

Planning Checklist for Research Assignments

It is important to collaborate with librarians, anticipate student stumbling blocks, and have a list of resources ready to guide students successfully through the research process. Use this checklist to assist in the planning process:

Assignment Requirements

General Assignment Considerations

- _____ Relate Assignment to some aspect of course subject matter or learning objectives.
- _____ Increase understanding of both the subject and process for locating information with the structured assignment.

Encouraging Time Management

- _____ Scaffold assignment activities to build upon each other, culminating in the final project.
- _____ Provide a timeline for students; set deadlines that allow students sufficient time for exploration, research, drafts, and final product.

Alternatives to the Research Paper

- _____ Experiment with short, less-complex essays or projects instead of a term paper (research log, research proposal, annotated bibliography, research press release, poster presentation, etc.) and specify the number of sources required.

Modeling and Grading

- _____ Provide models of exemplary research projects.
- _____ Provide grading rubric so instructor expectations are understood.

Involve a Librarian in the Design and Research Guidance Phases

- _____ Confirm that published research exists to support the research assignment and recommended sources are available at the libraries (online or in-person).
 - _____ Require each student to research a different topic to ensure the library offers enough print resources.
 - _____ Suggest sources that align with students' levels (reading ability, knowledge of subject matter, and search skills).
 - _____ Avoid strict and burdensome limits (too many restrictions at once such as publication date, word counts, materials type can make research nearly impossible for students).
 - _____ Set reasonable expectations about the use of print sources versus online sources (sometimes, the most recent information is no longer in print, e.g. many of our academic journals are only available online).
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Research Guidance Provide the Miami University Libraries Link: lib.miamioh.edu

Getting Started (General Knowledge / Research Process and Questions)

- _____ Understand the Research Process (e.g. [ACRL Information Literacy Standards](#))
- _____ Define research assignment terminology so that it does not create ambiguity (e.g. handouts state that students cannot use the Internet yet students must locate articles in the library's online subscription databases).

Searching for Information

- _____ Direct where to find a variety of resources including digital ([library databases](#), catalog, blogs, websites, etc.)
- _____ Recommend and require specific sources (subject library databases, reference materials, scholarly sources, etc.)
- _____ Review search strategies (Boolean operators, brainstorming search terms, scholarly limiters, advanced search)
- _____ Permit students to change their topics based on the reality of their research experience.

Evaluating Information

- _____ Require appropriate authority, content, and timeliness (like CRAAP Test, Lateral Reading)

Using Information

- _____ Inform students how to avoid plagiarism
 - _____ Address note-taking, paraphrasing, summarizing, and ethical scholarship.
 - _____ Provide citation guidance
 - _____ Give technical "how to" instructions for researching, using, creating, and evaluating digital sources such as blogs, wikis, or streaming videos.
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Support

- _____ Include links and contact information for Librarian(s), Tech Support, the HOWE Writing Center, and Tutoring services in addition to your own contact information.
- _____ Invite your college librarian to class (shows students that even you are asking the librarian for assistance).
- _____ Connect students to tutorials such as the libraries' [Instructional Videos](#).
- _____ Demonstrate support services in class, such as the [Ask Us! Chat Service](#).