

Student Handbook for Research



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**Originally created by the staff members at First Colonial High School
in Virginia Beach, VA**

Committee Members:

Jennifer Kelly

Jane Amelon

Mary Benson

Renee Brandt

Linda Durkee

Joan Grimes

Caroline Myers

Donna Spence

Elizabeth Thompson

Philippa Vanier

Mary Wales

Martha Wheless



**Southampton High School
Courtland, VA**

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Five Steps to Research

Step 1 - Planning

- Make sure you understand the assignment.
- If you are permitted, select a topic.
- Narrow the topic.
- Determine what kind of information you will need to complete the assignment.
- Conduct preliminary research for an overview of the topic.
- Write a thesis statement.

Step 2 - Searching for Information

- Determine the number and types of sources your teacher requires.
- Decide which sources may contain information helpful to you.
- Come up with a strategy to search in OPAC, online databases, and/or the World Wide Web.
- Use your search strategy to find your sources. Take the books off the shelf and / or access sites electronically.
- Continue your search strategy to actually find the information you need within these sources (use the index, search engines, etc.).
- Evaluate the validity and relevance of each resource.

Step 3 - Using the Information Found

- Write a source card for each source you think you will use.
- Read, hear or view the information you have found
- Evaluate the information.
- Write data cards, placing only one fact on each data card.

Step 4 - Putting It All Together

- Organize the information you have gathered.
- Revise your thesis if necessary.
- Write your paper or create your presentation.
- Edit and proofread.
- Check for any possible plagiarism.

Step 5 - Evaluating What You Have Done

- Did you satisfy the requirements of the assignment?
- Is your information accurate?
- Is your final product well organized?

Planning: Selecting a Topic

- If you have a choice, **select a topic that is of interest to you.** You will write a better paper if you care about your topic.
 - Example: *Paranormal Experiences*
- Think about the length of your paper. Is your topic too broad or too specific to be adequately covered in the number of pages you'll be writing? If so, **narrow your topic.**
 - Example: *Paranormal Experiences* cannot be adequately covered in a 5-page paper. A 500-page book might not even be long enough to completely cover that topic. Maybe *UFOs* is a topic that is more reasonable for a paper of that length. However, even *UFOs* might be too broad. You'll need to find a specific aspect of *UFOs* that interests you that you could adequately cover in the 5 pages.
- You'll need to know something about your topic in order to narrow sufficiently, so it's time for **pre-research.** Go to the Library Media Center, and briefly research your topic in basic sources to find out general information about your topic. Do not worry about taking notes yet.
 - Example: Search in encyclopedias and other preliminary sources under your topic: *UFOs*. You'll discover that there are many subtopics within the topic, such as *alien abductions*, *alien sightings*, and *the Roswell incident*.
- Now that you know about your topic, **choose ONE SINGLE ASPECT of your topic** as the focus of your paper. You may find that you still need to narrow further as your research progresses.
 - Example: *The Roswell incident* may be narrowed to *The government cover-up of the Roswell incident*.

Planning: Writing a Thesis Statement

What is a thesis statement?

A thesis statement is a one-sentence explanation of the argument that you will develop in your paper.

Why should your essay contain a thesis statement?

- To better organize your argument
- To provide the reader with a “guide” to your argument

What are the characteristics of a good thesis statement?

- Identifies the subject of your essay
- Indicates your conclusions/ opinions about the topic
- Indicates the organization of the paper

What are the steps to developing a thesis statement?

1. Start with your narrowed topic.
Example: The Roswell Incident
2. Indicate the main idea on which you plan to focus. (This main idea should be something with which people could reasonably agree or disagree.)
Example: The government cover-up of the Roswell incident.
3. Take a position of the topic.
Example: The Roswell incident occurred, but the government tried to hide it.
4. Indicate the organization of your paper.
Example: There is substantial evidence that the government has been trying to suppress the Roswell incident, in which an alien spacecraft crashed on a farm in New Mexico in 1947.

Methods of organization in a thesis statement:

1. Listing the Items

- *Example:* The government has been trying to suppress the Roswell incident, in which an alien spacecraft crashed on a farm in New Mexico in 1947, as evidenced by the wreckage, eyewitness reports, and the Air Force's actions
- *Rationale:* This thesis statement lists what your main ideas in the paper will be. It is a bit lengthy, but your reader will know where you are going.

2. Plural Noun

- *Example:* There is substantial evidence that the government has been trying to suppress the Roswell incident, in which an alien spacecraft crashed on a farm in New Mexico in 1947.
- *Rationale:* The word "evidence" is plural. The reader knows that multiple pieces of evidence will be the organizing factor in this essay.

3. Subordinate Clauses Indicating Relationships

- *Example:* If one analyzes the government's actions and apparent inactions regarding the Roswell incident, one could conclude that there has been a suppression of evidence in which an alien spacecraft crashed on a farm in New Mexico in 1947.
- *Rationale:* This is perhaps the most mature method of writing a thesis statement because it shows conclusions drawn by your higher level of thinking.

Searching for Information

1. Determine the number and type of resources your teacher requires.

Sometimes, teachers will require that you use a certain number of print resources and a certain number of online resources. Consider these specifications prior to beginning to search for resources. Refer to any handouts your teacher has provided for these requirements.

2. Determine the types of sources that may be helpful to you.

The place to start your search for information is the LMC - the Library Media Center. Here you will find print sources (books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, etc.), video and audio sources (CDs, DVDs, etc.), and electronic sources (web sites or online databases).

What source of information is best for my topic?

- Historical Topics - For information about something that happened approximately a year or more in the past, use books, videos, CDs, online databases, and web sites.
- Current Topics - For information about something that happened more recently than approximately a year ago, use print magazines and newspapers, online databases, and web sites.
- Remember that some topics can be both historical and current. For example, abortion is a topic that has been researched and written about for many years, but it still continues to be a topic that is very current.

3. Decide on a search strategy.

- Print, video, and audio resources- use *Alexandria Researcher* (card catalog)
 - *Alexandria Researcher* is found on the two computers next to the librarian's computer.
 - You may search by author, title, subject, or keyword.
 - Remember that there may not be a whole book on your subject, but information may be included in a book whose subject is broader.
Example: A sports book may include information on baseball. Use the *index* or *table of contents* to find this information.
 - Not all subjects are listed in Alexandria using words you might expect. If the first words you search don't work, try a synonym. *Example:* for cars, try automobiles.

- Web Sites
 - Always use a *search engine* (Google, etc.) or *subject directory* (Yahoo).
 - Figure out the important ideas and words that relate to your subject. They must be spelled correctly.
 - If you want to search for a phrase (two or more words together), put those words inside of quotation marks. Example: "gun control" or "rock and roll."
 - Use the words **AND**, **OR**, or **NOT** to refine your search when using more than one search term. Remember using **AND** and **NOT** will lower your number of results, while using **OR** will increase the number of hits you get.
 - Example:* tobacco AND cigarettes = *only* sources that have information about *both* topics.
 - Example:* tobacco OR alcohol = *any* sources that have information about *either* topic.
 - Example:* Indians NOT Native Americans = *only* sources with information about Indians from India (*not* Native Americans).
- Online Databases
 - Definition: Online databases are valuable resources that you can access through the Internet; however, they are not web sites. They are subscription resources, meaning that the state or school system pays for you to be able to access them.
 - They include encyclopedia articles; reference articles; current (as well as older) magazine, newspaper, and scholarly journal articles; photographs and images; links to pre-screened web sites; current statistics; and other types of information.
 - Each database has its own search engine. Use the same search strategy here that you would use on an Internet search engine.
 - When you find an article that will be useful to you, you can email it to your personal email account.
 - At this time we do not subscribe to online databases in Southampton County. However, you have free access to databases through Find It Virginia and the Blackwater Regional Library. See the SHS library website for more details.

4. Locate the resources and evaluate them.

Searching for Information: Evaluating Resources

All resources should be evaluated for relevancy and accuracy. Use the following criteria to make your judgments.

The Author

- Is this person qualified to be writing this information? Is he an expert or just someone who thinks he is? An included biography of the person (or at least his or her credentials) is a good sign.
- Is there a way to contact the person or organization who created the resource?
- Is there any reason to suspect that the person responsible for the resource is biased and/or is trying to promote his own agenda?

Currency

- When was the resource created?
- When was the resource last updated or revised?
- How current is the information (if currency is important to your topic)?

Bibliography or Works Cited List

- Is there a list of sources that the person or organization used to create the resource?
- If sources are cited, check them to verify that they are legitimate.

Appearance

- Does it look like the author took time creating the resource? Beware of any resource that has typos or that looks sloppy.
- Is the resource user-friendly?

Multiple sources

- Cross-referencing means checking your facts for accuracy by using more than one resource.
- If two or more resources agree on the information, then the information is probably accurate.
- If the sources do not agree, try to determine which source is trustworthier using the above factors, and/or try to find another resource.
- Try to find print as well as audiovisual and electronic materials in order to verify the accuracy of the information found.

Searching For Information: Evaluating Web Sites

When you come to the Library Media Center, you know that the books on the shelves are there because they are accurate and reliable sources of information. Unfortunately, you do not have the same assurance about information found on web sites. It is up to you to be an evaluator of all web sites that you find. Below are some criteria to consider in addition to those listed on the previous page.

The conditions listed below should alert you to be very cautious...

- Inactive links or links to poor sites
- No author (remember—anyone can create a web site, including children!)
- No date created or updated

Recommended Sites

Take advantage of links to recommended, prescreened sites from reliable sources such as online databases (Gale, Grolier Online, etc.).

The Web Address

| The Domain | Stands For . . . | Description |
|------------|-------------------------|---|
| .com | Commercial | Someone has paid to establish this site. There may be a bias or an agenda behind the information given. |
| .net | Internet Source | Basically the same as a .com address, and the same rules apply. |
| .biz | Business | This and other new commercial domain names are being added, and the rules above apply. |
| .ac | College or University | This site could be the work of either a student or a professor. Look for the author's credentials. |
| .edu | School or University | Again, is the author a student, teacher, or professor? Check the author's qualifications. |
| .k12 | Kindergarten-12th Grade | This is probably a site generated in an elementary, middle, or high school. Is the author a student or teacher? |
| .gov | Government | Contains information published by the government and is usually reliable; however, there still may be a bias. |
| .mil | Military | This is a government-sponsored site, so the rules for a .gov site apply. |
| .org | Organization | Consider the organization involved. Some .org sites are excellent, while others are biased. |

Using the Information Found: Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using someone else's idea and pretending it is your own. Even if you rewrite the actual words, you can still be guilty of plagiarism. When you write a research paper, you are working with the ideas of others; therefore, you must give them credit. "When you use another's idea, whether from a book, a lecture, a Web page, a friend's paper, or any other source, and whether you quote the words or restate the idea in your own words, you must give that person credit with a citation. No source may elect not to be cited" (Harris 132-3).

Southampton High School's Stance on Plagiarism:

When term papers or projects of major importance are assigned, the standard definition of plagiarism shall apply. Whenever evidence exists that a student has committed an error in judgment concerning cheating, the student may expect a grade of zero (0) on the work in question. Continued cheating will result in suspension. (Found in the 2012-2013 Southampton High School Student Handbook, page 17).

Plagiarism comes in many forms:

- Downloading or buying a complete research paper
- Cutting and pasting portions of articles or sites to create a paper
- Translating a foreign article or web site into another language and using it as your own
- Failing to use quotation marks around all words directly quoted
- Changing some words, but copying basic ideas or phrases
- Paraphrasing or summarizing ideas without giving credit

When do you need to give credit?

- When you copy an exact word or phrase
- When you use or build on someone else's ideas
- When you use or refer to someone else's words or ideas that you found in a printed, audio-visual, or electronic source or learned through a conversation or email
- When you reproduce any chart, picture, diagram, etc.

When is giving credit NOT needed?

- When stating facts that are common knowledge (information that is easily found in a general reference source like an encyclopedia or something most people probably already know)
- When recording results of an experiment that you have done
- When you are writing your own experiences, observations, or conclusions about a topic

How to avoid plagiarism when you take notes:

- Make sure your note cards are complete and contain all the information you will need to give credit to the source later.
- MARK EVERYTHING – Use quotation marks around exact quotations. Mark ideas that are not your own taken from the source. If your note card contains your own thoughts, mark that.

How to avoid plagiarism when you paraphrase and summarize:

- When you write your paraphrase or summary, try to do it without looking at the actual words used in the source. Read the source material, make sure you understand it, and then write your notes using your understanding of what you have just read.
- Double check your paraphrase or summary when it is written to make sure that you haven't accidentally used the same words or made a mistake in the accuracy of your content.

When in doubt, give credit to your source!

Source used in this section:

Harris, Robert A. *The Plagiarism Handbook*. Los Angeles: Pyczak Publishing, 2001. Print.

Using the Information Found: Source Card Format

- Make a source card on a *3x5 index card* for each source of information you plan to use BEFORE you take any notes from it.
- Include as much information as you can IN THE CORRECT FORMAT. This format is the same as the one you will use in the **Works Cited** of the paper. *Pay attention to punctuation, and follow the models.*
- The models on the next few pages follow the guidelines dictated in the most recent edition of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. If you need more information than is listed here, consult that handbook for more details.
- If a piece of information about the resource is unavailable, simply omit it and continue with the next piece of information.

Sample Source Card

- Put the information ABOUT the resource in the middle of the lined side of the card.
- Indent every line after the first.
- All titles of longer works are italicized (titles of books, plays, magazines such as *Time*, and newspapers such as *The Virginian-Pilot*).
- All titles of shorter works are in quotation marks (articles on the Web, articles found in magazines and newspapers, articles found within books, poems, and short stories).

| |
|---|
| |
| Netzley, Patricia D. <i>The Mystery Library: UFOs</i> . San Diego: Lucent Books, 2000. Print. |

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009. Print.

Using the Information Found: SAMPLE RESOURCE ENTRIES - BOOKS

Book With One Author

Last name, First name of Author. *Title*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

Netzley, Patricia D. *The Mystery Library: UFOs*. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2000. Print.

Book With Two or Three Authors

Last name, First name of 1st Listed Author, Firstname Lastname of 2nd Listed Author, and Firstname Lastname of 3rd Listed Author.

Title. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

Netzley, Patricia D, Jane Smith, and John Doe. *The Mystery Library: UFOs*. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2000. Print.

Book With More than Three Authors

Last name, First name of 1st Listed Author, et. al. *Title*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

Netzley, Patricia D., et al. *The Mystery Library: UFOs*. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2000. Print.

Book With No Author

Title. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

The Mystery Library: UFOs. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2000. Print.

Book Written by a Company or an Organization

Name of Company or Organization. *Title*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

National Research Council. *The Mystery Library: UFOs*. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2000. Print.

Book With a Translator

Last name, First name of Author. *Title*. Trans. Firstname Lastname of Translator. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

Netzley, Patricia D. *The Mystery Library: UFOs*. Trans. John Doe. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2000. Print.

Work in a Collection or Anthology (poem, essay, short story, play, etc.)

Last name, First name of Author. "Title of Piece." *Title of Collection or Anthology*. Ed. Firstname Lastname of Editor. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

Netzley, Patricia D. "Roswell: Fact or Fiction." *The Mystery Library: UFOs*. Ed. Mark Smith. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2000. 8-12. Print.

Introduction, Preface, Foreword, or Afterward to a Book

Last name, First name of Author of the Piece. Type of Piece (Introduction, Preface, Foreword, or Afterward). *Title of Book*. By Firstname Lastname of Book's Author. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

Elliot, Emory. Foreword. *The Jungle*. By Upton Sinclair. New York: Bantam, 1985. vii- xvii. Print.

Article in an Encyclopedia or Dictionary

Last name, First name of Author. "Title of Article." *Title of Encyclopedia*. Number of the Edition. Date of Publication. Print.
Brown, Marsha. "The Roswell Incident." *World Book Encyclopedia*. 15th ed. 2002. Print.

Article in a Multivolume Work (not an encyclopedia)

Last name, First name of Author. "Title of Article." *Title of Work*. Ed. Firstname Lastname of Editor. Number of vols. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.
Marsh, Fred. "Analysis of *The Jungle*." *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Daniel G. Morowski. 135 vols. Detroit: Gale, 1990. Print.

**SAMPLE RESOURCE ENTRIES –
MISCELLANEOUS PRINT RESOURCES**

Newspaper Article

Last name, First name of Author. "Title of Article." *Title of Newspaper*
Day Month Year of Publication, Edition: Page Number(s). Print.

Shean, Tom. "Buried By Bills." *The Virginian-Pilot* 30 May 1997: D1. Print.

Magazine or Scholarly Journal Article

Last name, First name of Author. "Title of Article." *Title of Magazine*
Day Month Year of Publication: Page Number(s). Print.

Miller, Tyler. "The Vietnam War: The Executioner." *Newsweek* 13 Nov. 1978: 70. Print.

Pamphlet or Brochure

Last name, First name of Author. *Title*. Place of Publication:
Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

What Should Be the Goal of U.S. Foreign Policy? San Diego: Greenhaven, 1993. Print.

Government Publication

Government. Agency. *Title*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

United States. Department of Defense. *America's Top Military Careers*. Indianapolis: JIST, 2002. Print.

SAMPLE RESOURCE ENTRIES – ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Web Site: World Wide Web

Last name, First name of Author. "Title of Article." *Overall Title of Web Site*. Publisher or Sponsor of the Site, (if there is none, put N.p.) Date Last Updated. (if there is none, put n.d.) Web. Day Month Year of Access.

O'Hara, Kathy. "No Child Left Behind Data Reporting VBCPS Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Released." *Virginia Beach City Public Schools*. U.S. Department of Education, 2003. Web. 23 Feb. 2010.

Online E Book

Last name, First name of Author. *Title*. Place of Publication of the Original Work: Original Publisher, Original Date of Publication. Title of Web Page. Web. Date of Access.

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Cornwall Press, 1813. Jane Austen Information Page. Web. 23 Feb. 2004.

**Article from Gale, Proquest, SIRS, Grolier Online, or World Book Online
(A Subscription Online Database)**

Last name, First name of Author. "Article Title." *Title of Work in which it was Originally Published* Volume #. Issue (Year): Page Number(s). *Database Title*. Web. Date of Access.

Ferro, Jeffrey. "Characteristics of Prison Inmates." *The United States Penal System* 12 (2002): 12-33. *Opposing Viewpoints*. Gale. Web. 26 Nov. 2010.

Article from an Online Encyclopedia (not Grolier or World Book)

Last name, First name of Author. "Title of Article." *Title of Online Encyclopedia*. Date of Electronic Publication. Title of Original Work in which it was Published. Web. Date of Access.

Doe, John. "France." *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. 1998. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Web. 8 May 2010.

Email Communication

Last name, First name of Author. "Title of Message from Subject Line." Message to Firstname Lastname of Recipient. Day Month Year of the Message. E Mail.

Kelly, Jennifer. "Re: Citing Sources." Message to Jay Nang. 9 Sept. 2002. Mail.

Photographic Image or Clip Art

"Title of Image." Digital Image. *Title of Web Site*. Web. Date of Access.

"Ccroc33" Digital Image. *Classroom Clipart: Animals*. Web. 23 Feb. 2010

Sound or Video Clip

Last name, First name of Person Responsible. "Title of Clip." Date of Original Production. *Title of Web Site*. Medium of publication followed by the word *file*.

Armstrong, Neil A. "Walks on the Moon." 1968. *History Channel: Speeches*. 23 Feb. 2004. *Digital file*.

SAMPLE RESOURCE ENTRIES – MISCELLANEOUS TYPES OF RESOURCES

Interview (telephone or personal)

Last name, First name of Person Interviewed. Type of Interview
(Personal interview, Telephone interview, etc.). Day Month Year
of Interview.

Tapper, Charlene. Telephone interview. 14 Apr. 2001.

Cartoon

Last name, First name of Cartoonist. "Title of Cartoon." Cartoon or
Comic strip. *Title of Work in Which the Cartoon was Printed*
[Place of Publication] Day Month Year of Publication: Page Num-
ber(s).

Trudeau, Gary. "Doonesbury." Comic strip. *The Virginian-Pilot*
4 May 2002: 26. Print.

Map

Title of Map. Map. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication.
Print.

New Mexico. Map. Chicago: Greenhaven Press, 2002. Print.

Radio or Television Program

"Title of Segment." *Name of News Show.* Name of National
Network. Call Letters of Local Station, City of Local Station.
Broadcast Date. Television.

"The First American." *Sixty Minutes.* NBC. WAVY, Norfolk. 21
Mar. 1998. Television.

Videocassette / DVD

Title of the Film. Dir. First name Last name of Director. Distributor, Year
of Release. Format.

Justices of the Supreme Court. Dir. John Smith. Miramax, 2000. DVD.

Audiocassette / CD

Last name, First name of Artist. "Title of Song." *Title of Album.*
Record Label, Year of Release. CD.

Evanescence. "My Immortal." *Fallen.* Wind-Up Entertainment, 2003. CD.

Art

Last name, First name of Artist. *Title*. Date of Composition (if the year is unknown put n.d.) Indicate the medium. Name of Institution that Houses the Work, City in which Work is Kept.

Heckman, Albert. *Windblown Trees*. N.d. Lithography on paper.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

***Remember: If a piece of information about the resource is unavailable, simply omit it and continue with the next piece of information.*

Using the Information Found: Source Card Worksheet

1. Book with One Author

_____, _____, _____, _____;
 Author's last name, Author's first name. *Title of book* (italicized). Place of publication:
 _____, _____, Print.
 Publisher, Date of publication.

2. Work in a Collection or Anthology

_____, _____, _____, _____;
 Author's last name, Author's first name. "Title of article (in quotes)." *Title of book* (italicized).
 _____, _____, _____, _____;
 Ed. Editor's first and last name. Place of publication: Publisher, Date of publication.
 Print.

3. Article from an Online Database

_____, _____, _____, _____;
 Author's last name, Author's first name. "Title of article (in quotes)." *Title of Work in which it*
 _____ (_____) _____;
was Originally Published (italicized) Volume # (Date Published): Page Number(s).
 _____, _____, Web. _____;
 Title of section of database (itslized). Overall Title of Database. Date Accessed

4. Web site

_____, _____, _____;
 Author's last name, Author's first name. "Title of section (in quotes)"
 _____, _____;
Overall title of web site (italicized.) Sponsoring Organization or Publisher.
 _____, Web. _____;
 Date last revised. Date accessed.

Using the Information Found: Data Card Format

Why Use Data Cards???

- To carefully copy direct quotations
- To ensure that you do not plagiarize main ideas
- To make it easy to organize your paper

What To Include On Data Cards

- **Upper Left-Hand Corner**
 - Write the last name of the author OR, if there is no author, the first meaningful word of the title (not “an” or “the”).
 - Write the page number(s) on which you found the information. **DO NOT INCLUDE PAGE NUMBERS FOR ONLINE SOURCES** (including web sites and online magazine and newspaper articles from electronic databases).
 - Do not put a comma between the author/title word and the page number.
 - Example: *Smith 26* OR *Mystery 26*
- **Upper Right-Hand Corner**
 - Write a key word or phrase to indicate the subtopic of the card. This keyword should be a topic that will prove your **thesis statement**.
 - Make the key word as specific as possible.
 - Example: If your paper is about the Alien Spacecraft at Roswell, your key words could be “The Government’s Response” or “People Who Investigated the Crash.”
- **In the Middle**
 - Write only one fact per card.
 - Decide on the type of note you want to take (direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary) before writing – see the next few pages for an explanation of each.
 - Write on the front (lined) side only.

| Type of Data Card | When To Use It | What To Do |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Direct Quotation | <i>Only every once in a while</i> when you cannot state the original better yourself | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy the phrase(s) or sentence(s) exactly. • Put quotation marks around it / them. |
| Paraphrase | When the original doesn't sound like you or isn't clear | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the sentence(s) you wish to paraphrase. • Then, write it / them in your own words. |
| Summary | When you want to briefly summarize a long passage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the ENTIRE PASSAGE you wish to summarize. • Then, write a one or two sentence summary of it in your own words. |
| Table or Graph | When numbers are required (ex. a timeline or statistical data) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the data. • Record pertinent information in a format such as a table or graph. |

**Sample Direct Quotation
Data Card**

| |
|---|
| Netzley 29 Roswell UFO Discovery |
| <p>“On the night of July 2, there was a violent thunderstorm in the area, and rancher Max Brazel heard a loud crash near his home. The next day while visiting his fields he discovered hundreds of small pieces of a strange material that looked like tinfoil.”</p> |

**Sample Paraphrase
Data Card**

| |
|---|
| Netzley 29 Roswell UFO Discovery |
| <p>Max Brazel heard a crash on his property on the night of July 2, 1947 during a storm. He found debris that looked like little pieces of tinfoil when he inspected his fields the next day.</p> |

Using the Information Found: Data Card Worksheet

Pretend that you are writing a paper about the roles of women and men in Ancient Greece. Read the sample paragraph below on the left. The, create three practice data cards for information found in the sample paragraph.

Sample Paragraph from a Resource

In classical Sparta, by contrast, women were not nearly so regulated and segregated. In fact, it appears that Spartan women did not simply manage the household for their husbands, as Athenian women did, but actually set the rules and largely took precedence over men in that sphere. This was because Spartan society (beginning in the Archaic Age) was built around a strict, regimented system (the *agoge*) designed to produce machinelike soldiers to man the most feared army in Greece. Spartan boys left home at age seven and up to the age of thirty or more lived in military barracks with other males. In fact, Spartan men were not allowed to reside with their wives and children until age thirty. And even then, married men were frequently absent, engaging in military training, war, hunting and political activities; in addition, most Spartan men of all ages ate their meals with their comrades in a common mess hall.

From page 67

Nardo, Don. *Ancient Civilizations: The Ancient Greeks*. San Diego, Lucent, 2001. Print.

Practice Direct Quotation Data Card

| |
|--|
| |
| |

Practice Paraphrase Data Card

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| |

Practice Summary Data Card

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| |

Putting It All Together: Organizing Your Information

Arranging Your Data Cards

- Group together data cards with similar ideas using the key words or phrases you wrote in the upper right-hand corners. Do not worry about separating cards from the same source. Make a pile of data cards that do not fit into any category.
- For each group of data cards, decide the order in which you will present the information.
- Decide the order in which you plan to present each group of information.
- Number all of the data cards in the lower right-hand corner to reflect the order in which you plan to use them in your paper. This numbering will help you should your cards accidentally become out of order.
- Realize that you may, as you are writing your paper, decide to change the order of the data cards. Additionally, you may decide NOT to use some of the data cards at all. Lastly, you may choose to insert information from your miscellaneous pile at a later time.

Evaluating Your Information

Do you have enough information to adequately address the argument you introduced in your thesis statement? If so, great! If not, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I need to reword my thesis to match the information I've found (change my main idea or my position in the argument)? If so, **revise your thesis statement**.
- Do I need to find more information to completely support the argument I raised in the thesis statement? If so, **continue to collect information**. Find more resources, make a source card for each, and take more notes.

Using Graphic Organizers

Now that you've selected and arranged the information you plan to use in the body paragraphs of your paper, it is time to graphically lay out your essay. Once you have completed this task, the challenging part of your project is done! You can choose one of the following graphic organizers in order to brainstorm. Select the format that best suits your needs and style. These organizers may be completed using pencil and paper or a computer software program such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Publisher, or Inspiration.

Putting It All Together

Graphic Organizer 1 - Outline

I. Introduction

- A. General statement
- B. Sentence(s) to lead into specific topic
- C. Thesis statement
 - 1. Main idea one
 - 2. Main idea two
 - 3. Main idea three

II. Main idea one

- A. Subdivision
 - 1. Detail
 - 2. Detail
- B. Subdivision
 - 1. Detail
 - 2. Detail
 - a. Subdetail
 - b. Subdetail
 - 3. Detail

III. Main Idea Two

- A. Subdivision
 - 1. Detail
 - a. Subdetail
 - b. Subdetail
 - 2. Detail
- B. Subdivision

IV. Main Idea Three

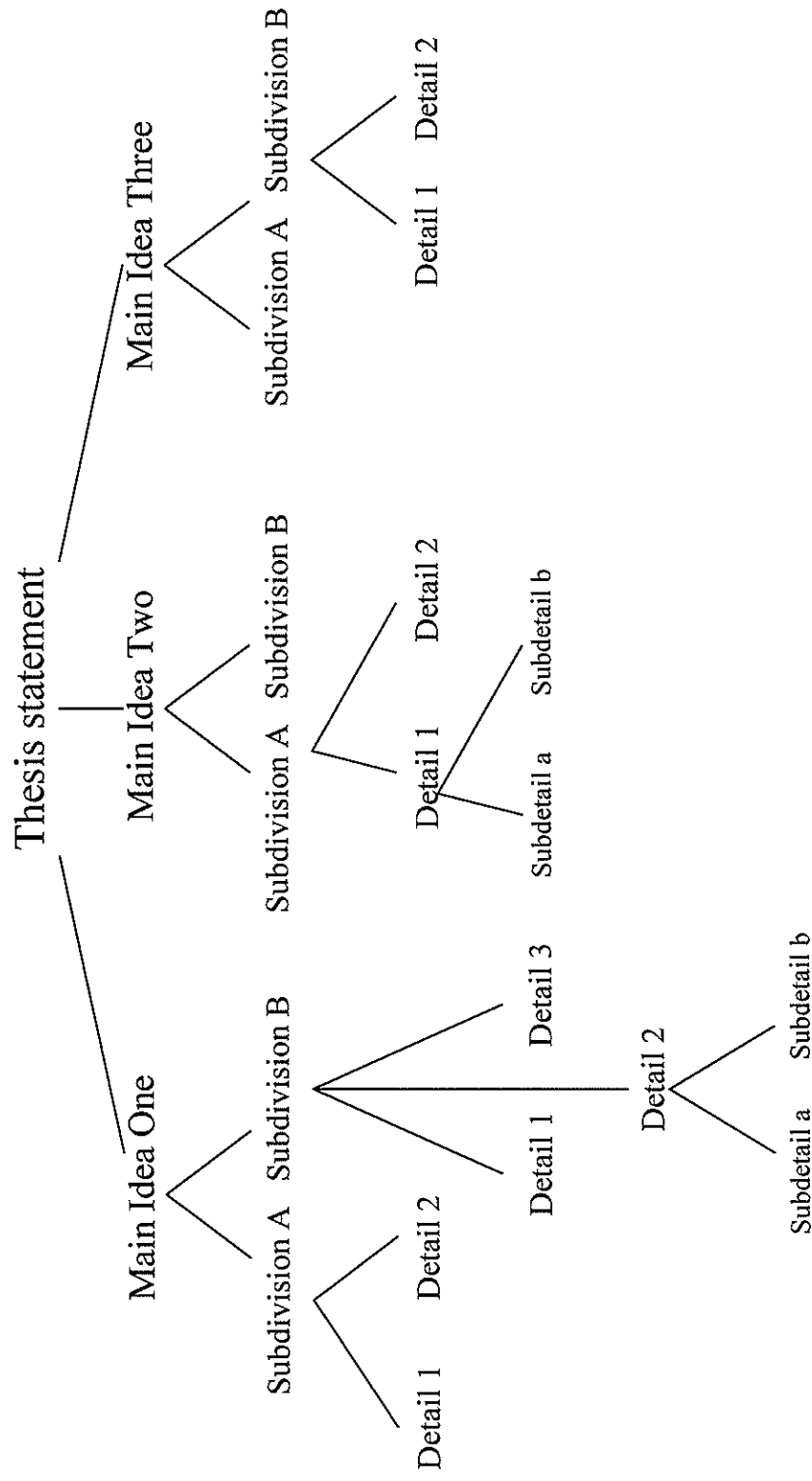
- A. Subdivision
- B. Subdivision
 - 1. Detail
 - 2. Detail

V. Conclusion

- A. Restatement of thesis statement
- B. Sum up sentence
 - 1. Main idea one
 - 2. Main idea two
 - 3. Main idea three
- C. General or philosophical statement

Putting It All Together

Graphic Organizer 2 – Flow Chart



Putting It All Together: Writing – Introduction Paragraph

The Rules:

- Start with a general statement that *captures the reader's attention*. This sentence should not deal with your specific topic, but it should relate to it.
- Narrow down to your specific topic through the use of several sentences.
- End the paragraph with your **thesis statement**. This sentence should clearly introduce the specific aspect(s) of your topic that you intend to prove in your paper.
- Do not include any details or researched information in this paragraph.

The Sample:

Main Ideas in the Sample Paper

- An alien spacecraft DID crash in Roswell, New Mexico in 1947.
- This incident proves that there is intelligent life other than humans in the universe.
- The government has been trying to cover up the Roswell incident.

Sample Introduction Paragraph For That Paper

Throughout time, humans have wondered if there is intelligent life on other planets. In the last half-century, we have spent huge sums of money and time in creating and operating spacecraft that travel to the moon in search of life. More recently, humans have been developing technology that will allow us to travel to other planets to determine if another species of intelligent life exists in our solar system. However, all of these efforts to discover an alien species are unnecessary; we need only look in our own backyard to verify that an alien species exists. The Roswell incident, in which an alien spacecraft crashed on a farm in New Mexico in 1947, is adequate proof that intelligent life outside Earth does exist; however, there is substantial evidence that the government has been trying to cover up the discovery.

Putting It All Together: Writing – Body Paragraphs

First Sentence

- Always start with a **topic sentence** that clearly states the main idea of the paragraph. This sentence should relate directly to the thesis statement.
- This sentence should include a transition to connect this paragraph with the previous one. Transitions include: *First, Next, Another..., On the other hand, Similarly, In contrast, Although..., Therefore, However, In addition to..., Nevertheless,*

Sentences in the Middle

- This is the section of the paragraph in which you give **your details and your evidence** to support your main idea. *This is where your notes are used, but your own words and ideas should be included in addition to your researched information.*
- Each sentence should relate to the main idea expressed in the topic sentence.

Last Sentence

- Always end with a **return sentence** to summarize your main idea or to make conclusions.
- If this sentence does not relate to the thesis statement (the last sentence of the introduction paragraph), you need to reevaluate the relevance of your body paragraph.

Giving Credit to Your Sources When You Use Your Data Cards

Documentation (or giving credit to your source when you use information from it) is the way to avoid plagiarism. *Remember: you plagiarize any time you use another person's words OR IDEAS without giving credit.*

Citing sources in the text

In MLA style, references to sources are placed in the text of the paper to briefly identify sources for readers and enable them to locate the source of the cited

information in the Works Cited list. These parenthetical references should be kept as brief and as clear as possible.

- Give only the information needed to identify a source. Usually the author's last name and a page reference are all that is needed.
- Place the parenthetical reference as close as possible to the material being documented and where a pause would naturally occur, preferably at the end of a sentence.
- Parenthetical material should complement, not repeat, information given in the text. If you include an author's name in a sentence, you do not need to repeat it in your parenthetical statement.
- Do not put a comma before the page number.
- Put a period AFTER the parentheses (not within the quotation marks, and not before the parentheses).
- Italicize all titles of longer works (titles of books, plays, magazines such as *Time*, and newspapers such as *The Virginian-Pilot*). Put all titles of shorter works in quotation marks (articles on the Web, articles found in magazines and newspapers, articles found within books, poems, and short stories).
- Electronic and online sources are cited just like print resources in references cited in the text. If an online source lacks numbering, omit numbers from the parenthetical references. If a source includes fixed page numbers or section numbering, such as numbering of paragraphs, cite the relevant numbers.

Some Examples:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Author's name in text | Dover has expressed this concern (118-21). |
| Author's name in reference | This concern has been expressed (Dover 118-21). |
| Multiple authors of a work | This hypothesis (Bradley and Rogers 7) suggested this theory (Sumner, Reichl, and Waugh 23). |
| Two locations | Williams alludes to this premise (136-39, 145). |
| Two works cited | (Burns 54; Thomas 327) |

Multivolume works/References to Volumes and Pages

(Wilson 2:1-18)

References to an entire volume

(Henderson, vol. 3)

In text reference to an entire volume

In this case, there is no need for parentheses because the volume and the author is mentioned within the text.

In volume 3, Henderson suggests

Corporate authors

(United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa 51-63)

Works with no author

If there is no author, include the first meaningful word of the title (not “an” or “the”) and the page number (if available). Italicize all titles of longer works (titles of books, plays, magazines such as *Time*, and newspapers such as *The Virginian-Pilot*). Put all titles of shorter works in quotation marks (articles on the Web, articles found in magazines and newspapers, articles found within books, poems, and short stories).

as stated by the presidential commission (*Report 4*).

Online source with numbered paragraphs

(Fox, pars. 4-5)

Direct Quotation

If a quote is more than four lines, set it off from your text by adding a colon and then beginning a new, indented, double spaced line without quotation marks.

“For all its lightness, the debris in Brazel’s pickup bed seemed remarkably durable” (Netzley 29).

OR

Netzley explained, “For all its lightness, the debris in Brazel’s pickup bed seemed remarkably durable” (29).

OR

As Netzley explained on page 29, "On the night of July 2, there was a violent thunderstorm in the area, and rancher Max Brazel heard a loud crash near his home."

Paraphrase or Summary

During a storm on July 2, 1947, Max Brazel heard an abnormally loud crash outside his house (Netzley 29).

OR

According to Netzley, during a storm on July 2, 1947, Max Brazel heard an abnormally loud crash outside his house (29).

OR

As stated on page 101 of *Paranormal*, the sound heard outside Brazel's house was abnormally loud.

Using Your Research

Use A Direct Quotation As Part of Your Sentence

Remember – if you can say it better in your own words, DO NOT USE A DIRECT QUOTATION!

- The crash material found in Max Brazel's pickup truck was unique, but some of it looked familiar to investigators. They said that a few of the pieces "were shaped like I-beams, the horizontal girders used in building construction" (Netzley 101).

How to Clear Up Some Information Within a Direct Quotation

Use square brackets to clarify information within a direct quotation. []

- Original quotation: *He had never seen any similar material, so he concluded that it must have come from some kind of experimental military aircraft.*
- How to use it in your paper: "[Max Brazel] had never seen any similar material, so he concluded that it must have come from some kind of experimental military aircraft" (Netzley 29).

Leaving Out Part of the Direct Quotation

Use an ellipsis, or three spaced dots: . . .

- **In the middle of a sentence: USE AN ELLIPSIS**
 - Original quotation: *Another type of balloon, the fu-go, has also been proposed as the source of Marcel's debris.*
 - How to use it in your paper: *According to Netzley, "Another type of balloon . . . has also been proposed as the source of Marcel's debris" (33).*
- **At the end of a sentence: USE AN ELLIPSIS**
 - Original quotation: *Moreover, Brookesmith points out that the strange writing on the debris was arranged in columns, which is how Japanese script appears.*
 - How to use it in your paper: *"Moreover, Brookesmith points out that the strange writing on the debris was arranged in columns..." (Netzley 34-5).*

- **At the beginning of a sentence: DO NOT USE AN ELLIPSIS**
 - Original quotation: *According to these witnesses, the aliens were less than five feet tall and wore one-piece jumpsuits with no snaps, buttons, or zippers.*
 - How to use it in your paper: *When Max Brazel's friends and family saw the aliens, they noted that these extraterrestrials "were less than five feet tall and wore one-piece jumpsuits with no snaps, buttons, or zippers" (Netzley 35).*

Using a Quotation Within a Quotation

Use single quotation marks (' ') within the double quotation marks (" ").

- Example: *As stated by Netzley, "Grady L. 'Barney' Barnett, a civil engineer who had been working in the area, was already there" (35).*

Using a Long Direct Quotation (FOUR OR MORE TYPED LINES)

- Introduce the quotation.
- Indent each line ten spaces.
- Continue to double space.
- Type to the right margin.
- Leave out quotation marks.
- Put the last name of the author (OR the title word) and the page number in parentheses at the end AFTER the end period.
- Example:

According to many people, the government has been covering up the Roswell incident for over 50 years:

Randle and Schmidt agree, reporting that in researching the Roswell incident over four decades after the event, they still found people who they said could not talk about the incident because they had been sworn to secrecy by the government. The authors say that this secrecy itself suggests that the government is covering something up. (Netzley 38)

Using a Poetry Direct Quotation

- Using One Line Only
 - Make it a part of your sentence.
 - Do not use an ellipsis.
 - Example: *Robert Frost symbolizes death in his poem "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" when he writes, "And miles to go before I sleep" (377).*

- Using Two or Three Lines
 - Indicate that a new line of the poem is starting by inserting a slash.
 - Put a space before and after the slash.
 - Example: *Robert Frost symbolizes death in his poem "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" when he writes, "But I have promises to keep, / And miles to go before I sleep" (377).*
- Using Four or More Lines
 - Introduce the quotation.
 - Indent each line ten spaces.
 - Continue to double space.
 - Type to the right margin.
 - Leave out quotation marks.
 - Put the author / title word and page number in parentheses at the end AFTER the end period.
 - Example:
In "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening", the poet is explaining that a person cannot just give up and die until he or she fulfills his or her goals in life:

*The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
 But I have promises to keep,
 And miles to go before I sleep,
 And miles to go before I sleep. (Frost 377)*

Sample Body Paragraph

Main idea: The government cover-up of the Roswell incident.

There are many people who still believe that the crash on Max Brazel's farm in 1947 was really an alien spacecraft; however, the government has denied this claim for over 50 years. The government's original response to the crash was that it was debris from a spaceship; however, government officials later stated that the debris was from an ordinary weather balloon (Netzley 32). It is strange, though, that it took eight months for them to definitively come to that conclusion. Since the crash, the government has been trying to find evidence such as old news photos and other archival information that would effectively " . . .deflate the persistent rumors of a massive government conspiracy to hide the truth" ("Air" 15). Nevertheless, there are even some government officials, such as Walter Haut, who claim that an alien spacecraft crashed at Roswell and that the government confiscated the evidence, performed alien autopsies, and still has the questionable

material (Netzley 38). The discrepancy in the government's reports at the time of the crash, the extreme measures taken to conceal the materials, and the persistent statements by some governmental officers that it was an alien spaceship that crashed are evidence enough that the government was and is attempting to cover up an alien encounter.

Note the following aspects of the sample body paragraph:

- A topic sentence to introduce the main idea
- Transitions within the paragraph to improve the flow of ideas
- Two paraphrased ideas and one direct quotation within the paragraph
- Not a string of quotations or paraphrases, one right after the other. Instead, the author attempted to use the researched information *when it applied* within the context of his/her own sentences and ideas.
- Credit given to the source for each included piece of researched information
- A return sentence to sum up the main ideas and to conclude

Putting It All Together: Writing – Conclusion Paragraph

The Rules:

- Restate the thesis statement in a new way.
- Use a sentence to sum up each main idea of the paper.
- End with a general or philosophical statement.

Sample Conclusion Paragraph

Several things about the incident at Roswell in 1947 are obvious. First, it is clear that some flying object crashed onto Max Brazel's property, leaving strange debris. One can also be certain that the government collected the material from the crash and investigated it at Fort Worth. Although the government claims that it was not an alien spacecraft that crashed in Roswell, New Mexico, there is substantial evidence that their claim is false and that they have been covering up the alien encounter for over 50 years. Whether or not the American public will ever know the truth about the incident at Roswell remains uncertain.

Putting It All Together: Typing Your Essay Page

On Every Page

- Always use a standard, easily readable font (*example*: Times New Roman).
- Font should be 12-point size.
- Align your lines to the left. Do not center or right justify your text.
- Except for page headers, leave margins of one inch at the top, bottom, and on both sides of the text.
- Indent the first word of a paragraph one-half inch (or five spaces) from the left margin.
- Indent long quotations (of four or more lines) one inch from the left margin.
- Double-space your essay throughout, including quotations and the Works Cited.
- Place tables and illustrations as close as possible to the parts of the text to which they relate.

The First Page

- Include a page header, a heading, and a title on the first page of your paper.
- A page header on each page should include your last name and the page number. It should be located in the upper-right hand corner, one-half inch from the top, and flush with the right margin.
- The heading should begin one inch from the top of the first page and flush with the left margin. Type your name, your instructor's name, the course title, and the date on separate lines, double-spacing between the lines. Double-space again and center the title.
- If your title takes more than one line, double-space that as well. Double-space between the title and the first line of your essay. Do not underline or italicize your title, and do not put it in quotation marks or type it in all capital letters. Capitalize all major words in the title.

Every Page (Including the First)

- A page header on each page should include your last name and the page number.
- The page header should be located in the upper-right hand corner, one-half inch from the top, and flush with the right margin.
- Example page header: Jones 4

Michael Jones
Mrs. Smith
English 11
12 May 2004

Margins:
1" all
around

**Everything is
double-
spaced.**

**Use current
date**

**Page
header**

Jones 1

- Not underlined or in quotation marks
- All major words capitalized

The Roswell Incident: The Facts and the Cover-Up

Throughout time, humans have wondered if there is intelligent life on other planets. In the last half-century, we have spent huge sums of money and time in creating and operating spacecraft that travel to the moon in search of life. More recently, humans have been developing technology that will allow us to travel to other planets to determine if another species of intelligent life exists in our solar system. However, all of these efforts to discover an alien species are unnecessary; we need only look in our own backyard to verify that an alien species exists. The Roswell incident, in which an alien spacecraft crashed on a farm in New Mexico in 1947, is adequate proof that intelligent life outside Earth does exist; however, there is substantial evidence that the government has been trying to cover up the discovery.

There are many people who still believe that the crash on Max Brazel's farm in 1947 was really an alien spacecraft; however, the government has denied this claim for over 50 years. The government's original response to the crash was that it was debris from a spaceship; however, government officials later stated that the debris was from an ordinary weather balloon (Netzey 32). It is still a mystery as to whether the government has been trying to find evidence to definitively prove that there was a massive government conspiracy to hide the truth" ("Air" 15). Nevertheless, some government officials, such as Walter Haut, who claim that an alien spacecraft crashed at

Citation with
Author's Last
Name, a space,
and the page
number

Source with no
author-
Citation with 1st
word on source
card, a space, and
the page number.

Roswell and that the government confiscated the evidence, performed autopsies, and still has the questionable material (Netzley 38). The discrepancy in the government's reports at the time of the crash, the extreme measures taken to conceal the materials, and the persistent statements by some governmental officers that it was an alien spaceship that crashed are evidence enough that the government was and is attempting to cover up an alien encounter.

Include additional body paragraphs here...

Several things about the incident at Roswell in 1947 are obvious. First, it is clear that some flying object crashed onto Max Brazel's property, leaving strange debris. One can also be certain that the government collected the material from the crash and investigated it at Fort Worth. Although the government claims that it was not an alien spacecraft that crashed in Roswell, New Mexico, there is substantial evidence that their claim is false and that they have been covering up the alien encounter for over 50 years. Whether or not the American public will ever know the truth about the incident at Roswell remains uncertain.

Putting It All Together: Typing your Works Cited Page

Before you start typing:

- Make sure that you have a resource card for each source you have used.
- Alphabetize your resource cards by the author's last name or the first major word in the title if there is no author.
- The format used on your resource cards is the same format that you should use for your list of works cited.

When typing:

- Leave one-inch margins on all four borders.
- Include a page header in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top, and flush with the right margin.
- Do **NOT** number your entries.
- Do **NOT** include call numbers of books.
- Double-space the entire page.
- Indent the second line of each entry ½ inch (use your tab).
- Substitute 3 hyphens followed by a period and 2 spaces for more than 1 entry by the same author.
- Use page numbers **WITHOUT** p., pgs., or pp.
- * All titles of longer works are underlined (titles of books, plays, magazines such as *Time*, and newspapers such as *The Virginian-Pilot*).
- * All titles of shorter works are in quotation marks (articles on the Web, articles found in magazines and newspapers, articles found within books, poems, and short stories).

Any Questions?

- Ask your teacher or librarian.
- Check the most recent edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* .

Works Cited

Page
header

Jones 3

"Air Force Denies '47 UFO Recovery." *Sun-Sentinel* 11 Sept. 1994: 15A. Print.

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Entries are in
alphabetical
order by the
first word of
the entry.

Indent every
line after the
first of each
entry.

Margins:
1" all
around

Everything is
double-spaced.

Evaluating What You Have Done: Checklist for Content

Introduction Paragraph:

- ☐ Starts with general statement?
- ☐ Includes several sentences that connect general statement to thesis statement?
- ☐ Ends with thesis statement that...
 - ☐ Identifies the subject of your essay
 - ☐ Indicates your conclusions/ opinions about the topic
 - ☐ Indicates the organization of the paper
- ☐ Avoids including details and researched information?

Body Paragraphs:

- ☐ Start with topic sentence?
- ☐ All sentences in paragraph relate to topic sentence?
- ☐ Include researched information...
 - ☐ Use direct quotations sparingly?
 - ☐ Avoid stringing together researched information (one after another)?
 - ☐ Include author's last name (or title word) and page number (if available) for each direct quotation AND idea that is not your own?
 - ☐ Have a resource entry on the Works Cited page for each resource used?
- ☐ End with return sentence?

Conclusion Paragraph:

- ☐ Rephrases thesis statement?
- ☐ Sums up all main ideas?
- ☐ Ends with philosophical statement?

Overall:

- ☐ Correct grammar, usage, and spelling?
- ☐ Transition words or phrases within and between paragraphs?

Evaluating What You Have Done: Checklist for Format

Overall:

- ☐ One-inch margins on all sides?
- ☐ Double-spaced?
- ☐ Page header on each page, including your last name and page number?
- ☐ Two spaces after each period, question mark, and exclamation mark?
- ☐ One space after commas, colons, and semi-colons?
- ☐ Indent one tab (about 5 spaces) for each new paragraph?
- ☐ Titles of longer works italicized (titles of books, plays, magazines such as *Time*, and newspapers such as *The Virginian-Pilot*)?
- ☐ Titles of shorter works in quotation marks (articles found on the Web, in magazines, in newspapers, and in books; poems; and short stories)?

First Page:

- ☐ Follows the model for spacing and formatting?
- ☐ Includes a page header (upper-right) with your last name and page number of the paper?
- ☐ Includes detailed header with your name, teacher's name, course title, and date?
- ☐ Title interesting and reflective of topic?
- ☐ All major words of title capitalized?
- ☐ No underlining or quoting title?

Essay Pages After the First:

- ☐ Follows the model for spacing and formatting?
- ☐ Includes a header (upper-right) with your last name and page number of the paper?
- ☐ Place period AFTER parentheses when giving credit to the source?

Works Cited Page:

- ☐ Follows the model for spacing and formatting?
- ☐ Each entry in alphabetical order according to the first word?
- ☐ Entries unnumbered?
- ☐ Indent one tab (about 5 spaces) for every line after the first of each entry?
- ☐ No *page*, *pages*, *p.*, *pp.* or *pgs.* when indicating a page number?

Simplified Grading Rubric for a Research Paper

| | A (94-100) | B (86-93) | C (78-85) | D (70-77) | E (69 & Below) |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Composition / Organization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent and strong reflection of research Content is focused and fully developed Strong organization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable reflection of research Content is reasonably focused and developed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent reflection of research Inconsistent focus and development of content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent reflection of research Little focus and development of content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reflection of research No focus and development of content |
| Written Expression | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precise information Strong vocabulary Clear, coherent, and varied sentence construction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate information Varied vocabulary Clear and varied sentence construction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vague information Average vocabulary Some varied (but occasionally awkward) sentence construction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uneven selection of information Bland vocabulary Lack of sentence variety and frequent awkward sentence construction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of information Poor vocabulary Extremely awkward and monotonous sentence construction |
| Usage / Mechanics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent and correct use of MLA format Errors of capitalization, punctuation, usage, sentence formation, and spelling do not distract from message | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable use of MLA format Errors of capitalization, punctuation, usage, sentence formation, and spelling are elementary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent and incorrect use of MLA format Errors of capitalization, punctuation, usage, sentence formation, and spelling distract from message | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little and incorrect use of MLA format Density and variety of errors in capitalization, punctuation, usage, sentence formation, and spelling overwhelm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No use of MLA format No awareness of rules in capitalization, punctuation, usage, sentence formation, and spelling |

Detailed Grading Rubric for a Research Paper

| | A (94-100) | B (86-93) | C (78-85) | D (70-77) | E (69 & Below) |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| Composition / Organization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consistent control -Consistent and strong reflection of research -Unified -Lack of digressions -Central idea is focused and fully developed -Strong organization -Strong lead and closure -Logical transitions -Ideas flow logically throughout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reasonable control -Reasonable reflection of research -Occasional lapse of unity and/or organization -Few digressions -Occasional unevenness in elaboration -Skilled lead and closure -Appropriate transitions -Occasional lapse in coherence -Few shifts in point of view | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inconsistent control -Inconsistent reflection of research -Central idea prevents unity from emerging -Frequent digressions -Insufficient elaboration -Little organization -Inadequate lead and closure -Faulty transitions -Inadequate coherence -Inconsistent point of view | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Little control -Little reflection of research -Weak central idea -Frequent digressions -Little purposeful elaboration -Lacking in organization -Lead and closure fail to develop unity -Few, if any, transitions -Insufficient focus -Inconsistent point of view | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No control -No reflection of research -No central idea -No organization -No purposeful elaboration -No lead and closure -No transitions -No clarity of focus -Inconsistent point of view |
| Written Expression | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consistent control -Memorable message -Precise information -Effective subordination of ideas -Purposeful tone -Strong vocabulary -Highly specific word choice -Clear, coherent, and varied sentence construction -Vivid and purposeful figurative language -Highly effective writer's voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reasonable control -Purposeful message -Appropriate information -Appropriate subordination of ideas -Inconsistent tone -Varied vocabulary -Specific word choice -Clear and varied sentence construction -Appropriate figurative language -Clear writer's voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inconsistent control -Unclear message -Vague information -Generally appropriate subordination of ideas -Flat tone -Average vocabulary -Imprecise word choice -Occasional awkward sentence construction -Some varied sentence construction -Occasional use of figurative language -Writer's voice rarely emerges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Little control -Unclear message -Uneven selection of information -Inadequate subordination of ideas -No emerging tone -Bland vocabulary -Vague word choice -Frequent awkward sentence construction -Lack of sentence variety -Little evidence of figurative language -Writer's voice rarely emerges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No control -No clear message -Lack of information -No subordination of ideas -No emerging tone -Poor vocabulary -Incorrent word choice -Extremely awkward sentence construction -Monotonous sentence construction -No figurative language -No emerging writer's voice |
| Usage / Mechanics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strong and consistent control -Consistent and correct use of MLA format -Errors do not distract from message -Demonstrated thorough understanding of capitalization, punctuation, usage, sentence formation, and spelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reasonable control -Reasonably consistent and correct use of MLA format -Most errors are elementary -Demonstrated basic understanding of capitalization, punctuation, usage, sentence formation, and spelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inconsistent control -Inconsistent and incorrect use of MLA format -Errors distract from message -Demonstrated significant weakness in the understanding of capitalization, punctuation, usage, sentence formation, and spelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Little control -Little and incorrect use of MLA format -Density and variety of errors overwhelm -Frequent errors in capitalization, punctuation, usage, sentence formation, and spelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No control -No use of MLA format -No awareness of rules -Severe errors in capitalization, punctuation, usage, sentence formation, and spelling |

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