EGR 108
Writing Research Papers: A Step-by-Step Procedure

The Preliminaries:
___ 1. Choose a topic
___ 2. Begin preliminary reading
___ 3. Restrict the subject
___ 4. Develop a preliminary thesis sentence

Gathering Data:
___ 1. Compile the working bibliography
___ 2. Prepare the bibliography on cards in correct form (e-cards)
___ 3. Begin extensive work in the library; be sure to check:
    ___ a. general bibliographies
    ___ b. trade bibliographies
    ___ c. indexes (books and collections, literature in periodicals, newspaper indexes, pamphlet indexes)
    ___ d. card catalogue
    ___ e. electronic data base sources

Taking Notes:
___ 1. Develop a preliminary outline [note: thesis and topic sentences should be your ideas, with research providing the support inside the paragraphs].
___ 2. Evaluate your source material; which is primary material and which is secondary material?
___ 3. Begin note-taking on cards (ecards with double-entry notes); identify completely each source as you go, including page numbers. For electronic sources, be sure to include the date you accessed the information.
___ 4. Avoid plagiarism—clearly distinguish between use of general ideas borrowed from a source, paraphrases of ideas from a source, and direct quotations from a source (all these must be footnoted).

Writing the Paper:
___ 1. Develop the final outline; test your outline.
___ 2. Prepare to write:
    ___ a. put your ecards in the order that your outline is in
    ___ b. decide on the proper tense for your paper.
___ 3. Write the rough draft; get a peer review.
___ 4. Edit; check your documentation carefully.
___ 5. Revise and rewrite.
___ 6. Word-process your paper according to your instructor's format (i.e., title page, outline, text of the paper, reference page, etc.).
___ 7. Proofread.

Source: Purdue University Writing Center: http://www.97.com/writing.html; with emendations by the EGR 108 faculty.