

# Writing a Research Paper

## Purpose

A research paper is a carefully planned essay that shares information or proves a point. It may include ideas from books, Web sites, documents, interviews, observations, and so on. Most school research papers are from three to five pages long and may require a title page, an outline and a list of works cited.

The following pages contain information that will help you to organize and type your research paper.

## Topic

The first thing you need to do in writing your paper is to decide on a subject. Your teacher may give you a general or specific subject on which to write your paper. If you have been given a general subject you may need to be more specific when you start to look up your information or you may find you have too much information.

## Doing Research

Before you start writing down any information, you need to determine if your library has the needed sources. Source, Bibliography or Works Cited Cards Use 3x5 cards for your source information. Put only one source on a card. This information will be needed when you type your works cited page of your paper. Alphabetize your cards according to the Author's last name. Give each source card a number.

## Note Cards

Information will be written on note cards. Each card should be headed with one of your three to five main topics to be covered in the paper. Put the source card number on each note card. Use a separate card for each source and topic. Notes are a list of facts. No sentences should be used unless it is a direct quotation.

## Outline

Arrange your note cards in the order you want the information to appear in your paper. Give each topic a Roman Numeral. Using a full sheet of paper start with the Roman Numeral "1" and organize your facts under each main topic into subdivisions of important facts.

## Rough Draft

Using your outline as guide, write a rough draft. Each Roman Numeral of your outline will become a paragraph. Use your rough draft to correct spelling mistakes, punctuation and move sentences. Read your rough draft out loud to see if it flows smoothly and makes sense. Make corrections as needed. Your teacher may require you to turn in the rough draft to be graded.

## Typing and Printing

- I. Typing and Printing
  - A. Standards

1. Choose a standard, easily readable typeface. (e.g. Arial, Times New Roman , Courier)
2. Use a 12-font size.
3. DO NOT justify the lines of your paper at the right margin.
4. Turn off the automatic hyphenation and hyper linking features.

- B. Always keep a hard copy of your paper.
- C. Always save your work as you type.

## II. Paper

- A. Use only 8-by-11 inch white paper of good quality.
- B. Print on one side of the paper.

## III. Margins

- A. Set one inch margins at the top, bottom, and on both sides.
- B. Indent the first word of each paragraph one-half inch from the left margin. When using a word processing program, you may use the Tab key to indent for each paragraph.
- C. Indent set-off quotations one inch from the left margin. The right margin should remain normal.
- D. For an example, see the sample first page of a research paper.

## IV. Spacing

- A. A research paper must be double-spaced throughout, including quotation, notes, outline, and the list of works cited.
- B. See the sample pages of a research paper on the following pages.
- C. Position the first line of text one inch from the top of the page.

## V. Heading and Title

- A. Your research paper may not need a title page. If your teacher requires a title page, format it according to the instructions you are given.
- B. Beginning one inch from the top of the first page and flush with the left margin, type on separate lines and double space between each line.

1. Your name
2. Your teacher's name
3. The course name
4. The date (Day Month Year)

- C. Double space again and center the title.
- D. Double space between the title and the first line of the text.
- E. Do not underline your title or put it in quotations marks or type it in all capital letters.
- F. If you include an outline with your paper, it should precede the paper itself.

## VI. Page numbers

A. Number all pages consecutively throughout the research paper in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin.

1. Type your last name before the page number.
2. Do not use the abbreviation p. before a page number.
3. Do not add a period, a hyphen, or any other mark or symbol.

Snowcrest 1 Sam Snowcrest  
Cool Teacher  
English 9  
January 1, 2005  
Introduction or Beginning

Your introduction should do two things. The first part should say something interesting, surprising, or important about the subject to gain the reader's attention. The second part should identify the thesis of your research. This section should be 1-2 paragraphs long. You could start with a revealing story or quotation, give background information, offer a series of interesting or surprising facts, or define your topic. You may also state your reason for choosing the subject.

### Body of the Paper

The next step is to write the main part of your research paper, the part that supports or proves your thesis. Use your own words as much as possible. Include the ideas of others or direct quotations only when they add support to your thesis. This section should be 3-6 paragraphs long. Each different point should be written in a separate paragraph followed by support from your research. Include at least one quote in each paragraph and cite your sources after your quote or paraphrase.

### Conclusion

The final section of your paper should leave readers with a clear understanding of the importance of your research. Summarize the main points made and draw a final conclusion. Include a restatement of your thesis statement. This section should be 1-2 paragraphs long.

### Works Cited or Giving Credit

Works cited will follow their fact and be put in parenthesis. The authors last name and page number will be in parenthesis followed by the period for that sentence (Hunter 99).

### Final Completed Research Paper

Once you and your teacher are satisfied with your rough draft, type your final paper. You are now ready to turn your paper in. You will have your title page, final draft and works cited page. You may also be required to turn in your rough draft, note cards, source cards, and outline.

### Examples of Source Card and Note Card

DOCUMENTATION or GIVING CREDIT FOR YOUR INFORMATION GUIDELINES for AVOIDING PLAGIARISM:

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism is a form of theft. You plagiarize if you present other writers' words or ideas as your own. You must use citations to document all ideas and significant information that are not your own.

### USE YOUR OWN WORDS AND IDEAS.

Practice is essential to learning. Each time you choose your words, order your thoughts, and convey your ideas, you can improve your writing.

### GIVE CREDIT FOR COPIED, ADAPTED, or PARAPHRASED MATERIAL.

If you repeat another's exact words, you **MUST** use quotation marks and cite the source. If you adapt a chart or paraphrase a sentence, you must still cite. Paraphrase means that you restate the author's ideas, meaning, and information in your own words. To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use another person's idea, opinion, or theory; any facts, statistics, graphs, and drawings.

### AVOID USING OTHERS' WORK WITH MINOR "COSMETIC" CHANGES.

Examples: using "less" for "fewer," reversing the order of a sentence, changing terms in a computer code, or altering a spread sheet layout. If the work is essentially the same, give credit.

### THERE ARE NO "FREEBIES."

**ALWAYS** cite words, information, and ideas you use if they are new to you (learned in your research). No matter where you find it -- even in an encyclopedia or on the Internet -- you cite it!

### BEWARE OF "COMMON KNOWLEDGE."

You don't have to cite "common knowledge," **BUT** the fact must really be commonly known. That Abraham Lincoln was the U.S. President during the Civil War is common knowledge; that over 51,000 Union and Confederate soldiers died in the Battle of Gettysburg<sup>4</sup> is not.

### WHEN IN DOUBT, CITE.

Better to be safe than not give credit when you should!

### RULES FOR WORKS CITED

1. Place /Works Cited at the end of the paper.
2. List the sources in alphabetical order by the first word of the first line of each entry **EXCEPT** for a, an, and the.
3. **DO NOT NUMBER** entries.
4. Start the first line of every citation at the margin. Indent the second line, five spaces, as you would the beginning of a paragraph. This is a "hanging indention."
5. Single space entries if typing. If you are writing your paper, skip a line within the entry.
6. Double space between individual entries if typing. If you are writing your paper, skip one line after each entry before starting another.
7. Punctuate very carefully. Use the same punctuation as is on your bibliography sheets.

### Books:

A book with one author:

Brinkley, Alan. *The Unfinished Nation*. New York: Knopf, 1993.

If the person named on the title page is the editor or compiler, rather than the author, add a comma then the abbreviation "ed." or "comp." Kreider, Jan F., ed. Handbook of Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning. Boca Raton: Dell, 1993.

#### Two or More Authors:

List the names in the order they appear on the title page. Only the first author's name should be reversed: Last Name, First Name. Use a comma between the authors' names. Place a period after the last author's name. Rowe, Richard, and Larry Jeffus. The Essential Welder: Gas Metal Arc Welding Classroom Manual. Albany:Delmar, 2000.

If there are more than three authors, name only the first and add et al., or give all the names. Randall, John E., et al. Fishes of the Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea. Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1997.

#### General encyclopedia article, with author:

Bates, William. "Angelou, Maya." The Encyclopedia Americana. 2000 ed. General encyclopedia article, no author: "Fire Fighting." The Encyclopedia Britannica. 1999 ed.

#### Periodicals:

Author. "Title of Article." Title of Magazine Date: Page(s). Heyman, J.D., and Johnny Dodd. "New Arm, Same Spirit." People 23 Feb. 2004: 58+

#### Journal:

Author. "Title of Article." Title of Journal Volume number (Year): Page(s). Nelson, Roxanne. "Smoking Outside Still Causes Second-Hand Smoke Exposure to Children." Lancet 359 (2002):1675.

#### Newspaper:

Author. "Title of Article." Name of Newspaper Date: Page(s). Lowry, Brian and Rosie Mestel. "In Wired World TV Still Has Grip on Kids." Los Angeles Times 18 Sep. 2000: F1+.

#### Video recordings/DVD's:

Title. Director, Producer, and/or Writer. Medium. Distributor, Year. Monet: Legacy of Light. Writ., dir, and prod. Michael Gill. Videocassette. Home Vision, 1989.

#### Television Programs:

"Title of Episode or Segment." Title of Program or Series. Credit (Performer, writer, etc). Name of Network. Call Letters (if any), City of Local Station (if any).Broadcast Date. "Why the Towers Fell." Nova. PBS. KHET, Honolulu. 7 Sept. 2004.

#### Interviews:

Person Interviewed. Type of Interview (personal, telephone, email, etc.). Date. Nakamura, Michael. Personal interview. 23 July 2004.

#### Broadcast Interview:

Add information for the television or radio broadcast. Clinton, Bill. Interview with Larry King. Larry King Live. CNN. 24 June 2004.

## **WEB SITES**

Complete publication information may not be available for a Web site; provide what is given. Title of the Site. Editor. Date and/or Version Number. Name of Sponsoring Institution. Date of Access . ESPN.com. 13 May 2004. ESPN Internet Ventures. 24 Nov. 2004.

### Article Within a Web Site

Author. "Title of Web Page." Title of the Site. Date and/or Version Number. Name of Sponsoring Institution. Date of Access . Devitt, Terry. "Flying High." The Why Files. 9 Dec. 1999. University of Wisconsin. 4 Sept. 2004 .

### Article Within a Web Site (Anonymous)

"Title of Web Page." Title of the Site. Date and/or Version Number. Name of Sponsoring Institution. Date of Access . "Becoming a Meteorologist." Weather.com. 12 Nov.1999. The Weather Channel. 4 Sept. 2004 .