



## Writing an Academic Paper

Listed below are the steps required to write an academic paper. These steps do not have to be done in the order listed; in fact, they may be repeated many times during the process. Repeating steps most often happens during the research, reading, and first draft stage of writing. Writing and learning is a fluid process, so a thesis statement or viewpoints in the paper might change as you do your research. Or, an outline might be more easily written after completing the first draft rather than before. In addition, it is not unusual to go back to do further research or to revise a thesis statement when editing the rough draft.

### Select a Topic

- choose, if possible, a topic that interests you
- follow directions given by your professor
- consult with the TA or professor if you are uncertain about the assignment

### Create a time schedule with deadlines for each step

- research
- read & take notes
- outline/organize information
- write the first draft
- revise for completeness, conciseness & clarity
- edit & proofread

### Find sources

- remember that one source can lead to other useful information
- gather several different viewpoints to appreciate the topic's complexity
- search the BISON catalogue for books, journals and other material in the UM Libraries' collections and search NETDOC databases for journal citations, full-text resources, abstracts
- make a complete reference notecard for each source