Large research papers are daunting tasks for students. Students need time and guidance to produce a complex paper and help with the intellectual work you are expecting. Guide all the domains of knowledge students must combine: the genre and conventions of the finished product; the content; the writing process; and the audience and purpose. The following outline features ideas for breaking a research paper into smaller chunks that help students see the process for going from topic to final product. After the outline are two handouts, one to help you break down your smaller assignment into concrete steps for your students to follow and one to help you plan how these assignments will fit into your syllabus.

I. Topic Selection

✓ Provide low-stakes activities or assignments that let students investigate the assignment, brainstorm together, and define narrower topics that can be researched within the time constraints.
✓ Frame an assignment that has students describe their intentions, and lets you intervene early in the process if necessary. Possible genres for this kind of work include: a conference proposal, answer to a call for submissions, grant description, etc.

II. Identify and Analyze Sources

✓ Identifying sources early in the process helps ensure that students are engaged in research prior to the drafting stage. What do students need to know to identify possible sources? Can they do this kind of work together or share their findings with their peers?
✓ Consider preliminary assignments like an annotated bibliography, resource lists, Wikipedia entry, etc.

III. Draft to Think

✓ Sometimes it helps to have students produce multiple products from the research they are doing. A literature review, journalistic summary, or even a TED-Talk can help students fully understand their sources for application in a final paper.
✓ Have students read articles, previous student research papers, or even popular sources that showcase the kind of writing needed for your discipline’s research papers.
✓ Structure deadlines in ways that get students working on meaningful chunks rather than writing the paper from beginning to end. What can they do first that will help them do the rest? Perhaps: describe the problem, explain the method, represent the data in a visual form, write the analysis of a single paragraph, outlines, mind maps, etc.

IV. Peer Review

✓ Peer Review can be used throughout the research/writing process to improve the content or argument, challenge the analysis, or refine the format of the final product.
✓ Use rubrics to guide the work you want students to do in peer review. Consider assignments like having the peer write a summary of the argument, represent the data in a different way, or write out the comments as a reviewer in your discipline would.
✓ Include author’s responses to reviewers’ suggestions along with their revision to teach students how the review process actually works in your discipline.
### Break a complex task into components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name the complex skill or task you want students to learn in your course:</th>
<th>For example, students will make write a memo suggesting a solution to a problem common in this industry and include appropriate research that supports their proposed solution.</th>
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<tr>
<td>What do students have to be able to do to complete that complex task successfully (the outline above may provide a helpful starting point)?</td>
<td>For example, 1) <strong>Topic exploration</strong>: read and situate specific issues in the larger context 2) <strong>Identify and analyze sources</strong>: recognize peer reviewed journals in the disciplines; use data bases and key terms; read titles and abstracts to narrow results; track sources forward and mine bibliographies, 3) <strong>Draft to think</strong>: read articles for structure not just content; shift audiences and purposes; create visual representations of information; organize information or argument logically 4) <strong>Peer Review</strong>: follow arguments made by others and notice gaps in reasoning or information; think like the target audience; respond to readers concerns by making appropriate authorial choices.</td>
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Map the timeline for your syllabus that teaches the skills for this assignment:

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<tr>
<th>Day/text</th>
<th>Homework preparation</th>
<th>In class activity</th>
<th>Kind of scaffold</th>
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Outline by Keith Beard
Graphic Organizers by Margaret Marshall
Compiled by Sayler Hasty
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Office of University Writing
Auburn University
3436 RBD Library
Auburn, AL 36849

334-844-7475
www.auburn.edu/writing