



THE RESEARCH PROJECT/PAPER

**Everything you need to know to
write a great paper!**

WHAT'S YOUR TOPIC?

Select a year in
history to
research and
write about.



THE GOOD TOPIC

Your initial assignment is very broad allowing you a lot of freedom for your research and writing. To have a good topic, you need to narrow your focus.



NARROWING YOUR TOPIC

- First, select the year that you will focus on.
- After this decision is made, ask yourself two questions:
 - What do I already know about this year?
 - What would I like to know about this year?
- Knowing these answers will help you formulate your focus question.



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW? (FORMULATING YOUR FOCUS QUESTION)

- Here are some questions you might consider when narrowing your topic:
 - Who were the three most important/influential people of that year?
 - Where there any major inventions, discoveries, or breakthroughs for that year?
 - What were the three most important events (think: newsmakers) of that year?
 - What was happening in the world of sports that year?



A GOOD FOCUS QUESTION LEADS TO A GOOD RESEARCH PAPER.

- Subject: This Year in History
- Topic: 2009
- Focus Question: What were the three most important medical breakthroughs or discoveries that took place in 2009?



BE A REPORTER

- Once you've determined your focus question, begin to ask the "Reporter Questions":
 - Who?
 - What?
 - When?
 - Where?
 - Why?
 - How?
- Answering these will provide the basic information needed for your paper.



WHAT NOW?

You're ready to start researching . . .



WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU?

- **Books** – For this paper, your focus will likely be nonfiction books.
 - Search the OPAC (**O**n-line **P**ublic **A**ccess **C**atalog)
 - <http://atrium.gcssd.int/opac/sgchs/index.html>
- **eBooks** – Books that are available to view via the internet. eBooks can be accessed from the OPAC using your name (last, first) and password (your seven-digit STAR number).
- **Encyclopedias** – We have one print set in the media center located in the reference section.



WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU?

- **Internet** – Try searching using something other than Google. Click [here](#) to learn about search engines and find a few to try:
 - <http://secondary.educator.oslis.org/learn-to-research/research/research-search-engines-wp>



WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU?

- **Databases** – These are collections of articles and other information. While they are found on the internet, they are not “internet resources.” We have access to several databases through the Tennessee Electronic Library (<http://tntel.tnsos.org/> -- password: elvis) and through Dyersburg State Community College (<http://www.dscclrc.edu/content/default.asp?ppid=315&tid=1> – login: guest; password: dscclrc).



RELIABILITY

- It's important that the sources you choose are reliable. Click on the links below to find information on evaluating your sources:
 - General guidelines for evaluating any source:
 - <http://tutorial.lib.umn.edu/infomachine9a21.html>
 - Guidelines for evaluating websites:
 - <http://www.edtech.sandi.net/old305/handouts/digitalclassroom/walklikealibrarian/evaluatesites/evaluatingwebsites.pdf>
 - If you can't remember these websites, try to remember SAIL to help you evaluate a site:
 - S** – Scholarly (Does the site include references, bibliographies, etc.)
 - A** – Accuracy (Is the site recent? Accurate? When was the last update? Are there noticeable errors in spelling or grammar?)
 - I** – Intended Audience (Is the site too elementary or too advanced?)
 - L** – Lacking Credibility (Is the author's name/background clearly shown? Are references available?)



NOTE-TAKING

- Once you've located and evaluated sources and determined which ones might be useful, you're ready to take notes. (Remember: Not all sources will necessarily be used in your paper.)
- You'll want to take notes on those sources you find that are reliable and helpful in writing your paper.
- Use your own thoughts and words when possible, but if you must use the author's words, use quotation marks and **give the author credit!** You don't want to be guilty of **PLAGIARISM!**



WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

- “Plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.” (from Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices-
<http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9>)
- Avoid copying and pasting large amounts of information from websites and articles to use as your “notes.” Try to summarize the ideas and put them into your own words.
- Don’t steal someone’s ideas. Always give credit where credit is due!
- For more information on plagiarism, click here:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>.



CITING SOURCES

- In order to cite a source (give credit to its author), you must provide certain information in a certain format. For this research paper, you'll be following MLA format. The following slides will walk you through citing various types of sources.



CITING SOURCES -- BOOKS

- In order to cite a source (give credit to its author), you must provide the following information:
 - Author
 - Title
 - Place of publication
 - Publisher
 - Copyright date

Draper, Sharon. The Battle of Jericho. New York: Simon Pulse, 2003.



CITING SOURCES -- EBOOKS

- Author
- Title
- Title of site where eBook was found (SGCHS Media Center)
- Publication date of eBook
- Name of sponsoring institution (SGCHS)
- Date when book was accessed (24 November 2009)
- <URL of eBook in angled brackets>

Melville, Herman. Moby Dick, or The Whale.
Charlottesville: U of Virginia Library,
Electronic Text Center. 1 Apr 2004
<[http://etet.lib.virginia.edu/toc/medeng/
public/Mel2Mob/html](http://etet.lib.virginia.edu/toc/medeng/public/Mel2Mob/html)>.



CITING SOURCES -- ENCYCLOPEDIAS

- Author (omit if no author listed)
- “Title of Article (in quotes)”
- Title of encyclopedia
- Copyright date

“Jamaica.” Encyclopedia Britannica. 1999.



CITING SOURCES – WEB PAGE/SITE

- Author (omit if no author listed)
- “Title of Article (in quotes)”
- Title of webpage
- Sponsoring agency if given
- Date of publication or last updated
- Date of access (24 November 2009)
- <URL>

Carter, Raphael. “Few parents are stay at home parents.” Issue Guides: Child Care. Sponsored by Danforth Foundation and The Ford Foundation. June 9, 2006. 12 Feb 2007 <<http://www.publicagenda.org/>>.



CITING SOURCES – DATABASE ARTICLES

- Author (omit if no author listed)
- “Title of Article (in quotes)”
- Title of Journal
- Volume
- Issue
- Year or date of publication: Page numbers
- Title of database
- Name of Service
- Subscribing library
- Date of access
- <URL of database search page>

Salter, David. “Born to Rock and Roll.”
Rolling Stone (2005): 45-49. Expanded Academic ASAP. Infotrac. Gibson County High School Library. 12 Feb. 2007 <<http://infotrac.galegroup.com/it/web/>>.



WORKS CITED PAGE

- At the end of your paper, you'll need to include a works cited page. This page will give an alphabetical list of only the sources you used in your paper. Remember to watch indentation, punctuation, and spacing on this page.



READY TO WRITE?

- After you've collected your information and research, you should be ready to organize your ideas, make an outline, and write your paper.
- Here are some tips for the writing stage:
 - Save your work regularly.
 - Don't rely too heavily on spell check.
 - Proofread.
 - Don't wait until the last minute to finish your paper. That's always when computer issues arise!



Please let me know if you have questions. I'm here to help!



RESOURCES

- “Research: Search Engines.” Oregon School Library Information Systems. The Plone Foundation. 24 November 2009.
<<http://secondary.educator.oslis.org/learn-to-research/research/research-search-engines-wp>>.
- “Evaluating Sources.” QuickStudy: Library Research Guide. The University of Minnesota Libraries. 2000. 24 November 2009.
<<http://tutorial.lib.umn.edu/infomachine9a21.html>>.
- “Evaluating Websites.” San Diego Unified School District. N.p. N.d.
<<http://www.edtech.sandi.net/old305/handouts/digitalclassroom/walklikealibrarian/evaluatesites/evaluatingwebsites.pdf>>.
- “Avoiding Plagiarism.” The OWL at Purdue. The Writing Lab & The OWL at Purdue & Purdue University. 2009. N.d. 24 November 2009.
<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>>.



RESOURCES

- “Research: Search Engines.” Oregon School Library Information Systems. The Plone Foundation. 24 November 2009.
<<http://secondary.educator.oslis.org/learn-to-research/research/research-search-engines-wp>>.
- “Evaluating Sources.” QuickStudy: Library Research Guide. The University of Minnesota Libraries. 2000. 24 November 2009.
<<http://tutorial.lib.umn.edu/infomachine9a21.html>>.
- “Evaluating Websites.” San Diego Unified School District. N.p. N.d.
<<http://www.edtech.sandi.net/old305/handouts/digitalclassroom/walklikealibrarian/evaluatesites/evaluatingwebsites.pdf>>.
- “Avoiding Plagiarism.” The OWL at Purdue. The Writing Lab & The OWL at Purdue & Purdue University. 2009. N.d. 24 November 2009.
<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>>.

