

PAPER WRITING FRAMEWORK

Exploration Phase: This is exactly as it sounds; take some time to explore different topics. At this point, don't worry about whether or not you're looking at 'scholarly' material, just get a sense of the topic. What's important about it? What interests you? What kinds of questions do you have? Record your thoughts below.

Finalize Your Topic: Now that you've done some exploring, what is your topic? Be specific! Instead of "WWII" which is overly broad, narrow it down to "reasons the US fought in WWII."

Working Thesis Statement: This is the foundation of your entire paper. At this point, having a well thought out thesis statement will help you narrow the scope of your topic and provide a roadmap of your paper. A weak example is: "*The US entered WWII for many reasons – some moral, some political.*" This thesis provides no clear direction or focus for the paper. A stronger thesis would be: "*The US was propelled into WWII for political reasons after Pearl Harbor and continued for the moral reason of stopping global tyranny.*" Keep in mind, your thesis doesn't have to be perfect – it's a work in progress!

Research: This is where the magic happens! As you are pulling together research, you should be looking at scholarly, peer-reviewed articles and books. You can branch out from there with primary sources (as makes sense) and should utilize on-campus services like the library and librarians. As you are researching, look for themes that relate back to your thesis; in this case, reasons why the US entered and fought in WWII.

Organizing Research into Topics or Themes: Once you have your research complete (with 10+ sources to look at), start identifying themes or topics that repeat from one piece to the next. What topics stand out? What is important? What ideas support your thesis? This also a great time to consider whether or not your thesis needs to be adjusted/refined.

Theme 1: _____

Theme 2: _____

Theme 3: _____

Further Developing Themes with Supporting Evidence: Now you're off to a strong start! Focus on each theme; what evidence/supporting arguments can you pull from your research? You'll have to make sure you're citing the work properly (APA, MLA, Chicago), so use this space to map out your argument. Map out one theme below – the process will be the same for each theme.

Theme: _____

Evidence 1: _____

Source: _____

Evidence 2: _____

Source: _____

Evidence 3: _____

Source: _____

Evidence 4: _____

Source: _____

Start Writing the Body: Now that you have a framework, and you know how your research connects to and supports each topic, start putting pen to paper (or words on a page). Focus on flow and transition – if you have to move things around to make it a better reading experience, now's the time.

Write the Introduction and Conclusion: It might seem backwards, but writing your introduction and conclusion at the end of the process is an effective way to get things done. Once your paper is essentially written (with the body completed with the themes), you can easily introduce what you'll cover in your paper and summarize what you covered in your conclusion.

Revise Thesis as Necessary: Once your paper is complete, go back to your thesis; does it need to be revised or further defined? If no, congrats, you can move on to the next stage! If yes, finalize details and narrow your focus. Going back to the example, you could refine it to: "*Although the US originally entered WWII as a reaction to Pearl Harbor, the US fought against tyranny, genocide, oppression and the spread of fascism.*" Keep in mind that when it comes to a thesis, there is no right or wrong answer, just weaker and stronger arguments based on research and supporting evidence.

Review, Revise, Repeat: With everything finalized, go back through your paper and look for any spelling or grammar mistakes. Try reading your paper out loud – does it flow? Be sure to double check your citation and bibliography – accuracy is key! If you want a second opinion, set up a meeting with the Writing Center to get feedback and suggestions on how to develop and further improve your paper.

Theme/Idea: _____

Evidence/Support

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| <p>Author/Date Publication</p> <p>Points of consideration? Why is this important? Direct quotes? Page numbers?</p> |
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Evidence/Support

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