

## Research Papers: An Introduction

**“All literary students are dedicated to the same task, the discovery of truth.”**

Richard D. Altick, *The Art of Literary Research*

### What is a Research Paper?

A research paper is written by a student who has searched with intelligence through varied sources for facts that he or she recognizes as essential to his or her subject. The student may take an idea from one author, a quotation from another, and, having gathered a body of information, he or she uses imagination and knowledge to create something new, expressing our knowledge regarding a subject.

### Why Research Papers?

Writing skills are used in every facet of life. From office memos to patent applications to salary requests, writing skills prove their importance every day in the work place. To be a clear, concise communicator is invaluable.

Research is also an important tool in the workplace. Whether in literature or in the scientific world, being able to create a thesis and prove it is the basis of all advancement in thought and learning. Of utmost importance is the ability to document one's research correctly. There are several styles of documentation that are recognized as valid. The format used by the Modern Language Association is the style required by the English Department at GACS.

This Documentation Guideline booklet is designed to help guide the student in usage of the MLA format of research documentation. For further assistance, please refer to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

### What is the MLA?

Founded in 1883, the Modern Language Association of America, with over 30,000 members in 100 countries, provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. MLA members host an annual convention and other meetings, work with related organizations, and sustain one of the finest publishing programs in the humanities. For over a hundred years, members have worked to strengthen the study and teaching of language and literature.

To write a research paper requires discipline, creativity and determination. It is the hope of the English Department at GACS that our students develop these attributes as they improve their writing skills. Happy writing!

## THE FORMAT OF THE MLA PAPER

### MARGINS

The MLA requires all margins to be 1 inch, with the header set ½ inch from the top of the page.

### INDENTATIONS

Indent new paragraphs ½ inch from the left margin. (See instructions for setting tabs.)

### LONG QUOTATIONS

Quotes longer than three lines should be indented 1 inch from the left margin with no extra indentation on the first line. End punctuation is also placed BEFORE the parenthetical documentation, which is different from the normal format of placing punctuation after the parentheses. These quotes ARE double-spaced and do NOT use quotation marks.

### TYPEFACE

The GACS English Department uses 12 point, Times New Roman, as the standard font for all typed papers. Verify your teacher's requirements regarding this.

### TITLES

The title of your paper is never underlined or bolded or set off in any special way—unless it contains the title of a book or play, etc. In that case, only the part of your title that is the title of a book, play, etc., would be set off in the appropriate way.

### SPACING

A research paper must be double-spaced throughout, including quotations, notes and Works Cited page.

### PAPER

You should use standard white 8 ½ X 11" paper.

### HELPFUL RULES ABOUT QUOTATIONS

- Don't over-use quotations. Only quote when something is especially well-worded.
- To make your paper flow more smoothly, introduce your quotes in a variety of ways.
- Normally, quotation marks are needed if you use more than three consecutive words from a source. However, if you use a special, unusual phrase or word from a source, put it in quotation marks, no matter how short.
- Every quotation should have parenthetical documentation at the end of the sentence.
- In traditional grammar, periods and commas ALWAYS go inside quotation marks, UNLESS there is parenthetical documentation immediately following. Then, punctuation comes after the parentheses, no matter what type of punctuation it is.
- If you choose to leave out some words in the middle of your quotation, use ellipsis points.
- For words you add to make a meaning clear, use brackets.

“*The Scarlet Letter* is a condemnation of hypocrisy, ... [and] a call to action” (Harris 230).

Words omitted

your addition

### **Formatting Assistance**

The following are basic instructions for settings using Word 2003, Office XP. If you have a different program, steps will differ.

### **FOLLOW THESE STEPS BEFORE BEGINNING YOUR ROUGH DRAFT.**

#### **To Set Margins, Font, and Header**

1. Go to File, Page Setup  
     Set **all margins** at **1”**  
     Set **header** at **0.5”**  
     Click OK
  
2. Go to Format, Font  
     Choose the Font to be **Times New Roman, 12 point**  
     Click the **DEFAULT** button at the bottom left (this is VERY important)  
     Click OK
  
3. Go to View—Header and Footer  
     Once in Header, right align (in tool bar at top), **type your last name and hit space bar one time.**  
     Click on icon for Insert Page Number (looks like a white piece of paper with a #).  
     Return to the body of the paper by double-clicking in the body.

#### **To Set Tabs**

1. To to **Format**, then **Reveal Formatting**
2. Click **+Paragraph** to **–Paragraph**
3. Click on **Tabs**
4. Set **Tab Stop Positions AND Default Tab Stops** at **0.5”**
5. Click OK

#### **To Set Line Spacing**

1. Go to Format, then Reveal Formatting
2. Click **+Paragraph** to **–Paragraph**
3. Click on **Indentation**
2. Be sure all “Indentation” and “Spacing Before and After” boxes are set at **0**.
3. Alignment should be **LEFT**.
4. Change Line Spacing to **Double**.

#### **To Deactivate Hyperlink (web address changing to blue, underlining, etc.)**

1. Go to **Tools**; put cursor over **down arrows** to expand list of options
2. Click on **Autocorrect Options**
3. Click on **Autoformat as You Type** tab
4. Make sure the check is taken OFF “Internet and Network Paths with Hyperlinks”
5. Click **OK**

## PARENTHETICAL DOCUMENTATION

The purpose of parenthetical documentation is to show easily and concisely the source for a certain idea or quotation. It is considered plagiarism not to give credit to a source. Plagiarism usually occurs in two ways:

1) **A person gives a source, but does not use quotation marks correctly:**

a person's wording is too close to the original to be called his own—even if you give a source, but you don't word a passage differently enough, it is plagiarism. The usual rule of thumb is if you use more than three words consecutively from a source, you should put those words in quotation marks. Your sentence structure should also be different from your source's. You can't simply put in a few different words into a sentence and call that sentence your own.

2) **A person does not give a source to support the idea or fact presented.**

Plagiarism is a serious offense that will result in dismissal from most colleges. It is important that you make every effort to avoid plagiarism in your paper. Please read the **English Department Statement on Plagiarism:**

**Using someone else's ideas or phrasing and representing those ideas or phrasing as our own, either on purpose or through carelessness, is a serious offense known as plagiarism.** "Ideas or phrasing" includes written or spoken material, of course — from whole papers and paragraphs to sentences, and, indeed, phrases — but it also includes statistics, lab results, art work, etc. "Someone else" can mean a professional source, such as a published writer or critic in a book, magazine, encyclopedia, or journal; an electronic resource such as material we discover on the World Wide Web; another student at our school or anywhere else; a paper-writing "service" (online or otherwise) that offers to sell written papers for a fee.

Plagiarism is considered an HONOR CODE VIOLATION at GACS. It will be treated accordingly.

Except for possibly your introductory and concluding paragraphs, you will have parenthetical documentation at the end of most paragraphs. You may use more than one source in a paragraph, and if so, you should include your parentheses at the end of that information from that source.

- The parentheses should include the first word of the source entry AS IT APPEARS on your Works Cited page, whether that word is the author's last name or the first word of the title.
- If the first word is a title, and the title begins with an article (A, An, The), you should include the article and the next word. (See Sample Term Paper in booklet.)
- The page number should also be included (after a space). (Page numbers are NOT used in computer sources according to MLA. See your teacher for his or her specific requirements.)

When two sources begin with the same word (either an author or a title) include the first word of the entry (possibly first two words if the entry begins with A, An, or The) then the first distinguishing word after a comma. Example: ("*Pride*", Novels 123) in this example *Pride* is the first word in the works cited entry and *Novels* is the first word that is different from other entries that begin with "*Pride and Prejudice*." 123 is the page number of the

➤ source.

The following citation examples were chosen because they seem to be the most used types of sources by our students. This list is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all types of possible sources you may find. For information on types of sources not listed here, please refer to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

## CITING BOOKS

### A Book by a Single Author

Smith, John. *Symbolism at Its Best*. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing, 1989.

### A Book by Two or More Authors

Smith, John, and Annie Caldwell. *The Terror of Poe*. London: Cassell, 1997.

### A Book by a Corporate Author

American Language Association. *Short Story Writers*. Chicago: Random, 1982.

### Two or more Books by the Same Author

Bailey, Geoff. *Language and Wealth in Fitzgerald's Works*. New York: Oxford, 1999.

---. *Cather's Kitchens: Foodways in Literature and Life*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press, 1987.

### A Work in an Anthology (an essay, short story, poem or other work that appears in an anthology or other book collection)

Sayers, Martha. "Huck and Tom: Friends in Transition." *Twentieth-Century Criticism*.

Ed. Mark Stewart. New York: Plume Publications, 1994. 85-88.

### An Introduction, a Preface, a Foreword or an Afterword

Bordon, Grace. Foreword. *Selected Poems, 1923-1967*. By Bordon. Ed. Norman

Rising. Abilene, TX: University of Abilene Press, 1999. xv-xx.

An Article in a Common Encyclopedia (Britannica, New World, Oxford, etc.) or Dictionary (Webster's, New Collegiate, etc.)

Rogers, Timothy. "Victorian Poetry." *The Encyclopedia Americana*. 1998 ed.

### An Article in an Unfamiliar or Infrequently Published Encyclopedia or Dictionary

Allenhurst, Bruce. "Tales of the Dark Side." *Encyclopedia of American Gothic*.

Ed. Walter H. Bailey. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Vol. 10. New York: Macmillan-Simon, 2001.

"A Lesson Before Dying." *Novels for Students*. Ed. Deborah Stanley. Vol. 7.

Detroit: Gale Group, 1999.

### A Pamphlet: Treat a pamphlet as you would a book.

Hughes, Clarence. *Southern Raisins*. Oxford, MS: Ole Miss Press, 1987.

### The Bible: Name of version is NOT italicized; name of a titled edition is italicized.

The New American Standard Version. Kenneth Barker, gen. ed. Detroit, Michigan:

Zondervan, 1985.

*The NIV Study Bible*. Sam Smith, gen. ed. Detroit, Michigan: Zondervan, 1989.

## CITING PERIODICALS (magazines and journals)

### Scholarly Journal with Continuous Pagination

volume number



Craner, Paul M. "New Thinking for a New Society." *English Journal* 25 (1898): 5-24.

### Scholarly Journal That Pages Each Issue Separately

Hallery, Thomas. "Hope and Despair in Poe's *The Raven*." *Poe Quarterly* 12.5 (1997) : 5-18.

vol. number      issue number



### Newspaper Article

Hale, William. "Welty's World." *New York Times* 24 Feb. 2003: D5.

section      page number



### Magazine Article

Murphy, Rachel. "Exploding Puritan Myths." *Atlantic Monthly* Aug. 1999: 29-34.

### A Sound Recording

Gabrielson, Peter. *The Essence of Innocence in Emily Dickinson*. Columbia, 1991.

### A Television or Radio Program

"Frankenstein: The Making of the Monster." *Great Books*. Narr. Donald Sutherland. Writ.

name of episode (if one)

name of program



Eugene Vick. Dir. Jonathan Ward. Learning Channel. 9 Nov. 2002.

### A Film or Video Recording

*The Bronte Sisters Revealed*. Dir. Alan Stewart. Perf. James Callahan, Laura Riley, Maggie

Frazier, and Thomas Mitford. Miramax, 1998.

### An Interview

Blackmun, Harry. Interview with Ted Koppel and Nina Totenberg. *Nightline*. ABC.

WABC, New York. 6 April 2004.

### A Personal Interview

Bush, George W. Personal interview. 17 April 2004.

Letterman, David. Telephone interview. 20 February 2004.

### COMPUTER SOURCES (p. 207-235 in *MLA Handbook*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition)

#### A Document within a Database (A Work from a Library Subscription Service)

Janssen, James G. "Impaled Butterflies and the Misleading Moral in Hawthorne's Short Works." *Reference Guide to American Literature*, St. James Press, 1994. *Literature Resource Center*. GACS Private Library. 2 Oct. 2004 <<http://galenet.galegroup.com>>.

*Annotations:*

- title of article → "Impaled Butterflies and the Misleading Moral in Hawthorne's Short Works."
- where article originally appeared and other pub. info → *Reference Guide to American Literature*, St. James Press, 1994.
- database → *Literature Resource Center*.
- library source → GACS Private Library.
- date you retrieved info → 2 Oct. 2004
- url of site's main page if specific url is impractically long → <http://galenet.galegroup.com>
- This is a KnowledgeNotes page.

"Animal Farm." *ProQuest Learning: Literature*. GACS Private Library. 24 May 2004  
<<http://lion-schools.com>>.

#### An Entire Internet Site (professional or personal sites)

*Bartleby.com: Great Books Online*. Ed. Steven Lewis. 15 Sept. 1998. 7 Oct. 2004  
<<http://www.bartleby.com>>.

*Annotations:*

- date last updated → 15 Sept. 1998
- date you retrieved info → 7 Oct. 2004

*The Quotations Page*. 2006. 5 January 2007 <<http://www.quotationspage.com>>.

#### An Online Encyclopedia or Dictionary

*Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. 1999. Encyclopaedia Britannica. 11 Nov. 2004  
<<http://www.eb.com>: 180>.

*Annotations:*

- date copyrighted → 1999
- date you retrieved info → 11 Nov. 2004

### An Online Book

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *Twice-Told Tales*. Ed. George Lathrop. 1996. Boston: Houghton, 1883. *Nathaniel Hawthorne National Society*. 11 Nov. 2004 <<http://eldred.net.mediaone.net/nh/ttt.html>>. date site last updated  
title of website or name of sponsoring organization date you retrieved info

### A Part of an Online Book

Keats, John. "Ode on a Grecian Urn." *Poetical Works*. 1884. *Bartleby.com: Great Books Online*. Ed. Steven Green. 2002. 12 Oct. 2003 <<http://www.bartleby.com/126/41.htm>>. date orig. published  
date site updated date you retrieved info

### An Article in an Online Scholarly Journal

Sohmer, Steven. "Opening Day at Shakespeare's Globe." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 3:1 (1997) : 22-28. 9 Sept. 2002 <<http://www.humanities.ualberta.edu>>. vol. number (if one) issue number (if one) page numbers in orig. pub. if given

### An Article in an Online Magazine

Kinsley, Michael. "Now Is the Summer of Too Much Content." *The New Yorker* 25 June 1990. 5 Oct. 2002 <[www.newyorker.com/900625/articles.htm](http://www.newyorker.com/900625/articles.htm)>.

### An Article in an Online Newspaper

Dillingham, Ray. "O'Connor's View of Reality." *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Online* 21 June 2001. 9 Oct. 2002 <<http://www.accessatlanta.com/ajc/>>.

### A Part of a Publication on a CD-ROM

put version or edition if there is one

Edwards, Rachel. "John Keats." *The New Grolier Electronic Encyclopedia*. CD-ROM. Vers.  
5.8.2. Danbury, CT: Grolier Electronic Publishing, Inc., 1999.

[A sample first page](#)

[edge of page](#)

↑  
1 in.  
↓  
Sue Rogers

↓ 1/2 inch  
Rogers 1 ← 1 in.

← 1 in. → Mr. Jimmy Jones

English 12

12 April 2007

### A Truly Timeless Tale

(interesting attention-getter)

indent 1/2" "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times" (Dickens 206).

Surely more paradoxical words were never spoken than these thoughts that begin Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. How true are those words? What did they mean and are they still relevant today? As one searches for elements that make Dickens' tale a truly timeless tale with a message for all generations, three eternal truths stand out: hatred breeds oppression, oppression breeds revenge, and revenge leads to death.

clear that 1<sup>st</sup> point is beginning → The first truth that Dickens proclaims in his novel is that hatred breeds oppression. As one critic notes, "The aristocracy's oppression of the masses is a product of their hatred for and fear of the poor, dirty, hungry peasants" (Golding). This disdain is easily seen in the interaction between the royalty and the people. When the queen calls for the hungry to come and kiss her hand, it is obvious, according to one critic, that she has no understanding of their condition in life (*A Tale*).

no page numbers given for computer sources

↑  
1 inch  
↓

A sample second page

Rogers 2

The hatred the aristocracy feels for the people leads to astonishing oppression. Notably, the types of oppression seen in France during this time period are some of the worst ever seen in history (“*A Tale*” 109). The people are beaten, starved and otherwise maligned. One example of this mistreatment occurs when the royal coach runs over and kills a child, and the passenger stops and yells at the commoners for not keeping their “grimy, filthy” children out of the road (Dickens 67).

Because the aristocracy views the peasants as less than human, they oppress the peasants seemingly with little awareness of the pain and duress they are inflicting. Michael Haroldson shows this lack of awareness when he states,

indent 1 inch → The aristocracy moves in different circles from the populace.

The poor wait in lines to beg crumbs from a merchant while the royalty wait in their lounges for food and wine to be served at their whim. (46)

Only the page number is needed since author's name is in sentence

transition →

In addition to the idea that hatred results in oppression, another truth that contains a lesson for all time is the truth that oppression breeds revenge. Revenge is brewing when Madame Defarge sits knitting her threads of death and smiling all the while ..... (continue with point)... (Dickens 101).

## A Sample Works Cited Page

Alphabetized, not numbered

Ignore "A" or "The" or "An"  
when alphabetizing

Rogers 3

Works Cited

Dickens, Charles. *A Tale of Two Cities*. London: Scribners and Sons, Inc.,  
1986.

Golding, William. "Tales of Woe." *The Explicator*, 7 Jan. 2005, pp. 165-179.  
*Literary Reference Center*. GACS Private Library. 14 March 2007  
<<http://www.ebscohost.com>>.

Haroldson, Michael. "Charles Dickens: A Timeless Man." *English Journal*  
4 Feb. 1998: 44-47.

*A Tale for All Times*. Ed. David Smith. 7 July 1999. 22 Sep. 2000 <[www.charlesdickens.edu](http://www.charlesdickens.edu)>.

"*A Tale of Two Cities*." *Novels for Students*. Ed. Deborah Stanley. Vol. 9.  
Detroit: Gale Group, 1999.

## High School English Research Paper Reminders

You should turn in your **final draft (including the Works Cited page)** AND **copies or printouts of your sources, in order of citations throughout your paper.**

**Be sure** your header is ½ inch from top and all margins are 1 inch.

**Be sure** you use Times New Roman 12 point font (like this).

**Do NOT** use any other size or font throughout the paper (this includes your title).

**Be sure** your name and the page number is at the top right hand margin of every page (the W/C page is numbered also, but doesn't contribute to the required number of pages).

**Be sure** all the sources you list on your Works Cited page are actually cited (put in parentheses) somewhere in your paper!

**Be sure** you cite the required number of sources in your paper.

**Be sure** when you cite a work in parentheses that it matches how it appears on your Works Cited page. For example, if it is the first word of a web site that is in quotation marks on your W/C page, it should be in quotation marks in your parentheses. If it is italicized (underlined), then it should be the same in your parentheses.

**Make sure** all the lines in quotes longer than 3 lines are indented 10 spaces from left margin, do not use quote marks, and put end punctuation BEFORE the parentheses.

**Be sure to discuss literary characters and events in the present tense!**

### Content

Interesting, **attention-getting intro**

**Clear thesis statement** at end of intro

**Transition** from one point to the next (in addition, another, etc.—see book)

**Clear examples and explanations** to back up your points

EVERY sentence contributes to one of your points in the thesis statement.

**Cut out redundancy**—it is unnecessary and really isn't needed (get it?☺)

NEVER USE “A LOT” or “JUST” or “THINGS”—scour your paper for this

offensive language and purge it from your creation!

**Clear conclusion** that doesn't introduce new ideas

### Grammar

**Proofread your paper.**

**Have a grown-up proofread your paper.**

**Have a friend proofread your paper.**

**Have a grown-up friend proofread your paper.**

**Proofread your paper.**

Look out for comma splices and run-ons, fragments, misspellings and typos, vague references, such as “it” or “he” or “she” or “him” or “her.” In your paper, please use commas after introductory statements. (see?)

## TOP TEN ERRORS TO AVOID

- Avoid 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person (I, you)
- Avoid vague words such as:
  - thing: incorrect: Another thing the author points out is.....
  - correct: The author points out.....
  - stuff and lots of (or a lot):
    - incorrect: The character deals with lots of stuff before he decides to jump.
    - correct: The character deals with several adversities before he ....
  - just: incorrect: He is just trying to tell his story
  - correct: He is simply trying to tell his story.
  - This, that: incorrect: He takes the word of the man as gospel. This means he trusts him.
  - Correct: Trusting the man, he takes his word as gospel.
- Avoid beginning a sentence with the word also:
  - incorrect: Also, the main character has a problem with integrity.
  - correct: The main character also has a problem with integrity.
- Avoid wordiness
  - incorrect: The reason why Hawthorne shows Hester as impure is because ....
  - correct: Hawthorne shows Hester as impure because...
- Avoid fragments:
  - incorrect: The boy loves the girl so much. (so much that what?)
  - correct: The boy loves the girl.
  - incorrect: Which is why the girl says she will marry him.
  - correct: The girl says she will marry him because he loves her.
- Avoid run-ons and comma splices:
  - incorrect: In the third scene, Mr. Brown calls for his cat, taking her food bowl he walks out.
  - correct: In the third scene, Mr. Brown calls for his cat. Taking her food bowl, he walks out.
- Avoid vague references
  - Any time you see the pronoun, *it* or *he* or *she* or *him* or *her*, look at the closest noun BEFORE that pronoun and see if the pronoun is referring to that noun.
  - incorrect: In the novel, **it** says the Okies are oppressed.
  - correct: In the novel, the author says the Okies are oppressed.
- Avoid noun/pronoun disagreement (in gender or in number)
  - incorrect: Everyone needs to take **their** job seriously.
  - correct: Everyone needs to take **his or her** job seriously.
- Avoid qualifiers and intensifiers (really, very)
- Avoid introducing new information in the conclusion