

HOW TO DO RESEARCH

Lecture One

Research assignment or scientific research?

Being a student at the university involves many active learning activities. One of the most important types of active and responsible learning is research. Now, many confuse two forms of research: school research papers and scientific research. Which one are you involved with, at this point? Both are types of research. They have a lot in common in the way they are conducted, but you can identify the difference in these descriptions and guess the answer:

Scientific research involves **creating original knowledge** through the **direct** investigation of an aspect of reality (e.g., social, biological, physical, historical, literary phenomena) using rigorous descriptive or experimental scientific methods. This type of research is what you will be required to conduct for your Master's degree.

A **university (school) research assignment**, on the other hand, is what you are **asked (assigned) to do in the different courses** that you are taking as a student. Instead of creating original knowledge through direct contact with the phenomenon you are studying, you are required to

- create knowledge (original or not),
- ONLY through **gathering information** about that phenomenon,

- then you have to perform one or more of the following:
 - analysis,
 - evaluation,
 - synthesis,
 - comparing and contrasting,
 - or else, depending on what is required by the teacher,
- and then present your work in your own academic words.

Yet, this is not as boring as it may sound; it is actually as fun as you want it to be. You have to be **creative**, and your **intellectual personality** has to show. that's what makes it **original** and **fun**.

The steps, in a nutshell, are as follows:

- Choosing a topic
- Finding and evaluating resources
- Taking notes through annotated bibliographies
- Making an outline
- Writing up in an academic English
- Citing sources (throughout your text and at the end of it)
- Formatting (depending on the recommended style)

DO NOT PANIC! A separate lesson is to be devoted to each one of these steps.