

Your Research Paper in 8 Weeks

Your campus librarian can save you time! Campus librarians help students navigate the NAU Online Library, find credible sources and assist with APA formatting (reference page, in-text citations, etc.).

Contact your campus librarian: <http://library.national.edu/ask-a-librarian/campus-library-information/>

Week 1	Understand your assignment and choose a topic. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Read your assignment carefully! What is your instructor already providing? Topic, outline, type and number of sources, length of paper, deliverables before the final paper, due date?○ Clarify what type of research paper you'll be writing. Two common approaches to a research paper are argumentative (defend one side of a controversial topic), analytical (explain and evaluate a topic), etc.○ Understand the grading rubric.○ Pick your topic – not too narrow, not too broad. Your topic will develop into a thesis statement as you begin researching.
Week 2	Begin researching. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Collect and begin reading journal and magazine articles, encyclopedia articles, reports, and information from <i>credible</i> websites.○ Do not stop researching until you have at least 8 sources. More is better! Some sources may end up being irrelevant to your topic once you've read through them.○ Take notes on what you read. If you write from your notes, you'll be less likely to inadvertently plagiarize.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ More on plagiarism: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/
Week 3	Draft your thesis statement and outline. Continue researching if necessary. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The thesis and outline are essential to staying on topic when you begin writing.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ More on thesis statements: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/▪ More on outlines: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/01/○ As you draft these, it will become apparent if you need to collect more research.
Week 4	Create your reference page. Review how to create in-text citations. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Start by properly setting up your paper using APA formatting. Use place holders to create a title page, running header, abstract page and first page of the paper.○ Add your reference page at the end.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Type out your reference page. This will help you construct your in-text citations as you write and avoid plagiarism.
Week 5	<p>Write your first draft.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make sure to write from your outline! ○ Focus on topic sentences. Paragraphs should be at least 5 sentences long to allow for explanation, details and examples that support your topic sentence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More on topic sentences: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/606/01/
Week 6	<p>Complete your first draft.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Write your introduction and conclusion. These are best done last since your paper will determine how best to introduce and conclude this topic for your reader. ○ Give your paper a title and write the abstract. Remember, the abstract gives the reader an overview of your paper and includes your thesis statement and main ideas.
Week 7	<p>Revise your paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does your paper do what the thesis statement says it will do? ○ Does your paper transition sensibly from one paragraph to the next? ○ Does each paragraph address one idea? ○ Do you have a clear introduction and conclusion?
Week 8	<p>Complete your final draft.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask a fellow student, friend or family member to read your paper for grammar and punctuation errors. Ask them to focus only on these issues. ○ Turn in your paper!

And to pull it all together: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1pnpL8295E>