

## Research Overview

When you write a research paper, you ask important questions, search systematically for answers, and share your conclusions with the reader. In other words, this task is all about curiosity, discovery, and dialogue.

### STARTING POINT

The assignment usually relates to a course concept, so consider what your teacher wants you to learn and how your project will be evaluated. Then take ownership of the project by looking for an angle that truly makes the research your own.

### PURPOSE

The project requires you to carry out research and share the results. Your specific goal is to establish and support a position worth sharing with others.

### FORM

The traditional research paper is an extended essay (at least five pages), complete with thesis, supporting paragraphs, a thoughtful conclusion, integrated sources, and careful documentation. However, you may be asked to shape your research into something more visual, perhaps a multimedia presentation.

### AUDIENCE

Normally, your research paper is intended for your instructor and writing peers. Sometimes, however, your audience may be more specific (all Floridians, women with eating disorders, high school athletes, and so on).

### VOICE

The tone should be semiformal or formal, but ask your teacher for specific requirements. In any research paper, maintain a thoughtful, confident tone. After all, your research has made you somewhat of an authority on the topic.

### POINT OF VIEW

In most cases, your teacher will expect you to remain objective in a research paper, relating information in an impersonal manner, and keeping the focus where it belongs—on the topic. Another form of research, the I-Search paper, is much more personal, more of a story of the researcher's searching adventure. An I-Search paper is written from the first-person point of view.



**NOTE** The best research writing centers on your ideas, ideas you develop through thoughtful engagement with sources. In poor research writing, the sources dominate, and the writer's perspective disappears.