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#### PART 1 You just got the assignment...

It's the first week of the semester, and you have confidently stuffed 5 syllabi into your backpack. No need to look too closely, you think -- Let's ease back into schoolwork, shall we?

Until -- you notice it - a twenty page paper, due right before spring break. Maybe this time you will avoid pulling two hectic all-nighters in a row and catching a cold right before vacation? But Nietzsche said, "One must have chaos in oneself to give birth to a dancing star!" Well, maybe a more organized approach can leave chaos for a non-academic realm. Alright, it's time to start this paper, and do it right.

**First step: choosing a topic.** But the prompt is vague...how are you supposed to focus on one element from the first part of the semester, while bringing in outside sources, if you know practically nothing on the the syllabus?

**Come up with two very different ideas.** Even if this means blindly taking a stab at the reading list and blithely coupling the theory your finger lands on with the first artifact/case study/event/example your mind flits to.



Say this is a course on the Post-Socialist city. Well, you've always wanted to go to Moscow, and you noticed that Zygmunt Bauman is on the syllabus -- you read an essay of his in history class and contrasted it to Freud's "Civilization and its Discontents." You can present these three elements with a focus on public space, which you notice your professor has written an article about.



Or, draw on any significant job/internship/volunteer experiences that you would like to examine from a more critical, CULP-y perspective. For example, one CULP student was preparing to spend a summer teaching English as a volunteer in Panama. She wrote a paper about the neo-imperialist implications of English instruction. Keeping it personal means it will continue to be interesting to you throughout the process of writing!

**Talk to your professor.** Sometimes, pride, laziness, or fear get in the way of approaching someone in a position of power, but college is the perfect place to overcome this fear. It is the professor's job to be receptive to your inquiries. Here is how you should approach a professor about choosing a topic:

- a) It can't hurt to show initiative. At the very least, this eases the way for a critical, last minute email a day before the deadline. If you establish contact early, following up is easy.
- b) Bring the list of ideas you brainstormed in Step 1 and see what your professor suggests.
- c) They will likely give you a reading list -- but *not* a thesis or a research question. At this point in your research, that's fine. Whatever you have is rough, but if you hold on to the key elements (a theory & a case study) you have a "topic", and you've opened a dialogue with your professor.

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So, you have a "topic" (but not a solid research question or a thesis). You've talked to your professor and are feeling like a uniquely good student. It's over a month until your paper is due.

| July 2016 | Throwing | Throwing

A paper planner can go a long way in keeping you organized. You can use it to write down each event and task that you have for the day, and even use highlighters to color code different types of tasks (e.g., work, school, personal, and more).



For the visual learner, setting up a wall calendar can be a useful way to keep track of your progress on various tasks. And nothing is more satisfying than moving a post-it to the "done" column!

18

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This is the perfect time to take one free afternoon to plan and lay the foundation for the work to come -- so that you can take a little break before digging into the hard work.

25

26



There are many options for online calendars, which can provide a great visual of the events you have planned. They are also handy because they can sync between multiple devices. There are several well-regarded free online calendars, but Google Calendar comes for free with your Georgetown email account and you can adjust the setting so that you get email reminders for upcoming events.

**Time management** at the beginning of the semester is *key* to a calm paper-writing process. This involves setting internal deadlines and coordinating with your other courses, extracurriculars, family and friend events, and holidays. Settle down with a planner and different colored pens to set internal deadlines.

#### PART 2 Research and development...

You've met with your professor, you have a topic idea, and it's only the second week of the semester! Surely no one else in your class is as on-the-ball as you. But before you kick back and relax, try to keep up that momentum and gather some resources for your paper...

Now that you have a research topic, it's time to really hit the books. This is where you begin to dig into the literature that your professor recommended, as well as gauging the field on your own. If there were ever a practical skill you can't learn too soon, it's this: how to be discerning in your literature review. With your Georgetown login you are able to access *thousands of potential sources*, so you have to be selective. This means using reliable and fitting research databases.



Don't lose "cite" of the important things in life—like bad puns and good citations! Think about how hard you're working on this paper. All of the authors you're using as a resource worked just as hard (or probably harder!) to create their works, so it is vital that you give credit where credit is due by using proper citations. Different professors will ask for different citation styles, but **Purdue Owl**, the **Chicago Manual of Style**, and the **MLA Style Center** cover the most widely-used varieties.



**Pro-tip:** Reserve your materials through the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC). You get books delivered straight to the circulation desk from other schools and there's less of a risk that someone else will want to check-out the same materials (leading to an all-out reservation war). You can also have books from the Lau Stacks delivered to you!



**Pro-tip:** Build your bibliography at the beginning. Decide on a formatting style (or use the one designated to you) and get something done before you even write a single word of your essay. Leaving this step to the last minute can lead to mistakes or incorrect citations and that can lead to stickler professors calling you out-- or worse, sending you to the honor council.



**Pro-tip:** You can scan books on Lau 3 and turn them into searchable PDFs. This takes a minute but it will save you time and energy in the long run.

#### **Title of Paper**

- I. Introduction
  - A. Attention-getter
  - B. Thesis
  - C. In this paper I will...
    - 1. Introduce...
    - 2. Explore...
    - 3. Discuss...

#### II. Body

- A. Introduce Concept A
  - 1. What it is
  - 2. Why it matters
  - 3. Moving the argument forward

From here, many people like starting with an **outline**, consisting of the bare bones of your paper-to-be. There's no need for complete sentences — just some brainstormed ideas and bullet points specifying the arguments you are going to make in each paragraph. If you are thorough enough, this can be what you work from later on.

Understanding how to use search filters can cut down on the amount of time you spend sifting through information. If you are unfamiliar with using databases such as this one, it can be helpful to schedule a library research consultation, which can be done through the Georgetown Library website.

# If doesn't matter how many resources you have... If you don't know how to use them, it will never be enough.

Now comes the big task -- **actually writing something down!** Don't feel too much pressure, though -- it's only your first draft! There will be time to decide on what word fits where and what the perfect introduction is. The most important thing to do is just to start, and for many, this can be the hardest part..

#### PART 3 Crafting a thesis...

Now comes the big task— actually writing something down! Don't feel too much pressure, though— it's only your first draft! There will be time to decide on what word fits where and what the perfect introduction is. The most important thing to do is just to start, and for many, this can be the hardest part. Where should you start, you ask? Start with a thesis!

#### What is a thesis?

A thesis is the driving force behind your paper. If you begin with a strong thesis, the rest of your paper will follow much more easily. The following table explains what a thesis is, and just as importantly, what it isn't.







#### **Strong Thesis**

Operates as a powerful tool of discovery.

Leads to greater precision about what things mean.

Contains some kind of tension or dissonance.

Examines and questions a subject in order to arrive at a point that would not have been immediately obvious.

#### Example of a Good Thesis:

Last month, Starbucks launched the #RaceTogether campaign in an attempt to initiate racial dialogue in stores across the country. The campaign immediately incited opposition as Twitter users pointed out the campaign's contradictions. Although the campaign appears to have good intentions, it continues to perpetuate existing power relationships and tensions. It is a strategy to raise corporate profits by capitalizing on recent national conversation around race.

\*Any one of these "weak" examples can become a strong thesis if you use it as a starting point and then add the elements of a strong thesis. For example, you can use an obviously true statement of fact and then push back against it: In schools across America, students are being taught that 'exercise is good for you.' This sweeping statement obscures the power dynamics of who has access to recreation, which are deeply rooted in class and race.

#### **Weak Thesis**

Too large of an idea that offers no room for complication or complexity.

Climate change will change the way we live. - A stronger thesis would state the specific changes that climate change will bring and what it means for society.

#### Demonstrates rather than discovers.

Colleges are run like corporations and Georgetown is an example of why this is true. - No need to give it all away in the first sentence! You should make a claim, but allow it to develop over the course of your paper.

Makes unproductive claims that require no further thinking. This paper will examine the pros and cons of... - Simply listing pros and cons does not make for an interesting read. Complexify your definition of "pro" and "con" to come up with a unique take on your topic.

#### Makes obviously true statements of fact.

Exercise is good for you. - Tell me something I don't know! You can use obvious statements like this as a starting-off point to push back against commonly held assumptions.

Offers personal conviction as the sole basis for a claim. Shopping malls are excellent places to study. - A strong thesis is grounded in research, not just opinion.

#### Makes overly broad claims.

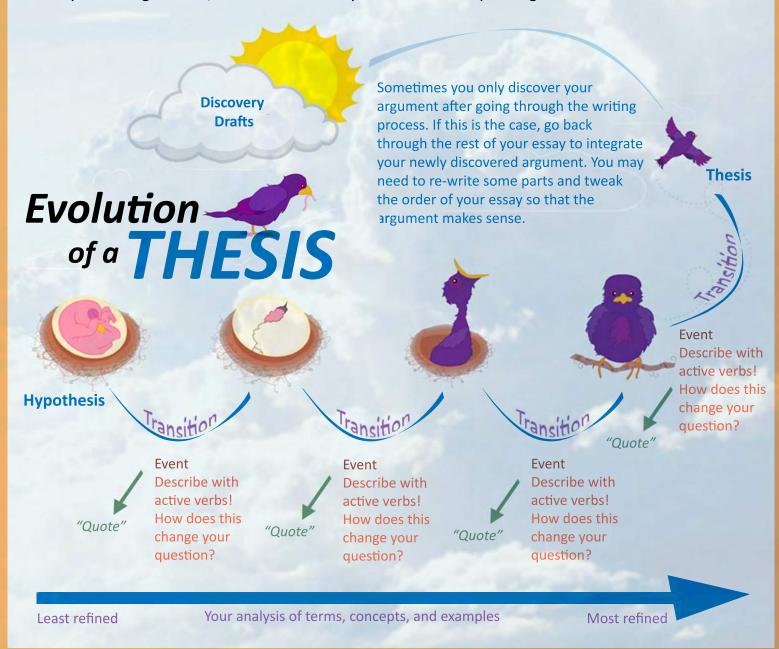
Individualism is good. - Overly broad claims do not present an argument. Where can you go from here? Add a point of contention or dissonance that you will explore in your paper.

#### PART 4 Making an argument...

Now that you've done some research and have a solid working thesis, it's time to build your argument. Remember, your thesis is not set in stone— it should evolve over the course of the writing process. As you go through the writing process, start thinking about your writing style. How do you want to convey your message? What tone is best suited to the argument you are making?

#### The Evolving Thesis:

Writing is the process of discovering and developing your thought, not merely the transcription of already complete thought. Being prepared to recognize and incorporate new insights as they arise is key to developing your powers of analysis and to improving your writing. Your thesis should develop over the course of your paper-- this will make it more fun to read and take your audience on a journey with you. Try to coax an argument out of the evidence you've gathered through your preliminary research. What are you saying in your paper that hasn't been said before? Make that the focus of your paper. There's no one way of writing a thesis, but somewhere in your introduction your argument should be made clear.



#### PART 5 Finding your voice...

Your voice is your own -- don't cheat yourself by adopting a plain, monotone style of writing. Of course, your message is the most important thing to communicate to your reader in any essay, but why not make it interesting?

If you're a creative writer, show it! Who says you can't utilize your literary TOOLBOX in your essays? Pepper your descriptions with imagery and metaphors! Incorporate allusions and alliteration! Play with syntax through chiasma and anaphora! Anything to keep your reader engaged with your essay.



#### Here's an example:

"Homonormativity is heteronormativity queered one degree to the left: a carbon-copy of extant power relations, indistinguishable from the original if not for the stray marking of 'gay'."

Follow this link to find out which famous author your writing style is closest to!

Finding your own specific voice is a process. It takes time, but don't be afraid to experiment.

See also: Editing section.



# PART 6 You think you're done... ...but you still have to edit...

You did it! The page limit has been reached, the points have been made, and the works have been cited. You may be tempted to scan through quickly (aka "edit"), print that sucker out, and call it a day... but hold on a second! You're not done yet. Proper editing will take your paper to the next level, and it takes time and focus. Step back for a few hours/days so you can come back to your paper with fresh eyes.

#### Back to the basics:

Check for run-ons and fragments.
Proofread for grammar and spelling.
Change passive voice (A fabulous paper was written by a student) to active voice (The student wrote a fabulous paper).
Know your audience.

#### Delete, delete, delete!

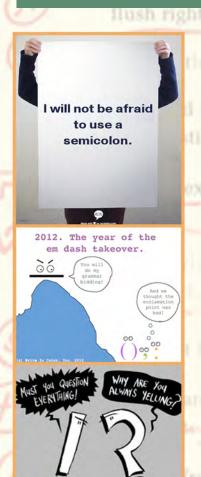
Don't be afraid to delete, rewrite, rearrange, or move big chunks of your paper. Sometimes the bravest changes are the best! Look out for redundancies. Don't get attached. Don't be afraid to rework your entire paper.

#### Edit Ruthlessly

Somebody has said that words are a let like inflated money-the more of them that you use, the less each one of them is worth.

Right en. Go through your entire letter just as many times as it takes. Search out and annihilate all unnecessary words, and sentences—even ontire paragraphs.

Malcolm Forbes
("How to write a business Letter
OR MAKE A SPEECH



**Punctuation** is key to any great essay! Of course, don't overuse it...

Find yourself using "and" over and over? Put in a semicolon instead.

Colons and dashes are useful tools for emphasizing certain points -- they heighten tension and create an impact through conscious separation.

Do you ever want to clarify a point, but don't want to break the flow of the essay (e.g.: like now)? Use parentheses! (Dashes work, too.)

Rhetorical questions are an effective way of moving your argument forward. Do you use them often?

Use exclamation points sparingly, if at all. Usually, in essays such as these, there is little use for them, but if you can use them appropriately, then do it!

#### **Syntax and sentences:**

Condense, shorten, and cut! If your professor imposes a page limit on your essay, then don't go over it. Aside from the obvious reasons (like a grade drop), the longer your sentences and paragraphs are, the easier it is for your reader to get lost. Your teachers will be reading tons of essays on top of their usual research, so don't turn your essay into a knot to be unraveled. Give them something concise and easy to read. Make your argument straightforward and to the point! Break up those paragraphs! Use simple sentences!

"Substitute 'damn' every time you're inclined to write 'very'; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be."

- Mark Twain

rk

#### Wait a few days! ...Or at least one...Then:

Make a physical copy and read it OUT LOUD! Hearing it out loud helps avoid awkward phrasing. You can also print it out and edit by hand. Use different colors for different edits (i.e. red for deletions, blue for awkward phrasing, green for grammar).

A Ring, A Thief, and A Beautiful Zombie!

#### Some other things you can do

#### Reverse outline:

Read your paper and outline what is in each paragraph. Make sure your outline reflects your argument. Read the first and last sentences of each paragraph to make sure that each paragraph contributes to your argument.

"The first draft of anything is shit." - Ernest Hemingway

#### Phone a friend.

Ask a friend (preferably someone in your class) to give you feedback! Ask for what your want – tell your peers what you need help with (i.e. grammar vs. content).

Be open to peer-edits, but also stay true to your own voice and the assignment.

Look online for more peer editing tips. Use the professor's rubric.

# Max went to Lilac's front door, and rang the b

#### **Go to the Writing Center**

Located on Lau 2, right next to Midnight Mug. Ask for style tips to make your paper more unique. You can also view their revision checklists online.



# I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M WRITING ABOUT

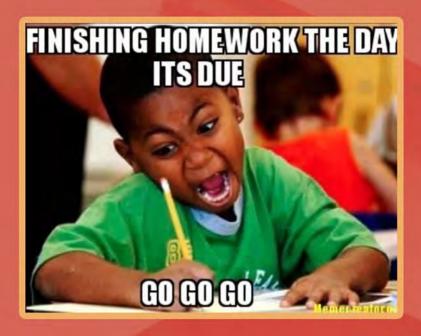
#### At the end of the day...

Remember this is a process that will take time. Be patient and read your piece more than once. Know your professor's guidelines and how they want it formatted. These are easy points to get!

Take a deep breath. This is one paper in your college career. Don't freak out.

#### PART 7 CRISIS MODE

Somehow or another, the weeks between getting the assignment and the due date have slipped by, and your paper is due TOMORROW. You ignored all the advice in this booklet (shame on you!) and you're somehow left with only a few scattered sources and a shaky outline. Don't panic, don't drop the class, and don't throw your computer against the wall. There are some concrete steps to take to get you through your crisis.



#### Time management during your crisis

Don't give into the temptation to panic. Taking 15-20 minutes to make a plan of action at the beginning of your crisis can defuse the situation before it really gets out of hand. Start with your strengths-- did you make an outline? Gather resources? Making an hourly plan, starting with your strengths and building from there, can salvage what seems like a disastrous paper. And make sure to schedule in breaks! Working non-stop for hours at a time only harms your productivity and increases your stress.

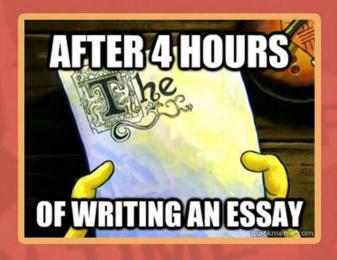
#### Asking for an extension

In the very worst case scenario, you do have the option of asking for an extension. Of course, this option is much more viable if you followed the advice in Part 1 and met with your professor early in the planning process. Establishing this connection early on lets the professor know that you take the class seriously. Combine this with a calm, well-crafted email that briefly explains what particular circumstances prevented you from writing the paper on time and politely recognizes that these explanations are not excuses and that you take responsibility for procrastinating. Remember, you are absolutely not entitled to get an extension and the professor may well refuse your request. But at the end of the day, if you are at the point where your only two options are to turn in a really bad paper or to swallow your pride and ask for an extension, you may as well give it a shot and see if you can turn in something that actually reflects your caliber as a student.



#### **WRITER'S BLOCK**

Sometimes, the words just won't flow. This type of crisis can come up at any point in the writing process, not just the day before your paper is due. Here are some tips to get your creative juices moving again. Some of these techniques can be used in combination and others can't-you just have to figure out what works for you!



**Go for a walk**-- if you're not making progress on your paper anyways, you may as well step away from the laptop and get outside. Take twenty minutes to clear your head-- maybe listen to some music or focus on the sounds around you instead of thinking about your paper. This can really be replaced with any form of exercise-- dance, do jumping-jacks, kick a soccer ball around for 15-20 minutes and you'll come back to your paper feeling refreshed!

*Eliminate distractions*-- Turn off your phone, disconnect from wifi, and find a quiet place to write.

**Change of scenery-**- If you've been in Lau all day and are getting frustrated (and who could blame you?!) see if a change of scenery can cheer you up and help you regain momentum. Try the HFSC, the Leavey Esplanade, or an off-campus cafe.

*Just write anyway*-- Type nonsense words. Write about your day. Write about how much you dislike writing. Just keep those fingers moving across the keyboard. Eventually, you may find yourself writing something that you want to keep.

#### When you're addicted to the thrill

Some of you out there may be adrenaline-junky types who insist that you are not able to write until you are in crisis mode. "Pressure makes diamonds," you tell yourself, secretly savoring that frantic 4 AM writing spree in Lau. But the truth is, good papers take time. You are simply not giving yourself the chance to write to your highest potential if you are waiting till the last minute for every paper.

One way to avoid this trap while still putting yourself under the pressure of a deadline is through peer

Procrastinator? No. I save all of my homework until the last minute because then I'll be older, therefore more wise.

But if you manage your time from the beginning, your paper will be so much better!

accountability. Early in the semester, find someone in your class who agrees to be your partner-in-writing. Together, you can set deadlines for different milestones for your essays. Agree to check in with each other and send each other drafts on agreed-upon days. Look at that! Now you have a whole series of deadlines, and a friend to hold you accountable for meeting them, without saving the entire paper for right before the actual deadline.

If this is a recurring problem, try visiting the **Academic Resource Center.** 

#### **APPENDIX A:** Writing an Introduction

Your intro is where you will present your thesis and argument. It provides a roadmap for your reader without giving too much away. Here is a helpful format for structuring your introduction, which can also help you think through your thesis:

**Common Ground.** Establish a brief context so the reader knows what you intend to qualify or question. This may be done by presenting a commonly held belief or providing a brief overview of what other researchers have said about the subject.

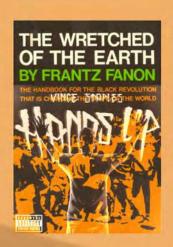
**But...** Introduce a question about something that is not fully understood about the subject or something that contradicts the common ground.

**So what?** Explain to your reader why this question or contradiction is important.

Thesis. Here, you will state your main claim, which should answer the question you proposed earlier.

#### Example:

How can people effectively resist oppression? Better yet, what does it mean to resist oppression? What role does violence play in the struggle to resist? To what end does one fight to resist for? These are the central questions that Franz Fanon deals with in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), particularly in the chapter "On Violence." They are also the same themes that Long Beach rapper Vince Staples deals with in his song "Hands Up." Of course, both works are in response to specific historical events, and written from particular historical perspectives—"On Violence" being a critical analysis of colonialism and decolonization during the of the Cold War era, and "Hands Up" a contemporary account of (and protest against) state-sanctioned discrimination toward young black men in the US. Despite perspectives grounded in different contexts, Fanon and Staples touch on similar themes relating to resistance. This should not come as a surprise: both are fighting hard against oppression. Hence the theorist's prose and the artist's track share a fists-clenched, eyes-wide-open quality—their works pulsate with an unforgiving clarity and bracing agitation.



#### Other example:

The Rolling Stone article "Confessions of an Ivy League Frat Boy: Inside Dartmouth's Hazing Abuses" explores Andrew Lohse's experiences as a Dartmouth student navigating the world of fraternity hazing, which nominally represents a coming of age tradition, where pledges earn admission into an esteemed brotherhood. Foucault's analysis illuminates how culture sets the framework for power circulation through the Dartmouth discourse, one predicated on the appearance of wealth. Lohse desires entry into this world through the Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) fraternity, whose members exhibit affluence. Foucault would suggest that the painful hazing Lohse endured functioned as a key discipline to reproduce and standardize the physical, visual attributes of wealth on the bodies of pledges. Finally, he would note that the way Lohse attempted to challenge his university's power structures with his own exposé in *The Dartmouth* actually illustrated his internalization of hazing. Importantly, Foucault emphasizes power not as defined by top-level university administration, but as a nexus of everyday, bottom-up subconscious relations. This framework illustrates that power is forcefully articulated through fraternity hazing as a discipline to establish an elite class based on economic and outward markers. This suggests culture and power mutually constitute each other, to form a society that rules itself by unconscious norms rather than by prescribed laws.



#### **APPENDIX B:** Tools of the Trade

Here are a few tools and tips for managing your resources and writing. Try them out and do a little exploring— it can take a some trial and error to find the tools that work best for you!

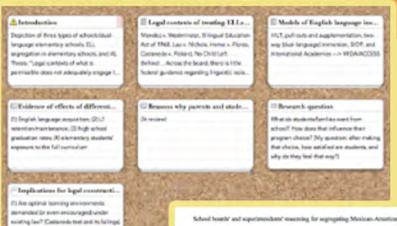


**Microsoft Word** is the old standby! Word is great for shorter papers-- practically everyone is familiar with it and it is easy to use. However, this section will introduce you to some alternate word processing programs that might suit your needs even better!

**Scrivener** is ideal for longer papers, and for long research papers in particular. (Mac and Windows; free 30-day trial; \$45 for full version)

#### Key features:

- \* Divide project into easily-viewable and manipulable sections
- \* View project as an outline in which each section can be viewed separately or together
- \* Keep "snapshots" of previous drafts of a project
- \* Templates for various academic style formats (MLA, Chicago, etc.)
- \* Set and track word count targets for each writing session



This is what writing in Scrivener looks like. The red text shows what was added during the revision process. Once you're done writing, you can apply visually appealing templates to the final product.

Here, the writing is organized by section. Scrivener lets users create "index cards" with a summary of each section. You have the option to view each section in isolation or with the rest of the text. Viewing each part in isolation is useful as it is less overwhelming.

20 is existing law flexible enough to

ecount for the multiple and variable circ.

Selection boats and superimendate measuring for segregating Mexican-American and Anglo-Stanon students surious specimens of the provident of the selection of the selection of the segregation of the selection of the segregation, arguing that people of Mexican decorat were biologically will to study the continuous efficient to Anglo students. Sell others recommended segregation for the sake of the Mexican students, so that they would not be unfairly compared with Anglo students. Despite the recommendations and mandates to segregate achoris, most rural high schools in Southern California were integrated between their districts could not affined to open new schools. Nonethelans, only a handful of Mexican-American students around high school diploston. A majority of Mexican-American students were often ministerized as "systemic"—a designation that pervented them from being procured to the next grade-and were personnel to deep out by school authorities. Regardiess of researching, is in clear that students were less progregated on the basis of rese and outstand origin, not language. The North Cavall Court rained in livers of the planticity, using Camming v. Search of Education (1995), which hold that if a wate violents the Fourturality Americans, the foliant government has the netherty to intervene. California have required achord distances to an open depter as for an possible", in previding an obsession to students to made the section of the latest to make the section of the same of the

**Mendeley** is a great way to organize, read and annotate sources.

(Mac, Windows, Linux, iOS, Android, and web; free with paid upgrades)

#### Key features:

- Manage PDFs by storing in easily-accessible folders
- Read, annotate, and highlight PDFs-notes are searchable
- ★ View documents offline and across platforms
- \* Automatically import and edit citation details
- Export bibliographies in several styles

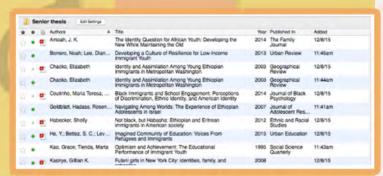


- 1. Sidebar: Offers many ways to browse the contents of your Evernote account
- Note List: Displays all of the notes in your Evernote account, with the must recently updated notes shown first. This is also where search results are displayed.
- Note Editor: Where you view and edit the note currently spected from the Note List. By default, your most recently updated note will be sisplayed when you launch; Puring the Committee of the Note o
- Search: Search your notes for knywords, locations, tags and more. Evernote searches
  the titles and contents of your notes, as well as text inside images attached to notes.
- j. New Note Button: Creates a new note in a specified notebook. When clicked, a blank note will appear in the Note Father where it can be edited immediately. You may also which the doub-down reems to the note, of the Button to select which individuals you want to create the note in.
- Activity Stream Button: Click to view your Activity Stream, which shows apportes
  that have occurred in your Shared Notes, Shared Notebooks and Joined Rolebooks.
- 7. Sync Button: Click to manually sync your Evernote account. Evernote automatically syncs regularly, so using this button is optimial. Since ensures that everything in your Evernote account is available anytime and anywhere that you have access to Evernote, including on your phore, tablet, computer and on the Web.
- Account Info Button: Click to add a new Evernote account, sign out, or view internation about your account, including your current monthly usage, your Evernote

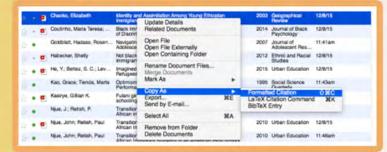
Source: https://evernote.com/evernote/guide/windows/#2



Mendeley can be used to search for and save journal articles.



The green dots indicate that the document hasn't been read yet, and the PDF symbols indicate that the file is saved onto your computer.



You can export citations in whatever format you like, making bibliographies easy to compile.

**Evernote** is useful for making to-do lists and helping you save ideas for later.

(Mac, Windows, iOS, Android, Windows Phone, and Blackberry; free with paid upgrades)

#### Key features:

Keep notes, to-do lists, reminders, voice notes, handwritten text, web pages, etc.

## RESOURCES & LINKS



The Academic Resource Center for study tips, time management advice, and other academic support



Request a Research Consultation



To download Scrivener



Subject and course guides (These also have contact info for subject librarians)



To download Mendeley



The GU Writing Center



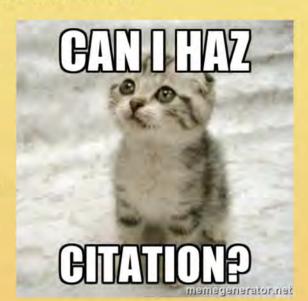
To download Evernote



How to format a bibliography (APA, MLA, Chicago, and AMA)

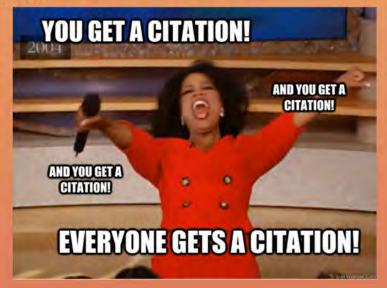
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