

## Planning Checklist: Research Assignments

It is important to collaborate with librarians, anticipate student stumbling blocks, and have a list of resources ready to guide students successfully through the research process. Use this checklist to assist in the planning process.

### ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS

#### General Assignment Considerations

- Relate assignment to some aspect of course subject matter or learning objectives.
- Increase understanding of both the subject and process for locating information with the structured assignment.

#### Encouraging Time Management

- Scaffold assignment activities to build upon each other, culminating in the final project.
- Provide a timeline to inform students how far along they should be by certain dates; set deadlines which allow students sufficient time for exploration, research, drafts and final production.

#### Type of Assignment

- Experiment with short, less-complex essays or projects instead of a term paper (article summaries, scholarly paper analysis, annotated bibliographies, poster presentation, etc.) and specify the number of sources required.

#### Modeling and Grading

- Provide models of exemplary research projects.
- Provide grading rubric so instructor expectations are understood.

#### Involve a librarian in the design and research guidance phases

- Confirm that published research exists to support the research assignment and recommended sources are available at the college library (online or in-person).
- Require each student to research a different topic to ensure the library offers enough print resources.
- Suggest sources that align with students' levels (reading ability, knowledge of subject matter, and search skills).
- Avoid strict and burdensome limits (too many restrictions at once such as publication date, word counts, material type can make research nearly impossible for students).
- Set reasonable expectations about the use of print sources versus online sources (sometimes, the most recent information is no longer available in print, e.g. many government publications are now only online).

### RESEARCH GUIDANCE Provide your college library or the MCCCD Libraries link: <http://libguides.maricopa.edu>

#### Getting Started (General Knowledge / Research Process and Questions)

- Understand the Research Process (e.g. [Kuhlthau's Information Search Process](#); [ACRL Information Literacy Standards](#))
- Define research assignment terminology so that it does not create ambiguity (e.g. handouts state that students cannot use the Internet yet students must locate articles in the library's online subscription databases).

#### Searching for Information

- Direct where to find a variety of resources including digital (library databases, catalog, blogs, wikis, websites, etc.)
- Recommend and require specific sources (subject library databases, reference materials, scholarly sources, etc.)
- Review search strategies (Boolean operators, full-text, scholarly limiters, advanced searching, subject searching)
- Permit students to change their topics based on the reality of their research experience.

#### Evaluating Information

- Require appropriate authority, content, and timeliness (use evaluation checklists such as the [CRAAP test](#)).

#### Using Information

- Inform students how to avoid plagiarism (e.g. [Purdue's Online Writing Lab: Preventing Plagiarism](#))
- Address note-taking, paraphrasing, summarizing, and ethical scholarship.
- Provide citation guidance—[Citation Help: Maricopa Community College Libraries](#)
- Give technical "how to" instructions for researching, using, creating and evaluating digital sources such as blogs, wikis, or streaming videos.

### SUPPORT

- Include links and contact information for Librarian(s), Tech Support, and Tutoring services in addition to your own contact information.
- Invite your college librarian to class (shows students that even you are asking the librarian for assistance).
- Connect students to their college library: [My Library: Maricopa Community College Libraries](#).
- Connect students to tutorials such as [Research Tips: Maricopa Community College Libraries](#).
- Demonstrate support services in class, such as [Ask a Librarian 24/7 Chat](#).