

Checklist for Writing a Research Paper

1. Choose a narrow topic

- A. Brainstorm a number of general topics.
- B. Generate more detailed, specific subjects for few of the topic ideas.
- C. Select the best topic and specific subject for the paper.
- D. Brainstorm words/subjects to look up in an encyclopedia, library catalog, and periodicals.
- E. Narrow the topic so it can be covered properly in the assigned length.

2. Determine the location of source materials

- A. Obtain all of your sources, using the school library, public library, and internet.
- B. Skim each source to determine its usefulness.
- C. Create a bibliography card for each source used.

3. Note Taking

- A. Develop an outline as a guide for research and note taking.
- B. Read and make notes in an organized manner.
- C. Site source one each note card.

4. Working Outline

- A. Organize note cards by topic.
- B. Rewrite outline in a final form.
- C. Label each note card with a code that corresponds to its place in the outline.

5. Writing the Paper

- A. Write the first draft using your own words.
- B. Write in the past tense.
- C. Write only in the third person.
- D. Revise first draft to create a final draft.
- E. Proof for spelling, punctuation, documentation of sources, clarity, and smooth transitions.
- F. Create final version.
- G. Create bibliography, following the manual carefully.
- H. Create a title page.

(1 1/2" from the top of paper)

The Contributions
of
Franklin D. Roosevelt

(2 1/2" between title and author)

Susan Townsend
(author)

(3" between author and concluding information)

(course) Language Arts
(teacher) Mr. Smith
(date) November 1, 1999

MLA Bibliographic Style

Modified for Middle School

1. For each source listed, begin first line at margin and indent each line that follows.
2. Underline or use italics for titles of books, periodicals, and software. Titles of articles are enclosed in quotation marks.
3. Note punctuation and follow exactly.
4. If required information, such as author or place of publication, is not available, just leave it out.
5. Arrange all sources in one list, alphabetically by first word, which will generally be either the author's last name or the first important word of the title.
6. Do not number bibliographic entries.

PRINT SOURCES

Book with one author:

1. Author.
2. Title of book. (underlined)
3. City of publication:
4. Publisher, date of publication.

Stenger, Carl. A Day in America. New York: Doubleday, 1985.

Book with two authors:

1. Authors (in the order they are given in the book).
2. Title of book. (underlined)
3. City of publication:
4. Publisher, date.

Smith, Elizabeth and David Williamson. Rocks and Gemstones. Chicago: Macmillan, 1995.

Book with no author:

Mexico. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Encyclopedia and other familiar reference books:

1. Author of article (if available). (The author may be listed at the beginning or end of an article)
2. "Title of article."
3. Title of book. (underlined)
4. Date of edition. (Volume and page number not necessary if articles are arranged alphabetically).

Eiselen, Malcom R. "Frankline, Benjamin." The World Book Encyclopedia. 1994.

“France.” Compton’s Encyclopedia. 1992.

Article in a periodical:

1. Author (if available).
2. “Title of article.”
3. Periodical title (underlined)
4. Date: page.

Cooper, Beth. “The Explorers of the New World.” Cobblestone. May 1996: 20-22.

“N.F.L. Training Camp Report.” The New York Times.
21 August 1996: B12.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE RESEARCHER

1. Name of person interviewed.
2. Type of interview.
3. Date of interview.

Hunt, James. Personal interview. 20 August 1990.

Ford, Harrison. Telephone interview. 26 January 1998.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

1. Author (if available).
2. “Title of article.”
3. Title of product (underlined or in italics)
4. Edition or version (if relevant)
5. CD-ROM.
6. City of publication: Publisher, date of publication.

Cashman, Katherine V. “Volcano.” World Book Multimedia Encyclopedia. 1995 ed.
CD-ROM. Chicago: World Book Inc, 1995.

“Japan.” Cartopedia. CD-ROM. New York: Dorling Kindersley, 1995.

Solnick, Bruce B. “Columbus, Christopher.” Grolier MultiMedia Encyclopedia. 1994 ed. CD-ROM. Danbury, CT: Grolier Electronic Publishing Inc., 1992.

Leicester, Henry M. “Chemistry.” Microsoft Encarta. 1994 ed. CD-ROM.
Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 1994.

“Engine, Four-Stroke.” David Macauley: The Way Things Work. CD-ROM. New York: Dorling Kindersley, 1994.

Periodical article found in CD-ROM database:

1. Author.
2. "Title of article."
3. Periodical title (underlined)
4. Date: page.
5. Title of database. (underlined)
6. CD-ROM.
7. City of publication: name of electronic publisher, date of electronic publication.

Gray, Robert. "Do You Believe in Dragons?" Ranger Rick. Oct 1993. 21-29. SIRS Discoverer. CD-ROM. Boca Raton: SIRS, Inc., Spring 1996.

Timney, Mark C. "Virtual Chills and Thrills." Boy's Life. April 1995: 13-15 Primary Search. CD-ROM. Peabody, MA: Ebsco, March 1996.

From an article from an encyclopedia found online:

1. Author, if shown
2. "Title of the article."
3. Name of encyclopedia (underlined).
4. Name of publisher, date of publication (if available).
5. Date of your visit
6. Name of the outline service you used.

"Animal Habitats." Compton's Living Encyclopedia. Compton's Learning Company, 1996. 22 August 1999 America Online.

Keller, Ralph. "Fruit Flies." Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia. Grolier Interactive Inc. 10 September 1996 America Online.

World Wide Web:

1. Author (if known).
2. "Title of article."
3. Title of complete work. (if relevant, underlined)
4. Date of visit
5. <full http address>. (enclosed in angle brackets)

Norton, R.J. "An Overview of John Wilkes Booth's Assassination of President Abraham Lincoln." Abraham Lincoln's Assassination. 28 November 1998 <<http://home.att.net/~rjnorton/Lincoln75.html>>.

"Statistical Summary: America's Major Wars." 14 August 1998 <<http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/other/stats/warcost.htm>>.

"Callisto." The Nine Planets. 21 May 1998 <<http://seds.lpl.arizona.edu/nineplanets/callisto.html>>.

Personal e-mail:

1. Author.
2. <Author's e-mail address> (enclosed in angle brackets)

3. "Subject line from posting."
4. Date of publication
5. Personal e-mail.

Tope, Robert.<bobtope@aol.com>. "Citrus Forecast."
3 Sept. 1999. Personal email.