

MANAGING LONGER PAPERS

Research papers that require upwards of ten pages can seem daunting or disorienting for even the most experienced writers. When it comes to writing longer papers, sometimes the key lies in how you approach the assignment. This guide will offer some ideas on how to plan, write, and lengthen your paper.

Hint: Before you begin writing, read the prompt carefully to ensure you have a clear understanding of the assignment.

STEPS FOR SUCCESS

1. **Before starting the assignment, write out your thoughts on paper.**
 - Look for keywords, ideas, or phrases in your prompt to ensure that you discuss them.
 - List out the topics you know you want to cover in your paper.
 - Once you have established where you want to go with your paper, start researching to add to your prior knowledge and then build off of that.

NOTE: Save the introduction for after you have started writing if you struggle with introducing the topic.

2. **Start researching as soon as possible** – When writing a research paper, you may not know exactly how many sources you will need to support your arguments or how long it will take you to conduct this research. Additionally, you cannot create an outline for your paper until you have researched enough to form your main points. For these reasons, completing the bulk of your research early is a good strategy.
3. **Outline your paper** – Using the information that you gathered in the research process, create a thorough outline of your paper. The more in-depth your outline, the easier it will be to write your paper, especially if you are a sequential or reflective learner.
 - A longer paper should be broken into sections within the body. Depending on the type of assignment and its length, it may be broken into subsections as well.
 - A good rule of thumb is to outline down to the paragraph, or plan what each paragraph will be about. You may plan each paragraph with a summary phrase, or you may break it down further and list specific pieces of information within each paragraph.

NOTE: The specificity of the outline depends on your personal preference; you will understand your needs as a writer with practice! See [How to Outline a Paper Based on a Prompt](#) or [Research Paper Outline: A Guide](#) for additional information.

4. **Create a plan of action** – Using your outline, plan to work on your assignment in smaller pieces. Block out certain times to write your paper one paragraph at a time.

- Rather than planning to write a certain number of pages, plan to write specific paragraphs in each sitting; this will help you stay focused on one idea each time you work on your paper.
- Try to gauge how long it takes you to write an academic paragraph in order to plan a realistic amount of work for each session.
- Spread out your work across the time you have before the due date; do not put off work until the last minute.
- Block out time to proofread your work before you submit it.

5. When you start the assignment, ensure you start by addressing the prompt.

- The reason you are writing the paper is to answer the question posed in the prompt, so be sure this is where you start.
- Elaborate on the keywords, ideas, or phrases that are within your prompt.

6. If you think you've said all there is to say, but still need to lengthen your paper, start here!

- Look back at what you have written and try to see it from a different perspective.
 - To you, it may seem as though you covered all your bases for the topic. For someone who knows nothing about the topic, it may be beneficial for you to explain or go further in depth on certain points.
 - Consider adding counterpoints to address the opposing views on your topic. This will add length to the paper and credibility to your argument.
- Read the prompt and ask yourself, "Does this answer/address everything?"
 - Make sure you focus on keywords. Is the prompt asking you to summarize or are you meant to elaborate on a piece of information?

PRACTICE NOW