

U. S. History Thesis Paper



Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page number</u>
Introduction	
Definition of a Research Paper	1
Procedure for a Research Paper	2
Schedule of Due Dates	3
Selecting a Topic/Developing a Research Question	4
U.S. History Thesis Topic Approval Sheet *	5
Source Requirements	7-8
U.S History Thesis Selected Sources Approval Sheet *	9
Identifying and Locating Sources	11
How to Outline	11-12
Taking Notes/Notecards	
Quoting, Paraphrasing & Summarizing	
Using notecards in Noodletools	13-16
Preparing your Works Cited	
Writing Your Thesis Statement	
Writing Your Introduction	17
Writing a Conclusion	18
Tips and Warnings	18-19
Transition Devices	19
Format for Typing a Research Paper	
Avoiding Plagiarism/Choosing When to Give Credit	20-21
Article on Plagiarism	22

** = to be handed in*

Introduction

Every spring semester, every junior must write a 7-8 page research paper in their U.S. History class. The term paper process includes several steps to make this process more manageable, and to teach you how to conduct historical research. Students who earn the best grades are proactive in this process, and complete every step on time. **This also means that you cannot wait until the last minute to write this paper and expect to earn a passing grade.**

Grading Procedure:

- Completing each process piece by scheduled due date – 1/3 of grade
- Final paper & Works Cited – 2/3 of grade.

What you need to know:

- The term paper process will count on your 4th quarter grade. The final submission of your term paper will also count on your fourth quarter grade. See rubric for a more detailed breakdown of point distribution.
- The research paper itself must be handed in with all supplemental materials on the date it is due during the period you have U.S. History.
- **Be sure to save all notes, outlines and rough drafts.** These materials must be turned in with your paper. These items prove that the paper is your own original work! **Be sure to share your project in the appropriate Noodle Tools drop box!**
- **If you are sick or out of school that day, the paper still must be handed in on time!**
- **Papers are considered late after the period you have U.S. History on the due date! Check your computers, printers and storage devices in advance.**

Definition of a Research Paper

The research paper is a long essay presenting your own interpretation or evaluation or argument about a topic or question. Information is taken from diverse sources that must be cited throughout the paper. You build upon what you know about a subject through your research to find out what experts know.

There are two types of research papers. Informational research papers summarize and present factual information in a coherent and organized way. Analytical papers present factual information and draw conclusions from the evidence presented. Often an analytical paper will explore a question. The analytical paper that explores a question has some elements of persuasive writing in that the writer's conclusion is an opinion derived from the factual evidence.

You do research to become an expert on the topic so you can present it from your own perspective. If your research paper is exploring a question it needs to support one side or the other for you to be able to draw a conclusion. The paper that explores a question is analytical, but uses information to support your point. As you explore a question you will use evidence to support a perspective on a topic.

Procedure for a Research Paper

The following steps are suggested in preparing a research paper:

1. Choose a general topic.
2. Find a variety of information sources on the subject (books, reference books, magazines, videos, databases, etc.) and make a preliminary reference list.
3. Limit the subject based on your initial information search. Develop a question.
4. Read and research extensively and take notes on note cards in Noodle Tools.
5. Sort your Noodle Tools note cards into related piles or create tags.
6. Make a preliminary outline using Noodle Tools. The titles of your note cards connect to the headings and subheadings in your outline.
7. Read and take more notes on weak areas.
8. Revise the outline.
9. Prepare the Works Cited page using the Bibliography feature in Noodle Tools.
10. Write a first draft and Works Cited page.
11. Revise and rewrite draft copies.
12. Prepare the final copy.

Schedule of Due Dates

You are expected to hand in each of the following on time. Unless you are legitimately absent from school, the grades for each part will be lowered one letter grade for every day the assignment is late.

The research paper itself must be handed in on the date it is due even if you are absent from school that day!

	Assignment Due Date	Value
Topic Approval Sheet	_____	/5
Source Selection and Preliminary Works Cited	_____	/5
Last Day to Change topic!	_____	
Preliminary Outline	_____	/5
Set of Noodle Tools notecards (At least 10)	_____	/5
Final Outline	_____	/10
Introduction with thesis underlined	_____	/10
Revised works cited & 7-8 page draft	_____	/10
Final paper & Works Cited	_____	/100
Total grade		/150

Selecting a Topic/Developing a Research Question

Remember that a **topic** is what a research paper is about. It provides a focus for the writing. Stick with one major topic in your paper. Choose a topic that is of interest to you – you will be examining it all semester. The topic **must** deal with U.S. History during the specified time period in some form; social, political, economic, religious, military, diplomatic, etc.

The topic **must** do one of the following:

- explore a thought provoking and controversial question
- compare two events or people in history
- evaluate an event or person

A **research question** allows you to look at a topic from a certain perspective and draw a conclusion from your research. For example: While Gandhi and Indian Independence are topics, asking the question “What effect did Gandhi have on Indian Independence?” allows you to make a point and draw a conclusion.

Choose a question that is not too broad or too narrow. If you want to write about Gandhi, you might ask these questions:

- 1. Who was Mohandas Gandhi?**
- 2. How did Gandhi’s pursuits affect Indian History?**
- 3. What effect did Gandhi have on India?**

Question “1” is too narrow.

It can be answered in one sentence.

Question “2” is too broad because you might have to explore several topics.

Question “3” is focused enough to stick to one topic, yet broad enough to research in some depth.

When you are developing a research question, be sure to choose a topic that can actually be researched. List all the questions you would like answered. Do a preliminary search to see what kinds of sources are available for research. Read an overview source (a source that summarizes the main points of your topic) to help you choose the best question for your research. The perspective from which you choose to explore your research question will develop into your thesis statement.

After choosing a topic you must hand in the topic approval sheet. All topics need to be approved by your teacher. Also, you may not change your topic without your teacher’s approval.

U.S. History Thesis Topic Approval Sheet

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

Remember your topic must do one of the following:

- Explore a thought provoking and or controversial question
- Compare two events or people in history
- Evaluate an event or person

The primary topic I want to research is:

Because:

Specific questions I expect to explore include:

1. _____

2. _____

An alternate topic I would like to research is:

Because:

Questions I expect to explore include:

1. _____

2. _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Source Requirements:

You must have a minimum of 5 sources. (minimum means more is better) Your sources should include at least one of each of the following:

- **A print overview source**
- **A database from SHS library or iConn** (may fulfill other requirements also)
- **A website** - Choose a website that is both *reliable* and *relevant to your research question*. You may use the suggested links on your teacher's Library Lessons page or search Destiny using WebPath Express to find reliable, scholarly websites. You may not use a .com website unless approved by your teacher or a media specialist.
- **A primary source**

The following sources may be used to help you focus and organize your research but should not be included in your works cited.

- A general or online encyclopedia (World Book and Wikipedia fall into this category)
- A high school history textbook

Evaluating Sources

During your library research lesson, the media specialist will go over how to evaluate sources. Here are just a few reminders and tips:

1. Make sure your source really covers the topic you have in mind.

Read through the table of contents, review main headings, look at the index, and skim through sections you feel may be of use to you. Ask yourself "Is there enough information and is it pertinent?"

2. Make sure that some of your sources are current.

Historians are influenced by the time period in which they write and new information has been gathered over the years. Views on any subject are likely to change over time, so it is good to sample sources across time periods.

3. Decide if the source is unreliable or biased.

Consider this question for every source. Be especially careful with Internet sites. Look for the credentials of the source and author. For instance, you might not trust a website called "Billy's Awesome Gandhi Page" or a pamphlet distributed by a hate group. Remember as well that all historians have a certain point of view.

4. Find out where any web information comes from.

As stated above, be careful. Many websites are created by amateur historians and middle and high school aged students. A website from a 7th grade history project is inappropriate for high school research. Websites maintained by college history departments and other history organizations are your safest bet. The librarian will give you more information on evaluating websites, but the number one rule is: If there are no credentials for the website, do not use it.

5. Decide if you will be able to use the source successfully.

Are the books too long and detailed? Can you understand what the author is talking about? Is the source over simplified? Choose sources you will actually use!

6. If the source is something you plan to use, record all of the important publishing information.

This holds true for all sources you think you might use, even if you ultimately do not use one or two. Make sure you have recorded all of the information needed for the Works Cited page in Noodle Tools before you leave your source!

U. S. History Thesis Selected Sources Approval Sheet

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

My print overview source is _____

My Library or iConn database is _____

I have used this database for _____

My newspaper or magazine article is _____

My primary source is (list name of document and where you located it) _____

My reliable website is (list title and URL) _____

Give a short annotation of the website and why it is useful for your research _____

Additional source (list name and format- book?, database?, website?)

Teacher Signature: _____

Identifying and Locating Sources

Getting an overview: What is it?

Getting an overview is finding a source of information that gives you a simple understanding about a topic without telling you all about it in great detail. An overview should have some basic facts and be in language clear enough for you to understand. It should answer the questions; "who", "what", "when" and "where", and only briefly some of the "why" and "how" questions. Think of an overview as a picture taken from a distance where all of the details are not in focus. Your later research will bring those details into focus.

Why do it?

Getting an overview will help you:

- Get a general understanding of your topic
- Begin to know what kinds of subtopics are within the general topic
- Begin to ask some questions that you will answer later in the research process
- Begin to focus your topic into one you can handle in your project

How do I find one?

General reference books and specialized encyclopedias are some of the best overview sources. **There are some excellent specialized encyclopedias on the cart from the library collection.** You may also find some good overview sources on websites, but you **must** evaluate the information to make sure it is accurate. It is better to use a book first for basic information and then search for a website. Short books and books written for young readers are also excellent overview sources.

How do I use an overview?

Notice the way the information has been organized in the overview. The headings, subheadings and Table of Contents will help you organize and focus your paper. *Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?* If a reader's first response is "how?" or "why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position.

How to Outline

It is important to organize your thoughts early in the research process. The outline will most likely change as you gather more research and improve your rough drafts.

Strategies

For help with the outline feature of Noodletools, use the Noodletools User's Guide. Click on the Help link found near the top of almost any page. It is found on the same line where it says Welcome followed by your name. Then under NoodleBib User's Guide, click on the link to a searchable HTML version of the User's Guide.

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needs to be ordered
ur topic. Take som

11-

- Look at the table of contents in some of your sources. It shows you how the author organized his/her information.
- Consider what is the best way to organize your information.
 - Chronological
 - Cause and effect
 - Compare and contrast
 - Deductive- (starting with a general problem then explaining specific

- Inductive- (starting with specific examples and causes then connecting them to a general problem)

Sample Preliminary Outline

Topic: Gandhi & Indian Independence

Introduction and Thesis Statement

A good introduction broadly sketches the scope of the topic. It raises the questions that will be examined throughout the paper. The thesis is the anchor and guiding force of the paper. Every section is tied to supporting the ideas expressed in the thesis.

I. Introduction

A. Who was Gandhi?

B. How did Gandhi affect Indian Independence?

II. Gandhi Youth

III. Gandhi in South Africa

A. As a lawyer

B. Gaining Indian freedoms

IV. Gandhi in India

A. Civil Disobedience B.

Amritsar Massacre C. Salt
March

D. Fasting

V. Other Players

A. Muhammad Ali Jinnah

B. The Muslim League

VI. Overall Results Gandhi

VII. Indian Independence

VIII. Conclusion: (A good conclusion summarizes all the major themes, while putting things in proper perspective for the reader. Above all, it connects to the thesis statement).

The difference between the preliminary and the final outline

The major difference between the preliminary outline and the final outline is that the final outline will contain many more specific details. For example, the final outline would list the specific details on Gandhi's role, specific ways it affected independence and freedom, etc.

-12-

Taking Notes/Notecards

Creating notecards is a vital piece of the research process. Note cards will help you organize your research paper itself. You will link your sources to the notecards as you take notes in Noodletools.

Purpose of notecards

- Record the general ideas that will form the backbone of your paper.

- Record specific pieces of information that support general ideas.
- Preserve the exact wording of some statements that you wish to quote directly.
- Create a system to organize your final outline and rough draft.

What to include on notecards

- The title of your notecard should connect to a heading or subheading in your outline.
- Link the source of the information to your notecard.
- Record only one main idea on each card.

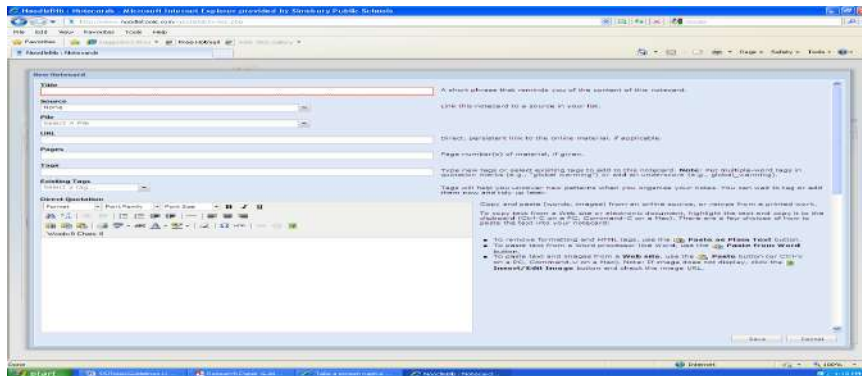
Quoting, Paraphrasing and Summarizing

- You can borrow from the works of other writers as you research.
- Good writers use three strategies to blend source materials with their own ideas, while making sure their own voice is heard.
 - quoting
 - summarizing
 - paraphrasing

Quotations are the exact words of an author, copied directly from the source word for word. Quotations must be cited using a parenthetical reference.

You must have some direct quotes in your paper.

- If writing a direct quote or part of a quote be sure to include quotation marks so you remember it was not your own words. Avoid long quotes. Less than 20% of your paper should be direct quotes.
- **Quotes go in the Direct Quotation (1st) section of your notecard.**



Use direct quotes when:

- The words in the source are so vivid or powerful that they provide a meaning that cannot be captured through paraphrasing.
- You find you cannot effectively paraphrase without distorting the author’s meaning or creating an awkward statement.
- You want to add the power of an author’s words to support your argument.
- You want to disagree with an author’s argument.

- You want to highlight particularly eloquent or powerful phrases or passages.
- You are comparing and contrasting specific points of view.
- You want to note the important research that preceded your own.

Using
paraphrasing in your paper:

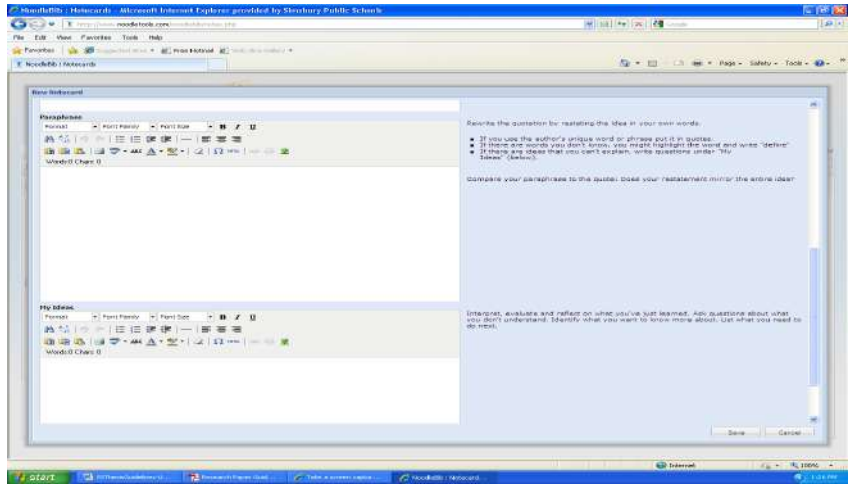
Paraphrasing means rephrasing the words of an author, putting his/her thoughts in your own words. A paraphrase can be viewed as a “translation” of the original source.

- You rework the source’s ideas, words, phrases and sentence structure with your own.
- **Like quotations, paraphrased material must be followed with in-text documentation (parenthetical reference) and cited on the Works Cited page.**
- Paraphrased text is often, but not always, slightly shorter than the original work.

Paraphrase when:

- You plan to sue information on your note cards and wish to avoid plagiarizing.
- You want to avoid overusing quotations.
- You want to use your own voice to present information.

Use the Paraphrase (2nd) section of your Noodletools notecard.



Summarizing an author’s ideas:

Summarizing involves putting the main idea(s) of one or several writers into your own words, including only the main point(s).

- It is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source, since they are not your own.

- Summarized ideas are not necessarily presented in the same order as in the original source.
- Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.
- **Use the Paraphrase (2nd) section of your notecard.**

-

Summarize when:

- You want to establish background or offer an overview of a topic.
- You want to describe common knowledge (from several sources) about a topic.
- You want to determine the main ideas of a single source.

Examples of quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing:

Referring to the works of other authors in your work lends credence to your writing. It shows that you have read pertinent material. It shows that others share your views, and it places your writing in a greater context. However, you must clearly differentiate your ideas and words from those of other authors. When you use someone else's words, you quote. When you use someone else's ideas, you paraphrase or summarize. Below are examples of each.

Original:

I'm convinced that fear is at the root of most bad writing. If one is writing for one 's own pleasure, that fear may be mild- timidity is the word I've used here. If, however, one is working under a deadline- a school paper, a newspaper article, the SAT writing sample- that fear may be intense. Dumbo got airborne with the help of a magic feather; you may feel the urge to grasp a passive verb or one of those nasty adverbs for the same reason. Just remember before you do that Dumbo didn ' t need the feather; the magic was in him. You probably do know what you are talking about, and can safely energize your prose with active verbs.

Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, 127-128.

Quoting: When you quote someone, you use the author 's exact words.

In his book *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, Stephen King offers his personal views on writing: "I 'm convinced that fear is at the root of most bad writing."

Paraphrasing: When you paraphrase someone, you use your words to convey another author's ideas. The words and the sentence structure must all be yours.

Acceptable: Stephen King blames fear for the overuse of adverbs and passive verbs, hallmarks of bad writing, and he encourages fledgling writers not to resort to using such devices as a crutch.

-15-

Unacceptable: Stephen King is convinced that fear **is at the root of most bad writing** and encourages writers to **energize prose with active verbs**.

The words in bold in the above unacceptable example are exactly as King wrote them. They have not been changed, therefore they are plagiarized. Simply eliminating one or two words is not paraphrasing.

Summarizing: To summarize is to condense ideas into fewer words and with fewer details. A paragraph, page, or even a chapter might be summarized in a single sentence. Be sure your summary accurately conveys the author’s message.

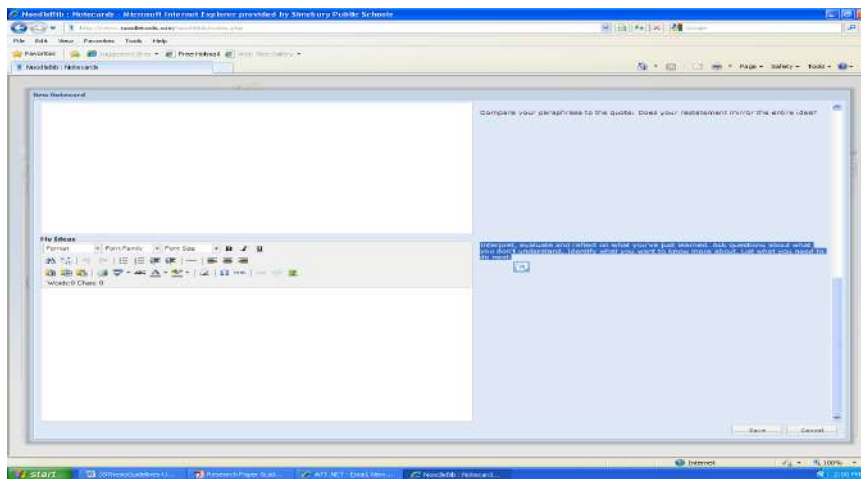
Accurate: For Stephen King, fear yields bad writing.

Inaccurate: Stephen King says students should be afraid of writing the SAT writing sample.

King acknowledges that students are often afraid of writing the SAT essay. He does not claim that they *should* be. The point he is trying to make in this passage is about fear and poor writing. The SAT is mentioned only as an example of what types of writing tasks make writers afraid.

When you include your own ideas and interpretations

- Interpret, evaluate and reflect on what you have learned.
- Ask questions about what you don’t understand.
- Identify what you want to know more about.
- List what you need to do next.
- **The items above go in the My Ideas (3rd) section of your notecard.**



Preparing your Works Cited

Write your final Works Cited **before** you begin your rough draft. The Works Cited page is where the reader finds complete documentation of all your citations. Export your Works Cited from Noodle Tools into Word and print.

Writing your thesis statement

A thesis statement should be developed after you have explored your research question, and have done enough research to confidently answer that question. A quality thesis statement should be clear, definitive, and backed up by research. The goal of this paper is for you to answer a historical question with your thesis statement, and back it up using evidence throughout the body of the paper that relates back to your thesis.

Your thesis statement is the anchor of your paper. It should explicitly state to the reader what you intend to cover in the paper.

Quality example:

During the second half of the twentieth century, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a political, economic, technologic and military rivalry. During this Cold War, both countries attempted to promote and expand their ideologies. By 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, and the United States of America was left as the lone world super power. It is clear that the policies of the Reagan Administration were the most important factor regarding the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the United States victory in the Cold War.

How do I know if my thesis is strong?

- ***Do I answer the question?*** Re-reading the question prompt after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that misses the focus of the question.
- ***Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?*** If your thesis simply states facts that no one would, or even could, disagree with, it's possible that you are simply providing a summary, rather than making an argument.
- ***Is my thesis statement specific enough?*** Thesis statements that are too vague often do not have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like "good" or "successful," see if you could be more specific: *why* is something "good"; *what* specifically makes something "successful"?
- ***Does my thesis pass the "So what?" test?*** If a reader's first response is, "So What?" then you need to clarify, to forge a relationship, or to connect to a larger issue.
- ***Does my essay support my thesis specifically and without wandering?*** If your thesis and the body of your essay do not seem to go together, one of them has to change. It's okay to change your working thesis to reflect things you have figured out in the course of writing your paper. Remember, always reassess and revise your writing as necessary.
- ***Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?*** If a reader's first response is "how?" or "why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position.

Writing your introduction

- Introduce your subject. Consider starting with a general statement and moving to a specific idea.
- Define any important terms.
- Set the context. Place your topic firmly in time and space.
- Declare your thesis statement (main idea, answer to research question).

-17-

Writing a conclusion

- A conclusion is your chance to leave a lasting impression. It should bring the paper to a satisfying close.
- Remind the reader of what you were trying to accomplish by restating the thesis in different words.

- Close with a general statement or a connection to a broader or modern issue.
- Do not present new ideas, stick in facts you forgot to mention, or simply make a monster list of everything you already said.

Tips and warnings

This paper should be an example of your best possible work. In order to make it so, the following suggestions are offered.

Things to do:

- When searching the Internet for information, be aware that experts on the topic do not evaluate many of these sources. They may not be accurate. You will need to use discretion, compare sources and be selective in your evaluation of information on the Internet. Databases such as American History and U.S. History in Context can be trusted.
- As you research and write, save all notes, drafts and printed web pages. **You will be expected to turn in all research materials with your paper.**

As you write your rough draft:

- Make sure the paper has an introduction stating all the main ideas that will be developed in the paper.
- Make sure your works cited is in final format before you begin writing the paper. Your parenthetical references will come from the Works Cited.
- Insert parenthetical references as you write the paper. Make a reference anywhere you have directly quoted an author, paraphrased an author's thoughts, or summarized an author's main ideas.
- Make sure each source that was used within a parenthetical reference appears on the Works Cited page and vice versa. Use transitions to smooth the change from one topic to another and to show the relationship between the two. **Do not use chapter headings!**
- Write a conclusion that summarizes all your main points.
- Leave time for revisions. Does the paper do justice to the thesis statement?
- Proofread your paper and correct all mistakes. **Do not depend on spell check to proofread for you!!**

-18-

As you type your final draft:

- Papers should be typed, double-spaced in a 12-point readable font such as Times New Roman.
- Use only one side of the paper. Use default settings for margins.
- Check the spelling and grammar. **There should be zero spelling errors in the final draft.**
- Include your Works Cited page as printed from Noodle Tools at the end of your paper.
- Save more than one copy of your paper!

- Leave time to print, especially if your home printer is broken and you need to print in school.

Things to avoid:

- Do not use contractions in a formal paper. Do not use first or second person (I, me, you) in a formal paper. Use only the third person (he, she, it, one, they, their). Do not use chapter headings. These break up the continuity of your paper. Instead use transitions to tie your paper together. Do not separate the introduction and conclusion from the main body of the paper. They should be your first and last paragraphs respectively.
- Do not use slang, colloquialisms or foul language.
- Do not use sensationalist language.
- Do not include drawings or graphs in the main body of the paper.

Transition Devices

Transitions are devices that reveal relationships between your sentences, paragraphs and ideas. Transitions help you, as the writer, to remain on track, and more importantly, they serve as signposts for the reader to show him or her exactly where you are going. It is critical that you be absolutely clear what the relationship is that you are trying to express. Then, choose the appropriate word or phrase. Here are some examples of the kinds of relationships you might show and what transitions will accomplish this for you.

CONSEQUENCE: therefore, then, thus, accordingly, as a result, consequently

SIMILARITY: similarly, likewise

COMPARISON: in comparison, by comparison, compared to

CONTRAST: however, but, yet, nevertheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, in contrast, whereas, except, conversely, meanwhile, although

SUPPLEMENTATION: in addition, further, furthermore, also, moreover, again, beside, next

EXAMPLE: for instance, for example, in this case, in this situation, to demonstrate, to illustrate, as an illustration

CONCESSION: to be sure, granted, although, though, while, of course, it is true

INSISTENCE: anyway, indeed, in fact

SEQUENCE: first, second, third, finally, afterward, subsequently, consequently, hence, next, following

RESTATEMENT: that is, in other words

SUMMARY: in conclusion, all in all, to summarize, all these, all together, in sum, in summary, on the whole, in brief, in short, therefore, accordingly, as a result, thus

TIME: afterward, later, earlier, formerly, at the same time, simultaneously, so far, until now, this time, subsequently

PURPOSE: in or to, in order that, so that

RESTRICTION: provided that, in case that

Format for Typing a Research Paper

Title Page

On the title page include the full title of your paper and your name. Your instructor will usually want you to include the course title, the instructor 's name, and the date as well. Do not type a number on the title page but count it in the document numbering; that is, the first page of the text will usually be numbered 2.

Page Numbers and Running Head

Number all pages except the title page in the upper right corner. Include your last name before the page numbers to help identify pages in case they come loose from your manuscript.

Margins and Line Spacing

Leave margins of at least one inch at the top, bottom, and sides of the page. Double-space the entire manuscript, including long quotations that have been set off from the text.

Long Quotations

When a quotation is fairly long, **at least 8 lines**, set it off from the text by indenting. Indent the full quotation one-half inch (five spaces) from the left margin. Quotation marks are not needed when a quotation has been set off from the text.

Avoiding Plagiarism/Choosing When to Give Credit

From the Purdue University Online Writing Lab at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

The heart of avoiding plagiarism is to make sure you give credit where it is due. This may be credit for something somebody said, wrote, emailed, drew, or implied.

Need to Document:

- When you are using or referring to someone else's words or ideas from a magazine, book, newspaper, song, TV program, movie, Web page, computer program, letter, advertisement, or any other medium
- When you use information gained through interviewing another person.
- When you copy the exact words or a "**unique phrase**" from somewhere.
- When you reprint any diagrams, illustrations, charts, and pictures.

No Need to Document:

- When you use ideas that others have given you in conversations or through email.
- When you are writing your own experiences, your own observations, your own insights, your own thoughts, or your own conclusions about a subject.
- When you are using "**common knowledge**" such as folklore, common sense observations, shared information within your field of study or cultural group.
- When you are compiling generally accepted facts.
- When you are writing up your own experimental result.

When paraphrasing and summarizing:

- First, write your paraphrase and summary without looking at the original text, so you rely only on your memory.
- Next, check your version with the original for content, accuracy, and mistakenly borrowed phrases
- Begin your summary with a statement giving credit to the source: *According to Stephen King ..*

When quoting directly

- Keep the person's name near the quote in your notes, and in your paper.
- Select those direct quotes that make the most impact in your paper. Too many direct quotes may lessen your credibility and interfere with your style.
- Mention the person's name either at the beginning of the quote, in the middle, or at the end.
- Put quotation marks around the text that you are quoting.

What is *Common Knowledge*?

- Common knowledge includes facts that are found in many sources and that you assume many people know. A rule of thumb is that if you find a fact in three or more sources, it may be considered common knowledge.
- An example of common knowledge is that John Adams married Abigail Smith.
- Remember, you must document little known facts and any ideas that interpret facts, even if they are paraphrased! For instance, even if you don't use McCullough's words, you should absolutely document McCullough's belief that this marriage may have been the most critical decision of Adam's life.

Material on Common Knowledge from Springfield township, PA High School Library Web Page: <http://mciu.org/~spjvweb/>, Joyce Valenza, Library Media Specialist.

HISTORIANS AND PLAGIARISM; [STATEWIDE Edition] Hartford Courant.

Hartford, Conn.: Feb 4, 2002. pg. A.S

Seventeen students have been expelled for plagiarism over the past year just from the University of Virginia alone. What, then, are students to think of the two prominent historians who have admitted that they copied material from others' books without proper credit?

First Stephen Ambrose acknowledged that his bestseller about World War II, "The Wild Blue," contained passages lifted from "Wings of Morning" by Thomas Childers. Then Doris Kearns Goodwin admitted that her 1987 book "The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys" included material taken from other books without full credit. Both authors said they would properly attribute the passages in future editions, and each blamed the mistakes on sloppiness. That excuse doesn't wash. Professors would not accept such an explanation from students. Shouldn't esteemed historians be held to a much higher standard? Mr. Ambrose enjoys star status as a popular historian, churning out one bestseller after another. He receives advances of \$1 million, and the frantic pace obviously has led him to cut corners. His editor even suggested that Mr. Ambrose slow down, saying that people would begin to think of him as "someone just pumping out cookies." Ms. Goodwin, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1995 for "No Ordinary Time," also found lucre in history through her writing, lectures and television appearances. She recently admitted she paid money to settle a complaint several years ago by Lynne McTaggart, author of "Kathleen Kennedy: Her Life and Times." Ms. McTaggart is one of three writers whose work was lifted without proper attribution in Ms. Goodwin's book about the Kennedys. Sometimes there is a fine line between describing events included in other books and copying another writer's words and passing them off as one's own. Mr. Ambrose and Ms. Goodwin crossed that line. They disgraced themselves.