WHAT NOT TO DO: RESEARCHING

Sure, looking at what to do is helpful, but sometimes looking at what not to do can be of even greater help. So, what shouldn't you do while researching?

In general, while researching:

- Don't plagiarize.
- Don't research blindly. Figure out a specific research question.
- Don't procrastinate. Get started early.
- Don't have your thesis or opinions set in stone prior to researching. The point of doing research is to learn something new.
- It can be hard to research if your topic is too broad. Don't have an unnecessarily broad topic; narrow it down--and keep narrowing it further as you research.
- Don't use uncredited resources. If you don't know about the credibility, visit the research desk or ask your professor.
- Don't assume your readers find your resource to be credible. Instead, make an argument for their credibility when you use them as a resource. For example, "Ross Douthat, the youngest column head in the history of the *New York Times*, says _____ about the use of the Oxford Comma within journalism."
- Don't forget to keep track of sources as you are finding them; that will allow you to cite sources accurately.
- Don't rely on a single resource. Multiple resources ensures credibility and will allow you to see the same issue from multiple perspectives.
- Did we mention not to plagiarize?
- Don't allow yourself to think that the research only happens before you write. Like most of the writing process, research is recursive; drafting will bring up more questions that you'll need to research.
- Don't feel compelled to read the academic articles. Read the abstract, and if it looks relevant, read the relevant portions of the paper.
- Also, don't plagiarize.