Ten tips on writing research papers

1. Don't try to squeeze everything you know about a subject into your research paper. Be judicious. Exercise restraint. Kill your darlings.

2. Know the difference between personal opinion and objective viewpoint, both yours and those of the authors you are reading and analyzing.

3. Proofread carefully. Don't rely on electronic spell-check. The best ways to proofread your work are to ask a qualified friend to read and comment on it, and to read it aloud to yourself – you'll hear your mistakes.

4. Use active voice in your writing: "Melchizedek ate the Cherry Ripe." Not "The Cherry Ripe was eaten by Melchizedek."

5. Always record and cite your sources. If you paraphrase an idea from an author, you must cite the source in a footnote or endnote. Be a willing citation slave, and one day they will be your slave.

6. Keep a journal. Write down your thoughts day and night, record quotations that appeal to you, make a note of cartoons, diagrams or ideas you can use later. If it's not written it will soon be forgotten.

7. Postgraduate students come from many backgrounds. Don't be discouraged if some of your cohorts have a law degree, or a Master's degree in creative writing, or won that game show last week. You have a place here.

8. College librarians are your friends. They are a treasure trove of information. They love a research challenge. Seek their help when you're struggling with databases or online catalogues, or you can't find that book.

9. If you're lagging behind or struggling with looming assessment deadlines, don't wait to ask for help. Connect with your supervisor, faculty, research support staff, writing tutors, graduates, and friends.

10. For coursework students, map each class and assessment deadline on a calendar. For research degree students, map your major tasks/deadlines, and divide into smaller, manageable tasks. Focus on today's work.