

The LSS 'How to' Series



B1

What to do when you get your assignment

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There's no need to be overwhelmed when you get your assignment! The whole task will seem easier if you take the time at the beginning to get a careful start on the project. Following these five steps will get you on the right track:

1. Read the assignment brief
2. Choose a topic
3. Formulate research questions
4. Make a thesis statement
5. Plan your time

This guide will help you with some tips on doing each of these steps carefully. By the time you start actually writing, it will be much easier.

Assignment First Steps

1. Read the assignment brief. This seems obvious, but do it carefully — there's no sense wasting time because you didn't pay enough attention at the very beginning! Read the exact words of the assignment very closely and be absolutely sure of what is required. If you're not certain, don't be afraid to ask for help.

2. Choose a topic. What is it that you want to know? What do you find interesting? What do you think you might have something to talk about? Take your time and think about it — a little extra effort and time now might save you a lot later in the process. You don't need to be specific right now — a general area will be enough to begin your work. It may be worth thinking of multiple options just in case.

Assignment First Steps

3. Formulate research questions. Again, what do *you* want to know? What interests you about the topic? What questions have not yet been answered? Bring in your own knowledge and personal experience. These questions will guide you through all your planning and writing.

4. Make a thesis statement. It should be something you can prove or disprove. It should be the right level of complexity to fit the scope and word count of your assignment. When you start writing, make sure every paragraph you write has something to do with the thesis.

5. Plan your time. Break down each task into sub-tasks — in fact, break everything down as much as you need to — and plan time for each step. Make sure to include extra time in case anything goes wrong. The more work you put into planning, the easier the actual writing will be.