

# Research Tips & Resources

## resources general tips

In order to write authoritatively on any subject, you need to become a bit of an expert first. Armed with the right tools and resources, anyone can become an expert! When researching, try to cast your net wide, and look at many different kinds of sources with variant approaches to your topic. You probably won't use all of your research in your paper, but you will have a wealth of information to work with!

- Come up with a plan.** In which mediums will you search? By when? Make a checklist.
- Write things down.** Keep records of what you searched for and anything interesting or useful that you found. Be sure to **note where you found each source** for citation purposes later.
- Keep copies.** If you are reading a journal article online, **save a copy to your computer**—this will save you time later when you want to quote or cite it.
- Go through the texts.** You don't need to read every book from cover to cover. It's okay to **actively skim** (read the whole thing quickly) or **scan** (drill in for specific information, i.e., use the index, table of contents). Highlight. Underline. Take notes. Read actively!
- Don't lose your data.** Always have a backup of your computer on an external hard drive. Consider using a cloud-based word processor so your documents are always saved both on your computer and online.
- Organize information.** Keep everything for each class in one place, whether it's saved in a folder on your computer or stored in a physical folder or notebook.

## Librarians: APU's best-kept secrets

Setting out on an endless sea of articles and journals can be one of the most daunting tasks of your academic career, and the sea of information is so vast that it can be hard to know where to begin. Librarians are experts on finding information; they can help advise you on where to look, which search terms to use, and many other aspects of the research process. APU's library staff has both general reference librarians and trained subject specialists to help with your questions.

### Reference Librarians

There is no better way to navigate APU's research resources than to meet with a reference librarian.

Visit any APU library and ask at the information desk, or go to [apu.edu/library/](http://apu.edu/library/) and enter your question into the "Ask a Librarian" box.

### Subject Specialists

If you encounter problems in your research or simply wish to speak to a specialist in your field, help is just a phone call or email away.

APU's subject specialist librarians are all listed online at [apu.edu/library/help/specialists/](http://apu.edu/library/help/specialists/).

### 24/7 AskNow Chat Service

3am and you *really* need some help finding that last resource?

APU subscribes to the AskNow service, so you can ask a reference librarian a question at any hour of the day or night at [apu.edu/library/help/asknow/](http://apu.edu/library/help/asknow/).



## Do APU's research services cost anything?

All of these services are 100% free to APU students, faculty, and staff.



## Which types of sources should I use?

You can find information in many places and mediums. Depending on your research project, you may want to access reliable internet sources, scholarly journal articles, magazines, newspapers, scientific research, movies, television shows, and radio segments. You may even consider conducting research of your own, such as a survey, poll, or interview.



## What kinds of guides or special resources are available?

- You can find general resources on writing and the writing process at the APU Writing Center website: [apu.edu/writingcenter/resources/](http://apu.edu/writingcenter/resources/).
- A number of general research and writing guides, as well as subject-specific guides, are also available on the APU Library website: [apu.libguides.com/](http://apu.libguides.com/).
- Visit APU's Graduate Writing Website by going to [apu.edu/writingcenter/](http://apu.edu/writingcenter/) and clicking on the link in the left-hand column. It's designed for graduate students, but undergraduates may also find it helpful and inspiring.



## I just want to organize my time well. Any suggestions?

- For lots of helpful information, browse the "All Guides" tab at [apu.libguides.com/](http://apu.libguides.com/).
- Check out the Writing Center's "Planning Your Paper" handout here: [apu.edu/writingcenter/resources/](http://apu.edu/writingcenter/resources/).



## Okay—I've done my research, but I'm having trouble getting started with the writing. Can I get help with writing a thesis and creating a plan for my paper?

Yes! APU's Writing Center can help you at any stage in your process. To make an appointment, visit [apu.mywconline.com/](http://apu.mywconline.com/).