



# The Research Paper

## What is a research paper?

- ✓ An investigation of a particular subject or issue
- ✓ A document that presents and supports a thesis
- ✓ A presentation of information, ideas, facts, data, etc. taken from experts, authorities, scholars, etc.
- ✓ A formal document which must follow formal rules of style and documentation of sources.

## Why write a research paper?

- ✓ To learn how to analyze a topic in greater depth than relying on your knowledge alone
- ✓ To conduct independent research on a particular topic
- ✓ To find out what others have had to say on a particular issue
- ✓ To learn how to be a discriminate reader of the information you uncover
- ✓ To organize your information into a compelling and persuasive document
- ✓ To fulfill a SHS requirement

No matter which way you look at it, to write a research paper, you must conduct research! You will, of course, have to incorporate one or more of the themes for the course (the reinvention of the self, the American Dream, rags to riches, the rebel) to write about, and your topic **MUST** take you beyond your own knowledge and experience. For instance, you may have an iPhone but you may not know much about its origins or what led Steve Jobs to create this innovative piece of technology. However, finding sources that discuss these topics would assist you in answering these questions about the product's origins and the creator's rationale. From a literature perspective for example, you may be interested in learning more about Hester and how her relationship with Puritanism contributed to her metamorphosis as a woman, bringing her that much closer to achieving the American Dream. In order to find out about the impetus for Hester's change, you would have to read articles written by scholars who have intensely studied Puritan women and Hester Prynne. In doing so, you are conducting research.

The research you will collect will help you to craft a more penetrating analysis of the subject you choose to write about. In your research process, you will become more informed about the wide variety of information you collect and learn how to tell which sources are the more reliable and respected authorities on your subject. For instance, your friend may know "everything there is to know" about how his/her Ember Ceramic Mug, but understanding entrepreneur and inventor Clay Alexander's design and methodology of how the mug actually regulates heat to maintain just the right temperature for the desired beverage, is another story entirely.

Writing a research paper takes time and effort. You need spend the time – and often this may be tiring and unproductive—searching for information on your topic, reading it carefully to decide whether you have found useful (or possibly useless) information, taking notes, METICULOUSLY recording bibliographic information on your sources, and organizing all of this information into a unified paper. However, if you enter this process with a desire to accomplish a challenging task, you will be rewarded for your efforts by the pride you will feel when the last page of your paper prints—even if it's at 5:30 am on the morning the paper is due.

**Good luck. Remember, I'll help you through this!**

## The Texts

You may choose from the list of the following texts. They include plays and short novels written by American authors. Once you have decided upon a book you would like to read, you need to purchase your own copy of the text. Since you will need to eat, sleep, and drink this work, you should have a copy that you can annotate and drool on when you fall asleep on it each night.

As you read, you should have a pencil in hand to mark and annotate the text. Since these texts are generally short, you will find it easy to re-read if necessary. I encourage you to meet with me to discuss your text at any point in your reading.

Choose wisely – you will have to live with your choice for the next several weeks and examine it in great detail in order to write an eight to ten (8-10) double-spaced page paper. The Works Cited page is not included in the count.

These are the only books from which you can choose.

**August Wilson**

*Fences*

*The Piano Lesson*

*Joe Turner's Come and Gone*

*Two Trains Running*

**Tennessee Williams**

*A Streetcar Named Desire*

*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

**Toni Morrison**

*The Bluest Eye*

*Beloved*

**Kate Chopin**

*The Awakening*

**Ralph Ellison**

*Invisible Man*

**Harriet Jacobs**

*Incident in the Life of a Slave Girl*

**Edith Wharton**

*The Age of Innocence*

**James Weldon Johnson**

*The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*

**Arthur Miller**

*The Crucible*

**Alice Walker**

*The Color Purple*

**Jhumpa Lahiri**

*The Namesake*

**Nella Larsen**

*Passing*

**Zora Neale Hurston**

*Their Eyes Were Watching God*

**Amy Tan**

*The Joy Luck Club*

**Richard Wright**

*Native Son*

**Edward Albee**

*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*

## Research Paper (The Process)

Step 1:	Select your primary source on or before	December 21, 2017
Step 2:	Test on primary source (book needs to be read in its entirety)	January 18, 2018
Step 3:	Primary source note cards* 10 note cards 10 note cards 10 note cards	January 18, 2018 January 23, 2018 January 24, 2018
Step 4:	Potential areas of investigation/What your paper might be about (at the end of class)	January 26, 2018
<b>Students will need to start making appointments to meet with me. I <u>MUST</u> meet with every student</b>		
Step 5:	Library and selection of secondary sources* (you need 2 <u>different</u> sources) ✍ 12 note cards with bibliographic information on a note card <u>preceding each</u> new source. ✍ 12 note cards with bibliographic information on a note card <u>preceding each</u> new source.	January 26, 2018 January 30, 2018
Step 6:	Preliminary thesis sentence using a Pattern of Organization (by the end of class)	February 1, 2018
Step 7:	I, II, III, etc. A, B, etc. 1, 2, etc. (evidence) <b>(I will gladly take a draft of the thesis paragraph today if you have it)</b>	February 6 - 13, 2018 February 6 - 13, 2018 February 6 - 13, 2018
Step 8:	<b><u>Complete Sentence Outline</u></b> with quotes that are* properly formatted along with analysis. <b><u>This must be handed in as a hard copy</u></b>	February 15, 2018
Step 9:	Final paper with separate Works Cited page, complete sentence outline, <u>revised</u> sentence outline, all note cards, and receipt from Turn-it-in.com	March 6, 2018

\*All of the items **must be** handed in during their check points and then again at the end of the entire process. \*\* The schedule is subject to change.  
Everything on this page will receive a grade.