



HOW TO WRITE A  
**COLLEGE PAPER**

»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»» an eBook ««««««««««««««««

by Alexandria Eisenhardt

"Your ten page paper on (insert your least favorite, most challenging subject here) is due in 3 weeks"

We've all been in this position before. You're assigned a paper, small or large, that seems like the hardest thing in the world. What happens next? You procrastinate for 2 weeks then you binge drink coffee for five days trying to finish your assignment, praying you do well. It doesn't have to happen like this.

We're going to break up this stressful process into 7 Steps

- 1: Initial Outline
- 2: Research
- 3: Extended Outline to include the research
- 4: REALLY Rough Draft
- 5: Peer review ( a helpful one, or see a TA )
- 6: Second Draft
- 7: Final Draft

# table of contents

p. 3

- p.4 Initial Outline
- p.7 Research
- p.11 Extended Outline to include the research
- p.13 REALLY Rough Draft
- p.15 Peer review ( a helpful one, or see a TA )
- p.18 Second Draft
- p.22 Final Draft

A top-down photograph of a dark wooden desk. In the center is a spiral-bound notebook with a white cover and lined pages. A silver pen lies on the notebook. Several white sticky notes are scattered around the notebook. One sticky note is on the left, another is on the right, and a third is partially visible at the bottom. The notebook's cover features a colorful illustration of a town with houses and a lighthouse. A purple banner with white text is overlaid on the notebook.

Part I:  
The Initial Outline

This, to me, is THE most important part of the paper writing process. An initial outline paves the way for the rest of your paper. And it's not hard! you don't have to know any in depth research before you write it! Which is why it's such a good first step.

When I sit down to write an outline, I like to use a good old fashioned pen and paper, well colored pens and paper. I designate one color for each of my different paragraphs. Typically I use purple for thesis and conclusion, then I break up the rest of the paragraphs with different colors relative to each topic. I strongly suggest hand writing your first outline, then typing it, so you have room to be creative and make a mess at first.

The first thing I write is my thesis. Everyone always says "never write your introduction paragraph first", but to me, if I don't know what I'm writing about, how can I write the paper? So instead of writing an entire first paragraph I write my thesis statement.

This is probably the hardest part of the entire paper, for the main reason that this statement is what your whole paper will be based upon. So when writing a thesis first think of what it is you want to say. Write ten different ones, word it 30 different ways, whatever you need to do to make it the clearest statement possible.

Once you have a solid thesis statement the rest is easy peasy lemon squeeze-y. I go by the equation (that I made up) that each page should have approximately 2-2.5 paragraphs. So do the math. If you have to write a 10 page paper you need at least 20 paragraphs.

Now subtract two for the introductory and conclusion, and you have 18. You have to write 18 body paragraphs. If you only have 2, 3 or even 4 body paragraphs then it's O.K. to have each paragraph be a slightly different topic. But in an 18 paragraph essay multiple paragraphs are going to cover the same topic. I would say only cover a maximum of four or five different topics in a ten page paper.

Once you discover how many topics you should cover about your thesis statement you're ready to write your outline!! Just jot down a topic sentence and some things you want to cover on the specific topic for each topic.

# Part II: Research



CROME AND CAVALLARIE  
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N38  
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CAVATZONI  
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NO 620  
N60  
N08  
97221

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N60  
N08  
97221

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Vaterhouse  
ROMAN BAROQUE PAINTING  
NO 622  
N60  
N08  
97221

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National Gallery of Art, Washington  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
The Art Institute of Chicago  
Cambridge University Press  
NO 623  
N60  
N08  
97221

Settecento Ferrarese  
NO 624  
N60  
N08  
97221

ART OF PAINTING IN FLORENCE  
A GUIDE  
1500-1550  
NO 625  
N60  
N08  
97221

NARDONSON  
ITALIAN PICTURES OF THE RENAISSANCE

BERENSON  
ITALIAN PICTURES OF THE RENAISSANCE

Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance

PAINTING IN RENAISSANCE  
FREMANTLE  
FLORENTINE GOTHIC PAINTERS

CORPUS FLORENTINAE PAINTING  
RICHARD OFFER

CORPUS FLORENTINAE PAINTING  
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So now you've written your outline, and it's time for the research. You're probably either wondering why you have to do research when it's not a research paper, or how you go about doing research without the help of your high schools resources.

Let's start with WHY research is important regardless of the type of paper you're writing.

So you were assigned a paper with the following prompt:

"Investigate various points of view concerning a particular topic of your choosing. Then write a 1,250-1,500 word essay bringing to text your own thought and point of view." (this was actually a prompt given to the freshman who have to take college writing at my university.

You may be thinking "well I can get away without doing research for this, I'll just write about something I know." This is not good thinking. Researching and incorporating quality research into a paper is a valuable skill, and when the TA grading your paper can see that you have this skill it can help you do better overall on your assignment. (Disclaimer: DO NOT apply research to a paper if it specifically states not to use any outside resources, you will lose points.)

Now that you know why it's important, let's move on to how to get started.



In high school you were told never to use Google. I'm going to tell you to use it. Refer back to your initial outline, then google your first topic. When I was helping my friend write a paper on whether walking or running is better for you for the prompt above, I had her type into Google "benefits of walking". She found a really great article, but didn't know if the source was an appropriate site to use. When this happens that usually means that this site got their information from somewhere else, so I had her look at their references. By going through the references of the site she found a dissertation published online by a Ph.D. candidate.

Ding. Ding. Ding! THAT IS AN APPROPRIATE SOURCE!

If you find an article with amazing content but it doesn't seem like you would be allowed to use it as a credible source always check their references because chances are they got their information from a credible source that you can use too! (and if you're a little too nervous to use google initially check out your school library's online databases, they're an amazing resource)

So you found a perfect source or two, now what? You need supplies. Whenever I sit down to do research I always have three things with me:

colored pens

5x3 index cards

[easybib.com](http://easybib.com)

So the first thing I do is pull out a index card and the colored pen that matches the same colored pen in my outline (if you don't like to use color then this doesn't apply). Then I write down the name of the source I used on the top of the index card, and if it's a book I write down the page number. Then I write down either a quote or a paraphrase of what I want to use from the source onto the notecard.

Before I move onto a new source I go to [easybib.com](http://easybib.com). This website is a lifesaver! It's free or you can pay for a subscription for extra goodies. Basically you copy and paste the URL of the source you were using or you put in the information for any other type of site you used into the search bar. Then it does this magical thing where it makes a correct citation for you! In any form you want: MLA, APA, etc. I always make a works cited while I do my research, then delete unused citations later because that way I'll never forget where I found a piece of information.

Having these color coded note cards of information and an already completed works cited basically ensures that your paper will write itself. Now when I say this I don't mean it will literally write itself, but you already have all the hard parts completed: a thesis, a list of topics you're going to talk about (outline), research to support your thesis, and a works cited for your research. All you have to do is put it all together!

## Initial Outline

Thesis: A large part of what I am working towards for my professional career stems from my interest with economic upbringing as well as my experience at an all-girls high school.

TOPIC 1: going from a lower to a higher socioeconomic setting was inspiring.

- > inspired to bridge the gap b/w the class system and education.
- > \* address people on the difference
- Smart Girls Group

TOPIC 2: Attending an all-girls school gave me the courage to

...school gave

### TOPIC 2

- statistics showing a low success rate in education

### TOPIC 1

- research on local education systems in relation to classist discrimination.

# Part III: The Extended Outline

# the extended outline p.12

You guys must be thinking: an extended outline? really? Yes really! Some people think this step in the writing process is unimportant, or tedious, and would rather jump right into writing their first draft. But trust me, your final paper will look, and sound, so much better if you do an extended outline first.

After you compile all your research, and have typed your original outline into your computer, you're ready to begin. Since I use physical 5x3 notecards when I do research it's easy for me to physically sort them into groups, which is exactly what I do. I separate my notecards into the different topics I highlighted in my outline. If you virtually took your research notes, try and sort them as well, either with tags or just grouped together on a word document.

Here comes the super easy part of an extended outline. Are you ready? All you have to do is type the information on your notecards into the correct sections on your outline, and you're done! (don't forget to add a little citation so you know where your information came from)

That's it! Crazy right? Everyone always thinks extended outlines are a long process, but they really aren't. And having this simple extended outline will make writing your first draft super easy since all you'll have to do is turn your notes into complete sentences.

# Part IV: The REALLY Rough Draft

## Initial Outline

Thesis: A large part of what I am working towards for my professional career stems from my socio-economic upbringing as well as my experience at an all-girls high school.

TOPIC 1: going from a lower to a higher setting was inspiring  
→ inspired to bridge the gap b/w the system and education.  
• educate people on the difference  
□ Smart Girls Group

TOPIC 2: Mentality on all girls  
me the courage to

## draft

This is probably going to be the shortest post in this series because it's so extremely simple.

When sitting down to write your first draft the first thing you should do is copy and paste your extended outline into a new document. Once you do that take your bullet points and make them into cohesive sentences. You may be thinking that I'm completely oversimplifying it, but you're overthinking it. Honestly you just have to turn your bullet points into separate sentences. Don't worry about if the sentences sound good together just make them into sentences. That's step one.

Step two is to add conclusion sentences. Read over your choppy paragraphs and add a conclusion sentence that seems to summarize what you stated in your paragraph.

Then you're done.

Take a break.

If you start revising your paper now, at this stage, you'll get overwhelmed. That's the worst thing that can happen when writing a big paper. Keeping your focus is what's going to turn your ideas into amazing writing and ultimately an amazing grade. So close your laptop, start other homework, and revise your paper later.

LiLi Wethengel  
Writing 112  
October 27, 2014

Essay 3 First Draft

Exercise is necessary to maintain a healthy mind and body, but have you ever thought which exercises are the best for your all-around health? Running and walking are two of the most common and easy exercises. The controversy about whether running and walking are equally beneficial continues to be disputed. *if you're here*

When it comes to weight loss running is the better option. To burn the same amount of calories as one would running one would have to walk for about 1.5 times longer. Other popular activities, such as biking and walking, only burn a fraction of the same amount of time. While the average human being burns about 100 calories by simply existing, running 5 miles a day can burn an additional 500 calories. Running is imperative for weight loss because it helps to tone muscles.

...asier on ones joints because there is less force on...  
...y in July 2013 concluded otherwise in the...  
...4,752 runners and 14,625 walkers over a...  
...ported osteoarthritis and 259 reported...  
...oarthritis and 114 reported hip...  
...ning significantly reduced

*if you're here*

*if you're here*

*if you're here*

# Part V: The Peer Review

The peer review is always the trickiest part of the writing process. A lot of people don't use the resource of peer review's seriously and therefore don't realize it's full potential. A peer review is one of the best things you can do in your writing process.

When you sit down to write something, whether it takes 1 hour, 1 week, or 1 month, you become consumed in it; you start to not notice when you write something awkwardly or maybe you just don't know how to say what you want to say. That's where the peer reviews become really helpful.

Once you complete your REALLY rough draft, it's time for a peer review. Now this draft should not be great. It should be a narrative of ideas describing what you want to say in your paper.

I always recommend having two separate people peer edit for you: the first should be in your class/ familiar with the material, and the second should be someone who knows nothing more than common sense about the subject and is not in your class. The reason your first peer editor should be in your class is because this draft of your paper is just your ideas. If you have someone who is in your class and familiar with the material, they can interpret what your trying to say and may be able to help word your thoughts better.



# the peer review

p.17

After writing your second or final draft have someone who is not in your class review it. This can ensure that you are getting your message across clearly, since the whole point of a paper is to introduce and explain a point to even someone who knows nothing on the subject. You want them to pick up your paper and completely understand your thought process when they get to the end. They will also be able to point out more simple and easily missed errors or grammatically incorrect sentences that you may not have noticed while writing the paper.

Always remember to take peer recommendations with a grain of salt. You may encounter a peer editor who has no sense of grammar, or who tries to correct a statement you've made that you know is correct. It may be helpful to have multiple people revise the same draft to avoid poor peer edits.

Alexandria Eisenhardt

Discussion – 02AB

Writing Assignment 1

10/17/2014

*Creative title?*

Who says a seventeen year old can't change the world? In my young professional career I am striving to improve girl's education, both at home in America, as well as

*girls?*

dedicated to helping

world. I am also

rt Girls Group. The

ng myself with the

ives across the

rough my

as well as my

ise of gender

en later in life

ht up in an upper

lementary and

*nice!  
awesome!*

*social  
to carbon?*

*not  
proof*

GENDER SEXUALITY CULTURE

FALL 2014

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2

PROF. A. DESCHAMPS

write a 4-5 page paper (not less than four and not more than five pages). Indicate support your claims, illustrate with examples, show a critical line of argument and standing (as best as possible) of intersections of gender with race, class, age, sexuality or ing style and mechanics are important components of this paper which should be typed, point font and 1 inch margins. Papers are due in discussion on Friday, November 07, be graded down. You must illustrate your arguments with references from the course gs, discussions and videos as applicable and as relevant. You must cite all your sources, r essay and with a bibliography at the end of your paper, complete with author, title and author's last name and the page numbers. (MLA or APA format). **Wikipedia is not an** mic Honesty Guidelines are in the Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities booklet. will be strictly penalized. Please be advised that you are expected to use only readings your references (unless otherwise asked) and you should have at least two references.

unity leader, or a student inve  
olitical issue that you think  
ss, age, sexuality, disabili  
ysis, application) and thi  
cuss and present an ac  
ould you need? How  
levant theoretical refe

once said, "A leader ma  
many people must do the b  
or how do you interpret the  
covered in this course? Rem

it "Women's Work, Wages, and The Feminization of Poverty". Define and discuss  
mples. How does this exist today? Is work still gendered? Your analysis should  
ions of race, class, gender, age, sexuality or any combination. You should also  
pecific recommendations (please do not make sweeping recommendation over  
nted systems) but think of your own and what tools you have at your

# Part VI: The Second Draft

# the second draft

p.19

how to add

quotes

So you've written your first draft and had someone you trust (with their writing opinions) review it. Now it's time to take a serious look at your paper and make some corrections. Before you do anything really read through the comments that your peer editor gave to you. If they didn't leave a lot then you may need to have someone else review it.

If you agree/understand why your peer editor made the changes or comments they did then you can start making those little changes. Once you fix up the grammar in your rough draft it becomes much easier to add in more stuff. When I say stuff I do not mean filler sentences. Trust me: if you have to write a 2-4 page paper your professor would much rather read a 2 page paper with great content than a four page with too many filler sentences. Clear writing is the best writing. Write just enough so that people will understand the point you are making, but not too much that they get bored or frustrated trying to find it.

So how do you write 'stuff' without the filler?

Go back and look what you have written. When I do a rough draft I typically do not include any quotes or paraphrased items from my research. This allows me to insert them into my second draft where they feel most applicable. When you re-read your edited rough draft look for points that need clarification, or places where a quote might help make more sense of your argument.

# the second draft

p.20

## how to add quotes

If you already included quotes into your rough draft then read those paragraphs a little closer. Did you introduce the quote correctly? A properly interdicted quote should consist of a sentence leading right into a quote with the help of a comma. For example: (Taken from my Women Studies Paper for which I got a 99% on.. not like I'm bragging or anything ;))

“According to the Women’s International Center, “In colonial America, women who earned their own living usually became seamstresses or kept boardinghouses. But some women worked in professions and jobs available mostly to men. There were women doctors, lawyers, preachers, teachers, writers, and singers.” (www.wic.org, section 4) ”

Remember to always include a proper parenthetical citation following your quote. It's O.K. to use other peoples research as long as you give them credit. If you don't know how to do a correct one check out this handy dandy chart: (docstyles.com)

Source	Citation	Source	Citation
<b>No Author</b>	( <u>Book Title</u> 123) ("Article Title" 123)	<b>Corporate</b>	(Modern Language Association 123)
<b>1 Author</b>	(Smith 123)	<b>Literary</b>	( <u>King Lear</u> 4.1) (Thoreau 11; ch.1)
<b>2 Authors</b>	(Smith and Jones 123)	<b>Multiple</b>	(Adams 11; Baker 21; Chavez 123)
<b>3 Authors</b>	(Smith, Jones, and Garcia 123)	<b>Two Works</b>	(Thoreau, <u>Walden</u> 8) (Thoreau, "Life" 9)
<b>4 Authors+</b>	(Smith et al. 123)	<b>Volume/Page</b>	(Burton 2: 123)

# the second draft

p.21

## how to add quotes

Once you have your quote, with it's proper introduction and parenthetical citation, you have to reference the quote. One of my english teachers in high school taught us that quotes were like a little kid crossing the street: the parents have to hold their hands. You're introduction is parent 1 and your reference is parent 2. Here is what I followed up my quote with in my Feminist Theory paper for Women Studies:

“However, female oppression in the early 19th century led to a new outlook on women’s work. If a woman wanted to work the only acceptable areas for her to do so were domestic work, writing, teaching and factory labor. ”

If after adding all of this you find that you still have not met your page or word requirement then you should consider going back to the research step and finding another subtopic to add to your paper.

# Part VII: The Final Draft

This is the easiest and fastest part of the process. Once you have your second draft completed it's time for some peer editing. After the rough draft I suggested you have someone who's in the same course and/or writing a similar kind of paper to peer edit because they may be able to help you construct clearer sentences since they have more background information on the topic.

After your second draft is completed have a friend who is not in your class edit the paper. Better yet, bring your paper to your college writing center or your TA for the class. They love to help students edit their papers because it shows them that you're trying, plus they can provide amazing insight!

Once you get your edited draft returned read through it and make the appropriate changes. The final step is to go back to the assignment. Make sure you have completed every portion of the assignment. Make sure you have answered the question asked of you completely and correctly. Make sure you directly supported your thesis throughout all aspects of your paper.

Once you have cross referenced everything and you're happy with your paper then you're done! That's it. You've successfully written a college paper without completely losing your mind.