**The research paper consists of an introduction in which the writer clearly introduces the topic and informs his audience exactly which stance he intends to take; this stance is often identified as the**[**thesis statement**](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/)**. An important goal of the research paper is persuasion, which means the topic chosen should be debatable or controversial.**

**Things to think about:**

* What is the topic?
* Why is it significant?
* What background material is relevant?
* What is my thesis or purpose statement?
* What organizational plan will best support my purpose?

**Writing your introduction:**

* present relevant background or contextual material
* define terms or concepts when necessary
* explain the focus of the paper and your specific purpose
* reveal your plan of organization

**Writing your body:**

* Build your essay around points you want to make (i.e., don't let your sources organize your paper)
* Integrate your sources into your discussion
* Summarize, analyze, explain, and evaluate published work rather than merely reporting it
* Move up and down the "ladder of abstraction" from generalization to varying levels of detail back to generalization

**Writing your conclusion:**

* If the argument or point of your paper is complex, you may need to summarize the argument for your reader.
* If prior to your conclusion you have not yet explained the significance of your findings or if you are proceeding inductively, use the end of your paper to add your points up, to explain their significance.
* Move from a detailed to a general level of consideration that returns the topic to the context provided by the introduction.
* Perhaps suggest what about this topic needs further research.