

Northgate High School

United States History

Junior Research Paper

ITEM	PAGE
WHY should you write a research paper?	2
Purpose and Topic selection	3
Narrowing a Broad Topic to Construct a Good Topic Question	4
Writing the Thesis	5
Possible Questions	6
Topic Question and Thesis Form	7
Reading Research - Note Taking Instruction	8
Sample Typed Notes	9
Outline Format	10
Style Requirements	12
Plagiarism	13
Sample Works Cited Page	14
In-Text Citations	16
Calendar	17

WHY should you write a research paper?

Purpose and Topic Selection:

The project affords you the opportunity to select a topic that interests you. Remember in choosing your topic that this paper should **PROVE** something. This is not a report, a review, a story or a biography. You must take a position on a topic and prove your position. Good thesis statements are not statements of fact or obvious information, as you know. They are a combination of topic and opinion. The thesis will be your platform – the foundation of your 3-5 page paper. You will use the paper to prove why this is a credible, valid thesis. A poor thesis statement is:

- **The Americans bombed Hiroshima on August 6, 1945.**

This statement is a fact. It has no opposition. No one could write a paper stating otherwise. If you are interested in Hiroshima, a better statement would be:

- **Bombing Hiroshima was the best way to bring about an end to WWII; Truman made the right decision.**

Now, this statement is arguable. It could be argued that dropping the atom bomb was unnecessary and a use of excessive force. A good thesis statement has an argument and opposition. It is not a statement of fact; it is an opinion which you will prove is "correct."

(STUDENT RESOURCES: Thesis statement building, Categorizing evidence process, Student guided activity)

Narrowing a Broad Topic to Construct a Good Topic Question

General Topic	The Great Depression
Narrowing Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Great Depression in the Bay Area • Effects of the Great Depression on minority groups • Women's role in economic recovery • FDR's critics
Potentially Good Topic Question	Did the Great Depression bring the country closer together or create further divisions between different groups?
Possible Thesis	Due to the economic hardships of the times, the Great Depression pulled the country apart as discrimination increased, families were separated or injured, and the division between social classes grew.

General Topic	The Civil Rights Movement
Narrowing Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early struggles • Leadership • Young people in the Movement • Importance of place/landmarks • Civil Disobedience and Non-Violence • Women in the Movement • The Legacy of music in the Freedom Struggle
Potentially Good Topic Question	What was the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement?
Possible Thesis	Women like Fannie Lou Hamer and Ella Baker provided vital leadership during the Civil Rights Movement, especially in the area of voting rights.

Writing the Thesis

Now that you have chosen a scintillating topic, the next step to writing a successful research paper is formulating a thesis. Your topic will take the form of a question, like next year's Senior Project questions. Students will meet with the Northgate librarian and become acquainted with available academic databases as well as review appropriate sources and research processes. Be sure there is enough information in your area of interest to answer your question. Since you have a question, your job is to answer it with an argument – this argument will be your thesis. In other words, once you have answered the question, you will have a thesis.

Here is an example of a question and research process that could lead to a solid working thesis. We will use a topic question, as mentioned before:

•Did the Great Depression bring the country closer together or create further divisions between different groups?

After the library presentation, find two or three sources relating to the Great Depression. As you examine the sources, take note of the economic collapse affected various groups of people. Put these discoveries into one statement. One possible thesis could be:

•Due to the economic hardships of the times, the Great Depression pulled the country apart as discrimination increased, families were separated or injured, and the division between social classes grew.

When you believe you have a thesis that is sufficiently narrow and focused, you will submit it for approval. Be prepared to revise your thesis if your teacher asks you to do so or if you discover that you need to revise because it is incomplete or inaccurate. Revising one's thesis is what research is all about.

Possible Questions

- How did women gaining the right to vote in 1920 change American politics?
- How was the situation facing Barack Obama when he was first elected similar to that confronting FDR in 1933?
- Was the Cold War largely a hoax intended to scare Americans into huge military expenditures?
- Is the United States truly an imperialist power?
- Should churches that encourage members to donate to political campaigns lose their tax-exempt status?
- Was the candidacy of Barack Obama in 2008 similar to that of Robert Kennedy in 1968?
- Who should be given more credit for ending the Cold War, Ronald Reagan or Mikhail Gorbachev?
- How much involvement should the U.S. government have in ending international genocide?
- Which country was more imperialistic, the Soviet Union or the United States?
- Was the Vietnam War a war that should have been fought?
- Should the U.S. adopt universal health care?
- Is the current war in Afghanistan similar to the Vietnam War?
- Does America promote democracy overseas?
- Is America hypocritical in its dealings with other countries?
- Have women achieved equality with men in the United States?
- Was Franklin Roosevelt a socialist?
- Is America a plutocracy (a country run by a small group of wealthy people)?
- Are radio commentators such as Rush Limbaugh good for American politics?

Topic Question and Thesis Form

YOUR NAME	
TEACHER NAME	
US HISTORY PERIOD	

TOPIC	
TOPIC QUESTION	
TEACHER COMMENTS	<input type="checkbox"/> Required research may be difficult to find on this topic <input type="checkbox"/> Question too broad <input type="checkbox"/> Question too narrow <input type="checkbox"/> See me for help refining this idea <input type="checkbox"/> Question may not lead to an arguable thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
APPROVAL	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Approved + TEACHER SIGNATURE:

QUESTION PHRASED AS THESIS STATEMENT	
TEACHER COMMENTS	<input type="checkbox"/> Required research may be difficult to find on this topic <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis not arguable/too Factual <input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate Abstract Terms <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis too broad <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis too narrow <input type="checkbox"/> See me for help refining this idea <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
APPROVAL	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Approved + TEACHER SIGNATURE:

Reading Research - Note Taking Instruction

Format your research as outlined below. Write your question at the top of each page. Number all pages using a footer.

Your notes for the paper must be typed. Remember to use a balance of direct quotations (using " ") and indirect (paraphrased) quotes.

1. SOURCES:

Page one of your notes will essentially be your bibliography. List all sources alphabetically by author's last name within categories. Then alphabetize the categories. You may use online resources like *easybib.com* for help getting your sources in proper MLA format. See the appendix pages of this guidebook for guidelines and a sample. Interviews, should you have them, are listed as "Primary Sources."

2. CATEGORIES:

Organize page two and all other pages of notes by category. That is, break your question into sections making each page its own section. Write the category to the left of each note/quotation and the citation at the end (example follows). Use a new page for each category.

3. IN-TEXT CITATION

After each note, write the author's name and page number(s) used. Put this in parenthesis, with a period after the closing parentheses.

NOTE: If you use more than one book by the same author, put the full title of the book in parenthesis followed by page number.

Sample Typed Notes

Be sure ANY information not quoted directly is in your own words!!!

Q: What are the major trends in quilt making and how did each evolve?

Amish Quilts"Important quotes from reading research. "Important quotes from reading research. "Important quotes from reading research. Research Research Important quotes from reading research (Taylor 47-48)

Notes paraphrased in my own words. This is an indirect form of quoting information. But of course I must credit my source (Martin 81).

"More important information directly quoted. More important information. Really important information" (Kiracofe 253).

PAGE 1

Q: What are the major trends in quilt making and how did each evolve?

Story/Friendship

Quilts:"More important information directly quoted. Really important information. Really really important information: (Kiracofe 317-319).

NOTE: NOTICE THAT THE PAGE CHANGES WHEN THE CATEGORIES CHANGE. PLEASE PUT SEPARATE CATEGORIES ON EACH PAGE.

Outline Format

An outline is crucial for making your research paper a success. The rest of this page demonstrates the outline format to use in organizing your paper. You will find a form on which to write your outline in this packet; then, we will explain further the three main parts of both the outline and the paper.

ENGAGING TITLE (You know how important this is)

I. Introduction

1. You may start your paper with historical background about the topic. Be careful not to expose too much.
2. The Introduction should contain at least five sentences plus the thesis.
3. The Introduction should conclude with the thesis statement.

II. The Body Paragraphs

1. Use at least seven Body Paragraphs (BPs). The beginning of each paragraph should have the topic sentence. Your topic sentence expresses the main idea of the paragraph. These can correspond with the topics of your note pages.
2. Each BP must focus on at least one **FACT** and contain a **CITATION** to the **SOURCE** of the **FACT**.
3. Each BP should contain at least seven sentences - enough to introduce and cite a fact and explain how this fact supports the thesis.
4. After the first BP, you need a transition sentence at the start of the next BP.

III. The Conclusion

1. The conclusion goes beyond restatement of the thesis by tying all of the paper's points together.
2. Indicates the historical significance of the thesis.
3. OR relates the thesis to a broader issue (NEW IDEA)

Outline Format (continued)

I. Intro

- A. Hook:
- B. Approved Thesis:

II. Body Paragraph #1

- A. Topic Sentence:
- B. Lead-In:
- C. Evidence – events, quotes, statistics (one to three sentences):
- D. Analysis & connection to argument (one to three sentences):
- E. Transition Sentence:

III. Body Paragraph #2

- A. Topic Sentence:
- B. Lead-In:
- C. Evidence – events, quotes, statistics (one to three sentences):
- D. Analysis & connection to argument (one to three sentences):
- E. Transition Sentence:

IV. Body Paragraph #3

- A. Topic Sentence:
- B. Lead-In:
- C. Evidence – events, quotes, statistics (one to three sentences):
- D. Analysis & connection to argument (one to three sentences):
- E. Transition Sentence:

V. Body Paragraph #4 – Repeat as above

VI. Body Paragraph #5 – Repeat as above

VII. Body Paragraph #6-?– Repeat as above

VIII. Conclusion

- A. Restate Thesis:
- B. Restate Main Arguments:
- C. New Idea (It's good to tie in your significant/metaphorical title here)

Style Requirements

1. Include a title page, but do not include a cover or folder.
2. Prove your thesis with words. Do not include pictures, drawings, graphs, charts, etc.
3. Write a three-to-five page paper in MLA format. Shorter or longer papers will lose points (This does not include the title page or bibliography).
4. Include at least ten citations (author and page number) referring to the source of the fact, idea or opinion you are stating, paraphrasing or quoting.
5. Use at least five different sources including two books (published in 2008 or later). You must use reputable, academic internet sources – avoid Wikipedia and its ilk! – and they must be approved by your teacher when you submit your bibliography.
6. Type the paper in black ink. Use one-inch margins on all four sides of each page and a standard, reasonable, 10-12 point font. Double-space your paper, indenting five spaces (one tab) at the beginning of each paragraph. Use only one side of the paper.
7. Conclude your paper with a Works Cited (bibliography), correctly listing your five (or more) sources in MLA format. Sources must include at least two books or articles (published in 2008 or later) and credible internet sites. Check the Citations/Bibliography section of this packet for sample bibliography format and entries.

Citations: Whether you paraphrase someone's words or quote directly, give credit through the use of citation. You must give a citation for any material you utilize.

- **If you are unsure if you need a citation, play it safe and USE ONE!**
- Use citations, not footnotes.
- The citation format is simple: (Smith 50). - Smith is the author's name and 50 is the page number of the fact. The period goes on the OUTSIDE of the parenthesis. Check the *In-Text Citations* page for possible variations.

Quotes: Punctuate quoted material with care:

- ❖ Quotations of three typed lines or less deserve "... " and a citation directly afterwards, outside the final quotation marks.
- ❖ Quotations of four typed lines or more deserve their own new line. Indent five spaces on both left and right, single space, and use a citation after the final punctuation mark of the quotation. Do not use "... " around quotations of four lines or more.

Plagiarism

Do your own work and give others credit for theirs. Plagiarism, the use of another's words or ideas without giving proper credit, is dishonest, unfair, and despicable. People fail in college and lose jobs for cheating. You will fail too, if you plagiarize, so DON'T.

Please cite everything. All papers will be checked via www.turnitin.com. Papers not submitted via Turnitin will not be graded, and students failing to comply with this policy will receive a zero for this assignment.

Sample Works Cited Page

Include a works cited page at the end of your paper that includes all the sources you reference. The format and punctuation for various types of sources should follow MLA format precisely. Please refer to this page for reference.

NOTE: Entries are always listed alphabetically by last name of author first.

Cite every book in your bibliography in EXACTLY THIS FORMAT:

Last name, first name, middle initial (if present).
Book Title. Publishing place: Publishing House, year.

Works Cited Format Examples

Books:

Riccio, Ottone M. *The Intimate Art of Writing Poetry*. New York: Prentice Hall Publishers, 2011.

Electronic Sources:

Smithfield, Raymond. "Baseball's Greatest Day". Major League Baseball Website. November 23, 2001. 30 April 2009. www.mlb.com.

Periodicals: (Newspapers and magazines)

Duckro, Becky and Joan McKee. "English, Art and Haiku," *The English Journal*, November, 2008. p. 91.

Primary Sources: (Interviews)

Moore, Natalie, Writing Instructor, Northgate High School, Walnut Creek, CA. Personal Interview. April 12 and 13, 2005.

In-text Citations

General Guidelines

The source information required in a parenthetical citation depends upon:

- (1.) the source medium (e.g. Print, Web, DVD) and
- (2.) the source's entry on the Works Cited (bibliography) page.

Any source information that you provide in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. More specifically, **whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited List.** The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence.

Example 1

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Example 2

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

Example 3

Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

In the works cited page:

Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads*. London: Oxford U.P., 1967. Print.

Example 4

Human beings have been described by Kenneth Burke as "symbol-using animals" (3). Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).

In the works cited page:

Burke, Kenneth. *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2012. Print.

Example 5 (no known author)

We see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has "more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change . . ." ("Impact of Global Warming" 6).

In the works cited page:

"The Impact of Global Warming in North America." *GLOBAL WARMING: Early Signs*. 1999. Web. 23 Mar. 2009.
<<http://www.fignewton.com/freesamples>>

Calendar

DUE DATE	ITEM
	Topic Question
	Thesis Statement
	Reading Research (Typed notes and Bibliography)
	Outline
	Draft #1
	Draft #2
	Complete Paper & Bibliography

Calendar Notes

- Late passes: The following assignments may not be turned in with a late pass:
 - Topic Question
 - Thesis Statement
 - Draft 1
- Final Papers submitted one day late will start with a grade of "C".
- Students without a first draft will start with a grade of "C."
- Students submitting final papers more than one day late will receive an "F" for the final research paper.
- You must attend every class period on the day the final complete paper is due.