Guide to Academic Research for UNCP Graduate Students

By

Michael C. Alewine and Robert J. Arndt

Mary Livermore Library

University of North Carolina at Pembroke

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STOP! Before You Start

You will need to have a library account and a PIN (Personal Identification Number):
http://libguides.uncp.edu/libraryaccounts

Learn about off-campus access: http://libguides.uncp.edu/offcampusaccess
Getting Help!

Laura Hess, Robert Arndt and Michael Alewine

With us, there is no such thing as a stupid question and you are never bothering us—so contact us as many times as you need to each day, and we will always be ready to help you in any way that we can...well, with research anyway. Contact Michael Alewine (michael.alewine@uncp.edu 910.522.5743), Robert Arndt (robert.arndt@uncp.edu 910.521.6529) or Laura Hess (laura.hess@uncp.edu 910.775.4174) and let us guide you where you need to be for each assignment.

We will meet with you for research consultations (including nights and weekends); we will also consult with you by email or phone; we will run searches for you and then provide you with step-by-step instructions concerning which databases to use, which keywords work best; we will scan or fax photocopies of print sources from the Library; we will assist you with document delivery and interlibrary loan; and we will also provide you with “appropriate” technical support in relation to finding information.

The Reference Desk can also help you when we are not available. You can reach the Reference Desk at 910.521.6656 or at refdesk@uncp.edu or by using the Ask-A-Librarian Web form at http://www.uncp.edu/academics/library/need-help-ask-librarian
Introduction

This guide serves only one purpose—and that is to orient UNCP graduate students to the “basic” concepts of academic research and the Library resources available for such research. The first part of this booklet will cover the basic processes of academic research while the other part will detail academic writing tips.

For our purposes, we will simply define academic research as the process by which students locate, critically evaluate, and ethically use information for academic research assignments—annotated bibliographies, article reviews, oral presentations, research papers, research projects, and masters-level capstone projects and theses.

This booklet is organized by the following major topics:

1. Developing a Topic
2. Developing Keywords
3. Locating Information
4. Evaluating Information
5. Citing and Using Information
Developing a Topic

Get general guidelines and parameters from your instructor first. Don’t get “married” to a specific topic—keep your options open. We will help you to develop 3-4 topics (subtopics) that you can take back to your instructor—in each case the tentative topics need to be tested for availability of relevant resources. Go back to your instructor and discuss the proposed topic that you like best (have the other topic ideas ready to go just in case)—you may even have a few articles in hand to show your instructor.

After you and your instructor come to an agreement on the topic, you can begin keyword development. Remember, when developing a topic, to keep it personal in some way—you will have a much better time completing the assignment if it is meaningful to you. Consider your chosen profession—something related to what you are actually doing or will do in a professional setting—and keep the topic relevant by looking at a “real” issue. Also, consider your personal interests or a health issue being experienced by you, a family member, or a friend. Jot down your ideas and draw connections (see sample topic cluster below).
Use popular magazines, news sites, and other sources to get ideas for topics (see image below).

Most students start off with something broad:

**Elections**

Then combine other concepts that interest you:

**Elections and race**

Then complete a few preliminary searches using online sources, like CNN, or print sources such as *Newsweek*, *Time*, or *US News and World Report*.

**Elections and race and identification cards**

or

**Elections and race and redistricting**

Present your topic as a statement or as a question. Example: *What are the racial and political factors involved in the redistricting of electoral boundaries?*

You can set geographical limits. *Example:* You want to write about an issue in your home community, such as *acid rain in Robeson County*.

You may have trouble finding enough information about the problem of acid rain in this specific county for an extensive research paper or presentation; however, you can increase your chances of finding sufficient information if you broaden the topic a bit to *acid rain in North Carolina* or *acid rain in the southeastern United States*. You could also consider an alternate focus, such as *air pollution*, or look at a different
region, such as **California, Massachusetts, New York**, or **Illinois**, which would have large industrial cities, major sources of air pollution.

But keep in mind that you should not make every assignment or topic specifically about Cumberland, Hoke, or Robeson counties, especially if you have to locate scholarly sources. For example, instead of Robeson County, use words like rural or American Indian, etc., which are terms that partially describe Robeson County.

**Developing Keywords**

Once you have selected a topic, you need to develop a set of keywords—words that describe the topic or aspects of the topic. Later, you will use these keywords to find information on your topic.

*Example:* You have chosen to write a paper on **college students’ alcohol use and grade-point averages**.

Start by stating your topic as a question: **Is there a relationship between college students’ alcohol use and grade-point averages?**

What are the main concepts in your question?

1. *alcohol*
2. *grade-point average*
3. *college students*

Are there other words for these concepts?

1. *alcohol*: **alcoholism, drinking, substance abuse, binge drinking**
2. *grade-point average*: **grades, achievement, GPA, graduation, test scores**
3. *college students*: **university, higher education, undergraduates, freshmen, fraternities, sororities, college athletes**

These words are your keywords, which you will use to test the viability of your topic and to search for information.

*Note:* You will want to keep a running list of your keywords and check them off as you try them. That way, you will not waste time searching for the same keywords twice.
Locating Information

Reference Sources: If you do not know a lot about your topic—or you are still developing your topic, which by the way is quite ok, because your topic will continue to evolve as you find new sources—then consider using a reference resource. Go to the Library’s home page, click the Advanced Search link, and then enter your keywords (Keep them broad when searching for books), and limit the location to UNCP Reference (see image below).

There are also online reference collections available to UNCP students. Both are great starting places for your research (they do require off-campus logins).

Oxford Reference Online: http://www.uncp.edu/node/33196

Sage E-reference: http://www.uncp.edu/node/33199

Books: The Livermore Library offers two resources to find print books—BraveCat and WorldCat. BraveCat is the library’s online catalog. WorldCat is a world-wide catalog of materials. You can use it search for and request books anywhere in the world. Requesting items from WorldCat requires an ILLiad (interlibrary loan) account.

The most common search is by topic—the keyword search. The keyword search allows you to search for any combination of words in various parts of a catalog record (e.g., the title, the author’s name, the subject terms, and the notes fields). Search for single
keywords (e.g., cloning) or combine keywords using and (e.g., Islam and women). You can interchange different words with similar meaning such as college and university using or (e.g., college or university). Keywords can be searched as a phrase inside quotation marks (e.g., "no child left behind"). You can also truncate words with an asterisk (e.g., prevent* = prevented, preventing, prevention, and prevents).

In the example above, we are searching for books about the prevention of child abuse. Click the Search (Submit Query) button. We search child abuse AND prevention

This particular search yields almost 200 results. You will notice (see image below) that in addition to print volumes, we also have electronic books (more than 175,000).
Click a title in the results list in order to see a full item record (see image below). The item record contains the citation information, the collection where the item is contained, the call # and the status (e.g., Available).

If the item is available, then you will be able to retrieve it from the shelves. If you do not come to campus, then you can request it, and we will mail the item to your home address [http://libguides.uncp.edu/holdrequest](http://libguides.uncp.edu/holdrequest)

Simply click the Request link (see image below) and enter your login information. If a book is checked out (see Status below) you can still request it. When it is returned to the Library, you will be notified of its availability.
Another database you can use to search for books is *WorldCat*, which searches libraries throughout the United States. Go to the Library’s homepage and click Electronic Resources; then under Database by Title, click the letter “W” and then click the link for *WorldCat* (you will need to login if you are off campus). You may also want to limit by date range.

You will then see a results list. The sample search above produces more than 380 results (See image below). Keep in mind that not all of the items listed will be exactly what you are looking for, so you will need to look at items’ records.
A WorldCat item record typically contains the citation information, a summary or the table of contents for the book, as well as linked subject headings. You can search BraveCat by title to see if our Library has the item available.

If it is not available at UNCP, you will need to request (see image below) it via interlibrary loan https://uncp.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/logon.html (click the First Time Registration if you have never used ILL before). Contact the reference desk at 910.521.6656 if you require assistance with requesting materials.

Articles: The most common resources that you are going to use in your academic career are scholarly articles. These are indexed and made available through various databases (not webpages) that we subscribe to and they are listed on our subject pages. At the Library’s homepage click Electronic Resources. Then select a subject page (see image below).
Each subject page provides links to the most commonly used databases as well as other related electronic resources (see image below).

Simply select a database. In this example we will select ERIC (an important education-related database). You will need to login from off campus. When the database opens, you will be at the advanced search screen (which is true of most of our article databases). If the database is an EBSCO or ProQuest database, then you will be able to add other databases. In EBSCO, simply look at the top of the window for a link labeled Choose Databases (see image below).
Click that link and select other databases that are relevant to your topic, such as Education Research Complete, PsycINFO, or PsycARTICLES (see image below).

In the example below, we are searching four databases and we also entered several sets of keywords. You will also notice that we limited the main set of keywords to **Subject** (see image below).

You can also limit to Scholarly Peer-Reviewed Journals, which are sometimes referred to as “Refereed” or “Peer Reviewed.” These are scholarly journals that have a rigorous approval and editing process in which experts in the field evaluate journal articles before they are accepted for publication.

You can also limit by publication date—some instructors specifically require that your sources are no more than 3 years, or 5 years, or 10 years, etc.

In the example below, we have set both the Scholarly Peer-Reviewed Journals limit and also the limit to sources no older than 2006 (see image below).
This particular search yielded more than 350 results (see image below).

Some articles are HTML Full Text (plain text). Some are PDF Full Text (a scanned image). Some are Linked Full Text (direct online subscriptions). Some do not contain the full text of the article, but instead have a link for Full Text Finder.

Full text articles can be opened and printed. They can be saved to a disk or your desktop or a flash drive. Some can be emailed directly, while others must first be downloaded to your desktop and then emailed as an attachment. To locate the full text of an article click the Full Text Finder link. A special database called EBSCO A to Z will open and will provide direct links to full text (if available) or indirect links through...
publisher sites; access through the Library (print, microform, or other electronic access); or no access at all. In the example below there is direct access (see images below).

Click the Download PDF link and the full text article should appear (see image below).
Scholarly peer-reviewed articles typically contain significant reference lists (see image below). As a matter of course, you should check these references to see if there are any that are relevant to your topic—one source can sometimes lead you several others.

References


If no access is available, then complete a document delivery (InterLibrary Loan) request [https://uncp.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/logon.html](https://uncp.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/logon.html) (which typically takes 2 to 5 business days).

**Look at Your Topic from Many Angles (Subtopics)**

Use the advanced search screens (see the series of images below) to experiment with different sets of keywords. Keep your main keywords in the first search field and then search various facets of your topic. As you can see, in the example searches above, we explore the concept of social workers and social work practice in relation to **child abuse and neglect**.
Here are a few example searches that we commonly see from grad students in various disciplines (take note of the different databases being used):
Always give thoughtful consideration to your keyword development. Keep your search strings simple—just one or two word keywords. Do not use prepositional phrases or sentences. Use the main words that describe your topic, but also try to discover other words with similar meaning.
Finding Statistical Information

The Good—there is no shortage of statistical information on the World Wide Web. The Bad—there is too much statistical information on the World Wide Web. The Ugly—10 different credible sites may end up providing 10 different numbers for the same statistical item.

Basic rule of thumb—use the best sources that you can (e.g., the BLS, the CDC, the CIA, the FBI, the UN, etc.)—use the most current sources that you can (look for the most recent version)—and when in doubt, always check with your instructor or librarian.

Use Google (see image below) and enter your keywords and limit to only government sites using ...and site:.gov Keep in mind that this will also pull up results from state governments, the Canadian government, etc. In this case (diabetes), look for national sites such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the National Institutes of Health (NIH). For example http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/data/

Also look for statistical data linking sites, subject guides or LibGuides, such as https://www.usa.gov/statistics or http://www.bls.gov/bls/other.htm
Evaluating Information

Credible sources are those that contain authoritative discussions of your topic—that is, information that you and others are likely to accept and believe. Just as you would be more likely to believe statements made by honest eyewitnesses and respected experts, readers are more likely to believe research that comes from resources written by people with firsthand experience or special training in the field you are discussing. In academic writing, the kind you generally do in your classes, such research often comes from scholarly books and journals, resources written and edited by college professors and other experts.

Books, of course, are fairly lengthy documents made available to readers by companies called publishers. Because reputable publishers want to protect their reputations, they generally are careful when selecting manuscripts to publish and then edit them thoroughly, making sure that the contents are accurate and well-founded. As a result, published books are generally credible.

Scholarly Journals contain articles written by scholars for other scholars and are the most credible sources. They often are associated with universities or national organizations, such as the American Nurses Association (ANA). They contain articles that examine issues in depth; often the focus of a particular article is very narrow—one aspect of one short story, for example. Like manuscripts considered for publication by scholarly book publishers, articles in scholarly journals often go through the peer-review process.

The Internet is an international network of computers. Because many people post information on the Internet in the form of World Wide Web sites, it can be a useful research tool. Unlike most books and articles you might find in a library, however, many webpages do not undergo any kind of elaborate process of fact-checking and other forms of editing. Thus, you will want to be extra careful when evaluating websites and avoid using any of questionable credibility, especially those that do not include authors’ names.
Here are some questions you can use to evaluate books, articles, and webpages:

1. Who is the author? What are the author's qualifications?
2. When was the source published?
3. Why was the source written?
4. What perspective does the source represent? Is there a bias?
5. Who published or sponsored the source?

Is the information reliable? Does the information fit with information found in other sources on the same topic? Is the information documented with references or other sources?

Credible sources are those that contain authoritative discussions of your topic—that is, information that you and others are likely to accept and believe. Just as you would be more likely to believe statements made by honest eyewitnesses and respected experts, readers are more likely to believe research that comes from resources written by people with firsthand experience or special training in the field you are discussing. In academic writing, the kind you generally do in your classes, such research often comes from scholarly books and journals, resources written and edited by college professors and other experts.

Books, of course, are fairly lengthy documents made available to readers by companies called publishers. Because reputable publishers want to protect their reputations, they generally are careful when selecting manuscripts to publish and then edit them thoroughly, making sure that the contents are accurate and well-founded. As a result, published books are generally credible.

Newspapers contain numerous articles written by many different authors, including members of the general public. Newspapers contain various news and feature articles,
as well as editorials, which usually have a strong bias. Newspapers rarely contain scholarly material, but many newspaper articles quote research studies by scholars. People who write for newspapers are usually not academic researchers.

Magazines, sometimes called popular magazines, can be very useful to students; however, very few of the articles in them are written or edited by scholars. Magazine articles tend to provide an overview of current issues and research and omit some of the details, such as discussions of methodology. Some popular magazines also contain a strong overall bias and may contain articles that are biased as well. People who write for popular magazines are usually not academic researchers.

Scholarly Journals contain articles written by scholars for other scholars and are the most credible sources. They often are associated with universities or national organizations, such as the American Political Science Association. They contain articles that examine issues in depth; often the focus of a particular article is very narrow—one aspect of one short story, for example. Like manuscripts considered for publication by scholarly book publishers, articles in scholarly journals often go through the peer-review process.

The Internet is an international network of computers. Because many people post information on the Internet in the form of World Wide Web sites, it can be a useful research tool. Unlike most books and articles you might find in a library, however, many webpages do not undergo any kind of elaborate process of fact-checking and other forms of editing. Thus, you will want to be extra careful when evaluating websites and avoid using any of questionable credibility, especially those that do not include authors’ names.

Here are some questions you can use to evaluate books, articles, and webpages:

1. Who is the author? What are the author’s qualifications?

If you are researching the science of hydroponics, you should use a source written by a soil science researcher instead of one written by a gardening enthusiast.

2. When was the source published?

If you are researching current education trends in the United States, you would be better off with a source that was published within the last few years. In fact, some of your instructors may even prohibit you from using sources older than five years. However, if you are researching a humanities topic, historical event, or political period, then it may be appropriate to use older resources. Sometimes professors may require you to use primary resources published during an earlier time period.

3. Why was the source written?

Was the author trying to inform you of something? Was he or she trying to criticize something or change your opinion about an issue?
4. What perspective does the source represent? Is there a bias?

If you were researching the current political climate in relation to environmental issues in the United States, you might come across numerous sources, such as Crimes against Nature: How George W. Bush and His Corporate Pals are Plundering the Country and High-jacking Our Democracy. This title was written by Robert Francis Kennedy, Jr., who is a lawyer and longtime environmentalist; however, he is also affiliated with the Democratic Party. Whenever a political or organizational affiliation is present, it is important to consider the possibility of bias. This book might be useful, but two main warning flags are that it is not a scholarly work and that political bias may be present. Websites, in particular, are likely to be written by authors with strong biases.

5. Who published or sponsored the source?

Some publishers are more respected and have a peer-review process; that is, they have experts read manuscripts and determine whether they are credible and generally worthy of being published. For example, Oxford University Press is a respected academic publisher that requires academic works to be reviewed by experts in the appropriate fields. Most university presses, as well certain national organization presses, such as the American Psychological Association and the American Sociological Association, have some kind of peer-review process. On the other hand, Trafford Publishing of Oxford, England, publishes books by authors who pay its fees; there is probably little or no process by which an expert judges the validity of the material in the book. Thus, a book published by Oxford University Press is probably more credible than one published by Trafford. Similarly, articles published in scholarly journals and websites sponsored by universities or the United States government are generally more authoritative than articles published in many popular magazines and websites created by individuals.

6. Is the information reliable? Does the information fit with information found in other sources on the same topic? Is the information documented with references or other sources?

Did you find over 100 scholarly books that describe the Jewish Holocaust (1939-1945) in detail and one website arguing that the Holocaust did not occur? If so, then the argument in the website should strike you as suspect.

NOTE: Academic libraries try to collect credible materials, but they also contain many items of questionable validity. One element that often suggests that a source is credible is the presence of a bibliography or a list of works cited. Such lists allow you to track down the information cited in the sources. Scholarly books and articles generally contain such lists. If you answer all of these questions and still are unsure about a source's credibility, see your instructor.
Citing Information

If you deliberately turn in someone else's work, use a source's exact words without placing these words in quotation marks, or use a unique interpretation you found in a source without giving credit to the source, you are guilty of plagiarism, a serious academic offense that can result in a number of different penalties, including a score of 0 on the assignment, failure of the class, and a report to Student Affairs. UNCP's Academic Honor Code reads: "Plagiarism is intentionally or knowingly presenting someone else's words or ideas as one's own. You avoid plagiarism by very carefully acknowledging the sources of ideas you use and by appropriately indicating any material that has been quoted (that is, by using quotation marks and properly acknowledging the source of the quote, usually with a clear reference source citation and page number)."

Using Refworks

RefWorks is an online research management, writing and collaboration tool that is designed to help researchers easily gather, manage, store and share all types of information, as well as generate citations and bibliographies. Citations and full text can be imported for databases and citations from library catalogs.

Access

RefWorks works best with the FireFox Internet browser. Turn off any pop-up blocker features before using RefWorks.

To access RefWorks, go to the Mary Livermore Library homepage. Click Electronic Resources. Click Database Title. Click R and then click RefWorks. If you are off campus, you will need to complete the library log-in (first or last name, University ID number, and Library PIN).

FireFox may require you to accept a security certificate. If it does, you can add an exception. Click Add exception. Click Get Certificate. Click Confirm Security Exception. A first time user will need to register for an individual account (If RefWorks prompts you for a Group Code, call 910.521.6656). Returning users can simply log in.
Once you have created an account, folders can be created in *RefWorks* to store citations.

**Creating Folders**

To create a folder, click **New Folder**. Name the folder. Click **Create**. A list of all folders can be seen on the right. The new folder will be part of the list.

**Importing Citations**

For bibliographic purposes, import the citation from the database where the full text was found. *BraveCat* and the electronic databases export the citations differently than *RefWorks*. See below for information on importing citations from EBSCO databases and *BraveCat*. For instructions about importing citations from other databases, see *RefWorks* LibGuide at [http://libguides.uncp.edu/refworks](http://libguides.uncp.edu/refworks). Click **Electronic Resources** then click **View Course LibGuides**, click **R** and select *RefWorks*.

Importing items from *EBSCO* databases
Items from *EBSCO* databases can be exported individually or as group. To export a single item, click the article title to view the full citation and then click the export icon from the Tools list on the right.

To export a group of items, add the record to the folder by clicking the **Add to folder** link below the citation or by clicking the folder icon in the full citation view.

Click the folder icon in the *EBSCO* toolbar (see image below).

Select the items in the folder to export. Click the export icon (see image below).

Click the **Direct Export to RefWorks** (see image below).

Click **Save**.

If a Windows Security message appears, click **OK** to allow the pop-up. *RefWorks* will open in a new window/tab. You may also have to agree or get the certificate. If
RefWorks does not open in another window or tab, check your browser’s pop-up blocker settings.

Log-in. RefWorks will open to an import screen (see image below).

Below is screen that will appear in RefWorks when the citations have been imported.

You have the option of adding the name of a database to the record. Click Edit Imported References. Type the name of the database into the Database box. Click Save Changes and then View Last Imported Folder. If no database title is added, click View Last Imported Folder.

Saving to Folders

After you import your citations you may want to save them to a specific folder. Click View Last Imported Folder.

Select items to save in a folder or click All in List to save all imported items to a folder.

If you do not place items in a folder, they will be deleted when the next records are imported.
Select a folder to save the item. A message will appear informing you the item(s) have been saved. Close the box.

Creating a Bibliography

A bibliography can be created containing all citations in your *RefWorks* account or only of a specific folder. Click *Bibliography* in the *RefWorks* toolbar.

Select an *Output Style* (citation format). Select the *File Type to Create*. Word for Windows (2000 or later) is the recommended choice. You can also create an HTML if the bibliography is to be part of a webpage. Select the references to be included in the bibliography. Click a folder from Folder List to create a bibliography of that folder. The default is last folder you were in. Click *Create Bibliography*.

The screen below will appear. Click the appropriate link to download or email the bibliography. You may want to both download the bibliography and e-mail to yourself.

Once you have opened the Word file, you will need to change the font style and size of your bibliography. Simply highlight all of your text or use Control A and select the appropriate font style and text size.

You will also need to check your bibliography to be sure that all proper names and titles are capitalized. Depending on your citation style, you may need to manually correct these items. Remember your professor is grading your work, not *RefWorks*. It is your responsibility to proofread your paper. Do not trust spell check or grammar check (and *RefWorks*) to locate and correct all mistakes!
You can get help with academic writing at the Writing Center with professional and students writing tutors. Once you have drafted a document, make an appointment to meet with a tutor—the tutor can point out problems areas, especially those dealing with clarity. We also cover a few basic academic writing strategies below.

**Incorporating Sources**

After you have conducted research, you need to know how to incorporate others’ findings into your own essay. The keyword here is “incorporate,” which means to bring into a body; that is, you need to bring others’ words and interpretations into the body of your own argument. This step is perhaps the most challenging part of writing a researched argument. If you merely present quotations from sources, your argument will come across as fragmented and unoriginal. On the other hand, if you deliberately use others’ words and ideas without giving them credit, you are guilty of plagiarism. Instead, you must come to understand your source material, weave it into your own argument, and give credit to sources for exact words or interpretations that you borrowed.

**Direct Quotes, Partial Quotes, and Paraphrases**

Original: “Despite the fact that more young people are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes around the world, there is little progress in developing a screening programme or finding the most effective treatment methods for this condition.”


Direct quote—According to Wilson (2013), “Despite the fact that more young people are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes around the world, there is little progress in developing a screening programme or finding the most effective treatment methods for this condition” (p. 14).
Partial quote—The incidences of Type 2 diabetes among children has dramatically risen on a global scale, and “... there is little progress in developing a screening programme or finding the most effective treatment methods for this condition” (Wilson, 2013, p. 14).

Paraphrase—While there has been a tremendous increase in diabetes among children worldwide, effective methods of diagnosis and treatment remain elusive (Wilson, 2013).

A Note about Attributive Phrases

These are phrases that allow you to transition the ideas of others into your own works. Try to mix it up a bit—don’t just use “According to...”

- Wilson (2013) discovered that “Despite the fact that...”
- Wilson (2013) argues that “Despite the fact that...”
- Wilson (2013) stated “Despite the fact that...”
- Wilson (2013) asserted that that “Despite the fact that...”
- Wilson (2013) found that “Despite the fact that...”
- Wilson (2013) questioned “why do health officials...”
- Wilson (2013) concluded that “Despite the fact that...”

The Paper Exchange

It is advisable to get input from other readers as early as possible in the writing process. After you have put together your first draft—which is not a “polished” document—form a small peer group with a few of your classmates. Exchange drafts with each other and give each other notes (keep in mind that your instructor may already have peer-review built into the course schedule). Pay close attention to questions of clarity—“What did you mean by this?” Help each other with grammar, typos, and citation errors. By peer-reviewing, you will also get ideas about other ways to write—individual writing styles can be fascinating—or you may also get ideas about ways to organize or present information.

Time is the Best Editor

Start your papers as early as you can and then set them aside for a few days. When you return to them, you will see them in a whole new objective light—“What the hell was I talking about here?”
Read Aloud

Reading your documents aloud will help you to find trouble areas. If your own tongue trips up on it, so will your instructor. Although, keep in mind that it is quite common to read something over and over and miss the same error every time—especially small missing words.

Bring in the Big Guns

Once you have a more polished draft, go to the writing center or even your instructor (some instructors will allow this if it is early enough in the semester—but many will not). Get ideas about clarity and direction—especially from your instructor—"Is there some piece of information that you are missing?" If your instructor gives you back a paper with corrections—make them! They hate when you ignore them. Also, go beyond what they suggest—make sure that they see a real effort from you.

Useful Links

Mary Livermore Library http://www.uncp.edu/academics/library
Electronic Resources http://libguides.uncp.edu/ElectronicResources
Placing a Hold Request http://libguides.uncp.edu/holdrequest
Requesting Materials from other Schools  [http://libguides.uncp.edu/ill](http://libguides.uncp.edu/ill)

Request Materials (Document Delivery/Inter Library Loan)  
[https://uncp.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/logon.html](https://uncp.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/logon.html)

Using EBSCO Folders  [http://libguides.uncp.edu/ebscofolders](http://libguides.uncp.edu/ebscofolders)

Locating an Article from a Citation  [http://libguides.uncp.edu/articlesfromcitation](http://libguides.uncp.edu/articlesfromcitation)

Library Hours  [http://www.uncp.edu/academics/library/library-hours](http://www.uncp.edu/academics/library/library-hours)

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Now go forth…Research, Read, and Write!