**Tips for Successful Writing: Writing Research Papers/Essays**

In some of your classes, you may have to complete an essay that requires research. Some research essays require more sources and research than others. When you complete these longer researched writing assignments, you will need to follow the rules of writing in an academic environment in addition to your professor’s guidelines. These assignments are an important part of your learning process and can help you to become a better researcher and writer. In addition, applying skills you learned in writing and researching the research projects in your English composition classes will make your researching and writing process easier, and it can help you to make a higher grade.

Here are some tips for completing research essays:

1. Approach long writing assignments as a long-term project. Do not try to write a research paper in a day or even a few days. Researching a topic and writing an essay based on that research takes time.
2. First, read the assignment directions carefully and make sure that you understand them. Look for keywords or concepts that will help you to understand what is being asked of you and how to express your thoughts on the topic.
3. Do some pre-writing. Pre-writing is valuable for all kinds of writing no matter the length. List everything you can think of about the topic you are being asked to write about. Then determine what you should include in the assignment.
4. Write clearly. Make sure that your sentences are easy to read and adequately meet the assignment requirements.
5. Be thorough. Meeting the word count of an essay is not adding meaningless extra, empty words to your essay. Instead, fill your paper with information and data from sources. Explain how the sources you quote, paraphrase, and summarize relate to the main idea (thesis) of your essay.
6. Vary sentence structure. Don’t write all long sentences or all short sentences. Use a mixture of short, medium, and long sentences. Don’t try to say too much in one sentence.
7. Be concise. Avoid wordy phrases that add nothing to the meaning of your sentence. Here are two resources that you can use to identify and replace wordy phrases: <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/conciseness/index.html>

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/conciseness/eliminating_words.html>

1. Revise the assignment. Revision means “see” (vis) “again” (re), so you will want to read over your assignment seeing again what you have written. Give yourself time by putting the essay aside for a day if possible before looking at it again with a critical eye. Consider revising and editing your essay several times. Reading over what you have just written with an eye toward making sure your assignment is well written and fulfills the assignment requirements can lead to a higher grade.

**SUGGESTED RESOURCES:**

**Citation Guide:** <http://www.king.edu/students/ace/owl/citationguide.aspx>

***Evaluating Sources:***

**Evaluating books:**

<http://www.king.edu/students/ace/owl/evaluatingbooks.aspx>

**Evaluating periodical articles:**

<http://www.king.edu/students/ace/owl/evaluatingperiodicalarticles.aspx>

**Evaluating websites:** <http://www.king.edu/students/ace/owl/evaluatingwebsites.aspx>

***Writing Research Papers:***

**Writing a research paper:** <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/research_papers/index.html>

**Genre and the research paper:** <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/research_papers/genre_and_the_research_paper.html>

**Identifying audiences:** <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/research_papers/identifying_audiences.html>

***Writing and Revising:***

Prewriting and planning: <http://www.king.edu/students/ace/owl/prewritingplanning.aspx>

Drafting the paper: <http://www.king.edu/students/ace/owl/draftingthepaper.aspx>

Editing and revising: <http://www.king.edu/students/ace/owl/editingrevising.aspx>

***Avoiding plagiarism:*** <http://www.king.edu/students/ace/owl/avoidingplagiarism.aspx>

***Thesis statements:***

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/the_writing_process/thesis_statement_tips.html>

***Paragraph writing:***

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/paragraphs_and_paragraphing/index.html>

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/paragraphs_and_paragraphing/paragraphing.html>

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/argument_papers/body_paragraphs.html>

***Research and evidence:***

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/establishing_arguments/research_and_evidence.html>

***Organizing arguments:***  <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/establishing_arguments/organizing_your_argument.html>

***Essay writing:***

Overview of essay writing: <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/essay_writing/index.html>