



RESEARCH

The tools that are included here are designed to help you find and record the information that you need. This includes evaluating sources for reliability, locating information in the chosen sources, and extracting information from the sources once they are found.

Research is a means for collecting information about your subject. Research is the key to proving your thesis, or the idea that you are trying to communicate in your research paper. Remember, the more research that you collect, the more material you will have to draw on in order to prove your thesis! A good research paper is one that draws on many different sources, not just one or two. Once this information is collected, it will be organized according to the specific idea or topic to which it applies in the research paper. These sources usually include (but are not limited to):

- Academic Journals
- Biographies
- Academic Papers
- Articles
- Newspapers
- Novels, short stories, poems, etc.
- The Internet
- Personal interview
- Direct observation, studies, experiments, etc.
- Encyclopedias (check with your teacher first)
- Dictionaries (check with your teacher first)

NOTE: Internet research is invaluable, but it must be balanced with information obtained from physical media (books, journals, newspapers, etc.). There are several reasons for striking a balance between Internet research and research obtained from physical media, but the most important reason is to insure the quality of the research that you obtain. In other words, some information that you find on the Internet might be based on opinion or simply incorrect! **Please see your teacher and/or the Technology Specialist for information about how to confirm the validity of Internet sources.**

Alternate search strategies may include:

- Changing your search terms: use synonyms rather than the original search term; expand your term to a more general term that includes your topic as a subtopic; switch the order of the words; change plurals to singulars or vice versa.
- Use a different search tool: use a book with its index; use a database rather than a webpage or book; use a video clip.

Internet research is also often more difficult to collect and organize than you think. For example, if you were to write a research paper about “the negative effects of steroids on major league baseball”, it is not enough to type that very phrase in [Google](#). It is more appropriate to break down the search into smaller, more accessible parts. For example: you might type the following phrase into [Google](#):



or you might break down the search into three different searches:

“negative effects of steroids”
and
“major league baseball”
and
“performance enhancing drugs, sports”

Again, see your teacher and/or the Technology Specialist about how to use [Boolean Searches](#) to narrow or broaden your Internet search.

Once you have found relevant research, you will need to record your findings for later reference. There are several means for recording research, to include hand written notes/note cards, but collecting and saving your work electronically in a *Word* program or *PowerPoint* is often safer and easier to access.



The Path to Researching on the Internet

Evaluate:

- Where am I?
- Is this page worth visiting?
- Does the site offer anything informative, unique, or insightful?
- Is it free of errors, misspelled words, and poor grammar?
- Do you understand the language? Is it too casual and basic or detailed and scholarly?

Relevance (Relates to the topic):

- Does this site address the topic you are researching?
- Are there enough details for this to be useful?

Objectivity (Point of view):

- Who wrote this?
- Is it a trusted source?
- Is there an obvious bias or point of view?
- What gives the author authority or expertise on the subject?

Accuracy:

- Is the information consistent with other sources?
- Are the website's sources listed?
- Are the sources also useful to you?

Date:

- When was the page originally written?
- When was it updated?
- Is the information current?

Learning to Use Note Cards

When it comes to organizing information for a term paper or even a short two or three page paper, the "Note Card System" can be very useful. By using this system, you create note cards from blank 3x5, 4 x 6, or 5x7 index cards that you fill with information pertinent to the subject that you are researching. Make sure the information is expressed in your own words, unless it is a quotation. Use good sentence structure; this will save you time when you start to write the paper.

NOTE: Microsoft Word and Microsoft Power Point can also be used to create "cards" and organize them.

Format: On the side with the lines:

Topic/Sub topic	
One fact	OR
One quote	OR
One thought	
	Internet Source
Title	OR
	Author and Page Number

Example:

Biography/Early years
Jane Parker was born August 21, 1960 in Dorchester, Massachusetts.
Mellencamp 32

On the blank side:

<p>Topic/subtopic (Ex.) Biography/Early years</p>

What to Do With Your Cards:

1. Organize the cards by topics to create an outline for your paper.
2. Write the research paper following the sequence of your outline. Use topical, concluding, and transitional sentences to link the information on the cards.
3. Keep a separate set of cards with the complete information of books, magazines, films, etc. These will be used for entering citations, and when compiling the works cited page.
4. Color or highlight note cards so that you can vary the number of sources in the paper. (Examples) Pink card or highlight is for books, Blue card or highlight is for magazines, newspapers or online journals, Yellow card or highlight is for Internet websites, and Green card or highlight is for audio or video sources.
5. When organizing your paper try to vary the color of each source so that your paragraphs and paper are not comprised of entirely one or two color sources.
6. Note Card Options/tools:
 - Standard 3 x 5 or 4 x 6 Note Cards
 - Note Taking Form (see next page)
 - Word - Create note cards using tables, one "card" per table, within a Word document. The "cards" can be sorted by moving the tables.
 - PowerPoint - Create note cards using PowerPoint. The idea is to create a presentation and have each slide be a "note card." Doing this makes it easy sort "cards" by moving slides.

NOTE TAKING FORM

Type of Source (Circle one):

Book

Magazine

Newspaper

Video

Online Journal

Internet Website

Other: _____

Author(s): _____

Title: _____

City of Publication: _____

Publisher: _____

Copyright date: _____ Page Number(s): _____ Date Updated: _____

Web Address: _____

Topic/Subtopic	Note from this source:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Topic/Subtopic	Note from this source:
_____	_____
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Topic/Subtopic	Note from this source:

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Topic/Subtopic	Note from this source: