

VANCOUVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MLA Research Handbook: Guide for Research

This guide is a summary of the Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Sixth Ed. 2003, which is intended to guide research that will be required during your high school career. For all questions not found in this summary, please consult the MLA Handbook, as it is basis for this document. The following steps will ensure that your research paper will be clear and effective:

- Write clearly and simply in a formal, standard language to impress the reader. If the reader does not easily understand the writer’s language, the purpose is lost.
- Use formal language—no contractions, slang, abbreviations, overused or dead words, and rarely is first or second person used.
- Make sure paper has an arguable or supported thesis in the first paragraph of paper, and each body paragraph has a topic sentence. Each paragraph should develop only one specific topic argument or point.
- Use transitional words/phrases to guide reader through paper’s discussion. Unanticipated discussion can confuse the reader.
- Vary length of sentences. Short sentences emphasize increased action, whereas long sentences emphasize the narrative. Either type of sentence used by itself will interfere with the reader’s understanding.
- Check spelling and grammar. Errors interrupt the paper’s effectiveness.
- Introduce all quotes. *Never begin or end a sentence or paragraph with a quote.* Explain quote’s significance or how it supports paragraph’s main idea. It is usually accomplished through one to three “framing” statements before and after quoted information or *a quote sandwich*.

The most important aspect of writing a research paper is that writers do not plagiarize, which is a serious offense, whether intended or by mistake. It ruins a writer’s credibility. The secret to avoiding plagiarism is to keep an extremely accurate record of sources consulted for paper. If information is read for research, a working bibliography entry must be written for source. **Directly cutting/copying and then pasting information from the Internet into research paper is plagiarism if the site information is not placed in quotations and cited immediately following the information.**



I. Researching Sources for Research Paper Topic

Index cards are the traditional method for keeping a record of source information. They can be used for both bib cards (3x5) and notes cards (4x6). Instructions for writing bib cards are below. **Basic information for a bibliography is found on title page of the source, usually.**

A bibliography entry has:

Author(s) complete name (last name, first name.)

“Article or Chapter Title.”

Work Title.

Volume number (II) or 11.3 [book or journal]

Book Editor(s) name (Ed. first name last name)

City where published: [book]

Publishers' name, [book]

Date.

Page numbers.

Type of publication (Print or Web).

Date of Access (Internet) (day Mon. year).

Bibliography card sample (3x5 index card)

When writing bib cards, indent every line of entry after first line. This “hanging indent” enables you to see what word should be in your in-text citation (Green 12).

Green, Katie. “Memories Preserved in Student Journals.” *English Journal* 15.4 (2000): 12-13. Print.

A. Entries for Bib Cards and Works Cited Page

• Book with One Author

Rogers, Karl. *To Run with the Night*. New York City: Oxford UP, 1996. Print.

• Two or Three Authors (same order as source)

Watson, Michael and Samantha Willis. *Chemistry and Chemists*. New York City: Random House, 1982. Print.

• Four or More Authors

Gilman, Sander, et al. *Hysteria beyond Freud*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993. Print.

• Anthology/Collection of Stories/Articles in one Book (Editor who has written the Forward or Introduction etc.)

Lopate, Phillip, ed. Introduction. *The Art of the Personal Essay: An Anthology from the Classical Era to*

the Present. New York City: Anchor-Doubleday, 1994. Print.

• Book with Chapters Written by Different Authors

Chamberlain, Lori. “Magicking the Real: Paradoxes of Postmodern Writing.” *Postmodern Fiction: A Bio-Bibliographical Guide*. Ed. Larry McCaffery. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986. Print.

• Two or More Books by the Same Author

Boroff, Marie. *Language and the Past: Verbal Artistry in Frost, Stevens, and Moore*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1979. Print.

---. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. New York: Norton, 1967. Print.

• Translation

Beowulf. Trans. Talbot Donaldson. Ed. Nicholas Howe. New York City: Norton, 2001. Print.

Allende, Isabel. “Toad’s Mouth.” Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. *A Hammock beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America*. Ed. Thomas Colchie. New York City: Plume, 1992. 83-88. Print.

• Pamphlet (follow book format)

• Book by a Corporate Author

American Medical Association. *The American Medical Association Encyclopedia of Medicine*. Ed. Charles B. Clayman. New York: Random, 1989. Print.

• A Multivolume Work (Reference Books)

Le Patourel, John. “Normans and Normandy.” *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*. Ed. Joseph R. Strayer. 13 vols. New York City: Scribner’s, 1987. Print.

- **Republished Book**

Atwood, Margaret. *The Blind Assassin*. 2000. New York City: Knopf-Random, 2001. Print.

- **Government Publication**

United Nations. *Consequences of Rapid Population Growth in Developing Countries*. New York City: Taylor, 1991. Print.

- **Interviews**

Brown, John. Personal Interview. day Mon. year.
Gordimer, Nadine. Interview. *New York Times* 10 Oct. 1991, late ed. : C25. Print.

- **Scholarly Journal**

Green, Katie. "Memories Preserved in Student Journals." *English Journal* 15.4 (2000):12-13. Print.

- **Article in a Newspaper**

Jeromack, Paul. "This Once David of the Art World Does Goliath a Favor." *New York Times* 13 Jul. 2002: B7+. Print.

- **Magazine Article**

Brown, Casey. "How Effective Are Today's Schools?" *US News and World Report* 4 May 2007: 23-34. Print.

- **An Anonymous Article** (no author)

"Dubious Venture." *Time* 3 Jan. 1994: 64-65. Print.

- **Television or Radio Program**

"Frederick Douglass." *Civil War Journal*. Narr. Danny Glover. Dir. Craig Haffner. Arts and Entertainment Network. 6 Apr. 1993. Television.

- **Sound Recording**

Holiday, Billie. "God Bless the Child." Rec. 9 May 1941. *The Essence of Billie Holiday*. Columbia, 1991. CD.

- **A Film or Video Recording**

It's a Wonderful Life. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. Jimmy Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell. RKO, 1946. Film.

- **Painting, Sculpture or Photograph**

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn. *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*. 1653. Oil on canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

- **Electronic Source (Web Site with an author)**

Brooks, David. "The Culture of Martyrdom." *Atlantic Online* June 2002. Web. 24 Sept. 2002.

- (Web site with an anonymous or no author)**

"Utah Mine Rescue Funeral." *CNN.com*. Cable News Network, 21 Aug. 2007. Web. 21 Sept. 2008.

- **Newspaper Source Found Online**

Jeromack, Paul. "This Once David of the Art World Does Goliath a Favor." *New York Times* 13 Jul. 2002: B7+. Web. 20 Mar. 2003.

- **Magazine Source Found Online**

Wimberly, Rachel. "What's on Your Web Site?" *Tradeshaw Week* 9 Oct. 2006. Web. 23 Oct. 2006.

- **Book Source Found Online**

Bellinger, Martha Fletcher. "Elizabethan Playhouses, Actors, and Audiences." *A Short History of the Theater*. New York City: Henry Holt and Co., 1927. 207-13. Web. 9 Mar. 2005.

For print sources found online, write source as usual but add access date after the word Web.

B. Taking Notes:

Before using a source in a research project, it should be evaluated for credibility. A student should not assume that all sources are credible, which is why Wikipedia and other general encyclopedias are not consulted for any reason other than to be a springboard for generating ideas for research. The focus should be on how current, how accurate the article is and by whose authority it was written. Record the author info and pages/paragraphs in the top left corner of your 4x6-index card. Also, write the topic of the information in the top right corner, which helps organize your paper as you take notes.

- **Page numbers:** printed books, magazines or newspapers.
- **Paragraph numbers:** any article or excerpt from a book, magazine or newspaper found on Internet.
 - ***Always print online article for several reasons:
 - paragraphs can be numbered on copy,
 - article's access date is printed on hard copy of article,
 - article may not remain online,
 - article can be highlighted for note taking.

Note card Samples (4x6 index cards):

Print Source with an Author

(Author's Last Name #)	Topic
One page, one source, one topic for each card	

Internet Article with an Author

(Author's Last Name par. #)	Topic
One paragraph, one source, one topic for each card	

Print Source with No Author

("First Main Word of Title... #)	Topic
One page, one source, one topic for each card	

Internet Source with No Author

("First Main Word of Title... par. #)	Topic
One paragraph, one source, one topic for each card	

Three ways to take notes:

- **Summarize:** using only general ideas from text
- **Paraphrase:** using detailed information from source but notes are not word-for-word
- **Quote:** copying original wording for clarity or effectiveness—must be word for word, punctuation for punctuation. A quote is **five consecutive words** from source. Words should be key words, phrases, lines or passages that are vivid, interesting or unusual. Using quotes too often can cause paper to become boring and difficult to read. Be sure to use quotation marks around the quote on your note card.
- Using non-poetry quotes: Enclose four lines or fewer of quoted material within quotation marks. The initial quotation mark should introduce quoted material and end quotation mark should come immediately after last word of quoted material. **Never place quotation marks after the parenthesis.**
- **More than four lines** of quoted material should be indented one tab **without quotation marks**,

beginning a new line following introduction to quote:

Quote should begin here. At the end of the four or more lines, insert the source information with the page or paragraph number. (Brown par. 3)

- Separate **Poetry** by line. When quoting only part of a line, put words in quotes within text on your note card. If quoting two or three lines, use slash (/) on each end of line to separate them: "I walked a mile with pleasure/She chattered all the way" (1-2).
- If quoting four or more lines of poetry, begin a new line with no quotation marks.

Robert Browning Hamilton's "Along the Road"

I walked a mile with pleasure,
 She chattered all the way.
 But I was ne'er the wiser,
 For all she had to say. (1-4)

Imitate poem's original arrangement.

Helpful Hints for writing note cards:

- To indicate original work sentence errors, use [sic] to show within quotation; use (sic) after quote.
- Omit words from quoted passage by using ellipsis...at beginning or ...middle... or end of sentence...
- If no page numbers are used (electronic source or a complete work), cite full name of author and work within sentence mentioning information, rather than in parenthesis at end.
- If print source article is single page or has no page or paragraph number, it is not noted within parenthesis; just first word in title of citation is listed.

Tables or Figures and Drawings:

- Label all tables numerically: Table 1 with a short sentence explaining what table represents.
- Label any drawings or figures as Fig. 1 with a short sentence explaining what the figure is.
- Number tables and figures and drawings separately:
 Table 1 and Figure 1, not Table 1 and Figure 2.

C. Organizing the Note Cards for the Outline
 When the research is complete,

1. Sort 4x6 note cards by topic in top right corner. You should have a minimum of four topics.
2. Then sort each individual topic in a logical order
3. Arrange topics by least important-most important, chronological or spatial order.
4. The first point will be I., second will be II. etc.

Title of the Paper
Thesis: A controlling thought that will be argued or supported through the research process.
I. First Point
A. Least important detail
B. Middle detail
C. Most important detail
II. Second Point
A. Comparison
B. Contrast

Notes on Outlines:

- The paper’s thesis should be the first line of outline, but the introduction and conclusion are not included in outline at this time.
- Outlines are topic or sentence style, not both.
- If subtopic has an A is used, it must have a B; if a subtopic has a 1, then it must have a 2, etc.
- After outlining the body of paper, then write introduction and conclusion.
- Follow outline. Adjust outline after writing begins. Change thesis as well if content leads to a different conclusion.

II. Formatting the Research Paper

A. Basic Guidelines:

- **Paper and Margins:** regular paper with margins of 1” on all sides. Type heading flush with left margin.
- **Font Style and Size:** Entire paper should be typed in Times New Roman, 12 font.
- **Spacing:** Use double-spacing used in all sections of paper, including heading, title, body of the paper, indented quotes, and Works Cited page and/or Bibliography. *No part of paper should be single-spaced or double double-spaced.* Use left justification only. Leave only one space after concluding punctuation between sentences.
- **Numbering/Pagination:** Number all pages, including first page with a header that includes last name of writer and page number. A research paper should not have hand-written page numbers or manually typed on first line.
***How to number the pages is in View option on the toolbar.

- Click on Header and Footer. Check that header’s font is **Times New Roman 12**.
- Type last name in text box, click on # symbol in gray toolbox. After number appears, tab name and number over to right margin.
- When finished, click close, which will number each page of paper.

B. Heading and Title of Paper:

- ❖ **Underling vs. Italics:** MLA style prefers titles of books, magazines, newspapers and Web sites to be underlined rather than typed in italics.
- ❖ **Heading** should be on top line of page: Student’s name, Teacher’s name, Topic of paper or Class name, Date of Assignment: 1 May 2003 or May 1, 2003. **Do not use 12/1/2003.**
- ❖ **Title:** Center title one double space below heading.
- Capitalize first and last word of title and all other words that are **NOT** prepositions, conjunctions or articles, unless they are first or last word of title. *Do not capitalize every letter in title.*
- If a number is at beginning or end of title, spell it out, unless it is a year (2004).
- Only underline words underlined in text of paper, such as the title of a work.
- Never put a title in quotation marks, unless it would be in quotation marks within text of paper, such as a poem.
***Title is the same font as the rest of the text—no bold, italics or underline.

C. Writing the Paper:

- Research papers are computer generated.
- Two reasons are formatting and convenience. All drafts should be double-spaced to help editing process.
- Save the entire paper in one document file; the paper’s pagination will not be correct if each section of the paper is in a separate file.

D. Citing Sources within the Text

In-text citations are necessary whenever source information is being used—summarized, paraphrased or quoted. A paper that does not have citations cannot pass—it is plagiarized.

E. In-Text Citations: Citations must follow source information or where a pause would naturally occur, as near the source material as possible.

Note: When citing same source consecutively, only list page or paragraph number; do not use the author’s name. First citation should look like this (Jones 2); consecutive citation should look like this (3).

One Author (non-electronic source)

- If author is not mentioned in text, include author's last name and page number.

“Primary sources bring the period being studied alive” (Baker 71).

- If author name is mentioned within text, include only the source's page number.

Nancy Baker suggests, “Primary sources bring the period being studied alive” (71).

Two or Three Authors (non-electronic source)

- All authors' names—last names—listed in order as listed in source, separated by and (not &) with page number.

“Primary information can also be found by using guides and indexes to the periodicals and newspapers of the day” (Baker and Huling 70). (Jones, Smith, and Brown 70).

More Than Three Authors (non-electronic source)

- First author's last name followed by et al. and the page number)

“The cow jumped over the moon” (Goose et al. 1).

Works with Editors or Translators instead of Authors (non-electronic source)

- Format in same form as a source with an author. (Bloom 371).

Translated Works with Author (non-electronic source)

- Cite original author's name rather than translator's. (Homer 324).

Two or More Works by Same Author (non-electronic source)

- To keep two sources separate, include cited works title in abbreviated form, separated from author's name with comma

In theory, she is interested less in the notions of beauty than in the notions of “linguistic accuracy” (Martin, Language 143).

- If author's name is mentioned within text, include only name of source and page number.

Martin, in her theory, is interested less in the notions of beauty than in the notions of “linguistic accuracy” (Language 143).

- When mentioning author and source within text, only include page number in parenthesis.

Martin, in her theory as stated in Language, is interested less in notions of beauty than in notions of “linguistic accuracy” (143).

Multiple Sources in the Same Citation (non-electronic source)

- Use semicolons to separate different sources within one parenthetical citation.

Several writers have commented on the unclear rules that are present in the professional organization (James 34; Brown 65; Thompson 33).

Works with No Author Listed (non-electronic source)

- Begin with quotation marks, then first main word of article title, followed by ellipsis and page number.

“When stitching, gently pull on the top layer to fit the piece underneath” (“Stitching... 19).

Government Documents (non-electronic source)

- If author is listed, follow rule for having author, unless government agency is listed first, then list first word of agency.

The presidential committee to re-elect the president in 1992 found that campus protests had focused on the war in Middle East (Jones 300).

- If no author is listed, use government agency that is listed.

Alcohol-related accidents are down “9%” this year (Department of Transportation 32).

- If no author is listed or if citing several articles from one reference, replace author's name with article title (“Vancouver”).

Articles with a Corporate Author (non-electronic source)

- Place corporate author's name in parenthesis followed by page reference, unless it is long, then it is better placed within text.

A study prepared by the United States Department of State defined terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience" (lines 14-16).

Articles in Reference Books (non-electronic source)

- When citing single article by single author in single work, use regular parenthetical citation (Carlin 345).

Works within a Multivolume Work (non-electronic source)

- Place volume number following author's name, followed by colon and a space or refer to it within the text, spelling out volume (Wellek 2: 1-4). OR "In volume two, Wellek suggests..." (1-4).

Literary and Religious Works (non-electronic source)

- When referencing prose, it is helpful to cite more information from the source. Chapter numbers enable readers to find the reference regardless of novel's edition.

Charles Darnay attempts to care for Lucie (Dickens 150 bk. 2, ch. 3).

- When citing plays and poetry, omit page number altogether and cite by division of story or poem (act, scene, canto, book or part) and lines with periods separating numbers.

"I walked a mile with pleasure / She chattered all the way" (Hamilton 1-2).

- Unless otherwise instructed, use Arabic numbers for citations of acts, scenes, and other numbered divisions of literary works; abbreviate and always underline titles of famous works.

"Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift/As mediation.../May sweep to my revenge" (Ham. 1.5. 35-37).

- If two separate sections of a poem are combined into one block quote, use single parenthetical notes

with line numbers separated by commas (Pfeiffer 1-2, 18-19).

- When including books of the Bible, they are abbreviated with chapter and verse numbers written as plays are:

"In one of the most vivid prophetic visions in the Bible, Ezekiel sees 'what seemed to be four living creatures,' with the faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (New Jerusalem Bible, Ezek. 1.5-10).

Works in Anthologies (non-electronic source)

- In an anthology or a collection of articles or stories by different authors all in one book, *cite author's name rather than the editor's name in parenthetical citation* (Twain 24).

Electronic Sources

- Sources only found on world wide web are cited by listing author's last name or web site's responsible party and paragraph number OR title of the article or paragraph numbers (Brown par. #).

OR

(United States Department of Education par. #).

- Sources found on web from print sources are *always* cited by paragraphs (Brown par. 10).

Indirect Citations or Quotes within Quotes (a person who is quoted within your article)

An indirect citation is when a person or organization is quoted within a source. Although it is recommended that when possible, information should be found in the primary or original source. When it is not possible, cite person quoted in secondary source.

Internet source (qtd. in Brown par.10)

Non-electronic source (qtd. in Buss 10).

Interview

(Mentor's last name date) (Jones 12 May 2006)

III. The Works Cited Page

Basic Information

- *Alphabetically* list every source cited in research paper in Works Cited.
- Works Cited page is a separate page immediately after the conclusion of paper. **Number it consecutively with paper and double-space it. No heading is necessary for the Works Cited page.**
- Begin page by centering Works Cited on top line.

- All entries should be in hanging indent format. To create a hanging indent:
 - Click on **F**ormat on toolbar at top of screen.
 - Next, click on **P**aragraph.
 - Click on **S**pecial
 - Click on down arrow to find **H**anging.
 - When finished, click **O**K.
- Alphabetize entries by author's last name or first main word in the article title.
- *Note: If source has no author, begin with first main word in title of article in magazine or newspaper; books are alphabetized by editor's name if no author is listed.*
- For book entries, list *city* of publishing, **not state or country**. If more than one is listed, pick first one in list. If city's name is difficult to locate, list state or if foreign country, list country.

*A period follows all entries on Works Cited page.
A space follows every period.*

The following pages have examples of the front page and Works Cited page for your paper. Before turning in your draft, verify that your paper's front page and works cited page look like these examples.

Student's Name [**First line of document**]

Teacher's Name

Class Name or Paper Topic

Date (Month Day, Year)

Title

(The title should not have any **bold letters** or underlining or larger font)

The thesis is a single sentence that answers the central question or problem that is supported by research. To write a thesis-driven paper, the writer must utilize credible sources, observe standard writing conventions, and follow the MLA rules for documenting sources, thus avoiding plagiarism. In addition, according to the MLA Handbook,

Students who wish to write successful research papers must know...the modern academic library— its central information system, reference works, online catalog of holdings, full-text databases, and other resources and services—and must be knowledgeable about finding useful Internet sources. (51) [**Period follows long quote, not parenthesis.**]

Research is not just choosing any articles found on the Internet or in books, magazines and newspapers. It is choosing articles written by reliable authors and published in unbiased sources.

Works Cited

- “1984.” *Newsweek* 2 Feb. 2004: 34-5. Print.
- Allende, Isabel. “Toad’s Mouth.” Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. *A Hammock beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America*. Ed. Thomas Colchie. New York: Plume, 1992. 83-88. Print.
- Berlage, Gail Ingham. Women in Baseball: The Forgotten History. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Co., 1994. Print.
- Brown, John. Personal Interview. 10 Oct. 2005.
- Durant, Will, and Ariel Durant. *The Age of Voltaire*. New York: Simon, 1965.
- . A Dual Autobiography. New York: Simon, 1995. Print.
- Hennenberger, Melinda. “The Leonardo Cover-Up.” New York Times 21 Apr. 2002, sec. 6: 42+. Print.
- Rice, Stephanie. “Suspect Is Tried for Murder.” The Columbian 25 Nov. 2006: A4. Print.
- Levy, Steven. “Great Minds, Great Ideas.” Newsweek 27 May 2002. Web. 20 Mar. 2003.
- United Nations. Consequences of Rapid Population Growth in Developing Countries. New York: Taylor, 1991. Print.