

## KEEPING A RESEARCH JOURNAL

### Explanation:

A research journal records the growth of your knowledge over time, in light of your contact with reading material across a subject or research project. In this way, it documents your interaction or dialogue with other texts. Your research journal should pay particular attention to the moments when your understanding switches direction, and should include some critical reflection. That is, the research journal is a record of what you are thinking about your research, rather than simply a list of notes about the texts you have read, or the things you have done.

The benefits of keeping a research journal include:

- **Writing practice:** it keeps you writing with regular entries, so you develop your research and writing skills over time
- **Clarification:** the process of writing can help clarify ideas
- **Building blocks:** your journal entries often form the foundations of a larger research project, as they document different stages in your research process. This can be particularly helpful for projects that involve documentation on methodology and literature reviews
- **Reflection:** the process of reflecting back on what you said earlier and letting the reader know when and why you changed your mind means that you are thinking about your research process as you write. In effect, you are drawing a map of your thought process in the midst of the process itself.

**Please note:** sometimes lecturers refer to blog posts as a research journal. In this case, you are usually required to write a short post on a weekly topic, as opposed to keep a record of your ongoing progress on one research topic. Check with your teacher about which is meant.

### Other resources:

Keep a research journal  
Learning Support, Monash University  
<http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/hdr/build/3.1.5.html>

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