

English 12 Comp Research Paper Module

3 sources on bibliography cards (5 pts each)	_____
10 note cards (10 points)	_____
Outline rough draft (10 points)	_____
Rough draft paper (20 points)	_____
Outline final draft (15 points)	_____
Final draft paper (50 points)	_____
Title page (5 points)	_____
Works cited page (20 points)	_____
Total out of 135 possible points	_____

The research paper is a form of formal writing that involves consulting reputable sources, compiling information, sorting through details, and composing a formal essay using the information.

Writing a research paper involves several steps; some students feel overwhelmed by the task at first, but breaking the large goal into smaller goals makes the project achievable.

Your research paper's format will conform to the MLA (Modern Language Association) style. This professional style is used in college English courses and in several professions.

Your Writer's Inc. book is the main resource you will use. Read pages 263-319, which discusses conducting research, note taking (using note cards), bibliography cards, writing multiple drafts, avoiding plagiarism, paraphrasing, citing sources, and Works Cited pages.

If your classroom situation does not allow the use of the internet, your teacher will help you by printing a few sources for you. You may also use almanacs, encyclopedias, and other reference books available in your classroom.

A checklist that breaks the task down into discrete steps follows on the next page.

Requirements:

Your research paper will answer the following prompt:

What social issue creates the most problems for young adults, and what are three possible solutions to that issue?

- ✓ 3 sources, with all publishing info recorded on bibliography cards
- ✓ 10 note cards, quoting material directly from sources with page #
- ✓ In-text MLA documentation; two short quotes from sources and one long quote from a source
- ✓ Outline rough draft
- ✓ Paper rough draft
- ✓ Outline final draft
- ✓ Paper final draft
- ✓ Title page
- ✓ Works cited page

Your paper will be graded using the rubric included in this module. Graphic organizers are included; their use is required.

Introductions and Conclusions

Introductions

Introductory paragraphs should accomplish two tasks:

1. They should capture the reader's interest so that he or she will want to read more.
2. They should let the reader know what the writing is going to be about.

Task 2 can be accomplished through using a carefully crafted **thesis statement**. The first task—securing the reader's interest—is more difficult. There are quite a few ways to grab a reader's interest:

1. give a brief historical review
2. tell an anecdote or little story
3. make a surprising statement
4. link the topic to a famous person
5. make a bold declaration

Moves to avoid in your introduction

- Don't apologize. Don't write, "In my humble opinion,..." or "I'm not sure about this, but..." You have the authority to write this essay, so write with authority.
- Don't announce your intentions flatly. Don't write, "In this essay, I will..." or "The purpose of this essay is to..." Your thesis will reveal your purpose to the reader in a much more direct and interesting way.
- Don't start with a dictionary definition. You may need to explain terms later in the essay, but this is an overused and boring way to start it.
- Don't dilly-dally. Get to the point. Use the prewriting stage to discover and sharpen your ideas so you can move confidently into your essay in the introduction.

Conclusions

A conclusion should

1. stress the importance of the thesis statement
2. lend the essay a sense of completeness
3. leave a final impression on the reader

Here are several objectives you might accomplish in a good conclusion. You won't want to do them all in one conclusion, of course! That would be overkill.

- briefly summarize the essay's main points
- ask readers a provocative question
- use a quotation
- evoke a vivid image
- call for your readers to take some sort of action
- end with a warning
- suggest results or consequences

The conclusion will echo the introduction and make the reader feel satisfied that the essay is complete.

Usually writers restate the thesis statement in slightly different terms.

Challenging the reader, looking to the future, or posing questions that will leave an impression on readers can all make for a satisfying conclusion.

Outline Graphic Organizer

Name _____ Date _____

Topic of Paper I. _____

Subtopic A. Introduction _____

- Supporting details
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

Subtopic B. _____

- Supporting details
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

Subtopic C. _____

- Supporting details
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

Subtopic D. _____

- Supporting details
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

Subtopic E. Conclusion _____

- Supporting details
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

Research Paper work plan

Use Writers Inc. book #232-318 as a reference throughout.

Finding a Research Topic

- ____ Your subject for this paper will be school-appropriate and interesting to you.
- ____ Talk to your teacher about what internet and print sources are available to you in your classroom situation.
- ____ **Limit your subject.** Your paper's **thesis statement** will contain your answer to this prompt: **What social issue creates the most problems for young adults, and what are three possible solutions to that issue?** Don't be surprised if your thesis changes as you do your research. You will probably consider a number of focuses before you settle on the one you will finally use for your paper.

Searching for Information

- ____ Prepare a preliminary bibliography: which selections will you use as evidence?
- ____ Take notes on note cards that record your thinking about the topic and the evidence.
- ____ Collect information from sources: pg #s and lines from text selections.

Designing a Writing Plan

- ____ Write your working outline. The paper will be 5 pages long & follow MLA format (12 pt. Times New Roman, double spaced throughout.)
- ____ Continue developing your research. Ask your teacher for guidance.
- ____ Revise your outline. Refer to Writers Inc. 300 to see a sample outline.

Writing the First Draft

- ____ Write the introduction (the thesis will be at the end of the introduction).

_____ Write the body (your outline will show you the structure of your paper).

_____ Write the conclusion (which will recall the thesis and wrap up the paper).

Revising

_____ Revise your first draft at least once, using instructor comments, peer comments, and the attached rubric to improve and polish your paper each time.

_____ Document your sources on a Works Cited page. See *Writers Inc* 258+ for examples and directions.

Preparing the Final Paper

_____ Edit your final revision. Use instructor and peer feedback and the rubric.

_____ Prepare your final copy.

_____ Arrange and number your pages.

_____ Add identifying information.

_____ Type your final outline.

_____ Check your paper one last time from start to finish.

To read successful student research papers, see *Writers Inc* 307 & 311. This is a good way to start the writing process and see that writing clear research papers is achievable and can be enjoyable!

Research Paper Rubric

Category	4	3	2	1
Organization	Information is well-organized with a strong thesis that previews main points of body. Conclusion restates thesis.	Information is organized, but thesis may be weak or missing preview component. Conclusion may be weak.	Information seems weakly organized; thesis may be vague, or main points may be scrambled. Conclusion may be poor.	Information is scrambled; paragraphs do not stick to one main topic each in the body; conclusion may be missing.
Required Elements	Rough outline, rough draft, and all requirements of assignment are complete and handed in to teacher.	One required element of the assignment is missing.	Two required elements of the assignment are missing.	Three or more required elements of the assignment are missing.
Paragraph Construction	All paragraphs include topic sentence, details or examples, and concluding sentences with transitions to next paragraph.	Most paragraphs include topic sentence, details or examples, and concluding sentences with transitions to next paragraph.	Two paragraphs include topic sentence, details or examples, and concluding sentences with transitions to next paragraph.	Only one paragraph includes a topic sentence, details or examples, and concluding sentence with transition to next paragraph.
Mechanics	MLA format is flawless. Works Cited page is without error. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are flawless. No sentence fragments appear.	MLA format is strong. Works Cited page has only 2-3 errors. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are flawless. No sentence fragments appear.	MLA format is good, but needs work. Works Cited page is flawed. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are flawed. No sentence fragments appear.	MLA format is weak. Works Cited page is weak. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are so flawed that meaning is sometimes inhibited. 1-2 sentence fragments may appear.

Your first and last name

Instructor's name (spelled correctly)

Course number (including section number)

Essay# or Type of Essay

Date (update with each draft)

A Specific, Original Title Goes Here (centered)

This is the way your essays should look according to the format required by MLA. You should use this format for all English Composition essays. As you can see, you do not need a cover sheet (a title page). All the necessary information goes in the upper left hand corner of the first page. As you begin your paper, indent each new paragraph using the TAB key (an automatic indent of five spaces). Notice that everything is double-spaced, that the page has one inch margins all around, and that no extra blank lines are included between paragraphs. This is an 11 point font (Gill Sans MT); notice that it is easy to read and not too big. For your own essays, you should use Gill, Arial, Times New Roman or a similar font to achieve a professional look. In order to place your last name and the page numbers in the top right corner, look under “insert” or “view” in your word processing program for a function titled “headers.”

In MS Word go to View, open Headers and Footers, TAB to the end of the text box, type in your last name, type a space, then click on the # sign in the pop-up menu under the text box; save and close. Your last name and page number will appear in gray scale at the top of each page.

If you are paraphrasing an author, you should include an in-text citation as well as a Works Cited page with your essay. An in-text citation is found in the body of your essay after the quote, and there are two types. The first is the type used when you do not mention the author's name in the signal phrase that introduces the quote. When this happens the citation includes the

last name of the author and the page number of the text where the words are printed. For example, some claim that Americans “consistently oversimplify and misunderstand our rural culture” (Kirkendall 62). If, on the other hand, you use the author’s name when introducing the quote, then only the page number is included in the citation. For example, Kirkendall suggests that Americans “consistently oversimplify and misunderstand our rural culture” (62). Notice that there is no comma or any indication like a "p." or "pg." in the citation. These directions are also in the MLA Documentation section of the *LB Brief*; it takes a bit of practice to get the quotation marks, parentheses and periods in the right places, but you do not have to memorize it because you will always have your *LB Brief* as a reference. Make sure you use it!

Some citations are too large to insert into your body paragraphs, and must be off-set with special formatting. A general rule of thumb is to block any quotation that is more than four full lines of text. When signaling the blocked quotation, be sure to use a colon to indicate such:

The block quote should be ten spaces into the indent (or two tabs). In MLA, the blocked quote is always double-spaced, and there are no quotation marks around it. "At least, there aren't any quotes around it unless you have a quotation within that quotation," remarks imaginary English professor Jane Smith. Also, don't forget to include your parenthetical citation after the quote (Johnson 21).

Resume your normal margins once you return to your paragraph. You will almost always have your own additional text after the blocked quotation in order to avoid having a quotation floating within your text. Including your own words after a block quote will ensure that you are analyzing and incorporating that quotation into your essay, rather than just filling space with fancy formatting.

The last page of your essay is the Works Cited page. You begin by centering the words Works Cited on the first line and then you include all of the information about the text you cited in the body of your paper according to a prescribed format. The format differs depending on the kind of text you are citing (book, periodical, edited collection, electronic source, etc.) so you should always consult the MLA Documentation section of the *LB Brief* before writing your citation. You will probably learn the formats you use most often, but this isn't necessary. Handbooks are references for such information and the *LB Brief* is an excellent one; additionally, *The Everyday Writer* also includes useful information on MLA specifics. The first line of your citation should begin at the left margin, and all subsequent lines should be indented. In many word processing programs this is called a "hanging indent;" you can probably find it in the paragraph format menu. Also, be sure that the entries are arranged in alphabetical order according to the first letter of the first part of each entry; typically this is the first letter of the author's last name, but not always so, especially with sources where the author is unknown.

With these pages we have tried to show -- rather than just tell -- you about MLA documentation. If you have any questions, be sure to ask your instructor.

Works Cited

- Kirkendall, Rebecca Thomas. "Who's a Hillbilly?" *The Longwood Guide to Writing*. Eds. Ronald F. Lunsford and William Bridges. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000. 61-63.
- Lawrence, Yong-Ha, Pete Lee, and Bill Theodore, eds. An Example of a Multivolume Text. Vol. 3. Boston: University of Boston Press, 2001. 4 vols.
- "Rather Common: An Example of an Electronic Source without an Author." ABCNews.com. 23 Feb 2006. 24 July 2007. <<http://www.abcnews.com/not/really/there.html>>
- The Qur'an: Translated Sacred Text. Trans. Abdullah Ali. London: Tahrike, 2001.
- Zupton, Elle, Jane Smith, Jeffery Jeffers, and Randi Mates. Imaginary Professors: Multiple Authors. New York: University of New York Press, 2003.

(Reproduced by permission of Jonathan Alexander, University of Cincinnati from Griegel-McCord, Michele, and Margaret Lindgren, eds. Student Guide to English Composition 102. 4th ed. Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2003. Guide modified for PPCC by Randy Robinson, PPCC Writing Center Tutor, Fall 2007. Revised Fall 2008 LAG.)