**Tips Specifically for Research/Term Papers**

**Research papers aren’t the same as persuasive arguments. Therefore:**

* Don’t include your opinion
* Don’t try to appeal to readers’ emotions
* All statements need to be based on facts (not opinions)
* You must acknowledge and give credit to the sources from which you obtained your facts (via in-text citations)

**Bad habits learned from modern documentaries:**

* Broad generalizations

“Since the beginning of time…”, “It has always been known that…”, “All throughout history…” These kinds of statements sound impressive in documentaries, but they are impossible to prove, can usually be disproven, and don’t tell the reader anything new. Don’t use them!

* Foretelling the future

Most documentaries make use of an omniscient narrator who predicts what will happen: “It would soon come to pass that…”, “His success would not last…”, “Soon, King so-and-so would be presented with a challenge…”, “It was only a matter of time before…” Avoid writing this way. Remember, you are trying to prove a point (your thesis) by presenting facts that support it; no need to make yourself sound extra important by “foretelling” something that has already happened.

**When in doubt, use the Sam Spade approach: “Just the facts.”**

* Imagine you’re a private investigator, like the fictional character Sam Spade (*Maltese Falcon*). Being a capable, no-frills P.I., you want to dispense with conjecturing, emotional appeals, and superfluous claptrap. Your paper is “just the facts”; no lofty omniscient pontification, no emotional appeals, no opinions. You are by-passing all the fluff, remaining true to your mission: support the thesis.
* Let the facts do the talking. One reason you don’t need to convince readers through emotional pleas and “should” statements is because **the facts** will convince readers of the validity of your thesis. Let the facts speak for themselves. That’s the point behind doing all that research! You’re a fact-finder ☺