

A Guide to Student Research Projects

Arlington High School

Arlington, MA

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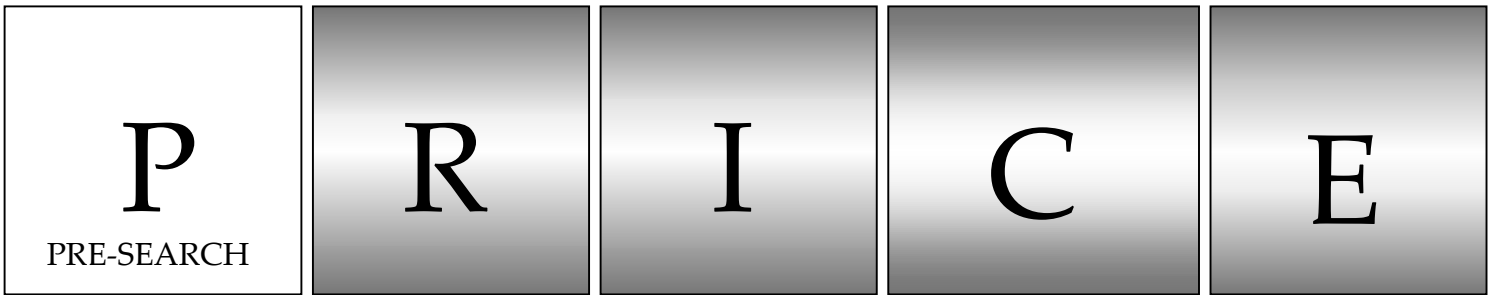
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PRE-SEARCH

This is the step in the research process that is most flexible. Pre-search options range from brainstorming to class work or homework, and can be done individually or in a group. Pre-search allows you to look at a problem and think about how you are going to solve it. The goal of the pre-search step is for you to clarify exactly what you want to research and to determine ways to find the necessary resources. If the initial research does not meet your expectations, this step may have to be revisited.

Ready to begin?

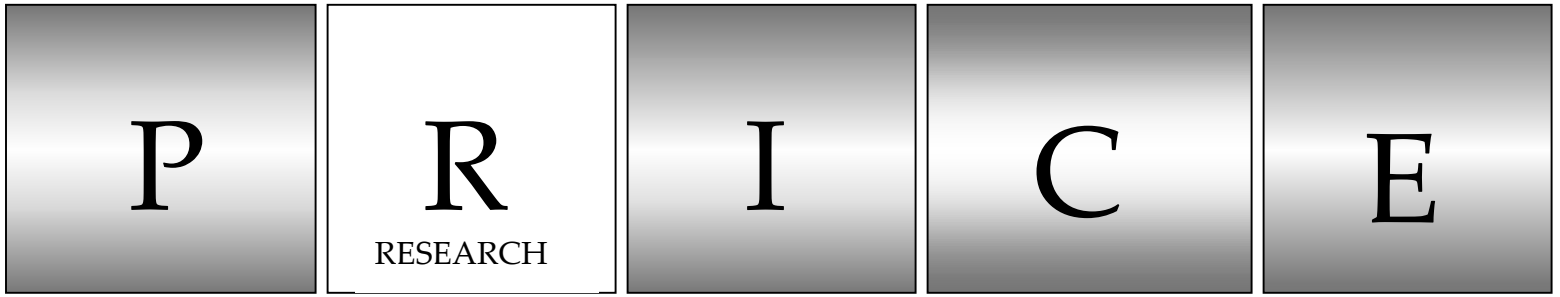
1. Choose a topic you are interested in. Write down what you already know about the subject.

2. Define your question. State your search terms.

What information will you look for?

What do you expect to find out?

3. Name some potential resources: books, databases, web pages, interviews, etc.



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)

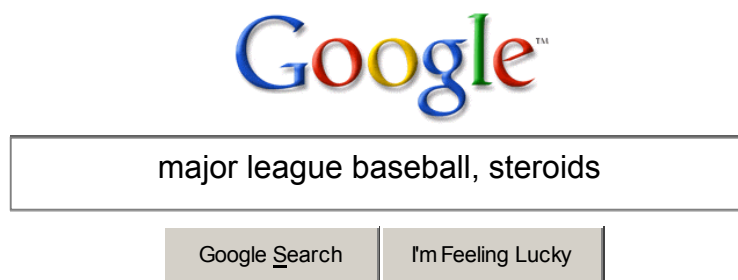
NOTE: Internet research is invaluable, but it must be balanced with information obtained from physical media (books, journals, newspapers, etc.). There are several reasons for striking a balance between Internet research and research obtained from physical media, but the most important reason is to insure 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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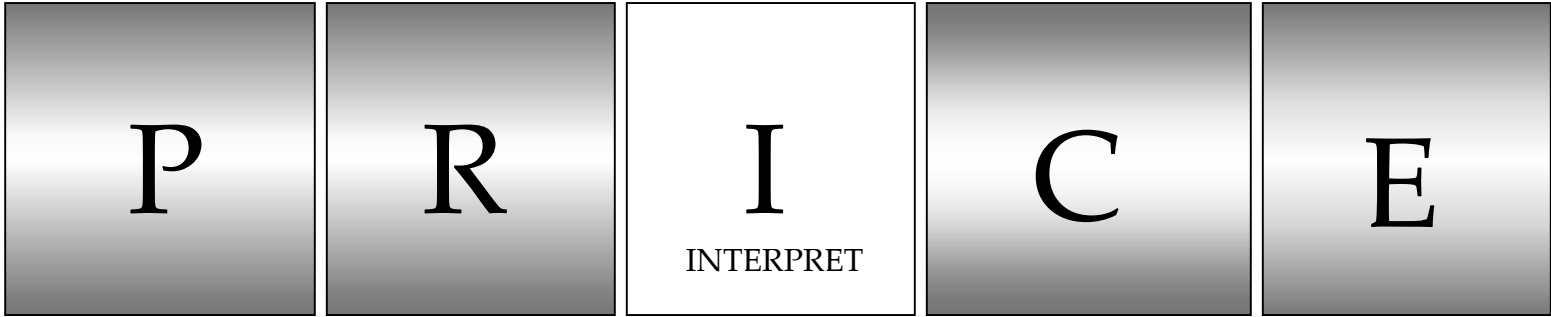
Topic/Subtopic	Note from this source:

Topic/Subtopic	Note from this source:

Topic/Subtopic	Note from this source:

Topic/Subtopic	Note from this source:

Topic/Subtopic	Note from this source:



INTERPRET

The interpret phase of the research process is when students take information they have gathered and make sense of it. This involves organizing their notes and recording their sources. In any research process, this is the step at which students can pause and reflect on their information. Do they have enough? Is there anything that they do not need?

An important step in a written research assignment is organization. There is information in this section about creating outlines. Many students are eager to skip this step. Hopefully, if they get used to making outlines for all written assignments, the process will become less loathsome to students.

There is also a handout here to help students learn to create their own thesis statement for a written assignment. Thesis statements are an area where considerable growth is expected as students pass through middle school. A strong thesis can make or break a process, and once students have gathered their information, it is important that they have a thesis statement to build their project around.

How to Write a Thesis Statement

A **thesis statement** is a one-sentence summary of the purpose of one's paper that usually appears at the end of the introductory paragraph. An advanced thesis statement will actually pose an argument or take a position that will later be supported by evidence in the body of the paper.

1. Start with a topic.

Example: The Puritans

2. Pose a question that your paper will try to answer.

Example: What sort of lasting impact did the Puritans have on Massachusetts and the United States.

3. Now let's try to create a thesis statement.

The Puritans were a religious group that settled in colonial Massachusetts.

This is a fact. It is not a thesis. Try to take a position on the topic.

The Puritans had an important, lasting impact on both Massachusetts and the United States.

Now you have taken a position, but you need to support it with sound reasoning.

The Puritans had a more important and lasting impact on both Massachusetts and the United States than other ethnic and religious groups that settled in colonial America.

Your position is much clearer now, but your reasoning is still vague. Try to avoid words like *good*, *bad* or *important*. Instead, be specific and explain your reasoning in more detail.

Due to their strong values and commitment to self-government, the Puritans had a more important and lasting impact on both Massachusetts and the United States than other ethnic and religious groups that settled in colonial America.

This is a much stronger thesis statement because it takes a firm stand and explains your reasoning. In your body paragraphs, you will then give more concrete evidence to support each part of your thesis.

Here are some thesis statements for other types of papers:

Comparison Paper

The Puritans and Quakers, both important communities that settled in colonial America, differed greatly in their religious views and impact on the future of the United States.

Policy Paper

In order to have such a strong impact on the future of American government, it was crucial that the Puritans develop strong and independent town meetings in their communities.

Cause/Effect Paper

The success of the Puritans in America was largely due to their industrious nature and middle class sensibilities.

Literary Analysis

Nathaniel Hawthorne, author of The House of Seven Gables, effectively illustrates the struggles to maintaining colonial Puritan identities and social hierarchies in 19th Century Massachusetts.

Persuasive Paper

The Imperial British government made a crucial mistake in allowing too much self-government by the prosperous and powerful Puritan communities of colonial New England.

HOW TO CREATE AN OUTLINE

An outline is a great way to organize the notes you've taken so far. It is especially important to use an outline when compiling facts from various sources. Each outline you complete will look a little different depending on the assignment, teacher, and amount of information you have to work with. Below are a number of different examples. **REMEMBER: In an outline, if you have a I, you must have at least a II. If you have an A, you must have at least a B, etc.**

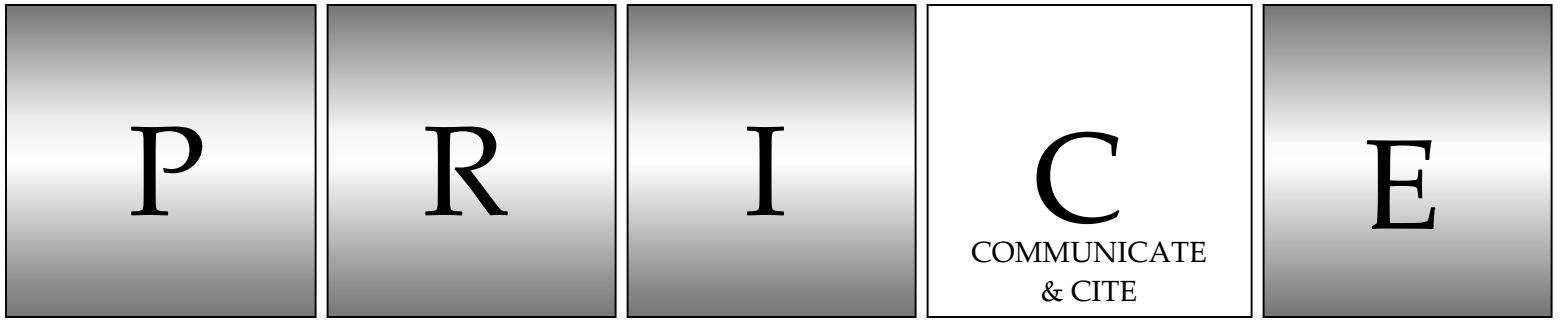
SAMPLE PARAGRAPH OUTLINE:**FORMAT:**

Title of Outline

- I. **Roman Numerals** indicate **TOPIC**
 - A. **Capital Letters** indicate **SUBTOPIC**
 - 1. **Arabic Numbers** indicate **SUPPORTING DETAIL**
 - a. **Lower case letters** indicate **ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION, CLARIFICATION OR INTERPRETATION**
 - b. **Lower case letters** indicate **ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION, CLARIFICATION OR INTERPRETATION**
 - 2. **Arabic numbers** indicate **SUPPORTING DETAIL**
 - B. **Capital Letters** indicate **SUBTOPIC**

The Benefits of Running

- I. Introduction
 - A. Running is becoming an extremely popular sport for all ages.
 - B. Running is a great form of exercise because it helps people control their weight, develop muscles, and improves mental and physical performance.
- II. Body Paragraph ONE – Weight control
 - A. Aids self-control
 - B. Burns calories
 - C. Encourages a healthy diet
 - D. Suppresses appetite
 - E. Improves overall health
 - 1. Strengthens heart
 - 2. Lowers blood pressure
 - 3. Changes blood lipids
 - 4. Improves circulation
- III. Body Paragraph TWO – Muscular Development
 - A. Improves tone
 - B. Enhances contours
 - C. Increases strength
 - D. Improves endurance
- IV. Body Paragraph THREE – Psychological well-being
 - A. Aids sleep
 - B. Inhibits depression
 - C. Intensifies vitality
- V. Conclusion
 - A. Benefits of running make it an excellent exercise.
 - B. People who want to improve their health should consider running.



COMMUNICATE & CITE

Writing Your Paper

Now that you have done your research and created an outline, you are ready to write your paper. It is time to gather all of your information and present it in your voice, with your style. You may want to think of yourself as a well prepared attorney or actor in this situation, working to persuade your audience to be open to and interested in the information you are going to present. What is most important is to remember is that writing is a communicative process.

Who is your audience? For most research papers, the audience is your teacher. Teachers will usually give you very specific information about what content they expect to see in your papers. That content aspect of a paper is actually addressed in the research and outline phases mentioned in the previous sections. This communication section is to remind you that another human being will not only read your paper but also grade it, based on how well he or she feels that you have communicated your ideas.

Research papers follow a pretty standard format: a strong opening statement (as shown above) with some more general information in the introductory paragraph to show where the paper is going or how it is constructed. The following paragraphs and pages are the “meat” (you’ve all heard the writing sandwich analogy in your English classes) of your paper where you support your opening statement with research. Finally, you will come to a conclusion, but let’s hold off on that for a moment.

Many of you have heard the expression from the computer / technology world, “Garbage in; garbage out.” This is a good motto to think about both as you are researching and writing. Find interesting information that supports your thesis

statement with interesting and new information. If you aren't interested in the ideas you find, why should your teacher be? Look back at your note cards and find the most interesting or strongest resources and include only those in your paper or at least get them as close to the beginning of your paper as possible. One of your primary thoughts in this writing phase of the research paper should be, "Am I keeping my audience interested? Does this make sense to an outside reader?"

As you use your quotations and other source material, make sure not to make the two most common mistakes of high school research paper writers. The first mistake involves using extensive quotes. If you see that a quote you are using is taking up to half a page or a full page or more, you are "over-quoting." You cannot use whole pages of someone else's material to fill out the ten-page requirement of your research paper. You need to find the pertinent information in a long passage and use only that quotation. The second mistake is letting quotations and source material stand on their own. Most often you need to explain why a quotation you are using proves or supports your thesis. It is also a convention of research writing that a quotation is explained or summarized to emphasize its importance. (Please see the sample term paper at the end of this document for examples.)

Teachers expect research papers – and all writing – to flow smoothly from paragraph to paragraph and from topic to topic. Make sure that as you end one paragraph, you pick up on a theme and continue it in the next. There are also certain introductory phrases and markers that reassure the reader that the flow is continuous. Phrases such as, "a second reason that ..." after you already explained the first reason, or "Dr. X, another scientist who studied this information..." remind the reader that you are presenting sequential information that will lead to a final conclusion.

Use of certain adverbs and adjectives can also help persuade a reader that you are very sure of your information and that the reader can believe what you are writing. Phrases such as "it is clear from the quote above...", or "the following fact makes a compelling case for...", provide subtle cues to the reader that, at a minimum, you have a strong belief in the importance and reliability of your information. The "meat" of a research paper consists of layers and layers of well introduced and explained quotations that continue to prove your main topic statement in a coherent and smooth manner.

When you have presented all of your compelling evidence, it is time to "sandwich" your research paper with a closing paragraph. A good closing paragraph is one of the most difficult writing assignments. Many of you learned in elementary school that a closing paragraph restates the opening paragraph and makes writing circular. While the basic convention of the research paper is to refer back to the opening paragraph, a simple restatement of the topic sentence will not suffice. A good closing paragraph not only revisits the topic, but also includes important information from the body of the paper to show why or how the statement was proven. It includes core information that communicates to the reader what he or she has learned from the paper. Remember, that is a key goal, to constantly communicate with your reader through voice, style, and content. If you can do that, you will assuredly write an outstanding paper.

Preparing Parenthetical (In-text) Citations

The Arlington Public Schools uses the MLA style of documentation and written formatting in all classes, with the exception of a few upper-level psychology courses at Arlington High School. Instructions for using this style are included in this book.

Parenthetical citations must be used whenever you include a direct quote, a statistic, a close paraphrase, or another piece of unique information in your writing. Using parenthetical citations to document your sources helps your readers identify them easily. The following guidelines will help you to cite your sources properly.

Basic citation. Place the citation at the end of the sentence containing the material you are documenting. The citation should appear after the last word of the sentence but before the end punctuation mark.

Example: Humans could not survive on Venus. Night and day, the surface temperature on Venus is nearly 900° F (Colozzo 16).

Citation of an encyclopedia or a similar reference work. When citing an article in a reference work that is arranged alphabetically- an encyclopedia or a biographical dictionary, for example- give only the title or a shortened version of the title.

Example: A day on Mars is only 40 minutes longer than a day on Earth, but the Martian year is almost twice as long as a year on Earth- 687 days (“Planets Nearby”).

Citation of an anonymous work. When citing an anonymous work (one for which no author is identified), give the title or a shortened version of the title, followed by the page number, if appropriate. Make sure that the first word of the title is the word by which the work is alphabetized in the Works Cited list.

Example: “In spite of its giant size, Saturn doesn't weigh very much. In fact, as a whole, Saturn is lighter than water and would float in a bathtub if you had one big enough” (“Astronomy for Kids”).

Citation of a long quotation. When documenting a long quotation that is set off from the text, place the citation after the end punctuation.

Example: Jupiter's most prominent feature is its giant sandstorm called the Great Red Spot: It's nearly three times the size of the whole Earth. At different times, it has shrunk or grown, turned dull pink, or become bright red, but it has not changed position and has kept the same oval shape for centuries. (Krepelka)

Citation of a work by two or three authors. When citing a work by two or three authors, give the authors' last names and the page number.

Example: Venus has no small craters because the atmospheres is so dense that it stops smaller incoming meteors before you can hit the ground and make a crater (Sundstrom and Crafts, 84).

Citation of a work by more than three authors. When citing a work by more than three authors, give the last name of the first author followed by *et al.* and the page number, if appropriate. *Et al.* is an abbreviation of Latin *et alii* or *et aliae*, meaning “and others”.

Example: The *Olympus Mons* volcano on Mars is 350 miles across and 15 miles high- that's wider than the state of New Mexico and three times as tall as Mt. Everest (Feeney, et al. 51).

Citation of a quotation appearing in a source. When citing a statement that is quoted by your source, use the abbreviation *qtd. in.*

Example: Pluto's new classification is a dwarf planet. “We know of 44 dwarf planets so far,” said Mike Brown, of the California Institute of Technology. (qtd. in Pozdena 50)

Citation of a source without page numbers. For a source without page numbers—an interview, a piece of computer software, or a recording, for example—give the name of the author or interviewee. If there is no name, give the title or a shortened version of the title.

Example: Mercury has a large, partly molten core nearly three-quarters of its diameter, accounting for nearly 80% of its mass (“Planet of Extremes”).

WORKS CITED PAGE FORMAT GUIDE

Book written by one person

Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Example: Henley, Patricia. The Hummingbird House. Denver: MacMurray, 1999.

Book written by two or three people

Author 1's last name, Author 1's first name *and* Author 2's first name and last name. Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Example: Bentley, Nicholas and Michael Slater. The Dickens Index. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Book written by more than three people

Author 1's last name, Author 1's first name, *et al.* Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Example: Schirokauer, Conrad, et al. A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1989.

Book with an editor

Editor's last name, Editor's first name, ed. Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Example: Dubus, Andre, ed. Into the Silence: American Stories. Cambridge: Green Street, 1988.

Reference Book (Encyclopedia, Biographical Dictionary, etc.)

Author/Editor's last name, Author/Editor's first name. "Title of Entry." Title of Encyclopedia/Book. Edition (if known). Year of Publication.

Example: Sturgeon, Theodore. "Science Fiction." The Encyclopedia Americana. International Edition. 1995.

Magazine or Newspaper Article

Author's last name, Author's first name. "Title of Article." Title of Newspaper or Magazine. Date: Section/Issue.

Example: Di Rado, Alicia. "Trekking through College: Classes Explore Modern Society Using the World of Star Trek." Los Angeles Times 15 March 1995: A3.

Magazine or Newspaper Article on the Internet

Author's last name, Author's first name. "Title of Article." Name of Newspaper or Magazine.
Date of Publication: Page(s). Online Site Name. Date Accessed.
<http://www.complete_url_for_site.com>

Example: Bluestein, Greg. "New Solar Panels Attract More Light." The Boston Globe.
11 April 2007: B8. Boston.com. 12 April 2007.
<http://www.boston.com/news/science/articles/2007/04/11/new_solar_panel_design_traps_more_light/>

Article in an Online Database or Subscription Service

Author's last name, Author's first name. "Title of Article." Name of Print Version of Article. Date
of Publication, Edition: Page(s). Database Name. Service Name. Name of where or
through which service the article was accessed, City/Town where service was accessed.
Date of Access. <http://www.abbreviated_url_for_site...>

Example: Norlander, Britt. "Ben Franklin's Workshop: Celebrating a Lifetime of
Invention." Science World. 16 Jan 2006, v62 i8: 12-16. Student Resource
Center. Infotrac. Ottoson Middle School Media Center, Arlington, MA. 19 May
2006. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/SRC?NT=zz&locID=arli74305&...>>

Website

Author's last name, Author's first name. "Title of Webpage." Title of Main Website. Date page
was created or updated. Name of page's sponsor. Date accessed.
<http://www.complete_url.com>

Example: Lynch, Tim. "DSN Trials and Tribble-ations Review." Psi Phi: Bradley's
Science Fiction Club. 1996. Bradley University. 8 Oct 1997.
<<http://www.bradley.edu/campusorg/psiphi/DS9/ep/503r.html>>

Image from the Internet

Artist last name, Artist first name (if available). "Title of Image." Date of image. Online image.
Title of larger site. Date of download. <http://electronic_address_of_image.jpg>

Example: Picasso, Pable. "Guernica". 1937. Online image. Art in the Picture. 12 April
2007. <http://www.artinthepicture.com/artists/Pablo_Picasso/guernica.jpeg>

Interview or Letter You Have Received

Interview's last name, Interview's first name. Personal (or telephone) interview (or letter to the
author). Date.

Example: Jackson, Pete. Personal interview. 12 April 2007.

Film

Title, Name of Screenwriter. Name of Director, Names of Main Actors/Actresses. Production
Company, Date.

Example: Glory, screenplay by Kevin Jarre. dir. Edward Zwick, perf. Matthew
Broderick, Morgan Freeman, and Denzel Washington, TriStar, 1989.

Television or Radio Program

"Episode Name." Series or Program Name. Writer. Director. Producer. Network. Station Viewed, City, Original Air Date.

Example: "A Desert Blooming." Living Wild. Writ. Marshall Reagan. Dir. Harry Gordon. Prod. Peter Argentine. PBS. WTTW, Chicago. 29 April 2002.

Sound Recording (digital file, compact disc, audiocassette, or record)

Artist, "Title of Track", Title of Album, type of recording, Manufacturer, Date.

Example: Woody Guthrie, "Do Re Me," Dust Bowl Ballads. CD. Rounder, 1988.

Musical Composition

Composer's last name, Composer's first name. Title of piece.

Example: Chopin, Frederic. Waltz in A-flat major, op. 42

Lecture

Speaker's last name, first name. Title or description. Sponsoring organization. Location. Date.

Example: Konstandakis, Melanie. Class lecture. Arlington High School. Arlington, MA. 5 Nov. 2005.

HELP! I'm stuck making my works cited page!

Q: Which author do I write first when there is more than one?

A: List the names in the order you appear on the title page.

Q: Do all of the author's names get reversed?

A: No. Only the first author's last name is written first. The rest are written normally.

Q: Where's the author's name in an encyclopedia?

A: Usually it's in very tiny print at the end of the article you're reading.

Q: The URL for this website is four lines long! What do I do?

A: Including the first line, ending with an ellipsis (...).

Q: How do I arrange all of these entries on the page?

A: In alphabetical order, skipping a line between each entry. Do *not* number them or separate sources by type. Works cited pages should be single-spaced.

Q: I've searched and searched but I can't find an author. What do I do?

A: Start with the title and keep the rest of the entry the same.

Q: How do I format the dates in website entries?

A: Like this: 20 Mar 2007. Abbreviate all months to the first three letters.

Q: How do I make the computer stop changing my <urls> into blue links?

A: Try pressing Ctrl+Z immediately after it happens. It should undo the computer's auto-formatting.

Q: The computer won't let me indent the second line. What do I do?

A: Place your cursor before the first letter on the second line, then press Enter once. This should allow you to then space inward.

Q: What's the difference between a bibliography and a works cited page?

A: A bibliography contains only books, a works cited page contains many kinds of sources. In the real world, though, the terms are used interchangeably.

Q: I can't find a lot of stuff for the citation from this website. Can I still use it?

A: Yes. Include as much as you can, and just leave out what you can't find. Someone should be able to go back and access the site based on your entry. Be wary, though- if you can't find a lot of the information, the site might not be very reliable.

Q: There are lots of dates and lots of cities of publication. Which one do I pick?

A: Use the most recent date and the city closest to where you are.

THESE ARE ALL EXAMPLES OF PLAGARISM

- asking your parent or a friend to edit or rewrite your essay, making all the changes or corrections for you
- reading someone else's term paper and then writing your own using some of his ideas and copying part or all of his bibliography
- listing books in *your* bibliography that you haven't read
- taking a report or term paper you wrote for one class and rewriting it for another class
- taking a report or term paper you wrote for one class and handing it in for another class without rewriting it
- copying sentences or paragraphs from a source for your report without using quotation marks or parenthetical citations
- writing a report as a group and then each person writing a report that is just a little bit different to hand in
- copying a report or term paper from the Internet and editing it to be "yours"
- copying a report or term paper from the Internet and handing it in without any changes
- bribing someone to rewrite your papers for you
- paying another person, or an editing service, to write your term paper

Adapted from: Student Cheating and Plagiarism in the Internet Era: A Wake-Up Call by Ann Lathrop and Kathleen Foss. *Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 2000.*



PLAGIARISM occurs when a writer uses another person's material without giving them proper credit. Sometimes writers plagiarize on purpose, but it often happens because you simply don't understand what must be acknowledged. In either case, **PLAGIARISM IS ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE.**

The following are examples of plagiarism!

1. Quoting a source without using quotation marks – even if you do cite it.
2. Buying a paper online or downloading a paper from a free site.
3. Copying or using work done by another student.
4. Citing sources you didn't use.
5. Turning in the same paper for more than one class without the permission of both teachers.

THE ONLY TIMES WHEN YOU DO NOT NEED TO CITE ANOTHER AUTHOR ARE WHEN:

1. **COMMON KNOWLEDGE** – Information that most educated people would know
Example: *China is one of the largest countries in Asia.*
2. **FACTS FOUND IN MANY SOURCES** – Basic information that you can easily find in a number of sources.
Example: *Buddhism, Taoism, and Islam are the three most commonly practiced religions in China.*
3. **YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS** – Your own original conclusions are thoughts that originate in your own mind!
Example: *China's religions are many, the food is delicious, and the culture is the cornerstone of your society.*

Plagiarism is a serious offense because it robs the original writer of recognition. If you are caught plagiarizing you will fail the assignment.

EXAMPLES OF PLAGIARISM

ORIGINAL PASSAGE:

China, representing one of the earliest civilizations in the world, has a recorded history of about 3,600 years. It possesses rich historical documents as well as ancient relics. Like other nations, China, in its development, passed through the stages of primitive society, slave society, and feudal society.

**This information appears on the following website:
<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/history/>*

VERY OBVIOUS PLAGIARISM:

China, representing one of the earliest civilizations in the world, has a recorded history of about 3,600 years. It possesses rich historical documents as well as ancient relics. Like other nations, China, in its development, passed through the stages of primitive society, slave society, and feudal society.

**The author of these sentences has obviously simply COPIED AND PASTED this information from the website that you were researching – UNACCEPTABLE!*

A LITTLE LESS OBVIOUS, BUT STILL PLAGIARISM:

Being one of the earliest civilizations in the world, **China** has a **very long** recorded history. It possesses rich historical documents as well as ancient relics. Like other **countries**, China, in its **maturity**, passed through the stages of primitive society, slave society, and feudal society.

**The author has decided to change six of the words in the passage. This is still plagiarism and is UNACCEPTABLE!*

STILL PLAGIARISM:

China is one of the oldest civilizations in the world. **It** has a recorded history of about 3, 600 years. **Its** rich historical documents and ancient relics **are fascinating! Throughout its history, China** passed through the stages of primitive society, slave society, and feudal society.

**The author has changed the structure of a number of the sentences, but has stolen four EXACT phrases from the original passage. Yet again, UNACCEPTABLE!*

CORRECT USE OF THE ORIGINAL PASSAGE:



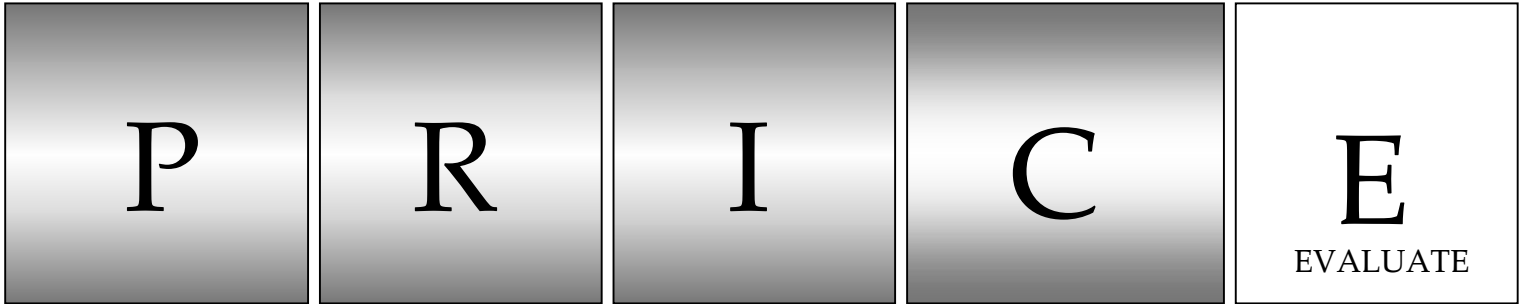
China has a long and intricate history, full of shifts in government and changing beliefs. Visitors can recognize evidence of these changes within the country's culture, artifacts, and people.

OR



China has a long and intricate history, full of shifts in government and changing beliefs. "It possesses rich historical documents as well as ancient relics" (Smith).

**The author has not stolen any phrasing from the original passage. When he/she did use the exact phrase from the website, it was cited correctly by noting the website author's last name in parentheses. You will list your sources on a WORKS CITED PAGE at the end of your paper.*



EVALUATE

Evaluation comes in many forms. It should be an ongoing process throughout the project by students and teachers, as well as being a critical piece for you before submitting work to your teacher. This step involves editing, rethinking, and adapting to changes or suggestions made by others. Evaluation should not be a solitary process. Rather, the input of others should be sought in order to ensure that the final product is of the highest possible caliber.

Included here are tools for checking your own work. From this point, you can cycle back to any of the other steps in the research process if their evaluations reveal that more research or organization is needed.

Checklist for Content

- Appropriate title?
- Is the thesis clear and original?
- Does the introductory paragraph contain the following:
 - give enough background information
 - validate the importance of the topic
 - identify the approach the paper will take to support topic
- Does the supporting information support the thesis adequately?
- Does the concluding paragraph bring closure to the paper? Does it restate the thesis?

Checklist for Writing / Communicating

- Is my source material interesting and exciting?
- Have I organized my information so that the most compelling quotations and ideas come at the beginning of the paper?
- Are my quotes too long? Am I using other author's material to cover up my own lack of research and relevant information?
- Have I introduced or explained quotes as necessary so that the reader understands why they are being used in the paper?
- Have I followed the sequence that I promised in my introduction?
- Have I used words and phrases that help the paper flow smoothly from one paragraph to the next, and from one topic to the next?
- Have I used language that shows me as a writer who is confident about my material?
- Have I included a conclusion that refers to both the introductory paragraph and salient points I have made throughout the paper?
- Have I re-read my writing with a thought towards communicating with my audience?

Checklist for MLA Format

- ❑ Is there a heading in the left hand corner? It needs the following:
 - Name
 - Instructor
 - Class
 - Date (European style)
- ❑ Does each page contain the following in the upper right hand corner of the header section? Last name and page number
- ❑ Is the text in 12-point font and is the paper double-spaced?
- ❑ Are all four margins one-inch wide?
- ❑ Are there parenthetical citations after quotations or paraphrased material that is not common knowledge (statistics, theories, etc.)?
- ❑ Is there a Works Cited page?

Please note lack of punctuation in the heading and header section:
See sample in the appendix.

MLA Research Paper (Daly)

Daly 1

Angela Daly
Professor Chavez
English 101
14 March XXXX

A Call to Action:

Regulate Use of Cell Phones on the Road

When a cell phone goes off in a classroom or at a concert, we are irritated, but at least our lives are not endangered. When we are on the road, however, irresponsible cell phone users are more than irritating: They are putting our lives at risk. Many of us have witnessed drivers so distracted by dialing and chatting that they resemble drunk drivers, weaving between lanes, for example, or nearly running down pedestrians in crosswalks. A number of bills to regulate use of cell phones on the road have been introduced in state legislatures, and the time has come to push for their passage. Regulation is needed because drivers using phones are seriously impaired and because laws on negligent and reckless driving are not sufficient to punish offenders.

No one can deny that cell phones have caused traffic deaths and injuries. Cell phones were implicated in three fatal accidents in November 1999 alone. Early in November, two-year-old Morgan Pena was killed by a driver distracted by his cell phone. Morgan's mother, Patti Pena, reports that the driver "ran a stop sign at 45 mph, broadsided my vehicle and killed Morgan as she sat in her car seat." A week later, corrections officer Shannon Smith, who was guarding prisoners by the side of the road, was killed by a woman distracted by a phone call (Besthoff). On Thanksgiving weekend that same month, John and Carole Hall were killed when a Naval

Title is centered.

Opening sentences catch readers' attention.

Thesis asserts Angela Daly's main point.

Daly uses a clear topic sentence.

Signal phrase names the author of the quotation to follow.

No page number is available for this Web source.

Author's name is given in parentheses; no page number is available.

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

Academy midshipman crashed into their parked car. The driver said in court that when he looked up from the cell phone he was dialing, he was three feet from the car and had no time to stop (Stockwell B8).

Page number is given when available.

Clear topic sentences, like this one, are used throughout the paper.

Expert testimony, public opinion, and even cartoons suggest that driving while phoning is dangerous. Frances Bents, an expert on the relation between cell phones and accidents, estimates that between 450 and 1,000 crashes a year have some connection to cell phone use (Layton C9). In a survey published by Farmers Insurance Group, 87% of those polled said that cell phones affect a driver's ability, and 40% reported having close calls with drivers distracted by phones. Many cartoons have depicted the very real dangers of driving while distracted (see Fig. 1).

Summary and long quotation are introduced with a signal phrase naming the authors.

Scientific research confirms the dangers of using phones while on the road. In 1997 an important study appeared in the New England Journal of Medicine. The authors, Donald Redelmeier and Robert Tibshirani, studied 699 volunteers who made their cell phone bills available in order to confirm the times when they had placed calls. The participants agreed to report any nonfatal collision in which they were involved. By comparing the time of a collision with the phone records, the researchers assessed the dangers of driving while phoning. The results are unsettling:

Long quotation is set off from the text; quotation marks are omitted.

We found that using a cellular telephone was associated with a risk of having a motor vehicle collision that was about four times as high as that among the same drivers when they were not using their cellular telephones. This relative risk is similar



Fig. 1. Chan Lowe, cartoon, Washington Post 22 July 2000: A21.

Illustration has figure number, label, and source information.

to the hazard associated with driving with a blood alcohol level at the legal limit. (456)

The news media often exaggerated the latter claim ("similar to" is not "equal to"); nonetheless, the comparison with drunk driving suggests the extent to which cell phone use while driving can impair judgment.

A 1998 study focused on Oklahoma, one of the few states to keep records on fatal accidents involving cell phones. Using police records, John M. Violanti of the Rochester Institute of Technology investigated the relation between traffic fatalities in Oklahoma and the use or presence of a cell phone. He found a ninefold increase in the risk of fatality if a phone was being used and a doubled risk simply when a phone was present in a vehicle (522-23). The latter statistic is interesting, for it suggests that those who carry phones

Summary begins with a signal phrase naming the author and ends with page numbers in parentheses.

in their cars may tend to be more negligent (or prone to distractions of all kinds) than those who do not.

Daly counters an opposing argument.

Some groups have argued that state traffic laws make legislation regulating cell phone use unnecessary. Sadly, this is not true. Laws on traffic safety vary from state to state, and drivers distracted by cell phones can get off with light punishment even when they cause fatal accidents. For example, although the midshipman mentioned earlier was charged with vehicular manslaughter for the deaths of John and Carole Hall, the judge was unable to issue a verdict of guilty. Under Maryland law, he could only find the defendant guilty of negligent driving and impose a \$500 fine (Layton C1). Such a light sentence is not unusual. The driver who killed Morgan Pena in Pennsylvania received two tickets and a \$50 fine--and retained his driving privileges (Pena). In Georgia, a young woman distracted by her phone ran down and killed a two-year-old; her sentence was ninety days in boot camp and five hundred hours of community service (Ippolito J1). The families of the victims are understandably distressed by laws that lead to such light sentences.

Facts are documented with in-text citations: authors' names and page numbers (if available) in parentheses.

Daly uses an analogy to justify passing a special law.

When certain kinds of driver behavior are shown to be especially dangerous, we wisely draft special laws making them illegal and imposing specific punishments. Running red lights, failing to stop for a school bus, and drunk driving are obvious examples; phoning in a moving vehicle should be no exception. Unlike more general laws covering negligent driving, specific laws leave little ambiguity for law officers and for judges and juries imposing punishments. Such laws have another important benefit: They leave no ambiguity for drivers. Currently, drivers can tease themselves into

thinking they are using their car phones responsibly because the definition of “negligent driving” is vague.

As of December 2000, twenty countries were restricting use of cell phones in moving vehicles (Sundeen 8). In the United States, it is highly unlikely that legislation could be passed on the national level, since traffic safety is considered a state and local issue. To date, only a few counties and towns have passed traffic laws restricting cell phone use. For example, in Suffolk County, New York, it is illegal for drivers to use a handheld phone for anything but an emergency call while on the road (Haughney A8). The first town to restrict use of handheld phones was Brooklyn, Ohio (Layton C9). Brooklyn, the first community in the country to pass a seat belt law, has once again shown its concern for traffic safety.

Laws passed by counties and towns have had some effect, but it makes more sense to legislate at the state level. Local laws are not likely to have the impact of state laws, and keeping track of a wide variety of local ordinances is confusing for drivers. Even a spokesperson for Verizon Wireless has said that statewide bans are preferable to a “crazy patchwork quilt of ordinances” (qtd. in Haughney A8). Unfortunately, although a number of bills have been introduced in state legislatures, as of early 2001 no state law seriously restricting use of the phones had passed--largely because of effective lobbying from the wireless industry.

Despite the claims of some lobbyists, tough laws regulating phone use can make our roads safer. In Japan, for example, accidents linked to cell phones fell by 75% just a month after the country prohibited using a handheld phone while driving (Haugh-

Daly explains why US laws need to be passed on the state level.

Transition helps readers move from one paragraph to the next.

Daly cites an indirect source: words quoted in another source.

Daly counters a claim made by some opponents.

ney A8). Research suggests and common sense tells us that it is not possible to drive an automobile at high speeds, dial numbers, and carry on conversations without significant risks. When such behavior is regulated, obviously our roads will be safer.

Because of mounting public awareness of the dangers of drivers distracted by phones, state legislators must begin to take the problem seriously. "It's definitely an issue that is gaining steam around the country," says Matt Sundeen of the National Conference of State Legislatures (qtd. in Layton C9). Lon Anderson of the American Automobile Association agrees: "There is momentum building," he says, to pass laws (qtd. in Layton C9). The time has come for states to adopt legislation restricting the use of cell phones in moving vehicles.

For variety Daly places a signal phrase after a brief quotation.

The paper ends with Daly's stand on the issue.

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Heading is centered.

List is alphabetized by authors' last names (or by title when a work has no author).

First line of each entry is at the left margin; extra lines are indented 1/2" (or five spaces).

Double-spacing is used throughout.

The URL is broken after a slash. No hyphen is inserted.

Daly 8

Violanti, John M. "Cellular Phones and Fatal Traffic Collisions."
Accident Analysis and Prevention 30 (1998): 519-24.