

The Complete Guide for Writing Research Papers

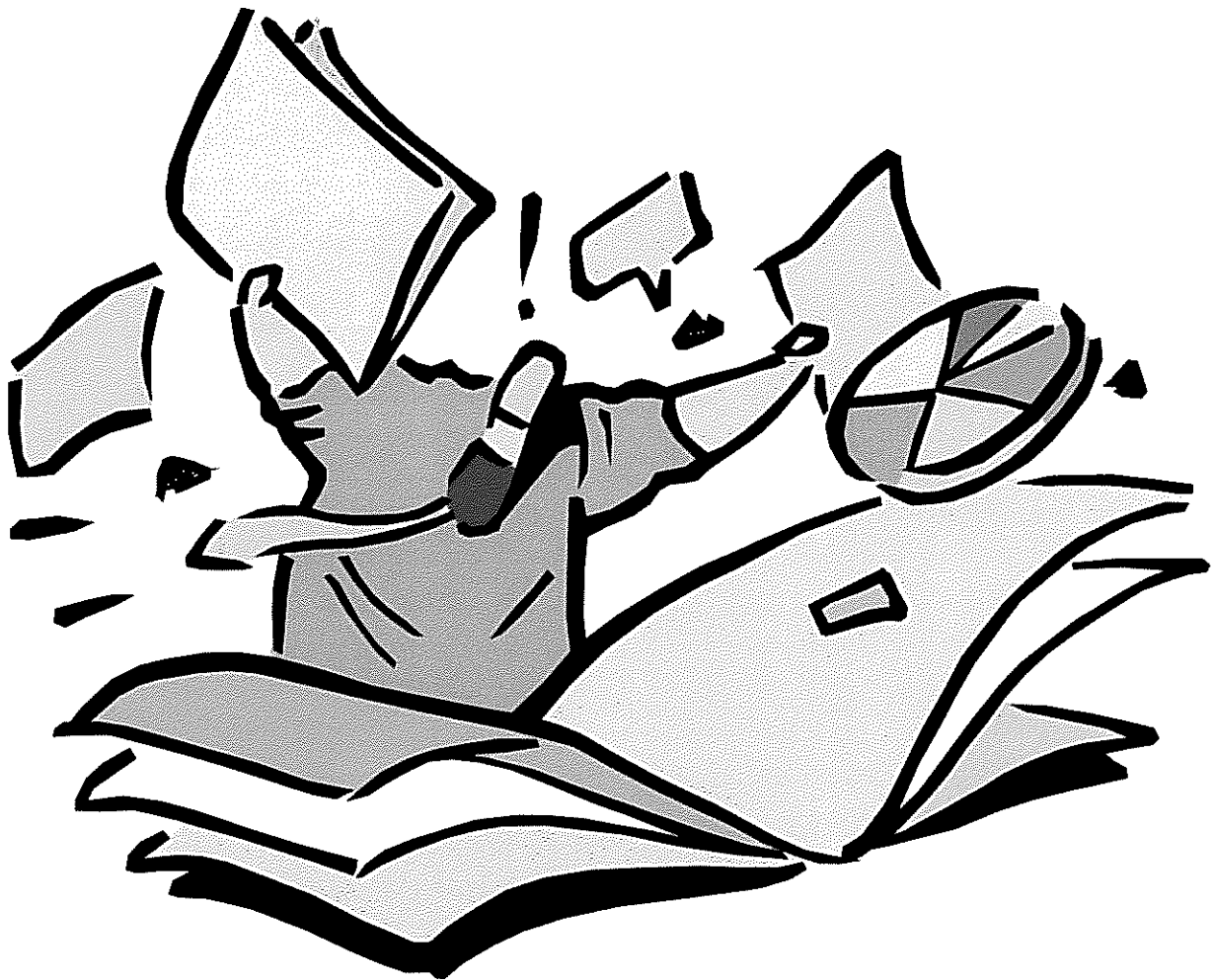


Table of Contents

Introduction to Research Papers

What is a Research Paper?.....	4
Why Write a Research Paper?	5
Step By Step Guide to Writing a Research Paper	6
Step By Step Guide Notes	7

Topics

Choosing a Paper Topic.....	8
Paper Topic Checklist	9

Outlines

Outlining your Paper	10
Creating an Outline.....	10
Outline Examples	12-14
Outline Notes.....	115
Outline Notes.....	216

Starting the Writing Process

Thesis Statement and Starting Your Paper.....	17
Common Errors and Checklist	17-18
Stylistic Information.....	19-20
When to Capitalize	21-22
When Not to Capitalize, Contractions, Commonly Misused Words.....	22

Working with Sources

Types of Sources	23-26
Taking Notes	27
Citing Sources Made Easy.....	28
Types of Quotes.....	29
Quote Examples.....	30

Formatting	
Formatting Information	31
Title Page Example.....	32
Footnoting	
Using Footnotes.....	33-34
Footnote Examples	35-36
Bibliography	
Creating a Bibliography	37
Bibliography Examples	38
Bibliographic Citation Examples.....	39-40
Appendix	
Documentation Sheet.....	41
Topic Approval Form	42
Final Product Checklist	43
Final Notes.....	44-45

**INTRODUCTION
To
RESEARCH
PAPERS**

What is a Research Paper?

By this point in your high school career you have undoubtedly written countless papers on a number of different topics. The length and style of each of those papers varied based on their purpose, but you were most likely expected to explain or argue some point in a cohesive and intelligent way. It is the argument approach which needs to be applied in the case of a research paper.

Unlike a term paper, where the author simply examines a topic in an attempt to inform the reader, a research paper demands that the author take a side and argue a point. After explaining the paper's point of view in the thesis statement, the author will spend the rest of the essay offering information that supports the argument he or she has chosen. Several claims will be made as the paper progresses, each one relating back to the original argument, and those claims will be supported by specific examples, or evidence. As the paper develops, the scope of the work will become more and more specific, from a broad thesis, to specific claims, to supportive evidence. It is important that the author avoids writing a mere summary of a topic without evaluating that topic in an argumentative and persuasive way. Failure to do so negates the research process and severely lessens the value of the paper itself.

Because student authors are rarely experts in the field they have chosen to write about, it will be necessary to look for proof to support their claims in the texts, websites and publications of recognized experts. By using the findings of these experts as support, the authors can effectively prove or disprove their points of contention within the arguments. When using an expert's words to support their own, authors must take specific care to follow the rules of citation in order to avoid plagiarizing another person's information. Plagiarizing arguments, information, or ideas from another person is considered cheating in the academic world and requires severe repercussions from the teacher and administration.

While the skills needed to research, organize and create a quality paper are ones each student possesses, the techniques and requirements needed to properly format, cite and organize a full length research paper are often foreign to students and require care to master. By following the process laid out in the pages that follow, students should be capable of properly completing all of the necessary steps and produce a high quality research paper.

Why Write a Research Paper?

As students leave Clinton High School and enroll in colleges and universities, they will be expected to produce work comparable to that of their peers from across the country. Regardless of the field of study chosen by these students, part of the work expected will be presented in written form. The ability to write in a cohesive and productive manner is a skill that must be learned and practiced over time. Writing assignments, such as a research paper, hone the skills students have gained over more than a decade of education and focus those skills into a persuasive and argumentative format.

While very few students will actually choose a career where writing research papers is vital, writing in a persuasive and argumentative manner is incorporated in a number of different fields. Everyday people send emails, memos and proposals intended to convince the reader that the author's point of view is the correct one. Whenever a business sends a proposal to a prospective client, a worker an email to request a raise, or a lawyer sends a written request to a judge, he or she is writing persuasively. The skills needed to write a strong persuasive piece are the same skills students practice when writing a research paper.

The skills learned from creating a research paper go well beyond the writing process itself. Ideally, students will have already produced dozens, if not hundreds of papers for their classes before even attempting a large scale research paper. For many, it is not the writing but the research portion that will become the most useful in their future. By learning how and where to look for important information, students will learn a skill that transcends the educational fields. These same techniques can be put to use throughout life, whenever a difficult question or decision needs to be dealt with. Which new car would be best for my driving needs? Which college will help me succeed in a given major? Which stocks should I invest in for a short term gain? How about a long term investment? The answers to all of these questions would require research of the same type as that in a high school research paper. By learning those skills now, students will improve the likelihood of successful research based decisions for the rest of their lives.

Step By Step Guide to Writing a Research Paper

Step 1: Brainstorm on the Subject

Once the parameters of the assignment have been given, begin to explore broad areas of study that may make interesting research topics. Consider as many areas as you'd like and eliminate them individually as you go along.

Step 2: Choose a Topic

Choose a specific topic from the list created during your brainstorming. Use the "Choosing a Paper Topic" portion of this writing guide to help identify a suitable topic.

Step 3: Take Notes/Outline

As you review information about your chosen topic, take notes on any information that may help in the writing process. Be sure to record where the notes come from for later citation. Use these notes to decide what the major points of the paper will be and create the outline of the paper. Methods for outlining a paper can be found in the "Outlining Your Paper" portion of this writing guide.

Step 4: Write a First Draft

Use your outline to begin writing a cohesive essay. Make sure you are aligning your paper with the expectations of the assignment and are arguing a point. Include information from your notes to add depth to the assignment and feel free to make as many adjustments along the way as necessary. At this point in the process the paper is just beginning to take shape so you may need to adjust the thesis statement or the order of your paragraphs as you progress.

Step 5: Revise/Correct

After writing the first draft, wait at least a day before you attempt to revise the paper. This will allow you to examine the text with less bias as to the style and word choice. Look for areas that need clarification, more evidence or more elaboration and adjust accordingly. You may also need to eliminate portions that are not relevant or add more information to better address the assignment.

Step 6: Write a Second Draft

Rewrite the paper with the new revisions in preparation for the final draft. You may find it necessary to repeat steps 5 and 6 more than once before you complete the writing/revising process.

Step 7: Edit/Peer Edit

Reread your newest version of the paper, or have a peer read it for you, focusing on errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and word choice.

Step 8: Final Draft/Recheck

Use the information you collected in the editing process to create a final, polished essay. Always recheck your final draft for any unseen errors in order to make sure it is of the highest possible quality and correctly formatted.

Step By Step Guide Notes

Use the follow spaces to record any thoughts or information pertaining to the eight steps previously explained:

Step 1: Brainstorm on the Subject

Step 2: Choose a Topic

Step 3: Take Notes/Outline

Step 4: Write a First Draft

Step 5: Revise/Correct

Step 6: Write a Second Draft

Step 7: Edit/Peer Edit

Step 8: Final Draft/Recheck

TOPICS
&
OUTLINES

Choosing a Paper Topic

You must consider many things when choosing a topic for writing a paper. The requirements of each assignment must be followed, but if you find yourself able to pick your own assignment consider the following steps.

1. Read the requirements of the assignment

- a. Are you arguing an issue, offering information, explaining something?
- b. How much time do you have to complete the assignment?
- c. How much space do you have to complete the assignment? (i.e. number of pages)
- d. Are you required to use or not use certain sources?

2. Pick something that you have an interest in

- a. Is there an appropriate subject you feel strongly about?
- b. Is there some aspect of the assignment you wish to learn more about?

3. Subject vs. Topic

- a. Subject: A subject is the basic content of your paper. Subjects are usually broad and very general. In some cases your teacher may assign a subject to you, such as “the Civil War”. In many cases it would now be up to you to choose what particular topic within the broader subject you are interested in researching.
- b. Topic: A topic is the specific issue which your research paper covers. Topics are usually very specific. If your overall subject was “the Civil War” you may choose a topic such as “the Massachusetts 54th Regiment” or “the Role of Women in Confederate Field Hospitals”.

4. Broad vs. Narrow

- a. Not all topics are equal; it is possible to choose a topic that is as broad as a subject.
- b. If your subject was “Traffic Laws” and you were trying to choose between the topics of “The Importance of Safety Belts” or “Speeding Violations and Teen Drivers” you need to carefully consider the questions asked in bullet one.
- c. Broad topics are often the subjects of entire books or even multivolume works. Example: “The Life of Harry Truman” is a specific topic, but would still require a vast amount of time and space to complete.
- d. A narrow topic is something that can be satisfactorily covered in the space of one article or a very short work. Example: “Harry Truman’s Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb” is a narrow specific topic.
- e. Be sure to consider the amount of time you have and the amount pages you are allowed as you try to narrow down your topic.

5. **Consult a general resource to get an overview of the subject/topic.** Read a summary of some sort (encyclopedia or online resource).
6. **Check for additional information on your topic**
 - a. Consult your local libraries for books and articles on the topic.
 - b. Check for any useful online sources.
 - c. If you discover you do not have enough information go back to step 2.
7. **Consider the length of time and size of the assignment**
 - a. Do not try to write a history of the entire world for a three page paper.
 - b. Do not try to write about something tiny for a fifteen page paper.
 - c. Is your topic manageable given the time you have to complete your paper?
 - d. If you discover you cannot manage the topic in the time provided or it will not fulfill the requirements of the assignment go back to step 2.
8. **Choose your working topic.** This may change a little bit before you begin writing your final draft.
9. **Begin reading as much as you can on your topic**
 - a. The more you read about your topic the more effectively you will be able to write.
 - b. Once you have completed some pre-reading you can make an educated choice on your final topic.

Topic Checklist

- _____ 1. I have chosen a subject that satisfies the assignment requirements.
- _____ 2. I have chosen an appropriate topic that is connected to the required subject and satisfies the assignment requirements.
- _____ 3. I have found a diverse and adequate amount of sources on my topic.
- _____ 4. I have completed some pre-reading on my topic.
- _____ 5. I have finalized my topic and received approval from my teacher.

Outlining Your Paper

Outlines are typically the second major portion of the paper writing process. They are often created after the bulk of the research has been completed and lead into the writing of the actual paper itself. It is important to remember that an outline is different from a rough draft.

Why create an outline?

1. Outlines are great organizational tools. They can transform your partial ideas and pre-reading notes into a coherent and directed work.
2. An outline seeks to produce a mere skeleton of the actual paper. Some portions may have full sentences and complete detail, other portions will be filled with thought fragments and references to other works and quotes.
3. The goal of an outline isn't to construct complete arguments, but rather to find the best way to organize your ideas and create a direction that the eventual paper will follow.
 - a. The outline is really about breaking you paper up into small, well organized and manageable portions.
 - b. In many cases your outline will give you a great idea as to the strengths and weaknesses of your paper.
4. There are several ways to create an outline for your research paper and all of them can be useful if done properly.
5. The key to making your outline a useful one is to make sure the details you plan on exploring are laid out in a logical pattern and are grouped together in a way that allows the reader to focus on similar thoughts. If you fail to organize your details with the readers in mind you will make it very difficult for them to understand your arguments.

What are the steps to create an outline?

It is common to skip the introduction and conclusion when creating an outline. Those portions of the essay will be dealt with when creating a rough draft and can be omitted in an outline unless the classroom teacher assigns otherwise. Your outline should only deal with the important arguments and support of your thesis.

1. The first step in creating an outline is deciding what topics are major topics for your argument.
 - a. Make a list of your main topics/arguments you will use to support your thesis. Using this list, write the main points you will use to support each of these topics/arguments.

- b. These points will have more than one piece of evidence to bolster them and will be referred to specifically in the thesis statement of your final copy. Arrange these thoughts in some logical order.
 - c. The logic behind this order will vary greatly depending on the topic of your essay but you may consider chronological, order of importance, or by volume of information available.
 2. Once the major headings have been chosen, sub-topics that explain your major points can be added.
 - a. These typically come in order underneath each of the major topics and can be labeled with Roman numerals or capital letters.
 - b. Each sub-topic must be connected to the major point under which it is listed and support that topic.
 - c. A good way to complete this important task involves the use of index cards. This will allow you to create a “storyboard” of your paper. You can then move these ideas around to see where they will fit best.
 3. At this point you may have to revise your choices of major points based on the availability and strength of sub-topics.
 - a. You may consider adding, removing, or rewording the major points but remember to keep these changes in mind when considering your thesis statement.
 - b. It is important to remember that you can never have a single sub-topic or piece of evidence in an outline. You should not be writing a #1 if there is no #2 to follow it (or *a*, without *b*, etc.).
 - c. If you find that you do not have the ability to add additional pieces to make a series, consider adding the portion you do have to another part of your essay.
 4. The final portion of the outline is the evidence that supports the sub-topics.
 - a. These pieces will be filled in beneath the sub-topics and should be labeled with standard numbers or lower case letters.
 - b. Again, be sure that these are aligned with the correct subtopic by relevance and that they support both the sub-topic and the major point of the paragraph.

Creating an outline may require you to rethink large portions of your original ideas in order to create the best argument possible. It is not uncommon to have significantly different arguments when you’ve completed your outline than you did when you began it. Remember, your outline is not final, you can move things around as ideas come to you or as new sources strengthen or weaken parts of your paper.

Outline Example

Major Point 1

Sub-Topic 1

Evidence/Detail 1
Evidence/Detail 2

Sub-Topic 2

Sub-Topic 3

Evidence/Detail 1
Evidence/Detail 2
Evidence/Detail 3

Major Point 2

Sub-Topic 1

Sub-Topic 2

Evidence/Detail 1
Evidence/Detail 2

Sub-Topic 3

Evidence/Detail 1
Evidence/Detail 2
Evidence/Detail 3
Evidence/Detail 4

Major Point 3

Sub-Topic 1

Evidence/Detail 1
Evidence/Detail 2

Sub-Topic 2

Evidence/Detail 1
Evidence/Detail 2
Evidence/Detail 3

Sub-Topic 3

Major Point 4

Sub-Topic 1

Evidence/Detail 1
Evidence/Detail 2

Sub-Topic 2

Evidence/Detail 1
Evidence/Detail 2
Evidence/Detail 3

Sub-Topic 3

Evidence/Detail 1
Evidence/Detail 2
Evidence/Detail 3

SAMPLE OUTLINE

History of American Education

1) Introduction

- a) Thesis: Although the purpose of education has changed, the coverage of the basics has not.
- b) What is education?
 - i) Work definition for this paper.
 - ii) Examples that support my definition.
- c) What specific content and time period this paper covers.

2) Colonial Education

- a) Old Deluder Satan Act
- b) Massachusetts Model
- c) Mid-Atlantic Education
- d) Southern Education

3) Education in the 1800s

- a) Changing Content
- b) Slave Schools
- c) Science

4) Education Pre-1920

- a) Essentials
- b) Gender
- c) Expansion of subject

5) Education 1920-modern day

- a) The Great Democratizer
- b) Impact of National Events
 - i) Great Depression
 - ii) World War II
 - iii) Cold War
 - iv) Counter-Culture
 - v) 90's Excess
 - vi) Open Admissions/Everyone is Welcome
- c) Impact of Technology
 - i) Construction
 - ii) Highways
 - iii) Technology
 - iv) Computers
 - v) Internet

6) Conclusion

- a) Summary of paper's content
- b) What does the future hold?
 - i) Distance Learning
 - ii) E-Readers
 - iii) E-Libraries

Outline Notes

Use the following spaces to record any thoughts or information pertaining to the process of outlining explained previously.

Major Point:

Sub Topics:

Evidence/Details:

Major Point:

Sub Topics:

Evidence/Details:

Major Point:

Sub-Topics:

Evidence/Details:

Major Point:

Sub-Topics:

Evidence/Details:

**STARTING
THE
WRITING
PROCESS**

Thesis Statement

The thesis statement may be the single most important sentence in any good research paper. It acts as a declaration of the author's belief and sets up the direction and outline of all future arguments. A proper thesis statement offers the reader the topic to be discussed throughout the body of the essay as well as the specific purpose for writing. After reading a properly written thesis, it should be clear what the argument of the paper is, what aspects of that argument the author is planning on developing throughout the essay, and in what order those arguments will be explored. Additionally, the thesis should be written in a clear style and voice that matches the specific language of the rest of the paper.

Getting Started

The best time to begin your thesis statement is during the brainstorming and outlining portion of the essay. Begin by writing your topic, then your opinion on that topic and finally the reasons why that opinion is correct. If, for example, your paper is on solar power, you may want to explore the possible advantages of solar technology.

Topic: Solar Energy

Opinion: Should be used more often

Reasoning: a) renewable energy source b) less pollution than traditional sources
c) cheaper source of power than traditional sources.

Thesis Statement: Solar energy should be considered as an alternative to traditional energy sources because it offers a cheaper and cleaner energy that is highly renewable.

Be aware that writing your thesis statement early in the outlining process will require continual rechecking and possible rewriting of the thesis in order to ensure its alignment with the rest of the essay.

Common Errors

The most common errors made when crafting a thesis statement occur when the author tries to be either too general or too specific. Overly general thesis statements don't give the reader enough information to properly gauge the rest of the piece while overly specific statements leave little room for expansion throughout the remainder of the essay.

Examples

Too General

Gym is an important part of the school day.
“The Lady or the Tiger” is a great short story.
It is important to save the rain forests.

Too Specific

Many students join the Excel Club at Clinton High School.
Advanced Placement courses are designed for the top students in the school.
Tax returns are complicated and require an accountant.

Thesis Checklist

- _____ 1. The thesis statement clearly indicates the main idea to be explored in the essay.
- _____ 2. The thesis statement informs the reader of the author’s opinion on the topic.
- _____ 3. The thesis statement offers specific ideas to be developed throughout the essay.
- _____ 4. The thesis statement allows the readers to see in which order the ideas will be presented.
- _____ 5. The thesis statement fulfills the requirements of the assignment of the essay.
- _____ 6. The thesis statement is written with appropriate language and voice for the assignment.
- _____ 7. The thesis statement is neither too general nor too specific for use.

Writing Style

A writer's style is the unique way he or she presents an argument to the audience. By making a series of choices about word selection, sentence structure, the inclusion of descriptive words and even punctuation, a writer creates a persona the readers expect to remain the same throughout the piece. In order to create and maintain a style that fits the specific needs of a research paper, a writer must pay attention to several aspects of their work.

Audience

All pieces of literature are written with a specific audience in mind and that audience must be considered whenever a decision on style is made. A different series of words would be used to reach and entertain an audience of high school students than an audience of college professors. Fortunately, writers of research papers will know the audience they need to reach by simply reading the assignment. The most common audience for an assigned research paper will be the teacher or teachers giving the assignment, but it is not uncommon for part of the grade to rely on peer assessment as well. Be sure to read the assignment carefully and discuss the intended audience with the assigning teacher, and then write your rough draft and all subsequent versions with that audience in mind.

Be sure to consider the audience's prior knowledge on the topic as well as any opinions or biases they may have concerning the points you may be trying to make. It is also important to know the style of writing the audience is likely to expect when reading this paper. Since this paper is likely being written for a class assignment, the teacher will expect the paper to be written in formal English and contain a specific amount of source material. Failure to meet the expectations of the audience will result in a weaker paper and lower grade.

Purpose

Literature can be written for a number of different purposes. While some papers are meant to explain a situation, describe a scene or narrate a story, this paper is meant to persuade the reader to agree with you as a writer. In order to accomplish this task, it is important that you carefully choose what material you include as evidence. Whereas the right piece of evidence can make your argument, the wrong piece can allow the reader to see alternative points that lead them to conclusions contrary to yours. Always try to find the most convincing examples and facts and include them in your papers in order to bolster the strength of your point of view. By carefully choosing your references this way, you can easily add depth to your entire paper.

Formal vs. Informal English

One of the most difficult habits for young writers to obtain is to write in the proper form of English for a particular piece of literature. Writers must always anticipate the expectations of their readers and attempt to write with the level of language that will meet those expectations. Because this particular essay has been assigned as part of a class curriculum, the level of English will always be formal. In order to meet the requirements of formal English, writers must be aware of a number of aspects of their writing, including but not limited to:

Slang: Should be avoided unless it is required as part of a name or quotation.

Local Phrases: Like slang, should be avoided whenever possible.

Contractions: Most contractions should be avoided but some of the more common ones may be considered acceptable. Ask your individual teacher.

Overly Wordy: Be careful to avoid unnecessarily long descriptions and explanations.

Redundant: Once a topic is covered, move on.

Grammar/Punctuation: Traditional rules on both apply.

Tone

A writer's tone is a reflection of that writer's attitude towards the topic of the paper. While it is important for a writer to persuade the readers to agree with a specific point of view, it is best to let the evidence and analysis included in the paper do that work for the writer. Writers should avoid allowing their attitude to overly shape the tone of a research paper by including sarcasm, insults or emotion. An objective tone called *Standard Written English* has long been considered the acceptable tone to use in academic papers and most notable professional publications. It follows accepted rules of usage, structure, grammar and punctuation and is written to avoid confusion due to an emotionally biased author. By sticking to this approach, writers of research papers will allow their claims to be supported by facts rather than emotional pleas.

Capitalization

Among the most common errors in writing are errors in capitalization. Use the following guide when you revise your essay to avoid mistakes.

When To Capitalize:

Capitalize the first word in every sentence.

The paper is nearly complete.

Capitalize proper nouns or adjectives.

Mary, Canada, Canadian bacon, Tyler's

Capitalize the first word in quoted sentence.

"Give me liberty or give me death!" – Patrick Henry

Capitalize a person's title when it precedes that person's name.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chairman Carl Smith

Capitalize high ranking titles to show respect.

The President, The First Lady

Capitalize nationalities and races.

Swiss, Cherokee, Egyptian

Capitalize religions and religious deities (even in the pronoun form)

Catholic, Jewish, Lord, Buddha, (He, His)

Capitalize the first, last and all important words in any publication or film.

People, Silent Night, The Cat in the Hat

Capitalize political parties.

Democrats, Republicans

Capitalize initials.

J.D. Salinger, M.L. Carr

Capitalize acronyms/initialisms.

O.S.H.A., C.I.A., Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Capitalize compass directions when they refer to a specific region.

The civil war was fought between the North and South.

Capitalize specific course titles.

Biology 101, Psychology 216, Advanced Chemistry

Capitalize historical events or calendar items.

The War of 1812, Valentines Day

Capitalize abbreviations that follow a name.

Mike Smith Jr., William Smith, Esq.

Capitalize trademarks.
Pepsi, Apple, Nike

Capitalize the pronoun I.
Here I am.

When Not To Capitalize:

Do Not Capitalize school subjects except languages.
math, science, English

Do Not Capitalize seasons.
autumn, winter, spring, summer

Do Not Capitalize conjunctions in a title.
Marley and Me, Beauty and the Beast

Do Not Capitalize *a, an* or *the* in a title unless it is the first word.
The Cat in the Hat, It's a Wonderful Life

Do Not Capitalize the first word after a colon or semicolon.
These are my favorites: strawberry, vanilla and chocolate.

Do Not Capitalize a person's title unless it precedes their name.
I met the teacher and the principal.

Do Not Capitalize compass directions used to indicate direction.
Our hike will lead us north, then west.

Contractions

A contraction is a shortening of a word or group of words by omitting some letters (*I will* becomes *I'll*, *can not* becomes *can't*, etc.). Contractions are very common in spoken English and some are even acceptable in written English as well (*of the clock* is acceptable as *o'clock*). While it is up to the assigning teacher to decide how many and which contractions will be allowed in a paper, students should always keep in mind that many contractions are considered informal and should be avoided if possible. Additionally, multiple contractions in a single paragraph or a single sentence will significantly change the tone of the piece.

Commonly Misused Words

Homonyms (words that sound alike) are among the most misused words in writing. Be sure you are using the correct word for your argument by looking up the proper spelling or definition before finalizing your work. If necessary, highlight a word that you think may need to be examined and come back to it during the proofreading portion of your work. Some of the more commonly misused homonyms include: accept/except; affect/effect; allusion/illusion; capital/capitol; its/it's; lay/lie; principle/principal; than/then; to/too/two; there/they're/their; your/you're.

**WORKING
WITH
SOURCES
&
CITATIONS**

Types of Sources

Finding the correct sources to support your paper can be difficult, especially given the amount of information readily available. If you consider some of the basic facts about sources, deciding where to look first will be easy.

1. Books

- a. Books: Books are written for a variety of audiences. Books usually offer an in depth analysis of a topic. Many books contain footnotes allowing the reader to dig deeper into a particular topic. Due to the nature of the publishing process, books can often become outdated or inaccurate overtime so be sure to check for updated research on your particular topic.

Examples

1. Biography of Edgar Allen Poe
 2. The Things They Carried
 3. The American Political Tradition
- ✓ Consider books about your general subject; they may contain a section, chapter or a few pages on your particular topic.
 - ✓ Example: If your topic is “Music Piracy” you should consult books on the music industry or internet crimes, each of which would likely contain a full treatment of your specific topic.
 - ✓ Be sure to check the footnotes/bibliography of sources that are helpful in your research; this may lead to additional, quality sources.

- b. Reference Books: Reference books are written for both general and scholarly audiences. Reference books usually contain a vast amount of information with little analysis. These types of books can be a great place to start to get a feel for the different aspects of your topic.

Examples:

1. Almanac
2. Encyclopedia

2. Periodicals

- a. Newspapers: Most newspapers are published on a daily or weekly basis and are written for the general public. Papers usually deal with immediate coverage of an event and answer those important “who, what, when, where and how” questions. Newspaper editorials can be a helpful place to find specific, powerful views on a topic.

Examples:

1. The Boston Globe
2. USA Today

- b. Magazines: Most magazines are published on a weekly or monthly basis and are written for the general public. Magazines usually offer more analysis than a newspaper and in some cases even take a side on a controversial topic.

Examples:

1. Time
2. Newsweek

- c. Scholarly Journals: Scholarly journals are published on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis and are written for experts of particular disciplines. Journals will offer a much deeper academic analysis of a topic and are always footnoted. These footnotes are an invaluable resource when looking for additional sources targeted to your topic.

Examples:

1. Journal of Massachusetts History
2. Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics
 - ✓ Many libraries have access to online databases. Be sure to check the list or ask the librarian which database would be the best for your research.
 - ✓ Some databases require a log-in ID and password, usually obtained from the Reference Librarian.
 - ✓ Many databases offer full text articles from numerous journals. Be sure to check their footnotes for more sources.

- d. Databases: Databases are collections of articles and materials related to a particular discipline or area of study. The database usually provides a summary of the article, book, or source along with the necessary citation information. Many databases now feature full text articles from newspapers, magazines, and journals. You will likely need your library card and/or the aid of the librarian to access these tools. Some databases are even accessible from home!

Examples:

1. InfoTrak: Collection of 1,000 periodicals (including the New York Times and Wall Street Journal). Many are available in full text format.
2. Gale Virtual Reference Library: Provides full text of hundreds of electronic reference books on a wide range of subjects including: the arts, business, education, history, law, medicine, and science.
3. Humanities Full Text: This database indexes, abstracts and provides the full text of articles, interviews, obituaries, bibliographies, original works of fiction, drama, and poetry, book reviews, and media reviews.
4. Literature Criticism Online: This resource directs the user to commentaries on classic and contemporary books, plays, and poems.

3. Other Sources

- a. Interviews: People are a great source of information. If you are researching the Great Depression why not interview someone who was alive during it? In many cases the information you gain from interviews will serve to strengthen your researched argument.

Example: Interview a Vietnam veteran about his experiences during the war.

- b. Self Conducted Surveys: Surveys can be conducted in many ways; verbally, printed and even online. You can use the information you gain from a survey to conduct a detailed analysis of your particular topic. If you were writing about post-graduation plans of high school students why not talk to some?

Examples:

As part of your paper on the study habits of high school juniors in Science class, you ask students to answer the following questions anonymously.

- ✓ How many hours do you spend on homework each night?
 - ✓ How many days prior to a test do you begin to prepare?
 - ✓ What is your current average?
 - ✓ Are you pleased with your current average?
- c. Non Print Sources: Remember images, maps, audio and video sources are great places to find information about your topic.

Examples:

1. Rocky IV
2. Photograph of the Class of 1983

4. Using the internet

- a. Caution: Remember, the pages on the internet can be authored by ANYONE. This means if you are not careful, what you believe to be a scholarly piece of research can actually be a fifth grade class project.
- b. The problems/uses for Wikipedia: Wikipedia can be a great place to start your research. Just like a reference books, Wikipedia offers a general overview about a particular topic. Unlike reference books, Wikipedia can be written by anyone and therefore cannot be trusted as an academic source.
- c. Sometimes you may need to conduct a more general search in order to find information about your topic.

Example: If your topic is “Concussions in Lacrosse” you may need to consider searching for “concussions in sports” or “Lacrosse injuries”.

5. Inter-Library Loan

- a. As library card holder you may request that books from other area libraries be transferred to your local library. Be advised, these loans can sometimes take two weeks, so identify and request books for loan early in your research process.

Usually the required information to request a book through interlibrary loan is:

- ✓ Basic Information: Author, Title, ISBN, Dewey Decimal Code.
 - ✓ Additional Information: If the requested item is an article you will need to provide publication, volume, number, and start page.
 - ✓ Your Information: When would you like the item shipped? You may be able to pick which library the item is shipped to, maybe even right to your school's library/media center.
- b. Make sure you know what you are requesting; some items may be whole collections, microfilm or full archives. In most cases huge items will not be transferred, but sometimes they can be, with a charge to the individual making the request.

6. Other Advice

- a. When visiting the library, bring some spare change; photocopies (and sometimes printing) are not usually free.
- b. When you need to just establish if enough books exist on your topic to sustain your research be sure to check your local book stores, amazon.com and Google Books.

Taking Notes

Use the following spaces to record any thoughts or information pertaining to sources explained previously.

Book Information:

Website Information:

Periodical Information:

Journal Information:

Citing Sources Made Easy

Use the following outlines to ensure your sources are correctly documented.

Citing Books:

Author's Last Name, First Name. *Title of the Book.* Additional Title Information,

City of Publication: Publisher, Publication Date

Citing Magazines:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Magazine.*

Dates of Publication: Pages.

Citing Newspapers:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Newspaper*

Pages. Publication Date

Citing Websites:

Website URL, "Title of Cited Material", Date of Creation

Types of Quotes

Working someone else's ideas into your paper is necessary to offer expert support for your arguments. Your goal is to use and interpret other people's arguments to support your thesis. Quotes are not the only way to work important information into your paper. Quoting requires careful consideration of your purpose in order to make sure your paper is not simply a collection of statements by others.

Paraphrase: In many cases you will need to summarize and review the information you are taking from an expanded source in order to make it useable for your research paper. In this case make sure you are representing the original source's actual ideas and make sure you provided proper documentation of where you obtained this information.

Imbedded Quotations: Imbedded quotations appear within the body of a paragraph. These quotes need quotation marks and have a footnote appearing at the end of the quote, even if additional paraphrased information is contained in the upcoming sentences. Quotes should be used sparingly, but imbedded quotes take up less space than block quotes and give you a chance to offer support for your statements within a paragraph.

Block Quotations: Usually block quotes are reserved for a quote longer than three lines that make a very significant point or statement. These quotes do not use quotation marks and usually need to be explained before or after their appearance in your paper. The footnote would appear at the end of the quote. If you have something very powerful, something that will prove your thesis with one shot or make a major point to your readers you should consider using a block quote. Block quotes should be used sparingly, as they take up a lot of space and represent someone else's work or opinion, not your own.

Be careful of plagiarism! Plagiarism is using someone else's ideas without giving them proper credit. Although a very serious matter, plagiarism can easily be avoided by documenting anything in your paper that the "average person" would not know. When reviewing your paper, check each piece of evidence you used in support of your thesis and make sure a proper citation is made as to the information's origin.

Quote Examples

Original Source: *“Win-Win is the belief that everyone can win. It’s both nice and tough all at once. I won’t step on you, but I won’t be your doormat either. You care about other people and you want them to succeed. But you also care about yourself, and you want to succeed as well. Win-Win is abundant. It is the belief that there’s plenty of success to go around. It’s not either you or me. It’s both of us. It’s not a matter of who gets the biggest piece of the pie. There’s more than enough food for everyone. It’s an all-you-can-eat buffet.”*¹

Paraphrase: A Win-Win situation benefits all parties involved. In a Win-Win situation both parties work towards a solution that would allow them each to make some gains and avoid failure.²

Imbedded Quotations: There are many ways to work on projects with other students. According to Sean Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, the Win-Win relationship “is the belief that everyone can win”.³ Armed with the attitude that you can do well and help others do well at the same time should create a better working relationship with your peers.

Block Quotations: There are many ways to work on projects with other students. Armed with the attitude that you can do well and help others do well at the same time should create a better working relationship with your peers. One author characterizes the Win-Win situation as,

It’s not either you or me. It’s both of us.
It’s not a matter of who gets the biggest piece of
the pie. There’s more than enough food for everyone.
It’s an all-you-can-eat buffet.⁴

Based on Covey’s definition of the Win-Win situation, one can clearly see the benefits. If you are willing to do something if it helps you move closer to your goals but at the expense of others, you are basing your success on someone else’s failure. In essence, you are setting goals on the idea that success only comes in limited amounts. Covey’s idea of a buffet leads to the assumption that success is not limited, if someone succeeds there is still more than enough success for everyone else.

Plagiarism: In Win-Win there’s more than enough food for everyone. It is not you or me, it is both of us. Win-Win is not a matter of who gets the biggest piece of the pie, it is like an all-you-can-eat buffet.

¹Sean Covey. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998, p 152.

²Sean Covey. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998, p 152.

³Sean Covey. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998, p 152.

⁴Sean Covey. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998, p 152.

FORMATTING

&

FOOTNOTING

Formatting a Research Paper

Unless your teacher makes exceptions, all research papers should be formatted in a formal college-level paper style. This includes:

- Times New Roman font
- 12 point font
- Double Spaced
- No extra spaces between paragraphs
- Five space indent for each paragraph
- One inch margin on each side of the paper
- Printed in black ink
- Number every page after the first one (upper right or bottom middle)
- Stapled in the top left corner
- Title page/heading will be at the discretion of the classroom teacher

Clinton High School

TITLE OF THE PAPER (ALL CAPS)

by

Your Name

Course Title

Teacher of the Course

Date Paper Submitted

Footnotes

The purpose of footnotes is to provide the reader with access to the information you used to reach your conclusions. This gives the reader the opportunity to verify your information or do further reading on your topic. Footnotes must be precise in order to offer as much information as possible.

Think of your sources as the ingredients in your paper, if someone were to follow the same “ingredients” they should reach the same conclusions. By providing notes for the locations of your supporting arguments you are creating a blueprint for someone to prove your paper. Notes make your paper an experiment and give others, concerned with the same hypothesis, the opportunity to reproduce the experiment and reach the same conclusions.

Footnote:

1. A bibliographic reference displayed by a number placed following the appropriate quote, sentence(s) or paragraph of text.
2. The complete reference is placed at the bottom (foot) of the page for the reader to reference.

Endnote:

1. A bibliographic reference displayed by a number placed following the appropriate quote, sentence(s) or paragraph of text.
2. The complete reference is placed at the end of the paper for the reader to reference.

When should you footnote?

1. When you are directly quoting someone else from what they have said or written.
Example: You use a quote from President John F. Kennedy as proof of the importance of community service activities.
2. When you are using the ideas or information of someone else.
Example: You use the results of a scientist’s experiment to support your paper’s thesis.

WHEN IN DOUBT, FOOTNOTE!

What information needs to be recorded for footnote/endnote?

1. Books
 - a. Author(s) or Editor(s)
 - b. Title
 - c. Publisher, City & Year
 - d. Page Number

Example

Bradley Nutting, *Colonial American Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989) 42.

2. Magazine/Journal
 - a. Author(s)
 - b. Publication Title
 - c. Article Title
 - d. Publication Time & Year
 - e. Volume & Issue Number
 - f. Page Number

Example

Angela Pirisi, *Psychology Today* "Dreams and You", May-June 2004: 27.

3. Website
 - a. Complete Web Address
 - b. Title of Section or Article (if applicable)
 - c. Name of Organization or Person running the Site (if available)
 - d. Date You Accessed the Information
 - e. When the website was last updated (if available)

Example

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/ml_iran_british_museum, "Iran to Cut Ties with British Museum Over Loan", February 9, 2010.

Footnote Checklist

- _____ 1. All information, that is not common knowledge, has been properly cited.
- _____ 2. All citations contain all of the necessary information.
- _____ 3. I have double checked the page numbers provided in the appropriate citations to be sure they are correct.
- _____ 4. I have double checked all quotes used in my paper to make sure that they are completely accurate.
- _____ 5. I have not over exaggerated the information from sources used in order to support of my thesis.

Footnote Examples

No author or editor:

Norman's Guide to Life after High School 33rd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Norman's Guides, 1999) 367.

One author:

Bradley Nutting, *Colonial American Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989) 42.

Two authors:

Sean Cohen and Christopher Hoffman, *Movies and Film in American Education* (New York: Knopf, 2004) 76.

Three authors:

Daniel Lowe, Brian Ginsberg, and Sarah Jackson, *Analyzing American Government Through Popular Media*. 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 2004) 144.

More than three authors:

Allison, Boyer, et al., *World History* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993) 456.

Multivolume work:

Paul Morrison, Howard Walker, and William E. Lancaster, *The Growth of the American Economy* 3 vols (New York: Oxford UP, 1998) 78.

Article in a book:

Michael Krossman, "Beat Culture in San Francisco" *San Francisco Lit: Essays on Regional Literary Culture*. Ed. Larry Fine and Paul Scold, (Albuquerque: U of New Mexico, 1985) 34.

Dictionary entry:

"Accord." Def. 5b. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 12th ed. (1998) 17.

Encyclopedia entry:

G. G Bergson, "Revisionism." *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 25th ed. (1997) 114.

Victoria Sheraton, "Politics and Comics." *Encyclopedia of Comics*, (Westwood: Greendale, 2007) 65.

Journal article, one author:

Mark Shifter, "Conflict over Presidential Actions: Congressional Debate over the War in Iraq." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35, 2002: 477.

Journal article, two authors:

Veronica Grossman, and Mark Shifter, "Ethics and Politics." *Journal of Law & Politics* 12.5, 2005: 509.

Magazine article:

Angela Pirisi, *Psychology Today* "Dreams and You", May-June 2004: 27.

Newspaper article, no author:

"Record Snowfall Expected in Washington, DC." *Weekly Weather Observer*, 5 February 2010: 6.

Newspaper article, one author, discontinuous pages:

Nathan Young. "New Turnpike Means Jobs." *Boston Metro* 11 June 2009: A2+.

Website:

Brian McWilliams. "A TV Plea to Patriot Hackers",
<<http://www.wired.com/politics/law/news/2001/09/47099>>,
September 26, 2001.

Film or video recording: *Titanic*. Director, James Cameron. 1997. DVD. Paramount Home, 1999.

"1929 Stock Market Crash (Part 1)", Youtube.com. November 30, 2007.
DeBunker7. March 18, 2010
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLnDPntfNFw>>.

Sound recording:

Counting Crows. *August and Everything After*. DGC, 1993. CD.

Sound recording, specific song:

Counting Crows. "Mr. Jones." *August and Everything After*. DGC, 1993. CD.

Interview:

Person Interviewed. Type of Interview (personal, telephone, email, etc.). Date of Interview. Example: *Jacob Wiinikka. Personal Interview. 16 July 2000.*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Bibliography

What is a bibliography?

Your bibliography is a listing of all of the sources you have used in the construction of your research paper. Make sure you confirm with your teacher that they only want sources you actually used, as some prefer a “Works Consulted” page. A “Works Consulted” page would be a listing of any source you looked at while writing your paper. The idea of any of these pages is to provide the reader with a listing of the sources you used to arrive at your conclusion and provide items that they may wish to use for further reading on your topic.

How should a bibliography be set up?

Any bibliography should be set up alphabetically by author. You may want to consider creating divisions within your bibliography such as “Print Sources”, “Non-Print Sources” and “Websites”. If your source does not have an author, consider the title when placing items in alphabetical order.

What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is very similar to a regular bibliography; a listing of the sources used in the construction of your research paper. The addition that makes your bibliography annotated is a summary of the source and an explanation of its usefulness in your research. This allows you to explain the worth of certain sources to show an even better command of the data used to support your thesis.

Example Bibliography

- Cohen, Sean, and Christopher Hoffman. *Movies and Film in American Education*. New York: Knopf, 2004. Print.
- Grossman, Veronica, and Mark Shifter. "Ethics and Politics." *Journal of Law & Politics* 12.5 (2005): 497-511. Print.
- McWilliams, Brian. "A TV Plea to Patriot Hackers",
<<http://www.wired.com/politics/law/news/2001/09/47099>>, September 26, 2001.
- Nutting, Bradley. *Colonial American Society*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989. Print.
- Shifter, Mark. "Conflict over Presidential Actions: Congressional Debate over the War in Iraq." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35. (2002): 475-99. Print.
- Young, Nathan. "New Turnpike Means Jobs." *Boston Metro* 11 June 2009: A2+. Print.

Example Annotated Bibliography

- McWilliams, Brian. "A TV Plea to Patriot Hackers",
<<http://www.wired.com/politics/law/news/2001/09/47099>>, September 26, 2001.
Brian McWilliams has authored many articles on cyber crimes and computer safety. This article is a fun piece from the online edition of Wired magazine. This publication is mainly for computer users and self described "web heads". The article explains the United States government's request to the hackers of the world for some help in combating both conventional and cyber terrorism. The most stunning revelation from this article comes in the fact that the U.S. government will be requesting this aid by running their plea for help on the Sci-Fi, USA networks and other television networks believed to "hacker favorites". The ads directed at hackers will also be running during specific programming, such as "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" reruns.
- Nutting, Bradley. *Colonial American Society*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989. Print.
In this work Dr. Nutting outlines the basic characteristics of Colonial American society. Dr. Nutting is the author of numerous works on Colonial America and is currently a professor of Colonial History at the University of North Carolina. Based on his current occupation and his past publications I believe him to be a leading expert in this area. This particular book is divided up into the sections of Church, Local Politics, Home Life, and Economic Life. Each of Dr. Nutting's sections are also subdivided into regions of British North America. The portion on home life in the mid-Atlantic colonies contained a great deal information gathered from colonial tax records and several diaries kept by various people during the 1720s. This part also contains statistical analysis of family income, debt and expenditures. My paper will focus on the relationship between income and status in colonial Maryland, therefore this section will be of the most benefit to my research.

Bibliographic Citation Examples

No author or editor:

Norman's Guide to Life after High School. 33rd ed. Princeton, NJ: Norman's Guides, 1999. Print.

One author:

Nutting, Bradley. *Colonial American Society*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989. Print.

Two authors:

Cohen, Sean, and Christopher Hoffman. *Movies and Film in American Education*. New York: Knopf, 2004. Print.

Three authors:

Lowe, Daniel, Brian Ginsberg, and Sarah Jackson. *Analyzing American Government Through Popular Media*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 2004. Print.

More than three authors:

Boyer, Allison, et al. *World History*. Berkeley: University of California, 1993. Print.

Multivolume work:

Morison, Paul, Howard Walker, and William E. Lancaster. *The Growth of the American Economy*. 3 vols. New York: Oxford UP, 1998. Print.

Article in a book:

Krossman, Michael. "Beat Culture in San Francisco." *San Francisco Lit: Essays on Regional Literary Culture*. Ed. Larry Fine and Paul Scold. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico, 1985. 16-43. Print.

Dictionary entry:

"Accord." Def. 5b. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 12th ed. 1998. Print.

Encyclopedia entry:

Bergson, G. G. "Revisionism." *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*. 25th ed. 1997. Print. Sheraton, Victoria. "Politics and Comics." *Encyclopedia of Comics*. Westwood: Greendale, 2007. Print.

Journal article, one author:

Shifter, Mark. "Conflict over Presidential Actions: Congressional Debate over the War in Iraq." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35. (2002): 475-99. Print.

Journal article, two authors:

Grossman, Veronica, and Mark Shifter. "Ethics and Politics." *Journal of Law & Politics* 12.5 (2005): 497-511. Print.

Magazine article:

Pirisi, Angela. *Psychology Today* "Dreams and You", May-June 2004: 27. Print.

Newspaper article, no author:

"Record Snowfall Expected in Washington DC" *Weekly Weather Observer* 5 February 2010, 6. Print.

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Young, Nathan. "New Turnpike Means Jobs" *Boston Metro* 11 June 2009: A2+. Print.

Website:

McWilliams, Brian. "A TV Plea to Patriot Hackers",
<<http://www.wired.com/politics/law/news/2001/09/47099>>,
September 26, 2001.

Film or video recording:

Titanic. Director, James Cameron. 1997. DVD. Paramount Home, 1999.

1929 Stock Market Crash (Part 1), Youtube.com. November 30, 2007.
DeBunker7. March 18, 2010
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLnDPntfNFw>>.

Sound recording:

Counting Crows. *August and Everything After*. DGC, 1993. CD.

Sound recording, specific song:

Counting Crows. "Mr. Jones." *August and Everything After*. DGC, 1993. CD.

Interview:

Person Interviewed. Type of Interview (personal, telephone, email, etc.). Date of Interview. *For example: Wiinikka, Jacob. Personal Interview. 16 July 2000.*

APPENDIX

**Clinton High School
Social Studies Department**

Research Topic Approval Form

You must staple an approved copy of this form to your final paper! Be sure to hang on to this paper once your topic is approved.

Question 1: Name your topic and give a short description detailing the nature of your inquiry and how you intend to proceed. Once you have answered this question, narrow your topic by focusing it into your thesis.

Question 2: Your thesis (in the form of a question)

Question 3: Name some of the sources you might use during your research. (Continue on the back if necessary.)

Student's Name & Date

Teacher's Signature (for approval) & Date

Research Paper Final Checklist

- | | |
|--|--|
| Does your chosen topic fall between too broad and too narrow? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your first sentence interesting and unique? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have a thesis statement? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your thesis clearly present your argument? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your thesis present the points you intend to use for proof? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you use language appropriate for this assignment? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your tone/voice appropriate for this assignment? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your paper fit into the rules of capitalization? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your paper fit into the rules of punctuation? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your paper fit into the rules of spelling and usage? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you use enough sources? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are all your sources valid and appropriate? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you properly cite every source? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have a complete bibliography? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you provide an annotated bibliography if required? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are your bibliography and footnotes done in proper format? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your paper properly formatted? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have the proper title page/heading? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you proofread for errors? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you have a peer edit your work? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |



This resource is also available on the school website:

www.clinton.k12.ma.us