

The ButlerHigh School Research Paper Guide

The teachers of the Butler High School English Department want each student to use the proper form in the writing of research-based papers. This guide uses the format from The Modern Language Association of America (MLA), which most college English and social studies departments follow. The information in this guide is referenced from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. This booklet along with class instruction will be your guide for research paper format.

It is important to recognize that there are sometimes multiple correct ways to cite research material. The newest (7th edition) version of the MLA guide says this, “While it is tempting to think that every source has only one complete and correct format for its entry in a list of works cited, in truth there are often several options for recording key features of a work” (129).

Regardless of the multiple possibilities, it is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the material contained in this guide and to use it correctly. The Internet is also an essential source of information and citation tools, but it is important to use these resources carefully, making sure to use the latest version of MLA citation (7th edition).

A. Steps in Research Paper Writing—Keep referring back to this as needed.

1. Select a general topic.
2. Find sources.
3. Read and take notes on sources (see sections C and D).
4. Develop a possible thesis statement. Do NOT attempt this step before you have done some research. Your thesis statement should be the result of your initial research.
5. Once you have developed a thesis, continue taking notes until you have all the material you need (see section D).
6. Develop a possible outline (see section F).
7. Organize notes by outline.
8. Prepare final topic outline (if required, see section G).
9. Write first draft of paper including internal citations (see sections E and F).
10. Edit and revise first draft (see sections H, I, and J).
11. Prepare final copy of manuscript (proofread and use correct MLA format).
12. Prepare Works Cited page

Important Note: Most students will submit the junior research paper as their Graduation Project research papers. The use of a visual aid, such as a chart or table, in the research paper is a Graduation Project requirement. Therefore, students should plan to include a visual aid in their junior research papers. A visual aid can be as complex as a detailed graph, table or chart, or as simple as a photograph taken by the student or a bulleted list. See the Graduation Project handbook for more information on the visual aid.

B. Plagiarism in Research Papers

Any use of another person’s words or ideas without giving that person credit is plagiarism. Plagiarism is dishonest and will constitute grounds for a zero on any research paper. Even if you change the words or add some of your own, you must still end the information with a citation. This means that you must cite all quotations and paraphrased passages in the form of an internal citation and an entry on your Works Cited page.

C. Finding Your Sources

I prefer that my students use ProQuest for their research. ProQuest is an online database of articles. Follow these instructions to access ProQuest and find your research materials:

Pro Quest

- Go to the Butler High School web site.
- Click on RESEARCH on the left.
- Now click on the big link in the middle of the page that says PROQUEST.
- **If prompted the user name = butlerhsnc & password = 28105**
- **Choose *SIRS Knowledge Source* and choose the “keyword” search option to search for a topic you already have in mind.** (Sort by Relevance or Date)

OR

- If you’re still searching for a topic, find the box that says “Pro Vs. Con.”
- You can also scroll through the list of topics on the left.
- Choosing VISUAL BROWSE is a great way to see topics in categories.
- Once you’ve clicked on the topic you like, you will find LOTS of resources, including lots of articles related to the topic.
- When you find an article that will work for you, click on “Print View” and then “Print” at the top of the screen. **This will print your articles WITH your citation at the bottom.**

D. Taking Notes from Your Sources

A research paper is really just a long essay that uses the ideas and words of other people as evidence and support. The note-taking process is the process of gathering those ideas and words so that they can be used during the writing process.

Some tips for taking notes:

- Using someone else’s words without giving that person credit with an internal citation and a Works Cited entry IS plagiarism. Make sure to cite other people’s words and ideas.
- AVOID USING long (more than 4 lines) quotes. Long quotes are allowed in research papers in general, but in a paper of this length, it isn’t a good idea.
- Think of the note-taking process as part of your planning and drafting. As you take notes, you should be thinking about your topic, narrowing your ideas, and finally, formulating a thesis statement. Stay flexible on your thesis until you have done some of your preliminary research.

Taking Notes using a Paperless (no index cards) Research Process:

- Refer back to section C and print your sources.
- You can copy and paste citations on a Works Cited page as you go.
- Make sure MLA citations print at the bottom of your articles (see last step in section C).
- Use your annotation skills as you read to mark information that you expect to use in your research paper.
- Keep this in mind—For a 6-8 page paper, you won’t need more than 3-4 pieces of good information per article.

E. Write an essay.

That's right. Now that you've educated yourself on your topic and developed a thesis statement, just write a thoughtful, intelligent essay on the topic and use the information you marked in your sources as support or as a basis for counterargument and refutation.

When you use information from a source, you need to provide an internal citation that matches your Works Cited entry. Here's a sample from an essay that shows what internal citations look like—

In fact, this topic is so controversial, because of the most commonly known source of stem cell harvesting, that President Bush banned federal funding of stem cell research in his first term. The ban was later reversed in 2009 by President Obama (Waters). Currently, the United States has a restrictive federal funding policy and different state policies regarding funding and permissibility of research ("Between Public Opinion").

WHEN DO YOU NEED TO CITE A SOURCE and WHEN DON'T YOU NEED TO CITE?

DON'T cite:	Do cite:
If the information is common knowledge and easily confirmed from a variety of sources. THIS INFORMATION DOES NOT NEED TO BE CITED.	Statistics and other factual information should always be cited, as well as opinions and less familiar facts. However, if you are not sure, cite it!

Example 1 - When you DON'T have to cite:

The university commonly called Chapel Hill is part of the University of North Carolina system.

This is common knowledge and easily confirmed in a multitude of sources. So it wouldn't need a citation.

Example 2 – When you DO have to cite:

The University of North Carolina was anticipated by a section of the first state constitution drawn up in 1776 directing the establishing of "one or more universities" in which "all useful learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted."

While the *University of North Carolina* system is well known, and these facts are easily confirmed, specific historical information or statistics should be cited.

F. Internal Citations

Internal citations are a part of MLA format. You should use an internal citation EVERY time you use information from a source.

Content of internal citations: Internal citations include the first element of the Works Cited entry (punctuated exactly as it is on the Works Cited page) and the page number where the information was actually found (if the source is a print source). The page numbers should already be on the note cards. In other words—

- an internal citation for a book with an author would be the author's name and the page number where the information was found
- an internal citation for an article with no author would be the title (or a shortened version of the title --- so "The Day No Dogs Would Bark" would become "The Day No Dogs") and the page number where the information was found
- an internal citation for a web site with no author would be the title of the web site or a shortened version of it (*Victorian Women Writers Project* would be *Victorian Women* or *Victorian Women Writers*)

Format of internal citations:

- This citation appears within parentheses and is placed at the end of the information taken from a source and used in the paper.
- An internal citation is placed before the punctuation mark at the end of a sentence, phrase, or clause containing an idea from a source.
Exception: A direct quote of more than four lines is set off by indenting 10 spaces from the left margin. The citation follows the ending punctuation.

Specific internal citation format:

1. Most internal citations from sources in print (like a book or magazine article) will be the author's last name and page number. (Bradlee 38)
2. If a source has two or more authors, use all last names of authors and the page number from the source. (Marquart, Olson, and Sorensen 23)
3. If you use sources by authors with the same last name, then the author's first initial and last name are used.
(M. Jones 55)
(S. Jones 14)
4. If there is more than one title by the SAME author in the works cited, use the author's last name and the title or a shortened form of the title in your citation. Use a comma between the author's name and the title.
(Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* 23)
(Frye, *Sound and Poetry* 79)
5. If a source on the works cited page has no author, use the title or a shortened form of the title.
("Caffeine" 12)
("Senior Fitness")
6. If an author's name is used in the text of the essay, then the internal citation need only include the page number.
Only Schlesinger has seen this relation (2: 776-77)
7. If the original source is not available to you, but you have the information quoted from an indirect source, the citation would be as follows: (qtd. in Drabble vii)

G. OUTLINES

You will not turn in an outline as part of an MLA research paper formally, but your teacher will probably require one as part of your research grade in class.

A **Topic Outline** is an outline of brief phrases or single words that are numbered or lettered to show the order and relative importance of your ideas.

A **minimal** outline for a paper on, say, asbestos poisoning, might look like this:

Topic--*Asbestos Poisoning*

Thesis: Asbestos poisoning is a life-threatening situation, but can be treated effectively if the symptoms are recognized early.

- I. Introduction
 - A. Definition of Asbestos Poisoning
 - B. Significance of the Study
 - C. Definition of Terms
- II. Body
 - A. Symptoms of Asbestos Poisoning
 - B. Effects of Asbestos Poisoning
 - C. Treatments
- III. Conclusion

H. Gathering the Information for the Works Cited Page.

Your *Works Cited* page will be the last page of your research paper, but if your teacher assigns the “paperless” version of the research process (not index cards), you’ll work on putting together your Works Cited page as you find your sources.

It is absolutely essential that you gather the information you’ll need to document your sources accurately and completely in order to assure that you’ll be able to find the source again should you need it in the future.



Important notes about CITATION SHORTCUTS: Most sources you’ll find on servers like ProQuest and WiseOwl provide citations (sometimes at the bottom of the article, sometimes elsewhere) that you can copy and paste onto your Works Cited page. Look for these citations.

You can also use <http://www.easybib.com> to format your citations. But use these resources thoughtfully. If your citations don’t look similar to the samples below, you may have entered something incorrectly.

YOU CANNOT PASTE ALL URLS into EASY BIB and get a correct citation. You are better off entering each piece of information into the citation generator separately.

Use the following information to check the format of your *Works Cited* entries:

IMPORTANT NOTE: All of the following information and much more can also be accessed at the website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

1. Entry for a book by one author:

Diorio, Mary Ann L. *A Student’s Guide to Nathaniel Hawthorne*.
Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 2004. Print.

[Author(s). Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium of the resource.]

2. Entry for a book by two or more authors:

Marquart, James W., Sheldon Olson, and Jonathan R. Sorensen. *The Rope, the Chair, and the Needle: Capital Punishment in Texas*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1994. Print.

[If there are more than three authors, name only the first author listed and then add *et al.*]

3. Entry for magazine, newspaper, or journal article with an author:

If the student has the hard copy of the magazine or newspaper—

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." *Time* 20 Nov. 2000: 70-71. Print.

If the student accesses the magazine or newspaper online—

Dolby, Nadine. "Research in Youth Culture." *Social Work and Society* (2008): n. pag. Web. 20 May 2009.

[The phrase "n. page" refers to the fact that there will be no page # for online periodicals.]

4. Entry for a government publication:

United States. Cong. Senate. Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. *Hearings on the Geopolitics of Oil*. 110th Cong., 1st sess. Washington: GPO, 2007. Print.

[The word "Print" at the end of the citation would be changed to Web if the publication is accessed online.]

5. Entry for an interview:

Pointer, Lawrence. Personal interview. 12 Oct. 2010.

--or--

Poussaint, Alvin F. Telephone interview. 2 Nov. 2010.

--or--

Rowling, J.K. E-mail interview. 8-12 May 2010.

6. Entry for an entire internet web site:

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2008. Web. 23 Apr. 2008.

The information above refers to

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available). *Name of Site*.
Version number. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available). Medium of publication. Date of

access.

I. Preparing the Works Cited Page

Begin the list of works cited on a new page in a word processing program (like Microsoft Word).

Notice the name of the page – WORKS CITED – and remove works from this page that you don't *actually cite* in the paper. The title- Works Cited - should be centered one inch from the top of the page. The entire page should be double-spaced throughout.

ALPHABETIZE THE LIST—Before you turn in your first completed draft, alphabetize the list by the last names of the authors (or editors); if a work has no author or editor, the entry should be alphabetized by the first word of the title other than *A*, *An*, or *The*.

If the list includes two or more works by the same author, use the author's name only for the first entry. For subsequent entries, use three hyphens followed by a period.

Don't forget to remove any works that you didn't actually use in your paper. **FOR GRADUATION PROJECT PAPERS, YOU MUST CITE AND USE A MINIMUM OF 5 SOURCES.**

INDENT AFTER THE FIRST LINE OF EACH ENTRY. – The first line of each works cited entry should NOT be indented, but any additional lines should be indented one-half inch (or five spaces).

The illustration below shows a correctly completed Works Cited page.

Works Cited
Aristotle. <i>Poetics</i> . Trans. S. H. Butcher. The Internet Classics Archive. Web
Atomic and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 13 Sept. 2007. Web. 4
Nov. 2008.
Beir, Ernst G. "Body Language." <i>Encyclopedia Americana</i> . 1998 ed. Print.
Coates, Steve. "Et Tu, Cybernetica Machina User?" <i>New York Times</i> 8 Oct.
2000, late ed.: D4. LexisNexis Academic. Web. 4 Dec. 2001.

J. Formatting the Paper

Page 1: MLA does not allow a separate title page. On the first page of the paper, students should place: name, teacher's name, the course title, and the date on separate lines against the left margin.

So page 1 of your paper should look like this:

	Jones 1
Pete Jones	
Ms. Johnson	
English III	
6 October 2010	
The American Dream	

Follow these guidelines when you format your research paper:

1. PAGE NUMBERING

Page numbers should be preceded by the student's last name in the upper right corner of each page, one-half inch below the top edge. This information can be automatically placed on each page by clicking on VIEW, then HEADER AND FOOTER in the Microsoft Word tool bar. By clicking on the # symbol, the student can automatically place page numbers on each page.

2. LENGTH, MARGINS, LINE SPACING, AND PARAGRAPH INDENTS

Papers written for the Graduation Project requirement must be a minimum of 6 FULL pages (not including the Works Cited page) and a maximum of 8 pages.

Margins should be one inch on all sides of the page.

Papers should be double-spaced throughout with no extra lines of space above or below the title of the paper or between paragraphs.

The first line of each paragraph should be indented five spaces (1/2 inch).

3. LONG QUOTATIONS

When a quoted passage takes up more than four typed lines, it should be set off from the text by indenting the entire quotation one inch (or ten spaces) from the left margin. The entire quotation should be double-spaced, and there should not be any extra space above or below it.

Quotation marks are not needed when a quotation has been set off from the text by indenting. *Students should not include many, if any, long quotations.*

4. SHORT QUOTATIONS

Most quotations used by the student should fit into this category. These quotations should be worked into the paper and set off with quotation marks.

I. Some final notes about online resources.

Today, there are many credible and useful resources online. But what you get out of them is only as good as what you put into them.

EasyBib (<http://www.easybib.com>) is a great way to get help with your citations. But make sure that you enter the information correctly. The system cannot read your mind.

Any Google search for an MLA question should turn up lots of useful sources. For instance, if you want to use a podcast as a source, but you don't know how to document that, if you Google the phrase "MLA citation for podcast" you will get plenty of references to help you.

Just be persistent, attentive to detail, and thorough, and you should do fine.