

Writing a Research Paper in the Scituate Public Schools



KEY TERMINOLOGY

Introduction	The first paragraph or paragraphs of the paper. It is funnel-shaped and always ends with your thesis.
Hook	The lead sentence(s) of your introduction used to "bait" your reader into reading on. Could be a description, controversial statement, or question.
Funnel-shape	The organization of the introduction. Moving from broad to specific, it begins with the hook, flows to the occasion, to the pivot-point, and finally, to the thesis and projected organization.
Thesis	A single sentence containing the paper's topic and the opinion to be proven in the paper.
Projected organization	The main points that support the thesis and which detail, in order, the main points addressed in the paper's body sections. It should be included as part of the thesis sentence itself or as its own sentence immediately preceding or following the thesis.
Supporting detail	Also known as evidence, facts, quotations, paraphrases, examples, descriptions.
Analysis	Also known as opinion, insight, interpretation, inference, evaluation, judgment, reflection.
Clincher	Last sentence of a paragraph or section. States why the preceding sentences support the topic sentence.
Transition	Used between sections and paragraphs to show relationships among ideas. Examples include <i>furthermore</i> , <i>however</i> , <i>likewise</i> , <i>similarly</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>in other words</i> , <i>nevertheless</i> , <i>not only... but also</i> , <i>therefore</i> , <i>for instance</i> , <i>for example</i> .
Final Clincher	Last sentence of the conclusion. It leaves the reader with something pertinent and profound or thought-provoking to think about; also known as a "Reach for Significance."
Plagiarism	Passing off someone else's ideas or words as your own. Plagiarism is intellectually dishonest and is grounds for immediate failure.

Plagiarism is an extremely serious form of cheating. Writers' original ideas are intellectual property; writers' phrases and clauses are artistic property. Academic tradition allows for borrowing writers' ideas and words as long as you credit the source. To omit the citation is to plagiarize. There are three forms of plagiarism: copying; patchwork plagiarism; and paraphrase plagiarism.

Here is a brief list of what needs to be credited or documented:

- Words or ideas presented in a magazine, book, newspaper, song, TV program, movie, Web page, computer program, letter, advertisement, or any other medium
- Information you gain through interviewing or conversing with another person, face to face, over the phone, or in writing
- When you copy the exact words or a unique phrase
- When you reuse or repost any electronically-available media, including images, audio, video, or other media

Bottom line, document any words, ideas, or other productions that originate somewhere outside of you.

There are, of course, certain things that do **not** need documentation or credit, including:

- Writing your own lived experiences, your own observations and insights, your own thoughts, and your own conclusions about a subject
- When you are using "common knowledge," things like folklore, common sense observations, myths, urban legends, and historical events (but **not** historical documents)
- When you are using generally-accepted facts, e.g., pollution is bad for the environment, including facts that are accepted within particular discourse communities, e.g., in the field of composition studies, "writing is a process" is a generally-accepted fact.

Deciding if Something is "Common Knowledge"

Generally speaking, you can regard something as common knowledge if you find the same information undocumented in at least five credible sources. Additionally, it might be common knowledge if you think the information you're presenting is something your readers will already know, or something that a person could easily find in general reference sources. But when in doubt, cite; if the citation turns out to be unnecessary, your teacher or editor will tell you.

Why do I have to include paraphrases and quotations in my paper?

To lend credibility or authority to your writing. Since you are not an expert on your topic, you must consult those who know much more about it than you. Caution: Don't do more harm than good by citing poor sources.

What is a paraphrase?

When you paraphrase, you put the original source's ideas, facts, or opinions in your own words.

Why must I cite the source when I paraphrase?

Even though paraphrases are in your own words, the ideas, facts, or opinions belong to the writer. Therefore, you must acknowledge the original source by using a parenthetical citation.

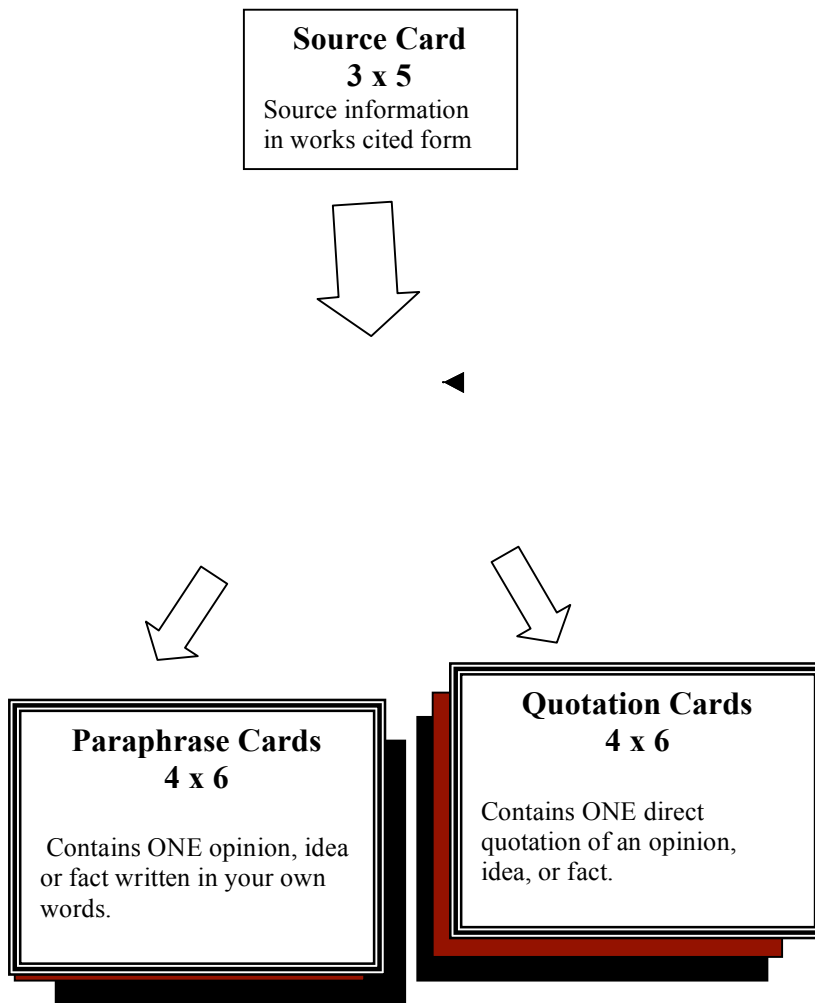
How much should I quote?

Quote only brief passages (i.e., a phrase, clause, or a series of sentences) that are especially interesting, well-written, or unusual. **KEEP YOUR QUOTATIONS AS BRIEF AS POSSIBLE.** Use only as much of the original words as you need to make your point.

STYLE TIP: Quote or paraphrase an average of four times per page only. Too many citations will lead your reader to believe that you are neither an original thinker nor a confident writer.

COLLECTING YOUR RESEARCH

Note cards: Using note cards to gather information on your topic is the most important step in the research process. Because you are required to organize your sources' ideas and cite all works to which you refer in your paper, **proper formatting and accurate documentation are a must**. Per the *MLA Handbook*, 6th Ed., you will use four kinds of note cards to help you do so: source, summary, paraphrase, and quotation.

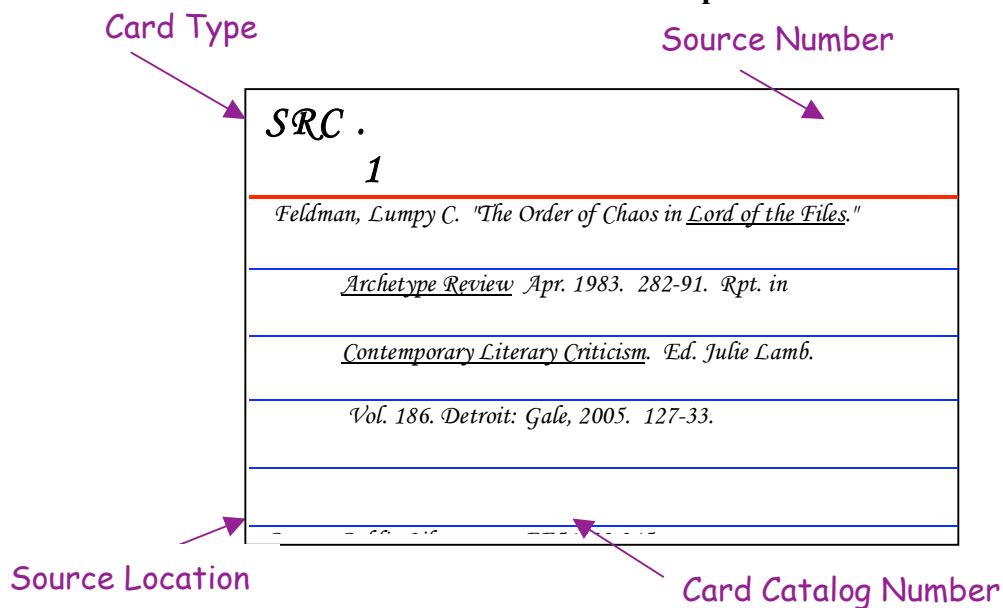


ORGANIZATION TIP: Keep paraphrase and quotation cards together in piles by sub-topic to help you organize your ideas when writing your outline.

- On the source card, cite the source in proper MLA Format as you will on the "Works Cited" page.
- For source cards only, write the **source location** and **card catalog number** on the last line in the lower left corner. This will help you relocate the source if need be. Internet sources will not have a source location.
- Identify the **card type** by writing it in **left-hand corner** on the first line.
- Write the **source number** in the **upper right-hand corner** and *circle* it. The source number will allow you to match the card to the correct source instead of having to rewrite the source itself on each corresponding paraphrase and quotation card.
- For paraphrase and quotation cards, write the **sub-topic** on the first line in the **center**. This subtopic will probably become a section of your outline and final paper.
- Write the quotation or paraphrase relevant to the paper's thesis. Include ONE idea, fact, or opinion only. **On the back of each card, jot down notes to yourself as to why you thought the information is important.** When you write your draft, you will find that you have much of the paper written already.
- So you don't forget to do so in your paper, write the **author** and **page** in proper MLA form (quotation and paraphrase cards only).

DRAFTING TIP: On the back of each card, include notes to yourself as to why you think the information is important. When you write your draft, you will find that you have much of the paper written already.

Source Card Sample



Paraphrase Card Sample

Card Type Topic Code Source Code

↓ ↓ ↓

P **SYMBOLISM**

1

The boys' dependence on the conch for order is ironic since the shell contains at its core a spiral, which is a universal symbol for disorder (Feldman 33).

(Author Page)

Quotation Card Sample

Q **SYMBOLISM**

1

"Spirals are most obviously present in nature as destructive forces such as tornados and whirlpools, but perhaps even more important to note is the spiral form at the molecular level. Might the double helix shape of DNA mean human beings themselves are naturally destined for chaos?" (Feldman 124).

Card Type	Purpose	What to do
Source Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > To ensure you have all the information you will need for your works cited page. Note: Use only one card per source. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Write, in proper MLA form, all the relevant source information just as you would in a works cited entry.
Paraphrase Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > To clarify or simplify a fact or an opinion. > To lend authority to your point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Note: Do not use whole phrases from the original source. > Again, include only ONE idea per card.
Quotation Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > To capture especially effective phrasing. > To lend authority to your point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Copy the writer's EXACT words regarding a fact or opinion.

- ☑ Use **Modern Language Association (MLA) standards** for formatting the paper and for documenting all in-text citations and sources on the works cited page.
- ☑ Use **ONLY 12 pt. Times New Roman Font** (except for note cards, which may be handwritten).
- ☑ Use **one-inch margins** on the top, bottom, and sides.
- ☑ Contain **NO spelling or grammatical errors**.
- ☑ Contain **topic sentences in your own words** for every paragraph.
- ☑ Include **NO supporting quotations in the introduction, conclusion** or topic sentences.
- ☑ Contain an average of **FOUR** in-text citations per page.
- ☑ Be an original document. **Plagiarized material will result in an automatic failing grade** for the assignment.

MLA FORMATTING TEMPLATE



Bagadonuts 1



Joe Bagadonuts

Mr. Griffin

Algebra 1B

1 January 2010

*One-inch
margins
from top,
bottom,
and sides
of paper
to text.
Add name
and page
using
header*

Title of Paper

The MLA style guidelines provide rules for scholarly writing. Double-space ALL text. You will NEVER need to single-space anything in your paper. Two typical elements of MLA term papers are provided as examples in this template: in-text citations and quotations.

In-Text (Parenthetical) citations:

Per MLA guidelines, all sources must be cited on the works cited page, located at the end of the paper. Within the body of the paper, a “pointer” containing the author’s last name and a page within parentheses (Erickson 24) indicates the cited text. *The author’s last name corresponds with the entry on the Works Cited page*, allowing readers to look up the source of the citation.

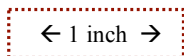
Quotations:

Quotes with fewer than four lines of prose or three lines of verse are quoted directly in your sentence.

Include this type of quote “directly in the sentence and enclose it within quotation marks” (Feldman 23). Never create a run-on sentence when leading into, out of, or text-sandwiching a quotation. Together, the quotation and your own words must be a grammatically correct sentence.

Quotes more than four lines of prose or three lines of verse follow different guidelines. Introduce these block quotations with a colon:

Start long quotes on a new line. Indent the quote one inch from the left margin. Also, double-space

 the lines and omit quotation marks. If you quote more than one paragraph, indent the first line of each paragraph an additional quarter inch.

When quoting verse, maintain line breaks from the original work. Include a parenthetical “pointer” after the closing punctuation, such as the one that follows. Note that with long quotations, the period does *not* follow the closed parenthesis. (Erickson 34)

Works Cited

Author's Name. Title of Book. City: Publisher, Year.

Author's Name. "Title of Article." Title of Publication Date Published: Pages.

Author's Name. "Title of Online Article." Title of Online Publication Version (Year Published): Pages. Date Accessed
<web address>..

"Title of Article." Title of Media. CD-ROM. City: Publisher, Year.

Author's Name. Document title. Date of Internet publication.

Date of access < web address >.

"Title of Article." Editorial. Title of Editorial. Date of Internet
publication. Date of access < web address >.

Note: For additional examples, refer to the MLA Web site or your MLA handbook.

SMOOTH MOVES: INTEGRATING QUOTATIONS

Quote Sandwiches: In most cases, paraphrases are an effective and sufficient form of providing supporting evidence. Use a quotation only when the writer's words are especially well-written, powerful, or crucial to making your point. When including a paraphrase or a quotation, be sure to make its significance clear to your reader. Use the quote sandwich method contained in the steps below as a guide:

1. Introduce the idea to be proven in the quote.
2. Insert the quotation (a sentence, a phrase, or just a few words).
3. Follow the quote with an explanation of how it supports or helps prove
your thesis.

Remember, if you make a sandwich without bottom slice of bread, your sandwich will fall apart. If you are not willing to provide an explanation of how the quote supports or helps prove your thesis, your quote sandwich will fall apart also (and so will your grade).

EXAMPLE from PHYSICS:

Ironically, light itself refuses to be entirely illuminated by scientific scrutiny. Light defies classification as it is “neither a particle nor a wave but behaves as both” (Stenhouse 156). That the paradoxical nature of light cannot be fully explained is a powerful reminder that humankind’s rational abilities indeed has limits. It also calls into questions whether the universe is even knowable at all.

When including quotations for support, avoid “plopping” them into your paper. In other words, do not allow quoted material to stand alone. Stand-alone quotations usually jar your reader because they do not typically provide clear, explicit connections to your ideas preceding and following the quotation. Example:

- ✘ The classic work *The Grapes of Wrath* is a historical novel. “A summation of national experience at a given time” (Levant 93).

Instead, make the connections clear to the reader using a variety of any of the following methods:

The Lead-in

Begin a sentence in your own words and then blend in a direct quotation. Example:

The Grapes of Wrath is a historical novel because it is “a summation of national experience at a given time” (Levant 93).



The Exit Out

Begin a sentence with a direct quotation and then lead your reader out with your own words. Example:

“[A] summation of national experience at a given time,” the work *The Grapes of Wrath* is indeed a historical novel (Levant 93).



The Drop In

Begin a sentence in your own words, blend in a direct quotation, and then end with your own words. Example:

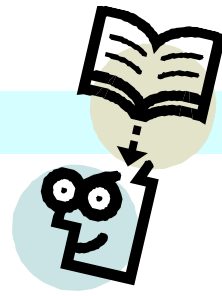
The classic work *The Grapes of Wrath* is “a summation of national experience at a given time” and therefore is considered a historical novel (Levant 93).

The Block Quotation

Use an offset or "block" quotation when quoting more than four lines. Introduce the block quotation with a complete sentence that ends with a colon. Begin the quotation itself on a new line, indented one inch from the left margin. Do NOT use punctuation marks around the quoted material (the indentation is enough to let your reader know that you are quoting). End the block quotation with a period. Include the in-text citation *without* a period. Example: (See page 32 of this handbook.)

WORKS CITED

DOCUMENT SOURCES IN PRINT



USING MLA STYLE TO

An excellent site for more complete information on how to cite sources can be found at the Purdue University "Online Writing Lab" (OWL)
(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>)

Book

Afishnaméd, Wanda. My Life with John Cleese. London: Python P, 2003.

Book with two authors

Brown, Nathan, and Sheryl A. Proper. The Everything Paying for College Book. Avon, MA: Adams, 2005.

Book with three or more authors

Gilman, Sandra, et al. Hysteria Beyond Freud. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993.

Essay or chapter in a book edited by another

Weyler, Karen A. "Captivity Narratives." The History of Southern Women's Literature. Ed. Carolyn Perry and Mary Louise Weaks. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2002. 25-31.

DVD

Balanchine. Dir. Merrill Brockway. 1984. DVD. West Long Branch, NJ: Kulter, 2004.

Interview you have conducted

Crumbum, Lester. Personal interview. 20 July 2002.

Magazine article

Feldman, Lumpy M. "Cruisin' for a Bruisin'." Seafarer Magazine. 21 July 2005: 22.

Newspaper article

Broder, John. "Clinton Adamant on World Role in Climate Accord." New York Times 12 Dec.1997, natl. ed. : A1+.

WORKS CITED FORMATS FOR ONLINE SOURCES

Article in an electronic magazine (ezine)

Adler, Jerry. "Ghost of Everest." *Newsweek* 17 May 1999. 19 May 1999
<http://newsweek.com/newsrv/issue/20_99a/printed/int/socu/so0120_1.htm>.

Author, no date

Dawe, James. The Jane Austen Page. 16 Sept. 2003 <<http://jamesdawe.com/austen.html>>.

Newspaper article

Wren, Christopher. "A Body on Mt. Everest, a Mystery Half-Solved." *New York Times on the Web* 5 May 1999. 13 May 1999
<<http://search.nytimes.com/search/daily/bin/fastweb?getdoc+site+site+87604+0+wAAA+%22a%7Ebody%7Eon%7Emt.%7Est%22>>.

No author

Dutch Recipes. 9 Jun. 1998. 16 Sept. 2003 <<http://www.fortunecity.com/victorian/verona/190/eten.htm>>.

Online document

Author's name (last name first). Document title. Date of Internet publication. Date of access <URL>.

Professional site

The William Faulkner Society Home Page. Ed. Mortimer, Gail. 16 Sept. 1999. William Faulkner Soc. 1 Oct. 1999
<<http://www.acad.swarthmore.edu/faulkner>>.

NAIC Online. 29 Sept. 1999. National Association of Inventors Corporation. 1 Oct. 1999 <<http://www.better-investing.org/>>.

U. S. Department of Education (ED) Home Page. 29 Sept. 1999. US Dept. of Education. 1 Oct. 1999
<<http://www.ed.gov/index.html>>.

William Faulkner on the Web. 7 July 1999. U of Mississippi. 20 Sept. 1999
<<http://www.mcsr.olemiss.edu/~egibp/faulkner/faulkner.html>>.

Short text within a larger project or database

Whitman, Walt. "Beat! Beat! Drums!" Project Bartleby Archive. Ed. Steven Van Leeuwen. May 1998. Columbia U. 11 May 1999
<<http://www.bartleby.com/142/112.html>>.

Websites without page numbers

If you cannot find a page number, do not include numbers in your parenthetical citation or works cited entry. If the page includes paragraph numbers, use the abbreviation para. or pars. before the paragraph numbers.

Example: (Smith, pars. 12-24).

Works Cited

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. New York: MLA, 2003. Guide to Using

Internet Sources 2003. 12 Dec. 2005 <<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/cite5.html#1>>.

Harnack, Andrew and Eugene Kleppinger. "Citation Styles." Online! A Reference.

Kinney, Thomas J. Home page. 2005. 23 Dec.

2005.<<http://www.u.arizona.edu/~tkinney/pdf/handouts/mla.doc>>.

COMMON REVISION & EDITING ERRORS

THE "YES TEST"

Your research paper must pass the following test before being accepted and graded for content.



- ___ Is the entire paper and Works Cited page **double-spaced**? (With no "padded" space between paragraphs.)
- ___ Are your thesis and projected organization **underlined**?
- ___ Does your final draft contain an average of **at least four quality citations per page**?
- ___ Is the **heading** correct? Spacing and information? Correct English course? Correct spelling of teacher's name? Your full name (no nickname)? Correct due date in European form (date month year) with **NO** commas?
- ___ Are all **page numbers** in the upper right corner, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top, at the right margin, and preceded by your last name?
- ___ Is the essay's **title** centered, **NOT** underlined, **NOT** italicized, and **NOT** in all capitals? Are all works appearing in the essay's title underlined or in quotation marks?
- ___ Did you double-check to make sure all of your **in-text citations** are documented properly? Are the quotation marks and punctuation in the proper order? Author page?
- ___ Does each **in-text citation** author's name match the author's name in your Works Cited page for each source?
- ___ Does each paragraph have a clear **topic sentence** written in your own words with **NO** quotations or paraphrasing?
- ___ Did you eliminate **ALL** recurring grammatical and stylistic problems from your paper (contractions, first person, etc.)?
- ___ Is there a clear **conclusion** that is entirely in your own words (i.e., contains **NO** quotations)?
- ___ Are all the **titles** properly presented in your **essay's introduction, body, and conclusion**? Italicize the titles of *plays, anthologies, books, and novels*.
- ___ Is **each entry** in the works cited page **followed by a period**? Are publication dates in **European format**?
- ___ Then... **you are finished** and may submit your paper!