

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RESEARCH PAPER

**All research papers require the following:**

1. Preliminary bibliography
2. Notes taken on note cards
3. Title page
4. Outline
5. Bibliography
6. Documentation
7. Both a first and a final draft
8. Appropriate number and type of sources--see chart below

<b>CLASS</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>SOURCES</b>	<b>MINIMUM LENGTH</b>
9th grade	History	A minimum of 8 sources: at least 1 periodical, at least 1 Internet source, at least 2 books, and no more than 2 general encyclopedias	5 typed, double spaced pages (in an approved font and size)
8th grade	Science	A minimum of 7 sources: at least 1 periodical, at least 1 internet source, at least 2 books, and no more than 2 general encyclopedias	4 typed, double spaced pages (in an approved font and size)
7th grade	History	A minimum of 6 sources: at least 1 periodical, at least 1 Internet source, at least 2 books, and no more than 2 general encyclopedias	3 typed, double spaced pages (in an approved font and size)
6th grade	Science	A minimum of 5 sources: at least 1 periodical, at least 1 Internet source, at least 2 books, and no more than 2 general encyclopedias	2 typed, double spaced pages (in an approved font and size)

## CHOOSING A TOPIC -- Preliminary Reading

1. You should pick a topic that you are interested in, because you will be working on it for several weeks. Come up with a list of several possible topics--use textbooks for ideas.
1. In order to be sure that there is enough information for you to write a good paper, you should next check the library for available sources. Look in your **textbook**, glance at **encyclopedias**, check the **electronic catalog for books**, and try the **online periodical databases**.
1. Gather these sources and **skim** through them. You should be looking to see the type of information in each source. Look for information that does not overlap, and that seems to go beyond a brief introduction. If there is not enough information, you must look for another topic.

## THE PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. When you have chosen your topic, you must make a series of bibliography cards for the **five** most promising sources you have found so far (see p. 4, 5).
1. Remember, you will need to use **more** than five sources for your paper. You may even decide that one or two of these preliminary sources are not as useful as they looked at first. That is fine. What you are doing in this step is verifying that there is enough information to get started.

## FOCUS QUESTIONS (Grade 6)

1. You need to think of some questions to guide your research. The questions should be general enough so that they cannot be answered by one fact.
1. Here are some examples:
  1. You should have from 5 to 7 focus questions for a 2 page paper.
  1. Write all your focus questions on one note card, to refer to as you take notes.
  1. As you research, keep your focus questions in mind. You need to find information that will answer the questions. **When you find a fact, ask yourself: Will this answer one of my focus questions?** Is it directly related to any of my questions? Is it background information that my readers will need in order to understand my topic? If the answer is yes, then take a note. **If the information does not have anything to do with your focus questions, maybe you can ignore it.** (You might consider adding a new focus question if the information seems important to your topic.)
1. Do not worry if you cannot find the answers to all of your focus questions. You will probably discover more about your topic as you research. It is possible to change your focus questions, eliminate some, or add new ones as you go along. Always check with your teacher if you think you need (or want) to change your focus questions.

## A THESIS STATEMENT (Grades 7-9)

1. A thesis is a statement of fact or opinion which you are going to prove in your research paper. It is like a scientist's hypothesis.
1. To develop your thesis statement, start by asking questions about your topic (similar to the focus questions you used in 6th grade). Do a little general reading to see if you can find information to answer your questions. This reading should not be in depth; you are skimming to get a general idea of your topic at this point.
1. Write your question and its answer as one sentence. For example, here is a question and its answer: What does a flame need in order to burn? Oxygen. Here is how to write this as a thesis statement: A flame needs oxygen in order to burn. Here is a history-related example: What held society together in the Middle Ages when the nobles and the peasants were so widely separated by class distinctions? Religion. Here is the thesis statement: The Church unified Medieval society.
1. Ask yourself whether you can find out **why** a flame needs oxygen, or **why** religion was the center of medieval life. If there seems to be enough information, then you probably have a good thesis. Check it with your teacher.
1. If there is not enough information, ask another question, look for its answer, and do some more preliminary reading.
1. Do not worry if you cannot find a great thesis right away. If you find one that is good enough to get going on, and that your teacher approves, you will discover more about your topic as you research. It is possible to change your thesis as you go along. Always check with your teacher if you think you need (or want) to change your thesis.

## Why do you need a thesis?

1. A thesis will help you research.

If you are searching for proof of why something is true or untrue, then you can know which things are important enough to take notes on. **When you find a fact, ask yourself: Will this help prove my thesis?** Is it directly related to my thesis? Is it background information that my readers will need in order to understand my point? If the answer is yes, then take a note. **If the information does not have anything to do with your thesis, maybe you can ignore it.** A good rule of thumb if you are not sure: when in doubt, take the note. You can discard extra information much more easily than you can look something up the night before the paper is due.

2. A thesis will help guide your outline.

As you arrange your facts in order, keep in mind that you are trying to persuade the reader to agree with your thesis.

3. A thesis will help guide your writing.

Before you begin typing, you will have already determined the order that you are going to present your facts to the reader (you did this by writing your outline). If you keep in mind the **overall purpose of your paper--to prove your thesis--you will be able to make connections between these separate facts.** Instead of being a series of unrelated bits of information, your paper will be a unified argument.

## NOTE-TAKING

Usually when you take notes, you will paraphrase information. This technique requires you to put the information **into your own words** while retaining the main idea and **some** key words from the original. When paraphrasing, you must also change the word order and sentence structure. Most importantly, you must be careful not to copy three or more consecutive words from the source.

Another note-taking technique is to quote directly from the source. **Try not to quote directly, but if you do, be sure to write quotation marks on your note card.**

Paraphrasing creates better, more useful notes than direct quotations, because when you begin to draft the paper, paraphrases create a smoother flow of information in your paper. **A good rule to follow is to paraphrase more and quote less.**

### How to paraphrase

1. Read your source carefully. Be certain that you understand the author's main points.
1. Select a passage from your source which presents information you need in your paper. Remember that the information should answer a focus question / support the thesis you are presenting in your paper.
1. Rewrite the source information into a statement of main idea and relevant details, preserving the meaning of the original.
1. Replace words with synonyms. This will take time and effort, but keep working until you have produced a version which does not use the wording of the original.
1. Construct a new word order. Do not rely on the author's sentence structure.
1. Check your version with the original. Make sure that you have not copied three or more consecutive words from the original.

**All your notes will be on index cards.** This will help you when you need to outline. (See p. 6) Before you make a fact card, make a bibliography card.

### How to write a bibliography card.

1. The **first thing you do** when you find any source is to make a bibliography card.
1. Each source needs its own "code symbol." This can be a color, a shape, a number, a letter, whatever you want. Write the symbol on the top of your card.
1. Keep a "code key" card; make a list of your code symbols with abbreviations of the sources they represent.
1. Write the bibliography of your source on the card **in the correct form, including all the punctuation, and indenting properly.** That way you know you have all the information when it is time to write the bibliography page. (See p. 5 for examples of bibliographies for various types of sources.)

## SAMPLE BIBLIOGRAPHIC ENTRIES

### **Book with one author:**

Almack, John C. *Research and Thesis Writing*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930.

### **Book with two authors:**

McKissak, Patricia C. and Frederick Higgins. *Black Diamond: The Story of the Negro Baseball Leagues*. New York: Scholastic, 1994.

### **Book with more than two authors:**

Busbey, Arthur B., et al. *Rocks and Fossils*. San Francisco: Time-Life Books, 1996.

### **Signed magazine article:**

Fincher, Jack. "George Ferris' Wheel of Fortune" *Smithsonian* July 1983: 108-118.

### **Unsigned magazine article:**

"Deadly by Nature." *World* June 1998: 20-23.

### **Signed encyclopedia article:**

Sapir, Edward. "Language." *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 1933.

### **Unsigned encyclopedia article:**

"Northwest Passage." *World Book Encyclopedia*, 1998.

### **Signed newspaper article:**

Salemy, Shirley. "Plan Will Aid Children." Des Moines Register, Sept. 2, 1988, sec. M:1.

### **Unsigned newspaper article:**

"Russia on the Verge." *New York Times*, Sept. 1, 1998, sec. A: 25.

### **Signed pamphlet:**

Grayson, George W. *The North American Free Trade Agreement*. New York: Foreign Policy Association, Inc., 1993.

### **Unsigned pamphlet:**

*Consumer Information Catalogue*. Pueblo, CO: Government Publications Office, 1997.

### **Video:**

*Island of the Giant Bears*. Videocassette. National Geographic, 1995, 59 min.

### **Television or radio program:**

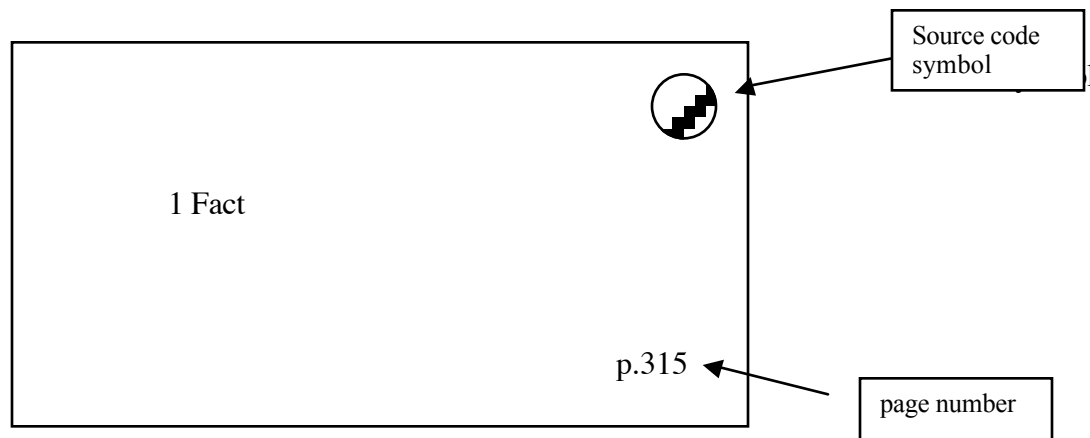
"Crime and Punishment." *Nightline in Prime Time*. ABC. WKOW, Madison, WI. Sept. 3, 1998.

### **Web site:**

Limb, Peter. "Relationships between Labour & African Nationalist Movements in South Africa." [[http://neal.ctstateu.edu/history/world\\_history/archives/limb-l.html](http://neal.ctstateu.edu/history/world_history/archives/limb-l.html)], May 11, 1992.

## **How to make a fact card.**

1. On each fact card, you must have three things:
  - a. The source "code symbol" (see above)
  - b. The page number (this will help with your documentation--see p. 7)
  - c. **IF THERE IS NO PAGE NUMBER IN THE SOURCE, WRITE "NP"**
  - d. ONE fact
2. Make sure each card has only one fact on it. This is important although it seems irritating. When it comes to outlining, you will need to be able to put individual facts into separate piles. (See p. 7)
3. **Always remember to record the number of the page on which you found your fact. You will need this for documentation.**



## **Hints:**

1. If you copy words exactly from the book, you **must use quotation marks on your card**. You might not remember that it is a direct quote when you sit down to write.
2. Try to **identify all names, places, etc. on each card. Do not use pronouns.** Remember that you will need to understand these notes when you read them several weeks after taking them.
3. Make a few non-note cards to help yourself:
  - a. list new places to look for information.
  - b. list questions that need answering as they occur to you.
  - c. make a "key" card of your bibliographic symbols and the sources to which they refer.
4. Every once in a while, review your note cards, keeping your mind on your focus questions / thesis. Do you have enough information to answer your questions / prove your thesis? What do you need more information about? Use this procedure as a way to check yourself, and to keep track of how much and what kinds of research you still need to do.

## HOW TO WRITE AN OUTLINE

### Preliminary steps.

1. Put your bibliography cards and other non-note cards aside.
1. Read through your fact cards one at a time, with your focus questions / thesis in mind.
1. Return to your cards and read them again. This time you will be sorting them into categories. As you read each fact, decide what category that fact will fit into. (You may want to use your focus questions as category titles; other possible categories include background information, causes, results, etc.) Write the category name on a blank card and use this card as a "title" card for a pile. Any fact card which fits that category should be placed in that pile. Each category will be a separate pile of fact cards. Not all of your categories will have the same number of facts. This is OK. Continue sorting your cards until you are finished. You may have a few "miscellaneous" cards that do not seem to fit anywhere. Put them to one side for now.
1. Now arrange the piles in an order that explains your topic and proves your thesis. You may need to re-title, combine, and/or split some piles.
1. You may need to do one or all of the following three things at this point:
  - a. Discard information that does not have anything to do with your thesis.
  - b. Do some more research, if you discover holes in your information.
  - c. Change your thesis to something that you can prove, based on your information. (Remember to check
6. Beginning with your first pile, put the individual cards in order within each pile. Do this by thinking of each pile as a separate paper. In what order would you put this information? Another way to order your cards is to think about the sections of your paper that come before and after the pile you are working on. Try to choose the first card for your pile based on what will have come before. Try to choose the last card for that particular pile based on the section that will come next. **Number your cards when you get to this stage in case you ever drop them.**

### Writing the actual outline.

1. Roman numeral "I" should be titled "Introduction." One of your capital letters ('A', 'B', 'C', etc.) will be your thesis statement written out. The other capital letters in this section should be any very basic background information about your topic.
1. The following Roman numerals will be the titles of your other piles.
1. When you have gone through each pile of cards, be sure that your last Roman numeral is titled "Conclusion." You need to summarize your main arguments and remind the reader that you have proven your thesis.

### Reminder:

1. You **must** have an Introduction (Roman Numeral I).
2. You **must** have a Conclusion (your last Roman Numeral).

## WRITING THE ROUGH DRAFT

You will need your fact cards, bibliography cards, and outline with you in order to write your paper. Your outline should keep your writing organized. Your fact cards will keep your writing accurate and complete. Your bibliography cards will allow you to add documentation.

1. Read Roman numeral I (the Introduction) of your outline. Find any note cards that go with that section of your outline, read them, and then write that paragraph. Since you have already put each individual note card in order, you shouldn't need to make a lot of decisions about what to write first. At this stage, you should be thinking about how to phrase your information, and how to connect the facts together.
1. Every note card does not have to be its own sentence. You will probably also find that you need to add additional sentences to explain the facts, and to serve as transitions between them.
1. Each Roman numeral of your outline will be a new paragraph. Remember to review the fact cards for each section before you begin writing. Sometimes, one Roman numeral may be more than one paragraph long. However, you should **never** have one paragraph that combines two or more Roman numerals.
1. If you use a direct quote, a statistic, or an unusual theory, be sure to document it correctly. It is easier to do this as you write, because you have the fact card right there. If you wait, you will have to find which note card the information came from - sometimes a tedious process.

## REREADING

When you finish your first draft, read your paper through. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Is my thesis in the Introduction?
2. Does each paragraph have one whole idea, and only one idea?
3. Did I explain general information and concepts first, and then give specific examples?
4. Did I make connections and transitions between the ideas in my paper?
5. Did I conclude?
6. **Does my paper make sense?** Did I prove my thesis / answer my focus questions?

### Make Any Necessary Changes.

## PROOFREADING

You have written your first draft, read it through, and done some revising. Now check your work for spelling, punctuation, etc. Here is a checklist that may help.

1. Spelling
2. Punctuation and capitalization of proper nouns (check the documentation and bibliography)
3. Sentence fragments and run-ons
4. Agreement between subject and predicate, and consistent verb tense
5. Remember, this is a formal academic piece of writing--avoid "I," "you," and slang.

### Again, Make Any Necessary Changes.

## DOCUMENTATION

You must acknowledge the sources of your information in order to avoid plagiarism and to convince your reader that your information is accurate.

1. Avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism means stealing someone else's work--whether stealing writing by copying phrases or sentences word for word, or stealing ideas and opinions by pretending that you came up with them completely independently. When you document a quote or an idea, you give credit to the original author.
2. Convince your reader. When you document information, your reader can double-check your facts. He may want to do so if the information is new or startling, like a new medical technique, or the discovery of a world leader's 100 year- old diary. Documentation is also helpful to the reader if he wants to read more about some aspect of your topic, because it gives him specific directions where to look.
3. What to document.
  - a. Direct quotes or extensive paraphrasing.
  - b. Specific numbers like dates, statistics, or amounts of money
  - c. Facts that are not common knowledge, or opinions which are not commonly held.
4. Hint: Do you think the reader will be skeptical? Then document.

### **How to document.**

1. Your documentation will all be in your text. As you come to the end of the sentence which contains the fact to be documented, do **not** write a period.
2. Instead of a period, begin a parenthesis. Write the last name of the author of the source from which you got the fact, and then write the page number or NP. End your parenthesis, and now write the period. If you have several sources by the same author, include an abbreviation of the title to clearly identify which source you mean. (see sample paper)
2. If the source of the fact did not give an author, use an abbreviation of the title of the source. If several sources have the same title, be sure to distinguish them with different abbreviations. (see sample paper)

## WRITING THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

When you look at the sample bibliography which comes after the sample research paper, look at the setup of the page. "Bibliography" is written at the top, as a heading. The entries are arranged alphabetically, and are not numbered. Notice also that the entries are single spaced, with an extra line between each entry. Each entry is shaped like a reverse paragraph. The first line starts at the margin, and any subsequent lines are indented. Your bibliography page should look like the sample.

### **Reminder:**

Be sure to carefully double-check the punctuation and format of your bibliographic entries. If you were careful while making your bibliography cards, you should have all the information you need.

## REVISION FOR THE FINAL DRAFT

### REMEMBER TO...

#### A. REREAD

1. Reread whole rough draft
2. Read teacher comments
3. Ask about any comments that aren't clear

#### B. MAKE CHANGES

1. Change date on title page
2. **Find additional information and include it, if needed**
3. Make corrections / additions to bibliography if needed
4. Look up any missing documentation and add it, if needed
5. Reorganize content (move sentences / paragraphs) if needed
6. Check for appropriate transitions and paragraphing; adjust if needed
7. Fix mechanical errors:  
spelling / punctuation / capitals / run-ons / documentation
8. Run "spell check" **SLOWLY**, and ask for help on any words "spell check" questions
9. Check that your outline still matches paper, and fix or adjust outline if needed

#### C. DOUBLE CHECK

1. Do "spell check" **AGAIN**
2. Save as "final draft" and print
3. Have a peer read the printed final draft
4. Read printed, stapled final draft yourself
5. Attach rough draft