# A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing a Research Paper

### **Step One: The Preliminaries**

Choose a topic Begin preliminary reading Restrict or limit your subject Develop a preliminary thesis sentence

# **Step Two: Gathering Data**

Compile a working bibliography Prepare the bibliography entry on 3" x 5" cards in correct bibliographical form Begin extensive work in the library; be sure to check general bibliographies trade bibliographies indexes card catalogue computer resources

### **Step Three: Taking Notes**

Develop a preliminary outline Evaluate source material: which is primary material and which is secondary material? Begin taking notes, preferably on 4" x 6" cards, which can be arranged and sorted Avoid plagiarism by labeling your notes as quoted, paraphrased, or summarized

# Step Four: Writing the Paper

Develop the final outline; test your outline Prepare to write: put note cards in the same order as the outline decide on the proper tense for the paper Write the rough draft Revise and rewrite Edit; check documentation carefully Type the paper according to the instructor's format Proofread

Remember that the tutors in the Writing Center will be happy to help you with any step in the research paper writing process.