

I love research projects. I wrote my first in my junior year of high school, when I researched and discussed the progressive revelation of the Jewish and Christian God throughout the Old Testament. My second paper came my senior year of high school, where in order to graduate I had to research and write a twenty-page paper on the topic of my choice. I examined pacifism in light of Christianity, and admonished the Church for not living according to Jesus' nonviolent ministry. I ended up writing thirty pages on that topic. Finally, this year, I wrote a paper on the existence of school segregation in our country now.

Over the course of these projects, I have learned and developed a research method that has helped me write effectively and efficiently, and through this last project I learned how to utilize a library of a major University, a resource I did not possess in high school.

I begin my research by sketching my thoughts onto a word document. I put together a positive and a negative thesis for my topic, so that if my research turns up data or information that surprises me, I will have a thesis ready for it. After this step, I begin finding resources. In the past, I was relegated to my school's dingy library and the internet, and ended up having to buy most of my sources myself. With my project this semester, however, I did not have to worry about that, because I was able to use the library for many of my sources. I used the online database to find many peer-reviewed journal publications that pertained to my topic, and because I go to Rice, I was able to read them for free, something I was not able to do in years past. I also used the library to check out several books that were extremely helpful for my paper. I found a whole section on the third floor that only contained books about educational inequity, and I checked out four books from that section.

After I find my sources, I make notecards containing one piece of information each, and on each notecard I note the source, and whether the piece of information is a quote, summary, or

paraphrase. Once I have combed through all of my sources, I make a detailed outline, which I quickly follow with a rough draft. I usually send my rough draft to one or two people for editing, and then I write my final draft. I put the finishing touches on the paper (headers, page numbers, etc.), and I read it through one more time before finally submitting it.

I love this process so much, and am so grateful to go to a school that provides me opportunities to write these papers, and that I also go to a school with an extensive library system with huge online and print resources. I cannot wait to continue writing and using Fondren as my source.