

A Process Approach to Writing Research Papers
 (adapted from *Research Paper Guide*, Point Loma Nazarene University, 2010)

<p><u>Step 1: Be a Strategic Reader and Scholar</u></p> <p>Even before your paper is assigned, use the tools you have been given by your instructor and GSI, and create tools you can use later.</p> <p>See the handout "Be a Strategic Reader and Scholar" for more information.</p>	<p><u>Step 5: Accumulate Research Materials</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use cards, Word, Post-its, or Excel to organize. 2. Organize your bibliography records first. 3. Organize notes next (one idea per document—direct quotations, paraphrases, your own ideas). 4. Arrange your notes under the main headings of your tentative outline. If necessary, print out documents and literally cut and paste (scissors and tape) them together by heading.
<p><u>Step 2: Understand the Assignment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length? • Free topic choice or assigned? • Type of paper: Informative? Persuasive? Other? • Any terminology in assignment not clear? • Library research needed or required? How much? • What style of citation is required? • Can you break the assignment into parts? • When will you do each part? • Are you required or allowed to collaborate with other members of the class? • Other special directions or requirements? 	<p><u>Step 6: Make a Final Outline to Guide Writing</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reorganize and fill in tentative outline. 2. Organize notes to correspond to outline. 3. As you decide where you will use outside resources in your paper, make notes in your outline to refer to your numbered notecards, attach post-its to your printed outline, or note the use of outside resources in a different font or text color from the rest of your outline. <p>In both Steps 6 and 7, it is important to maintain a clear distinction between your own words and ideas and those of others.</p>
<p><u>Step 3: Select a Topic</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a topic which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --interests you --you know something about --you can research easily 2. Write out topic and brainstorm. 3. Select your paper's specific topic from this brainstorming list. 4. In a sentence or short paragraph, describe what you think your paper is about. 	<p><u>Step 7: Write the Paper</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use your outline to guide you. 2. Write quickly—capture flow of ideas—deal with proofreading later. 3. Put aside overnight or longer, if possible.
<p><u>Step 4: Initial Planning, Investigation, and Outlining</u></p> <p>Write down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --the nature of your audience --ideas & information you already possess --sources you can consult --background reading you should do <p>Make a rough outline, a guide for your research to keep you on the subject while you work.</p>	<p><u>Step 8: Revise and Proofread</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check organization—reorganize paragraphs and add transitions where necessary. 2. Make sure all researched information is documented. 3. Rework introduction and conclusion. 4. Work on sentences—check spelling, punctuation, word choice, etc. 5. Read out loud to check for flow.