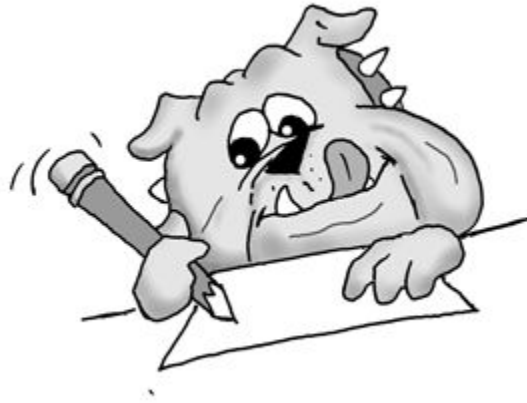


Ann Sobrato High School



Research Handbook

STEP 1: CHOOSING A TOPIC:



Read over the instructions for the assignment to make sure you fully understand what the instructor has in mind and on what basis you will be graded. If your teacher provides a list of topics, be sure to select one that is of interest to you. If not, brainstorm a list of possible topics and subtopics and finalize one with your teacher.

You want to be sure there will be enough information available on your topic for your research (books, articles, authoritative websites, others sources of information), so be sure to search the library catalog and online resources before you decide.

If you find too much information, you should check with your teacher and review options for narrowing your topic.

Help finding a topic:

[Internet Public Library](#)

[Owl at Purdue](#)

Don't Procrastinate! Plan time for your project:

[Internet Public Library](#)



STEP 2: IDENTIFYING RESOURCES

HOW TO FIND BOOKS, ARTICLES IN JOURNALS, MAGAZINES & ONLINE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Review your assignment to determine if your teacher has requirements, such as two books, two periodicals (magazine or news articles) and two websites. If not, you will need to decide based on your topic where the best sources of information can be found. Always try to use a variety of sources.

Search your school library catalog for books:

[Ann Sobrato HS Library Catalog](#)

Currently available only on school computers:

Select Ann Sobrato HS

Search your public library catalog for books and articles in databases:

[Morgan Hill Public Library](#)

Search catalog for books, Select Research to access databases of magazine and newspaper articles. You may need your library card and pin number to access.

[San Jose Public Library](#)

Search catalog (top right) for books, Select Learn, eLearning & Articles and then category of newspapers and magazines to obtain research articles. You will need your name, library card and pin number to access.

There are more search engines than Google and Yahoo.

[Choose the Best Search Engine](#)

Books and periodicals (magazines and newspaper articles) have been reviewed and checked for accuracy. Websites on the Internet may not be accurate. You will need to decide if a website is credible by reviewing:

- Who created the site and are they an expert or an official organization?
- What is the purpose of the site? Is the information accurate and consistent with other information you find?
- When was this site created? Is the information current and updated?
- Where does the information come from? Are the sources listed at the bottom?
- Why was this page created? What is the purpose? Be sure it is not to sell or persuade or contain bias.

Watch this Video to help you evaluate websites:



[Credible Websites?](#)

Types of Resources

Review instructions to determine if your assignment will need to include any of the following resources. Check with your teacher or librarian if you are unable to locate the sources you need.

Primary sources contain a first-hand account of the information presented. Examples are

- · statistics
- · standards
- · government information
- · lab reports
- · diaries
- · letters
- · log books
- · books & journal articles that present original, uninterpreted material
- · research results

Secondary source material

Secondary sources are writings that build on primary sources. Examples are

- · books that interpret or analyze the primary sources
- · conference publications
- · theses and dissertations
- · encyclopedias and handbooks that discuss the primary sources
- · periodical articles

Tertiary source material

Tertiary sources are usually indexes or encyclopedias that refer to primary and secondary sources. Examples are:

- encyclopedias and handbooks that discuss the secondary sources
- bibliographies
- abstract publications
- periodical indexes

Scholarly, peer-reviewed articles

What is a scholarly journal?

- A scholarly journal is a periodical that contains peer reviewed articles. They are written for an audience of scholars and researchers in a particular field. Other terms commonly used to describe this type of journal are peer reviewed, academic, or refereed.

What is peer review?

- Peer review is a process used to ensure the quality of articles. When an article is submitted to a peer reviewed journal, the editor(s) send it out to experts/scholars in the field (i.e. the author's peers) to review and critically evaluate the article on quality, importance, and appropriateness to the journal.

What is the difference between peer review and the publication process for popular magazines?

- Magazine articles are only judged/reviewed by the editor of the magazine, who may not have any knowledge of the article's subject matter. Writers for popular publications are usually paid for their articles. The articles are also usually geared to a more general audience.

Sources for scholarly articles:

- [Google Scholar](#)
- [JSTOR Journals](#)
- Public library databases: select academic and peer reviewed articles

STEP 3: PLANNING YOUR SEARCH

After you have identified your topic, begin to read background information. You can use the school library catalog to find reference books and encyclopedias and then read short summaries on your topic. You can also read online sources like Wikipedia to get an overview of your topic.

Start thinking about your topic, brainstorm questions you have, and begin thinking about what angle or approach you might use (analyze how to solve a problem, compare and contrast, or pro and con for an issue). Start to think about options for your thesis (main idea or approach). If you are bored with your topic or cannot find enough sources of information, consider another topic to research. If it is an interesting topic, start identifying search terms (key words and subtopics) to use.

For help in narrowing your topic:

[Brigham Young University Step by Step Guide & Research Rescue](#)

STEP 4: GATHERING INFORMATION & PIAGIARISM

As you read and take notes, it is best to read a paragraph of information, put it aside and write down the information in your own words. You still need to cite the book, website or article, so write down this information as you go. If end up writing down information word-for-word from the source, you will need to put quotations around the text and state the source of information.

If you use information and/or text from a source and you do not cite it correctly, this is called plagiarism. Students can receive a failing grade for their work if they are caught plagiarizing.



[Video: Plagiarism: How to avoid it](#)

Plagiarism

10 most common types of plagiarism are described below and described in detail on youTube video.

The types are ranked in order of severity of intent.

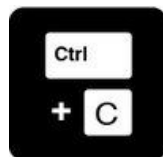


[10 Types of Plagiarism](#)



#1. CLONE

Submitting another's work, word-for-word, as one's own



#2. CTRL-C

Contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations



#3. FIND - REPLACE

Changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source



#4. REMIX

Paraphrases from multiple sources, made to fit together



#5. RECYCLE

Borrows generously from the writer's previous work without citation



#6. HYBRID

Combines perfectly cited sources with copied passages without citation



#7. MASHUP

Mixes copied material from multiple sources



#8. 404 ERROR

Includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources



#9. AGGREGATOR

Includes proper citation to sources but the paper contains almost no original work



#10. RE-TWEET

Includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text's original wording and/or structure

(Types of Plagiarism)

STEP 5: ORGANIZING YOUR INFORMATION & WRITING:

- Develop your thesis
- Organize your notes
- Outline your paper
- Write your first draft
- List your sources on a works cited page
- Revise your draft

Develop and state your thesis. Do not hesitate to discuss with your teacher. Your original thesis may change as you continue your research and find additional information.

What is a thesis statement?

A thesis statement . . .

- Makes an **argumentative assertion** about a topic; it states the **conclusions that you have reached** about your topic.
- Makes a promise to the reader about the **scope, purpose, and direction** of your paper.
- Is **focused** and **specific** enough to be "proven" within the boundaries of your paper.
- Is generally located **near the end of the introduction**; sometimes, in a long paper, the thesis will be expressed in several sentences or in an entire paragraph.
- Identifies the **relationships between the pieces of evidence** that you are using to support your argument.

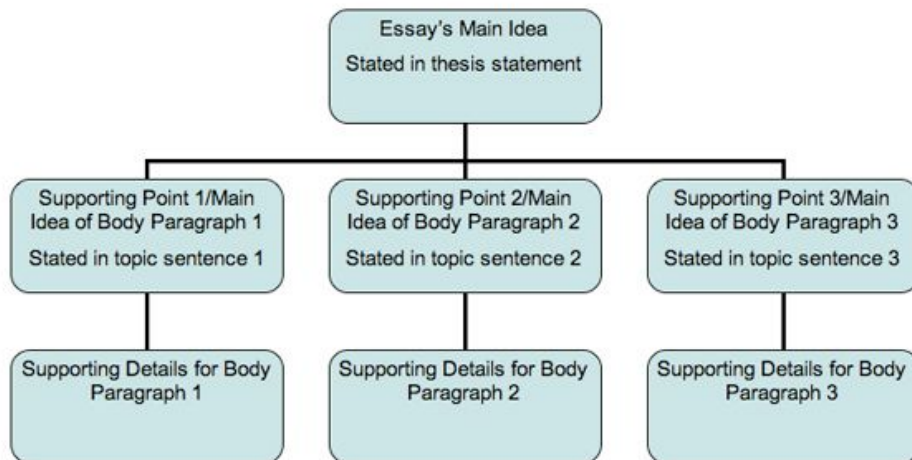
Not all papers require thesis statements! Ask your instructor if you're in doubt whether you need one. (What is a Thesis)

Note-taking

It is important to take good notes. As soon as you skim and read through books and articles on your topic and find good information that you want to include, write down the source (for a book, title, author, publication information, for a website, the title, author, url). On the same page or notecard, you can list the basic facts or information that you need. Restate in your own words or put quotations around the information to properly cite later.

[Guide for notetaking](#)

Sample Outline



Organize your notes into groups that make sense to you and then outline your paper. (introduction, body, and conclusion).

Sample outline:

I. Introduction: Hollywood has a long history of producing adventure films.
Avatar has some obvious merits, but there are also some significant flaws.

II. Body paragraph 1: Cinematography in *Avatar* (merits)
A. Feelings of flight
B. Skillful blend of animation with live action

III. Body paragraph 2: Special effects in *Avatar* (merits)
A. Amazing landscapes
B. Spectacular explosions

IV. Body paragraph 3: Faults in *Avatar* (flaws)
A. Predictable plot
B. Atrocious acting

V. Conclusion (a paragraph that restates the thesis and sums up the argument)
(Developing An Outline)



STEP 6: MAKING IT YOUR OWN & CORRECT CITATIONS:

You want to take credit for all the research you do, and also give credit to the authors of sources you used for your writing. You should be able to identify original text and ideas within your paper and also list the details on a more complete Works Cited List at the end of your paper.

Be aware that there are several methods for writing research papers and documenting your sources, so be sure to check with your teacher:

- **APA:** psychology, education, and other social sciences.
- **MLA:** literature, arts, and humanities.
- **AMA:** medicine, health, and biological sciences.
- **Turabian:** designed for college students to use with all subjects.
- **Chicago:** used with all subjects in the "real world" by books, magazines, newspapers, and other non-scholarly publications.

At Sobrato HS, we mainly use the MLA format.

"Using MLA Style properly makes it easier for readers to navigate and comprehend a text by providing familiar cues when referring to sources and borrowed information. Editors and instructors also encourage everyone to use the same format so there is consistency of style within a given field. Abiding by MLA's standards as a writer will allow you to:

- Provide your readers with cues they can use to follow your ideas more efficiently and to locate information of interest to them
- Allow readers to focus more on your ideas by not distracting them with unfamiliar or complicated formatting
- Establish your credibility or ethos in the field by demonstrating an awareness of your audience and their needs as fellow researchers (particularly concerning the citing of references)" (Welcome to the Purdue)

MLA details how to cross-reference your information. This identifies the quote properly to the reader and refers them to the work cited at the end of your paper. Review this powerpoint adapted from Purdue University for details:

[Cross-Referencing using MLA Format](#)

Here are some useful websites to guide you:

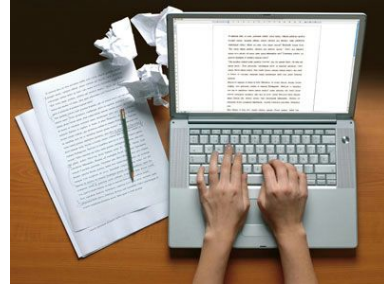
[The Owl Online Writing Lab from Purdue University](#)

Free online websites to create your citation page:

[Easy Bib](#)

[Bibme](#)

[Citation Machine](#)



STEP 7: COMMUNICATING YOUR FINDINGS

If you have done all of steps 1-6, the writing of your research paper will be much easier! Your research paper should consist of an introductory paragraph, several body paragraphs and then a conclusion.

The introduction should include some background information on your topic, some main discussion points and your thesis. All body paragraphs must relate to the thesis and each paragraph should have a specific focus. The conclusion should summarize all main discussion points. Try not to repeat the same phrases and sentences used in your paper, but be original. Leave the reader with a clear understanding of the topic and your position.

Complete your paper before it is due, set it aside and review carefully before submitting. Read aloud to make any adjustments to punctuation and find any repetitive wording. Save your work in several places (google docs, computer at home, memory stick).

STEP 8: REVIEWING AND EVALUATING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED:



Give yourself time to review the initial assignment and your research paper.

Things to think about:

- Did you include everything requested?
- Did you cite your sources properly?
- Did you review any rubrics provided by your teacher and grade the assignment yourself?
- How do you think you did?
- Did you spend enough time revising and editing to improve your research paper?
- How happy are you with the final product?
- What would you do different next time?

COMMON WRITING RUBRIC:

“A rubric is simply a scoring tool that identifies the various criteria relevant to an assignment or learning outcome, and then explicitly states the possible levels of achievement along a continuum (poor to excellent or novice to expert). Rubrics can be used to assess almost any type of student work, be it essays, final projects, oral presentations, or theatrical performances. They can be used at the time an assignment is given to communicate expectations to students, when student work is evaluated for fair and efficient grading, and to even assess a program by determining the extent to which students are achieving departmental learning outcomes.” (What are Rubrics?)

[Common Core Writing Rubrics for grades 9-10](#)

[Common Core Writing Rubrics for grades 11-12](#)

[Evidence Based Writing Rubric](#)

Works Cited

(In addition to websites and videos with direct links)

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