

# Editing the Rough Draft of a Research Paper

Perfecting a research paper is a long and tedious process but it can be broken down into three simple things: **Read, Organize, and Cite.**

## 1. READ

A. NEVER use 'I' or 'me' in a research paper

B. Rereading

- This should be done countless times in the writing process. While writing and rereading you should always be checking for grammar and spelling mistakes. Be sure one sentence always connects to the next and one paragraph always connects to the next.
- Read your paper aloud to yourself. Many little mistakes can be caught this way.

C. Rephrasing

- If your sentence doesn't sound quite right find a better way to say it using different vocabulary or a new sentence structure.

D. ALWAYS use the Past Tense

- All of your topics have already happened, they are a part of history, so you must use words like **was, were, had,** and **'ed.** Don't use is, are, or has.

E. Be Clear and Specific

- Be sure that any time you introduce a new person, place, or event that each one is fully explained, with all pertinent detail, to the reader. NEVER assume the reader will 'know what you mean'.
- Also remain as clear as possible in your paper by limiting the number of pronouns you use (he, she, they, it). Always say exactly what you mean, leave no room for ambiguity.

## 2. ORGANIZE

A. Introduction

- Make sure your introduction presents the necessary context for your topic and your thesis statement. This should not be background about your topic specifically but should instead be a glimpse into the time period your topic presides in.

B. Thesis

- This should be located towards the bottom of your introduction, just prior to the body of your paper.
- This NEEDS to be a clear statement about what you intend to talk about and prove in your paper. (Can be more than one sentence.)

### C. Organize the Body

- Go through each paragraph and make sure the topic of each paragraph is in chronological order with the paragraphs both ahead and behind it. History happens in order, therefore it should be written in order

### D. Transitions

- Check for smooth transitions between paragraphs. Read the last sentence of one paragraph and the first sentence of the next paragraph then ask yourself, “Do these sentences all pertain to the same subject?” “Are they leading into my next subject?”
- If the answers to these questions are ‘No’ then work on rephrasing and reworking that section of the paper.

### E. Conclusion

- This should be the last paragraph in your paper and NEEDS TO BE a culmination of the entire body of your paper. It should clearly and concisely restate the important points that you’ve presented throughout your paper and should sum up how those facts prove your initial thesis.

## 3. CITE

### A. Bibliography

- **Any time** you present information and facts in your paper you **MUST** cite the source that you got it from. This will require a completed bibliography to be done correctly.

### B. In-Text Citation

- After your information is presented within the paper you should take the first word or group of words from that source’s bibliographic citation and put it in parentheses at the end of your factual information. (Be sure to add the necessary page number(s) if your source has page numbers.)
- Examples: Bibliographical Citation
  - Kreider, Jan F., ed. Handbook of Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning. Boca Raton: CRC, 1993.
  - "Using Sensor Signals to Analyze Fires." Fire Technology 39 (2003): 295-308
- Examples: In-Text Citation respectively
  - Sentence of Fact (Kreider, 55-57).
  - Sentence of Fact (Using Sensor Signals, 296).