

Plan Your Paper

Before you start writing, make a plan for your paper. In this discovery stage the focus is on collecting information and organizing your thoughts and ideas. There are several ways to plan for your paper. You may:

- Brainstorm the general topic and components
- List key words in relation to what you've learned in class
- Read and conduct research
- Take notes
- Create an outline
- Freewrite (For example, "I am supposed to write a paper about...")

For research papers, be open and flexible with your topic. If your area of interest is too broad, you may be overwhelmed with material. If your topic is too specific or new, you may not find enough sources, or nothing at all. Be prepared to narrow or broaden your idea, or change topics. Know that your area of interest may change as your research progresses.

If you are having difficulty locating reliable sources, contact Leatherby Libraries for assistance. Reference librarians can help you search and locate resources for your class assignments. Don't be afraid to ask for help.