

How to Do Very Well on That Pro-Life Research Paper
**The Secret? Use Materials from the National Right to Life
Educational Trust Fund**

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So you're barely back from summer vacation and your teacher asks you to do a report or a research paper on a current event. You're pro-life, you'd like to a paper on some aspect of the abortion issue, but how do you get started and what signposts do you need to observe?

Begin by accessing the National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund. The Trust Fund conducts first-rate research, digs through newspapers and government reports and medical journals, and assembles it all in an easily accessible, easy to understand format. And any reader can rely on our accuracy. You can find our materials on the NRLC web page: www.nrlc.org.

Of course you'll still have the responsibility to write the paper, watch your grammar, and turn in your paper in a timely fashion. But the factsheets and brochures from the Trust Fund will provide you with the kind of accurate information and arguments you need to prepare a top-notch paper.

Here's some practical advice and examples of materials available from the Trust Fund and suggestions how to think through the way you assemble your paper.

Some Hints on Choosing a Topic

*Deep or Wide? Do you want to give your reader a general background on the topic or do you want to write on one aspect of the debate in depth?

If you choose to go general, you'll basically just be introducing the topic and outlining some of its broad ramifications. But you can still show why the issue is important and address some of the most salient facts such as the number of abortions, the significance of that number, the reasons why women have abortions, who has abortions, the profits that drive the abortion industry, and a sense of the humanity of the fetus. Trust Fund factsheets like *The Basics* and *Abortion Statistics* are great resources here.

*Life has many facets. If you decide you want to look at the abortion issue in depth, there are many possible topic areas on which the Trust Fund has done extensive research.

Do you want to focus on the humanity of the unborn child? The full color, fully documented a baby's first months brochure will give you the facts you need to make a compelling case. You can study stem cells, partial-birth abortion, or look at the history of the pro-life movement. Examine *Abortion's Economic Impact* or *Abortion's Impact on Minorities*.

*Focus, Focus. If you're not careful, your topic on, say, stem cell research will overlap into fetal pain and next thing you know you're discussing abortion in the Roman Empire. Once you decide on a topic, make sure you don't stray into other side arguments, however interesting they may be.

Doing Your Research

*Whom can you trust? Information on the Internet is plentiful but not always reliable. Make sure some scientific journal, medical text, respected research institute, or established news outlet ultimately backs up your source. Factsheets and other Trust Fund materials such as *Abortion: Some Medical Facts*, which can be found on our web page, are well footnoted from solid original sources you can feel comfortable citing.

*Write it down. When you find some information relevant to the topic you've chosen, write down exactly what your source says and fully document the original source. That means saying no more and no less than what the source says (if the source says the baby swims at seven weeks, don't say the baby does the breast stroke) and indicating the author, the name of the article, the publication, the date, and any further publication data (e.g., journal volume and number, name of editor, etc.).

If you cite *Roe v. Wade* or any of the other High Court abortion cases, make sure you characterize these correctly by checking the Trust Fund's Supreme Court Decisions: Abortion factsheet.

* See what the other side says. The Trust Fund's Abortion Reasons & Arguments factsheet offers responses to the most relevant arguments of the other side. Sometimes those on the other side will even give you information that will help you make your case. For instance, the strongest material on the Trust Fund's factsheet on Planned Parenthood exposing the organization's abortion agenda comes from PPFA itself.

Assembling Your Information

* Assemble Your Sources. Get all your notes and resources together. Take a look at what you've got. Are there any gaps in your research? If you're looking at the history of abortion, do you have the Trust Fund's information on the History of National Right to Life, a key participant in the battle over abortion?

* Think through your arguments. What are the points you need to emphasize to best make your case? What is the logical order of your arguments? Do you have evidence for the arguments you intend to make?

* Outline your Paper. Your teacher is your best guide here and he or she probably has a specific format in mind. It's often as simple as identifying your thesis, lining up the main points of your argument, supplying the evidence you need to make those points, and then summing up your research in a conclusion.

Factsheets such as the *Teens & Abortion: Why Parents Should Know* and *The Pain of the Unborn* not only supply you with the facts, but also provide good examples of how a topic can be organized and can help you spotlight the strongest and most relevant arguments.

Writing Your Paper

*Pay attention to the basics. You may have a great argument and possess the most compelling evidence. But if you can't express it in a clear and concise way, you'll impress no one. Follow standard rules of grammar so that subjects and verbs agree, sentences don't run on, proper nouns are capitalized, etc. Check your spelling. Have someone else read your paper or read it out loud to see if any phrases or sentences are jarring or confusing.

*Know your audience. Quotes from Scripture, Pope John Paul II's "Gospel of Life," etc. may fit in nicely to your paper if you are encouraging people of faith to take up the pro-life cause. In a public school, however, it may be more effective to argue the pro-life cause from a human rights or civil rights perspective. Not everyone recognizes the same religious authority, but your teachers will take note of material from medical texts and journals about the development of the unborn child or abortion's physical and psychological effects on women.

*Stick to the Facts. If you don't have a source for some statement you want to make, don't make it. If you have conflicting sets of data, get the sources for each one and see which one holds up best.

Know the difference between an "assertion" and an "argument." "Abortion hurts women" is an assertion. It may be true enough, but once you make this assertion, you must back up your point with argument and evidence. In this case, the facts and documentation needed to back up such a claim can be found in Trust Fund's Abortion's Physical Complications or Deaths Associated with RU-486 factsheets.

Resist the temptation to relate personal anecdotes unless they are absolutely relevant and be careful about unwarranted extrapolations.

*Keep your cool. Never personally attack and avoid hyperbole. Give opposing arguments their due both because that is being intellectually honest and because it tells your teacher he or she does not need to view your solid counter-evidence with suspicion.

Can we guarantee you'll get an A+ on your research paper? Sorry, no. A great deal of that is still up to you.

But with brochures and factsheets from the National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund, you'll have the ideas and information you need to address some of the hottest topics in America today. You'll be better and smarter for it. And that's what education is all about.

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