



Ogemaw Heights High School Guide to Research Papers

Items You Need (to be successful):

- Folder FOR RESEARCH ONLY: a 3 ring binder or a paper folder with the center brads is okay as well.
- 100 note cards
- Highlighters: a couple of different colors is good to have
- Rubber band: for keeping your notecards together

ALL OF THESE ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE DOLLAR STORE.

Steps 1 & 2: Selecting a Subject, and Narrowing It Down

The best advice is to select a subject that is attention grabbing. Since it will take a few weeks to work on this topic, choose something that is interesting. Choosing a topic simply because it sounds easy is like shooting yourself in the foot even before you start. Don't make this mistake.

To narrow the topic, do some preliminary reading. This could include looking up the basics of the topic in a search engine or encyclopedia. ***ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND SITES SUCH AS WIKIPEDIA ARE NOT ALLOWED AS OFFICIAL SOURCES, AND SHOULD NOT BE LISTED IN BIBLIOGRAPHIES.** HOWEVER, they are sites to get a beginning idea of what to research for the paper. It's a jumping off point.

Step 3: Writing a Working Thesis Statement

Creating a good thesis statement will help in two very important ways. First, it helps decide what areas to cover. Secondly, it guides in what areas NOT to cover.

Tips for Writing Your Thesis Statement

1. Determine the kind of paper being written:

- An **analytical** paper breaks down an issue or an idea into its component parts, evaluates the issue or idea, and presents this breakdown and evaluation to the audience.
- An **expository** (explanatory) paper explains something to the audience.
- An **argumentative** paper makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with specific evidence. The **claim** could be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation. The goal of the argumentative paper is to convince the audience that the claim is true based on the evidence provided.

If writing a text that does not fall under these three categories (e.g., a narrative), a thesis statement somewhere in the first paragraph could still be helpful to the reader.

2. The thesis statement should be specific—it should cover only what will be discussed in the paper and should be supported with specific evidence.
3. The thesis statement usually appears at the end of the first paragraph of a paper.
4. The topic may change as you write, so revising the thesis statement to reflect exactly what you have discussed in the paper may be necessary.

See the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) for help with thesis statement, citing, etc.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Step 4: Preliminary Research/Bibliography

The next step is to find all the sources needed. A detailed reading of each article or book is not necessary, but rather to skim it, decide if it is useful, and include it in the working bibliography.

Basic rules

- **Label** the page Bibliography (do not italicize the word or put it in quotation marks) and center the word at the top of the page.
- Double space all citations, but do not skip spaces between entries.
- Indent the second and subsequent lines of citations by 0.5 inches to create a hanging indent.
- List page numbers of sources efficiently, when needed. If referring to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on the Bibliography page as 225-50. Note that MLA style uses a hyphen in a span of pages.
- For every entry, determine the Medium of Publication. Most entries will likely be listed as Print or Web sources, but other possibilities may include Film, CD-ROM, or DVD.

Capitalization and punctuation

- **Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc**, but do not capitalize articles (the, an), prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle: *Gone with the Wind*, *The Art of War*, *There Is Nothing Left to Lose*.
- **Use italics (instead of underlining) for titles of larger works** (books, magazines) and quotation marks for titles of shorter works (poems, articles).

Bibliography

Dean, Cornelia. "Executive on a Mission: Saving the Planet." *The New York Times*, 22 May 2007,

www.nytimes.com/2007/05/22/science/earth/22ander.html?_r=0. Accessed 12 May 2016.

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2006, <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/an-inconvenient-truth-2006>. Accessed 15 June 2016.

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1, 2007, pp. 27-36.

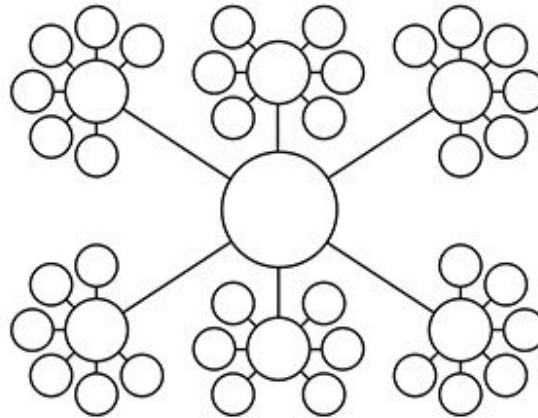
An Inconvenient Truth. Directed by Davis Guggenheim, performances by Al Gore and Billy West,

Paramount, 2006.

Leroux, Marcel. *Global Warming: Myth Or Reality?: The Erring Ways of Climatology*. Springer, 2005.

Step 5: Graphic Organizer

Create a web or bubble map with the topics you believe you will cover in your paper. This is a working document so you can cross out items that don't seem to fit your topic or you can add topics as you research and find they are interesting and want to include them. The items on the graphic organizer will turn into your slug.



Step 6: Read and Take Notes

When reading through the sources, take notes on index cards. Each bibliography entry should be labeled with a capital letter (A, B, C) and each note card should have the letter of the source written in the top right hand corner. This will allow finding the proper source if there was something essential forgotten on the note card.

Use a slug, which is one or two words, to indicate the **topic** of the notes on the note card. This will help to organize the cards in the order in which they will appear in the paper.

Depending on the nature of the source, either summarize what is being said, or directly quote it (use quotation marks.) Either way, **include the exact page number**.

Slug	Source Letter
This is where you will either paraphrase information or write a direct quote in quotation marks. Record PAGE #	

Step 7: Preparing a Formal Outline

Once the research is completed, transform the working outline into its final form: a sentence outline. The sentences in the outline are **topic sentences** for the body paragraphs of the paper. **The outline does not include information for the introduction or the conclusion. It also does not contain any information from your notecards. This is all from your brain!**

The formal outline has no title or heading, but it begins with the statement of the thesis. Here's a portion of a formal outline:

Thesis: A person considering a science career should possess certain skills, aptitudes, and characteristics.

- I. There are two basic types of science careers.
 - A. One is within the field of pure science.
 - B. The other is within the field of applied science.
- II. A science student considering a career in the field should possess certain characteristics if he hopes to be a success.
 - A. An interest in learning is very important to this student.
 - 1. He must possess natural ability.
 - 2. Other special skills are also necessary.
 - B. His curiosity must be almost overwhelming.
 - C. His enthusiasm for his career must be undying.

Step 8 & 9: Writing the Paper and Editing

With the outline and note cards stacked in subject (slug) piles, it is time to write. **Do not expect the first draft to be the finished product.** The hardest part is already finished... the order and topic sentences. Take the outline, sit down at the computer, and begin writing. Write the paper initially without note cards and then go back and add the notes as support. This helps to ensure you do not plagiarize.

Once the first draft is finished, begin revising by adding, eliminating, and rearranging material. If a section in the first draft seems unclear or sketchy, expand it by writing another sentence or two or even a new paragraph. To improve the fluency and coherence of the paper, add transitions to show how one sentence relates to another or how one paragraph leads to the next. For the sake of unity and reader interest, delete any material that is irrelevant, unimportant, repetitive, or dull and unnecessary.

Final editing can be done at this point and will deal with the more mechanical aspects of the paper. Check the sentences to see if they could be more precise. Make sure the sentences are varied both in style and in length and that the word choice is varied. Finally, **proofread to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.**

A WORD ABOUT PLAGIARISM:

Academic Plagiarism is the act of using another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source. It means giving the impression that you have written or

thought something that you have in fact borrowed from someone else. Plagiarism on this paper will result in failure. It's a crime. If you are caught in college, you can be expelled.

Documenting Sources:

In order to avoid plagiarism, document everything that is borrowed – not only direct quotes and paraphrases but also information and **ideas**.

Do this through the use of **parenthetical documentation**. At the end of a quote or an author's idea presented in the paper, place the author's name and the page number in parentheses. This then refers the reader to the bibliography at the end of the paper. Any source information that is provided in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. More specifically, whatever signal word or phrase provided to the readers in the text must be the first word or two that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited List.

Example:

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"
(Wordsworth 263).

Step 10: Organize Your Works Cited Page

The page following the paper should be titled Works Cited. Take the Bibliography, delete any sources not used, change the title, and correct any mistakes. **The bibliography and works cited pages do not count as a page in the paper.**

Step 11: Type Final Draft

The paper consists of a title, introduction, body, and conclusion. The entire paper will be double spaced.

Title: must include both the topic and the purpose of the paper. It should be interesting as well as informative. The title should be catchy and clever, but it needs to state the topic and purpose as well.

Introduction: It has two purposes. First, it will provide an attention-getter for the reader. Second, it will state the thesis at the end of the paragraph.

Body: This will provide the support for the thesis. This is the part that is covered by the outline. This is MORE than five paragraphs if writing a longer paper.

Conclusion: It must leave the reader with a lasting viewpoint what has just been discussed, and it must rephrase the thesis.

Sample First Page

Your name, the professor's name, the course number, and the date of the paper are double-spaced in 12-point, Times New Roman font. Dates in MLA are written in this order: day, month, and year.

Elizabeth L. Angeli
Professor Patricia Sullivan
English 624
12 February 2012

Green text boxes contain explanations of MLA style guidelines.

Blue boxes contain directions for writing and citing in MLA style.

Angeli 1

Page numbers begin on and with page 1. Type your name next to the page number so that it appears on every page.

Toward a Recovery of Nineteenth Century Farming Handbooks

While researching texts written about nineteenth century farming, I found a few authors who published books about the literature of nineteenth century farming, particularly agricultural journals, newspapers, pamphlets, and brochures. These authors often placed the farming literature they were studying into an historical context by discussing the important events in agriculture of the year in which the literature was published (see Demaree, for example). However, while these authors discuss journals, newspapers, pamphlets, and brochures, I could not find much discussion about another important source of farming knowledge: farming handbooks. My goal in this paper is to bring this source into the agricultural literature discussion by connecting three agricultural handbooks from the nineteenth century with nineteenth century agricultural history.

To achieve this goal, I have organized my paper into four main sections, two of which have sub-sections. In the first section, I provide an account of three important events in nineteenth century agricultural history: population and technological changes, the distribution of scientific new knowledge, and farming's influence on education. In the second section, I discuss three nineteenth century farming handbooks in connection with the important events described in the first section. I end my paper with a third section that offers research questions that could be answered in future versions of this paper and

Titles are centered and written in 12-point, Times New Roman font. The title is not bolded, underlined, or italicized.

The thesis statement usually is the last sentence of the introduction.

The thesis is a clear position that you will support and develop throughout your paper. This sentence guides or controls your paper.

The introductory paragraph, or introduction, should set the context for the rest of the paper. Tell your readers why you are writing and why your topic is important.

If your paper is long, you may want to write about how your paper is organized. This will help your readers follow your ideas.

MLA requires double-spacing throughout a document; do not single-space any part of the document.

These requirements will be used 9-12th grades with increased rigor at each level. Each research paper must have:

Proper, current MLA formatting (reference Purdue OWL website for questions)

- Graphic Organizer
- Outline
- Bibliography
- Works Cited
- Notecards

9th Grade: 30+ notecards and a final draft of 4-6 pages.

10th Grade: 40+ notecards and a final draft of 5-7 pages.

11th Grade: 50+ notecards and a final draft of 7-9 pages.

12th Grade: 60+ notecards and a final draft 8-10 pages.

AP Classes: 60+ notecards and a final draft of 7-10 pages including an **annotated** works cited.

Sources used:

"Welcome to the Purdue OWL." *Purdue OWL: MLA Formatting and Style Guide*. Purdue University,

2017. Web. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/551/01> Accessed 23 Jan. 2017.

Write For College. 181 Ballardvale Street, Wilmington, MA 01887: Great Source Education Group,

1997. Print.

Websites for senior research paper:

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