** from your information sources on **Focus Question Information Sheets** and become an expert on your specific research paper topic.
7. **Develop a thesis and write your paper** by using a **Research Paper Outline Sheet** and your **Focus Question Information Sheets**, all sequenced logically in order to produce an organized and readable paper.
8. **Cite your sources and avoid plagiarism** by using EasyBib and MLA style guides on the library website.
9. **Properly format your paper** by modeling it on the sample MLA research papers on the library website.
10. **Evaluate your work** by looking for shortcomings that you might improve upon before turning in your paper.

See detailed descriptions of each step by visiting the SMHS Library website and clicking on **Research and Research Paper Steps**.