

# Assignment Calculator

This "calculator" gives you a breakdown of how much time you should ideally spend on each part of your research paper or essay.

Ex: If you have 20 days before the due date, 10% of that time (2 days) should be devoted to identifying and developing your topic, while 20% (4 days) should be reserved for reading and evaluating sources.



## Identify & develop your topic: 10%

1. Choose a topic
2. Write a "question" that your paper will address
3. Develop that question into a defensible thesis statement

## Search for and collect sources: 10%

1. Use search engines, the library, and research guides to find articles, books, etc. relevant to your topic.
2. Make sure that your selected sources are peer-reviewed and academically credible, not only "popular" sources



## Read and evaluate your sources: 20%



1. Read through the research sources you've compiled
2. Take notes while reading - use tools to highlight and comment on PDFs
3. Write down 2-3 main ideas from each source
  - a. This could take the form of an annotated bibliography if one is required
4. Do more research to fill in any gaps if necessary



## Outline your paper: 10%

1. Briefly outline each section (usually by paragraph) of the paper
2. Most papers follow a general structure - they have an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion
3. Revisit and revise your thesis as necessary based on your new knowledge and research

## Write the first draft: 30%

1. If you have a good outline, writing the first draft will be like filling in the blanks to logically connect each part of the outline.
2. Focus on forming solid ideas that connect to and support your thesis rather than on writing grammatically perfect sentences.
3. If you don't want to add the in-text citations as you write, insert a placeholder as a reminder for yourself to go back and add them.
4. You don't have to start at the beginning. If writing the introduction feels hard, start with the body paragraphs and then revisit the intro.



## Revise and edit your draft: 15%

1. Now is the time to fix any grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.
2. Add transition words and sentences if you haven't already to make your ideas and sentences flow more smoothly.
3. Book an appointment with an LRC coach for a second perspective - another set of eyes can often catch things that you might not



## Check formatting and citations: 5%

1. Double-check that you've followed the assignment's formatting and citation guidelines. This includes:
  - a. In-text citations - replace placeholders with proper citations if necessary
  - b. Works cited/bibliography page
  - c. Text formatting

