

## Part #1 Creating a Strong Thesis Statement

A good thesis should directly answer the research question you chose AND preview the examples you will discuss in your paper.

### How do I know if my thesis is strong?

- *Do I answer the question?* Re-reading the question after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that misses the focus of the question.
- *Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?* If your thesis simply states facts that no one would, or even could, disagree with, it's possible that you are simply providing a summary, rather than making an argument.
- *Is my thesis statement specific enough?* Thesis statements that are too vague often do not have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like "good" or "successful," see if you could be more specific: *why* is something "good"; *what specifically* makes something "successful"?
- *Does my thesis pass the "So what?" test?* If a reader's first response is, "So what?" then you need to clarify, to forge a relationship, or to connect to a larger issue.
- *Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?* If a reader's first response is "how?" or "why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position.

**Don't be afraid to REVISE.** If your thesis and the body of your essay do not seem to go together, one of them has to change. It's okay to change your working thesis to reflect things you have figured out in the course of writing your paper.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Thesis Statement Approval Form

Remember the example we used earlier...

RESEARCH QUESTION: To what degree does the U.S. healthcare system provide for the various needs of citizens?

The answer to your research question is your thesis statement. Your thesis statement should appear at the end of the introduction to your research paper. To be complete, however, your thesis statement should be expanded so that it previews the reasons for your thesis and provides organization for your paper.

THESIS (ANSWER): The U.S. healthcare system provides for many of the needs of the upper class, but few of the healthcare needs for the lower classes.

EXPANDED: Citizens who are unemployed, self-employed, or cannot afford health insurance often go without healthcare.

This thesis is specific, outlines the arguments the writer will make (1: unemployed, 2: self-employed, 3: cannot afford), and someone could disagree with this statement by arguing that the needs of those listed are being met by the healthcare system. Also note that the maximum length for an expanded thesis is two sentences. You should not go into any more detail than that.

Your Research Question:

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Your Expanded Thesis:

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Check your thesis:

- Does it provide an answer to the research question?
- Is it specific?
- Could someone disagree with it?
- Is it something people care about?
- Does the expanded portion preview the sub-topics you will discuss in your paper?
- Is it limited to two sentences for each part?

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/concerns:

# Formatting a Works Cited in MLA Format

## WORKS CITED FORMATTING

- The **running header** from the paper should continue onto the Works Cited page from the paper itself. The header should consist of your last name, a space, and the page number (P # is an automatic function in Word or Google Docs).
- “Works Cited” should be **centered** at the top of the page.
- Your entries should be listed **alphabetically**, be **double-spaced**, and should have a **hanging indent** (i.e. the second and subsequent lines are indented underneath the first.) There are NO bullets or numbering in a works cited page.

## EXPORTING A WORKS CITED PAGE

- From your project dashboard, go into the Works Cited section. Click on the “Print/Export” button and export the works cited to whichever format you have written your paper in. Do this when you are certain you are DONE entering all your citation information and research.
  - Then copy this works cited page directly into your thesis paper. Make sure the formatting transferred properly and the fonts are consistent.
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## Articles from Electronic Databases

author of article     title of article     volume     page  
journal name here     article     issue     year     numbers  
Heyen, William. "Sunlight." *American Poetry Review* 36.2 (2007): 55-56. Expanded  
date of access  
database name     platform     website  
Academic ASAP. Web. 24 Sept. 2009.

Use the **Quick Cite** Function in NoodleTools for Databases. At the bottom of the database article, there is almost always a pre-formatted citation. Make sure that citation is in MLA format, then copy and paste that citation as is into the quick cite feature on NoodleTools.

**NOTE:** Do NOT need the “Big URL” for databases in the citation. Those are kept for your records only.

## Short Works from a Website

With author:

author last  
name first     title of short work     title of website     no number  
Shiva, Vandana. "Bioethics: A Third World Issue." *NativeWeb*. NativeWeb, n.d.  
date of access  
platform     website  
Web. 22 Jan. 2009.

Author unknown:

keyword  
topic     title of short work     title of website     date of access  
"Sister Alice." *American Experience*. PBS Online, 2 Apr. 2007. Web. 30 Oct. 2009.

## Books

author last  
name first  
book title  
city of  
publication  
publisher  
Sacks, Oliver. *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. New York: Knopf,  
2007. Print.

Take the information about the book from its title page and copyright page. Use a short form of the publisher's name; omit terms such as "Press," "Inc.," and "Co." except when naming university presses ("Harvard UP," for example). If the copyright page lists more than one date, use the most recent one.

For books with an editor:

author last  
name first  
book title  
editor's name  
city of  
publication  
publisher  
Plath, Sylvia. *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*. Ed. Karen V. Kukil. New York:  
Anchor-Doubleday, 2000. Print.

The abbreviation "Ed." means "Edited by," so it is the same for one or multiple editors.

## Encyclopedias or Dictionaries

When an encyclopedia or a dictionary is well known, simply list the author of the entry (if there is one), the title of the entry, the title of the reference work, the edition number (if any), and the date of the edition.

Posner, Rebecca. "Romance Languages." *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*. 15th ed. 1987. Print.

"Sonata." *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. 4th ed. 2000. Print.

Volume and page numbers are not necessary because the entries in the source are arranged alphabetically and therefore are easy to locate.

## Magazine Articles

List, in order, separated by periods, the author's name; the title of the article, in quotation marks; and the title of the magazine, underlined>. Then give the date and the page numbers, separated by a colon. If the magazine is issued monthly, give just the month and year. Abbreviate the names of the months except May, June, and July.

author last  
name first  
magazine  
article title  
date  
page numbers  
Lanting, Frans. "Life: A Journey through Time." *Audubon* Nov.-Dec. 2006:  
48-52. Print.

If the magazine is issued weekly, give the exact date.

author last  
name first  
magazine  
article title  
date  
page numbers  
von Brühl, David. "The Ghosts of Memphis." *Time* 7 Apr. 2008: 34-37. Print.

## Newspaper Articles

author last  
name first  
newspaper title  
date  
page numbers  
McKenna, Phil. "It Takes Just One Village." *New York Times* 23 Sept. 2008,  
New England ed.: D1. Print.

## Part 2: Documenting Your Research with Notecards

Creating Notecards is a vital piece of the research process. Notecards help you organize your research and the paper itself. They also help you keep track of all the information you will need to use evidence in your paper and where it came from. You may use paper notecards OR Noodletools notecards. If you use paper notecards make sure you have them for every class. If you use Noodletools make sure you share them with your teacher's dropbox.

### Purposes of Notecards

- Record general ideas that will help you understand the topic.
- Record specific pieces of evidence that support reasons in your paper.
- Preserve the exact wording of *some statements* you may wish to directly quote.
- Create a system to organize your final outline and rough draft.
- Keep track of where specific information came from and preserve all the proper citation information.

### What to include on your note cards:

- All notecards must be connected to a source. You must know WHICH SOURCE the information on that notecard came from. On the top line of the notecard, you should write the parenthetical citation of the source the information it is from.
- Each notecard should only be from ONE source.
- Try to record only one main idea on a notecard.
  - This is so you can make piles out of your notecards that represent the evidence that is grouped in a particular argument or "body paragraph" within your paper. If you have too much information on one notecard then you cannot pile these correctly without ripping notecards into pieces.
  - An excellent source for your topic might have five different notecards from it.
  - It's perfectly ok to have only a few bullet points on a notecard.
- Your notecards should be **mostly paraphrasing**. You may record segments of direct quotes when you feel it is necessary, but the majority of the information should be in your own words.
- You should only use a direct quote when
  - The words in the source are so powerful they can not be adequately paraphrased.
  - You find you cannot effectively paraphrase the information without distorting the author's meaning.

### Sample Notecard

*Linked to this source in NoodleTools Works Cited:*

Drogin, Bob. "Firms See Tidal Energy as Wave of the Future." Los Angeles Times. 20 Nov 2010: A.10.  
SIRS Issues Researcher. Web. 05 Apr 2013.

Source: (Drogin)

- Tidal Energy = Affordable and renewable
- "Hydrokinetic systems"
- Tidal energy could "meet up to 10% of America's electric power needs"
- This would be more than hydropower dams are producing now

**SAMPLE TEXT:** "The birth of a child in Europe in the Middle Ages normally took place in bed at the home of the mother. The mother was assisted by her female relatives and friends, and if any sort of medical practitioner was present, it was usually a midwife. Birth was a moment of heightened danger both for the mother and child, with infant mortality about twice as high as that in the poorest countries of the world today. Even if the delivery was successful, the child's prospects remained uncertain. Children have relatively weak immune systems, and the high incidence of disease and limited medical knowledge of the period meant that many children never reached adulthood. During the 13th century, about one child in six may have died in the first year, one in four by age 5; perhaps two-thirds lived to age 20.

The arrival of the new child was marked by the ceremony of baptism. This sacrament was considered vitally important because the unbaptized could not enter heaven. At baptism, the child was lifted from the font by its godparents, who undertook to educate the child in the Christian faith. One of the most important elements of the baptismal ceremony was the assigning of a name. The child at baptism received only a single name—the term "Christian name" still survives today" (Salisbury).

Edit Notecard

Title (Main Idea)  
Dangers of Birth/Baptism

1) Give your notecard a descriptive title that goes along with the "lens" or main idea of the information you are focusing on.

Paragraph Helvetica  
Words: 66 Chars: 348

"Birth was a moment of heightened danger both for the mother and child, with infant mortality about twice as high as that in the poorest countries of the world today".

"The high incidence of disease and limited medical knowledge of the period meant that many children never reached adulthood."

"This sacrament was considered vitally important because the church taught that the unbaptized could not enter heaven."

4) After summarizing your reading and organizing your ideas, look back at the text and pull key quotes from the text that you feel support the *main idea* of the notecard. This is the only section where you should have text written verbatim. Quotes should *not* be large blocks of text.

Source  
Salisbury, Joyce E. "Family Life in Medieval Europe." D3

2) Link the source you are taking the information from.

Select a tag ...  
Select a pile ...

Paraphrase or Summary  
Paragraph Helvetica Font Size B I U

3) After closely-reading for information, summarize what you have read by putting notes into your own words. This is meant to be brief and does not need to be in complete sentences.

- Birth happened in home of the mother
- Female friends and relatives present
- if any medical assistance, midwife
- infant mortality high
- weak immune systems, disease, and poor medical knowledge made childhood a challenge
- In 13th century 1 in 6 children die by year 1, 1 in 4 children die by age 5
- Only 2/3 make it to age 20.
- Baptism of baby extremely important sacrament.
- Godparents job to educate child on christian faith
- Child was given single name at baptism- known as "Christian name"

OPTIONAL: Use this space to write ideas or add to original ideas of the text you've read (interpretation and evaluation). This space can also be used for listing questions or next steps in the research process.

My Ideas  
Paragraph Font Family Font Size B I U  
Words: 33 Chars: 157

Surviving childhood in the middle ages was extremely difficult and to do so was mostly by luck.  
Next steps: Find out more about life after age 5- What type of education did children receive?

### Paraphrase: Write it in Your Own Words

A paraphrase is your own wording of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else.

Paraphrasing is a valuable skill because...

- it is better than quoting information from an undistinguished passage.
- it helps you control the temptation to quote too much.
- the mental process required for successful paraphrasing helps you to grasp the full meaning of the original.

#### **6 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing**

1. Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.
2. Set the original aside, and write your paraphrase on a note card.
3. Jot down a few words below your paraphrase to remind you later how you envision using this material. At the top of the note card, write a key word or phrase to indicate the subject of your paraphrase.
4. Check your rendition with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information in a new form.
5. Use quotation marks to identify any unique term or phraseology you have borrowed exactly from the source.
6. Record the source (including the page) on your note card so that you can credit it easily if you decide to incorporate the material into your paper.

### Direct Quotations

#### **Why Use Quotations?**

To present the exact wording of an idea whose wording you wish to preserve. IF YOU USE ANY QUOTATIONS, IT SHOULD BE BECAUSE THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO BETTER WAY TO STATE THAT IDEA.

Avoid using quotations because you don't understand what the article is saying. When you use a direct quote you MUST follow it with your interpretation of the quote anyway. You should only use quotes if it presents striking, memorable phrasing you don't want to change OR there is no accurate way to paraphrase it and you must use the exact same words.

#### **Important Tips for using Direct Quotes:**

- It is not necessary to quote full sentences; select only the essential part of the sentence to directly quote.
- Do not present quotations as separate sentences. Weave the quoted material into your own sentence that shows how it connects to the point you are making.
  - Ex. Descartes introduces the possibility that the world is controlled by a "malicious demon" who has "employed all his energies to deceive me" (24).
- Do not quote excessively; your paper should present your ideas, not someone else's.
- As a general rule, do not end a paragraph with a quotation; **end with your ideas.**

**Not including proper quotations and citations is considered  
PLAGIARISM.**

# In Text Citations (MLA Format)

Your citations will vary depending on what sources you're citing and how you write your paper. The important thing is that your in-text citations should lead the reader to the proper citation on your Works Cited page.

**GENERAL RULE:** The in-text citation should consist of the **FIRST WORD** in the MLA citation for the source you used.

\*Note, the period for the end of the sentence comes **AFTER** the close parentheses.

**1. Single Author** Put the author's last name in parentheses. You should include a page number in parentheses at the end of the cited text if you used a print resource with pages. Use no punctuation between the name and the page number.

*Companies can monitor employees' every keystroke without legal penalty, but they may have to combat low morale as a result (Lane 129).*

**2. Author Unknown** Use a short form of the title (usually the first real word or two of the article title) in parentheses. **Titles of books are *italicized*; titles of articles are put in "quotation marks"**.

*A popular keystroke logging program operates invisibly on workers' computers yet provides supervisors with details of the workers' online activities ("Automatically").*

**TIP:** Before assuming that a Web source has no author, do some detective work. Often the author's name is available but is not easy to find. For example, it may appear at the end of the page, in tiny print. Or it may appear on another page of the site, such as the home page.

**NOTE:** If a source has no author and is sponsored by a corporation or government agency, name the corporation or agency as the author.

**3. Two or three authors** Include both of their last names in the parenthetical reference: (Kizza & Ssanyu). When three authors are named in the parentheses, separate the names with commas: (Alton, Davies, and Rice). If there are more than three authors, use the first named one followed by et al: (Alton, et al.)

*Others note that "employee monitoring is a dependable, capable, and very affordable process of electronically or otherwise recording all employee activities at work" and elsewhere (Kizza & Ssanyu).*

**3. Citing multiple sources in the same sentence** To cite multiple sources in the same parenthetical reference, separate the citations by a semi-colon. Ex. (Elkins; "Global Warming").

Look up any other questionable sources online: Google "Purdue Online Writing Lab" and it is the first result. OR use the Noodletools in-text citation feature to help you.



## Thesis Paper Outline Requirements

- I. **Introduction**
  - a. **Expanded Thesis statement:** (TWO sentence MAXIMUM) A basic statement of your position; your answer to your research question. A brief listing of the major points that you will make in your paper, in the order in which you will make them.
  
- II. **Background Paragraph:** This is only info that is necessary for understanding your paper!
  - a. Evidence you will use. (Citation)
  - b. Evidence(Citation)
  
- III. **Arguments (Body Paragraphs)**
  - a. Argument 1 Topic
    - i. Transition word, introductory sentence. Remember, this sentence should be phrased to directly connect to your thesis.
    - ii. Supporting evidence (paraphrase or direct quote)\* w/ citation
    - iii. More supporting evidence! (Citation)
    - iv. Even more supporting evidence!! (Citation)
    - v. Concluding sentence: Restate what the evidence in this paragraph has shown and how it supports your thesis. This sentence is also connected directly to the thesis.
  - b. Argument 2 Topic
    - i. Transition word, introductory sentence.
    - ii. Supporting evidence (Citation)
    - iii. More supporting evidence! (Citation)
    - iv. Concluding sentence
  - c. Argument 3 Topic
    - i. Transition word, introductory sentence.
    - ii. Supporting evidence (Citation)
    - iii. More supporting evidence! (Citation)
    - iv. Concluding sentence

\*Consider carefully which information you will paraphrase and which you will quote. Use direct quotes sparingly, only when you cannot communicate the author's message adequately in your own words. Make sure you put "quotes" around any direct quotes and do not use quotes around paraphrased information. Any information that is not yours should be followed by a parenthetical citation.

- IV. **Conclusion**
  - a. Restate your thesis in different phrasing: Remind your reader of what you were trying to accomplish with your paper.
  
- V. **Works Cited Page**
  - a. Export from Noodletools.
  - b. Should be properly formatted: double spaced, hanging indent, citations in alphabetical order. NO BULLETS OR NUMBERING.

\*Use the blank google doc!

A Title page goes first!

**Introduction**-In this section, give the reader an idea of why your paper will be important and/or interesting, what your thesis is, and what supporting arguments you will make to defend your thesis. First, introduce your subject. Start with the broadest information and move into the specifics of your topic. Explain why your topic is relevant or important today. Explain why this topic is interesting. This is your “so what?” Last goes your expanded thesis statement, a basic statement of your position; your answer to your research question and then a brief listing of the major points that you will make in your paper, in the order in which you will make them.

**Background Paragraph**- Define any important terms or background information the reader needs to know to understand your argument. Assume that they do not have any background knowledge about your subject. Discuss context to place your topic in place and time. Discuss any past achievements or history related to your topic. Define key vocabulary words, people, places, organizations, etc. If your paper is a solution to a problem, explain the roots of the problem. This is not a paragraph to dump extra research in. All the information in this paragraph should help the reader understand your argument and it should be cited!

**Arguments (Body Paragraphs)**-Each of your main arguments can either argue a point that supports your position, or argue against something you believe is wrong, like a counter claim. Each argument should be supported by evidence from multiple different sources.

In a five-paragraph essay, each of your three arguments has its own body paragraph. For a longer thesis paper, an argument may be broken down into even more paragraphs. You SHOULD have more than three body paragraphs, however, those paragraphs must be broken up logically and have strong transition words or phrases to cue the reader that the next paragraph is part of the same argument, or moving into a new argument.

When you begin a paragraph you should start with a transition word or phrase. Then your introductory sentence should address the topic of the paragraph and should be phrased to directly connect to your thesis. Then you can set up and present evidence. Remember all evidence must be followed by a parenthetical citation. The sentence following the evidence should explain it and, most importantly, connect the evidence to the thesis. Tell the reader directly HOW the information in that cited piece of evidence PROVES your argument is correct.

Consider carefully which information you will paraphrase and which you will quote. Use direct quotes sparingly, only when you cannot communicate the author’s message adequately in your own words. Make sure you put “quotes” around any direct quotes and do not use quotes around paraphrased information. Any information that is not yours should be followed by a parenthetical citation.

You should have approximately 3+ pieces of evidence for each argument you are making. Once you feel you have proven that argument, you can wrap up with a concluding sentence where you connect the idea of the last few paragraphs back to the thesis statement. Repeat this process for your following arguments in your body paragraphs.

**Conclusion**- This section of your paper should summarize and look to the future. Restate your thesis in different phrasing to remind your reader of what you were trying to accomplish with your paper. You could acknowledge the opposing side of the argument, then re-emphasize your own argument by summarizing the main points that you made. Draw final conclusions about the strength of your position and its implications for the FUTURE.

Don’t forget to include your **Works Cited Page** exported from Noodletools on the start of a new page. It should be properly formatted: double spaced, hanging indent, citations in alphabetical order, no extra space between citations, no annotations. NO BULLETS OR NUMBERING.

## TRANSITIONAL WORDS OR PHRASES

### A. To continue the same line of thought or add an idea

First	in the next place	besides
Second	once more	in addition
Third	finally	too
In the first place	furthermore	as well as
To begin with	last	similarly
Moreover	also	equally important
Just as	above all	likewise
In a like manner		

### B. To make the thought more specific

For example	surely	in all probability
For instance	certainly	in all likelihood
In other words	probably	as might be expected
Actually	perhaps	therefore
In fact	possibly	consequently
Indeed	thus	accordingly
Doubtless	hence	

### C. To indicate a change in thought or contrast

But	nevertheless	on the other hand
Then	however	on the contrary
At the same time	although	contrary to
Meanwhile	in spite of	even though
Still	yet	even if
Instead	provided that	but more importantly
Though	unless	

### D. To show comparison

Similarly	likewise	in like manner
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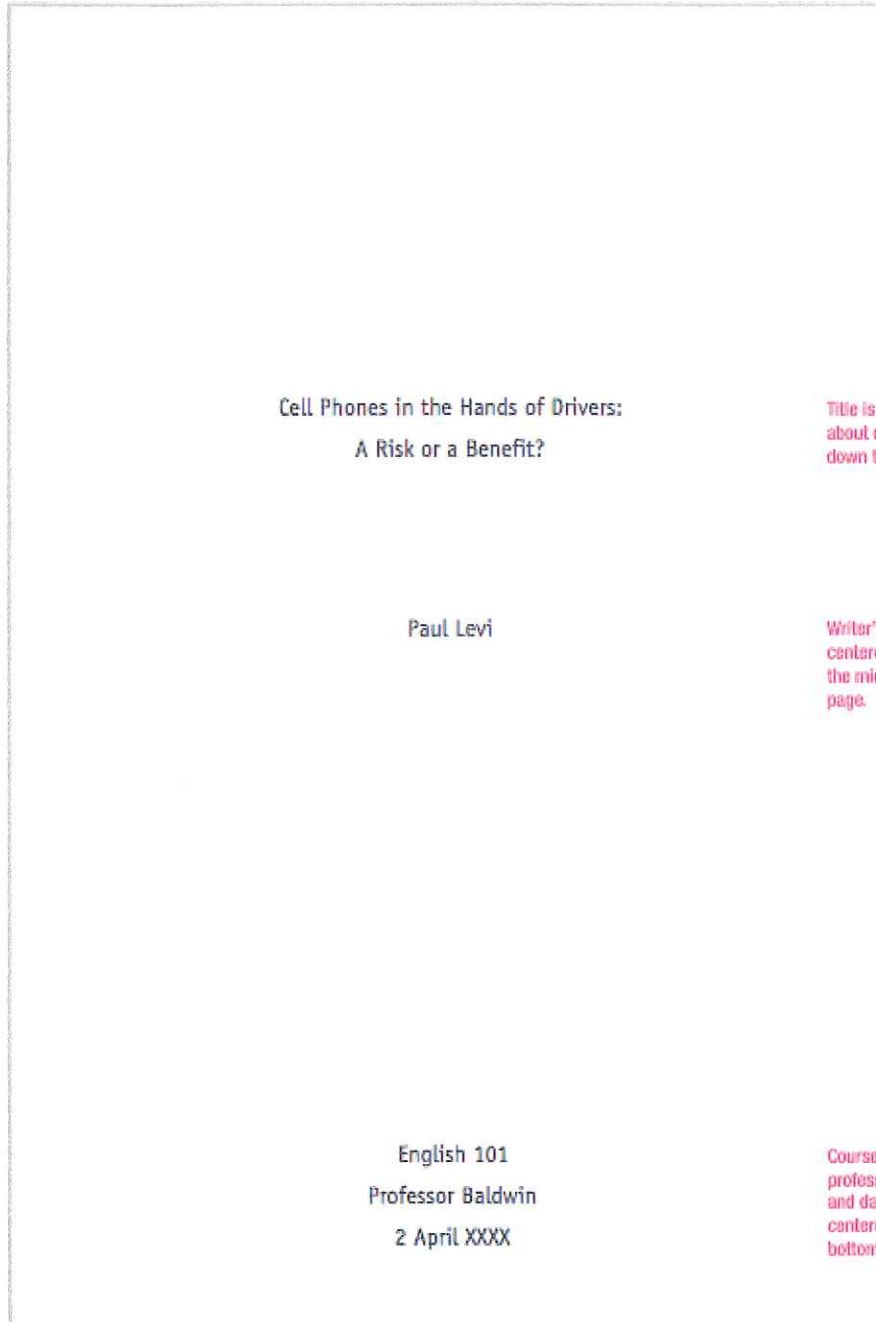
### E. To show a time or place arrangement of your ideas

Sooner or later	first	at the present time
At length	second	at the same time
Later	third	at this point
Meanwhile	finally	after a while
Further	eventually	as soon as
After	after that	as long as
Before	earlier	in the meantime
Next	now	in the end
Since	since then	whenever
Soon	thus	accordingly

### F. To show spatial order

Above	beneath	on
Across	beside	outside
Alongside	between	over
Among	beyond	to
Around	down	to the side of
At	in front of	toward
Before	inside	under
Behind	in the middle of	underneath
Below	off	

Formatting  
Your Paper

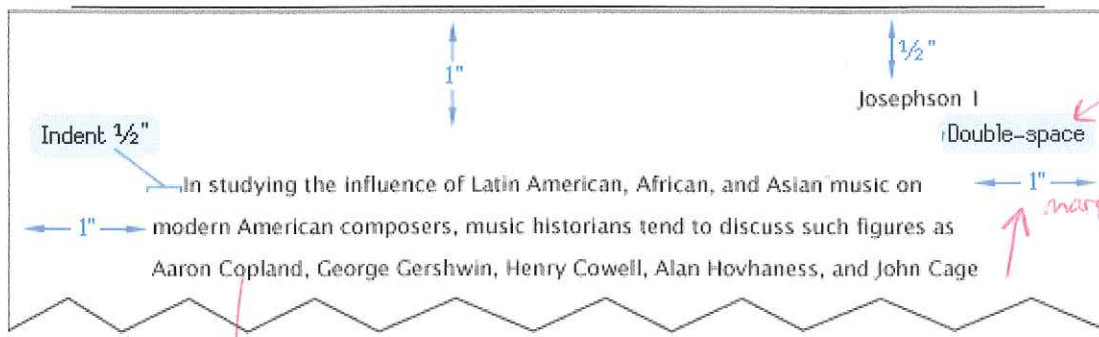


Title is centered  
about one-third  
down the page.

Writer's name is  
centered around  
the middle of the  
page.

Course name,  
professor's name,  
and date are  
centered near the  
bottom of the page.

Marginal annotations indicate **MLA-style formatting** and **effective writing**.



Times New Roman / Arial 12pt font

### FINAL PAPER CHECKLIST

- All of my pages have a header (last name and page number) on them.
- I included a properly formatted title page (see example)
- My paper has a great title. Your title needs to be broad enough to encompass your whole paper, specific enough to describe your paper topic, and interesting enough to make someone want to read your paper. Ask yourself, does this title accurately reflect and engagingly sell the essay's content and argument?
- All of my fonts and margins are consistent across the paper. The paper is properly formatted as stated on the formatting page.
- All information in the paper is accompanied by a citation. Any information that is not mine, direct quotes or paraphrasing, is cited.
- Every source referenced in my paper is connected to a source on the Works Cited page. It is easy to find because the in-text citation is the first word in the MLA citation.
- Any source I did NOT end up using is deleted from your Works Cited page.
- Every paragraph begins with a transition word or phrase which signifies whether the paragraph is a continuation of the last argument or the beginning of a new one.
- I used spell check.
- I ended sentences with a period, and capitalized the first word of the next sentence (a sentence does not end with a comma.)
- I capitalized all proper nouns.
- I put all article titles in quotes and book or movie titles in italics.
- I kept a consistent tense (past, present, future).
- There is no first or second person point of view in my paper (I, me, you). I only use third person (he, she, it, one, they, their).
- I did not use any contractions. (HINT: Use the "find" tool and search for apostrophes ('). The only apostrophes that come up should be possessive (ex. Ms. Donovan's room.)
- Did not use parentheses for anything other than citations. Content in parentheses should be important enough to include in the real text of the paper.
- I did not use any ellipses (...)
- I did not use hyphens in place of proper punctuation. (Find feature "--")
- I wrote out major numbers.
- I did not use any rhetorical questions (Again, use the find feature and search for question marks. Papers are opportunities to answer questions, not ask them.
- I did not use any slang, or inappropriate language. All of my language is academic and professional.
- I do not have any "chapter headings" or titles in my paper.
- There are no drawings, diagrams, pictures, etc. in the text of the paper. All of this is placed in an Appendix if it is absolutely necessary to the paper. See your teacher for more information about Appendices.

**I certify that I have proofread my paper for all of the above items and that this paper is representative of my absolute best ability.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Research Thesis Paper Writing Rubric for Simsbury High School Social Studies

Category	Exceeds Standard	Meets Standard	Approaching Standard	Below Standard
<b>Introduction, Background, &amp; Conclusion</b> <b>(5 x 2)</b> / 10 Points	Includes an <b>introduction</b> and a <b>conclusion</b> that are beyond a restatement of the theme. Paper sets up a historical context for its arguments that shows a complexity of history by referencing multiple perspectives. Background paragraph sets up necessary information for the argument to be understood. No irrelevant information included.	Includes an introduction and a conclusion that are a clear restatement of the theme. Paper sets up a historical context for its arguments. Background paragraph may include some irrelevant information.	Includes an introduction and conclusion that may be a restatement of the theme. Historical context for the paper's arguments may be too brief to be effective. Background paragraph is missing or includes too much irrelevant information.	May lack an introduction or a conclusion, or no attempt is made to provide historical context.
<b>Thesis</b> <b>(5 x 2)</b> / 10 Points	Has a strong, well developed thesis which clearly addresses the research question; deals with the most significant issues and trends relevant to question and the time period. Thesis has a specific argument that is proven across the paper. Thesis previews the arguments that will be made in the paper.	Has a reasonable (valid) thesis that addresses the research question, acknowledges most of the significant issues and trends, and is easily identifiable. Thesis has a specific argument. Thesis lacks an overview of the arguments that will be made.	Thesis is developed but not fully explained. It is reasonable and identifiable, but may not directly address the issue. It deals with some significant issues and trends. Thesis may be hard to pinpoint, though the paper has an argument. Thesis may be more of an overview than an argument.	Thesis may be absent, confused, poorly developed, or not address the question; may take a general approach to the topic, failing to focus on the question.
<b>Focus &amp; Organization</b> <b>(5 x 2)</b> / 10 Points	The writer utilizes multiple organized body paragraphs which demonstrates an exceptional academic (at or above grade level) understanding and analysis of the topic. Each paragraph has a focused subject. Topic sentences are used to establish the idea discussed in the following paragraph. Concluding sentences transition and tie analysis back to the thesis. Transitions are used throughout the paper.	The writer utilizes multiple body paragraphs which demonstrate a firm understanding of the topic. Arguments are clearly organized into sensible themes in the body paragraphs and topic sentences are used to signify that theme. Concluding sentences are used to connect the paragraph to the thesis. Some topic or concluding sentences may be missing or unclear. Paragraphs may be too short or too long. Some transitions are used.	The writer demonstrates understanding of the topic, takes a clear position, and shows awareness of audience. Utilizes body paragraphs that may not have a consistent subject. Paragraphs may be too short or too long. May be missing clear topic or concluding sentences. May be missing transitions or signal phrases.	The writer demonstrates some confusion about the purpose of the writing tasks, and may show inconsistent awareness of audience. Body paragraphs are missing, hard to follow, or disorganized. Topic and concluding sentences are missing or confusing.
<b>Elaboration, Description, &amp; Analysis</b> <b>(5 x 3)</b> / 15 Points	Ideas are supported with specific, accurate, and relevant details and evidence from sources. Use of sources is balanced throughout the paper, with no one source over or underutilized in each body paragraph. Use of sources is more analytical than descriptive (analyzes information more than explains it) and possess a firm stance (position/argument). Patterns or categories are recognized and multiple pieces of evidence prove the writer's analysis is correct. Analysis of documents and patterns ties back to thesis.	Ideas are supported with specific, accurate, and relevant details and evidence from sources. Use of sources is balanced throughout the paper, with some minor overuse of a source or lack of sources within body paragraphs. Use of sources is both descriptive and analytical (applies, analyzes, evaluates and/or creates information). Patterns are recognized through argument could be more compelling. Analysis of documents and patterns ties back to thesis.	Ideas are supported with evidence from sources that is mostly specific, accurate, and/or relevant. Use of sources is somewhat unbalanced, with one or two sources being overused within each body paragraph. Use of sources is more descriptive than analytical (applies, may analyze, and/or evaluate information). Observations are made but are not well explained. Patterns may be acknowledged but not proven. Analysis of a part of the research question may be missing. Analysis may tie the back to thesis in a way that is confusing or unclear.	Attempt is made to support ideas with evidence, but support is too general, inaccurate, or irrelevant. Use of sources is unbalanced, with each source being used within one body paragraph. Use of sources is primarily descriptive; may include faulty, weak, or isolated application or analysis. Little recognition of patterns or themes. Restatement of the sources used. Analysis does not relate back to thesis statement.
<b>Research &amp; Citations</b> <b>(5 x 6)</b> / 30 Points	Richly supports the theme with sources of adequate number, quality, and depth of information. Documents are parenthetically cited in MLA format within the text of the paper and seamlessly utilized, utilizing more paraphrasing than quotes. Quotes are utilized only for the most compelling evidence. When appropriate, the source of the document is acknowledged and woven seamlessly into the paper. Works cited page is correctly formatted and error free.	Supports the theme with sources of adequate number and quality. Source use may be unbalanced, over utilizing a source over others. Documents are parenthetically cited in MLA format within the text of the paper. The writer balances quotes and paraphrasing of sources, but may tend to over quote. Source of the document may be acknowledged. Works cited page is correctly formatted but may contain a minor error.	Supports theme with sources of adequate number but some information may be unimportant to the topic. Documents may be parenthetically cited but interrupt flow of the writing or the citation is not in MLA format. Writer relies too heavily on quoting sources and lacks proper paraphrasing. Writer may not introduce or follow up evidence properly. Writer may not introduce documents by name. Works cited page may be incorrectly formatted or may contain multiple errors.	Supports theme with sources, but writings incorporates limited relevant (important) information from the sources or consists primarily of relevant information copied from the sources. Documents are not properly parenthetically cited. No introduction of documents. Documents may be misinterpreted. Works cited page has incorrect formatting and/or errors in citations.
<b>Accuracy, Fluency, &amp; Mechanics</b> <b>(5 x 2)</b> / 10 Points _____ / 100 points	The writer utilizes a high level of academic discourse which creates an exceptionally clear, college-ready paper. Uses transitions consistently, and varies sentence structure to ensure that the writing reads fluently. The paper is properly formatted in MLA style and free of obvious spelling or grammatical errors. Contains no historical inaccuracies. Utilizes scholarly tone. Consistent tense and point of view.	The writer chooses words appropriately, uses transitions and varies sentence structure to ensure that writing reads fluently. May contain few minor historical inaccuracies. The paper may have some minor errors in MLA formatting, spelling, or grammar. Tone is appropriate to grade level. Consistent tense and point of view.	The writer may use some awkward wording or minimal transitions, but these problems do not interfere with explanation of writer's ideas. May contain some minor historical inaccuracies. May contain several errors in MLA formatting, spelling, or grammar. May contain second person POV or inconsistent tense.	Awkward wording, lack of transitions, and/or extensive writing errors interfere with the reader's ability to understand the writer's ideas. May contain major historical inaccuracies or errors. May contain many MLA formatting, spelling, or grammar errors. Utilizes first person and/or personal pronouns and inconsistent tense.