

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
RUTHERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRADES 6 - 12

Revised
JANUARY 2010

OUR GOAL:

In order to create a standard for research in the Rutherford Public School district, the following booklet has been created based on the MLA (Modern Language Association of America) style. The MLA Style is the most prevalent research format used in American colleges and universities. Rutherford students shall be required to adhere to the MLA style for all research.

THE RESEARCH PAPER/PROJECT DEFINITION:

The research paper/project is the result of inquiries a student makes on a selected topic. It is exclusively the student's creation because the paper or project is established from the student's own thoughts, or thesis, and the facts and beliefs he or she has collected from diverse sources. **"A research paper is exactly that: a paper written to reflect a search that will present information to support a point of view on a particular topic"** (University of Alberta 1).

DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM:

The MLA handbook defines plagiarism as "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" (Humanities Department 1). In order to avoid plagiarism, all students will be taught how to document direct quotations, and paraphrase facts, statistics, and original ideas not their own. Also, students must put quotation marks around everything that comes directly from the text while they are taking notes.

RUTHERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PLAGIARISM GUIDELINES:

Rutherford Public School's Plagiarism Guideline mandate "zero tolerance" towards plagiarism of any kind in Grades 7-12.

Students found to plagiarize will receive a "zero" for the assignment.

Instruction begins in Grade 6.

The Plagiarism Guidelines read as follows:

Grade 6 – Students will learn how to correctly document sources, paraphrase material, and cite sources. Teachers will create lessons that have students practice and learn how to avoid plagiarism. A mini assignment will be given to check for accuracy. No formal paper will be assigned.

Grade 7 – A review of the concepts taught in Grade 6 will take place. Students will then be held to the "zero tolerance" guidelines for all future assignments.

Grades 8-12 – All assignments that contain research, citation of sources, and or works cited pages will be graded using the "zero tolerance" guidelines for plagiarism. Students who are found to have plagiarized will receive a "zero" for the assignment.

CRITERIA FOR THE RESEARCH PAPER/PROJECT:

Research will be completed prior to the fourth marking period and at least two weeks prior to the end of a marking period. Teachers may use their discretion when assigning the weight of the research paper; however, since the research paper is a major project and quite a bit of time is spent on the process, the weight of the grade must be carefully considered. Since the research paper or project increases in difficulty and degree each grade level, the weight of the paper should also reflect this increase. Therefore, the research paper or project done on the twelfth grade level will count for more of the quarter grade than the one completed on grade eight. Interdisciplinary collaboration on research is strongly suggested, but is not mandatory.

The following is an example of the type of paper or project to be completed at each grade level 6-12*:

Grade 6 - Introduction to the Research Process: Using the Writers' Craft text, students will learn how to develop a thesis, gather appropriate sources, create an outline, and take notes from sources.

Grades 7 - Review of the components of the Research Process learned in grade 6, and write a draft of a paper (3-5 paragraphs), or incorporate skills into a report/project.

Grade 8 - Option of a research project, which includes parenthetical documentation (repeating steps learned above, and adding creative components) using the Writers' Craft text as a guide, or an essay-length (5 paragraphs) paper.

Grade 9 - Option of a research paper of essay length using the Writers' Craft text as a guide, or a performance based project using the MLA style, which includes journal entries, letters, pictures, and the creation of items such as souvenirs.

Grade 10 - Review of the Research Process using the Writers' Craft text as a guide. A paper (2 to 3 pages) will be written on a teacher generated literary topic.

Grade 11 - Continuing with what has been learned thus far, students will create a 3 to 5 page paper dealing with a literary topic that will be either teacher generated or student selected.

Grade 12 - For their senior year, students will develop a 5 to 8 page paper based on a literary topic (ex: author study, comparison of an author's work, effect of time period or life of author on a specific work).

NOTE: All special education classes will follow the above; however, the classroom teacher based on individual IEP reports will make modifications.

***At the completion of the research paper or project, all students in grades 8-12 will be required to hand in a large manila envelope or a folder which contains all the components of the paper such as an original thesis, outline, bibliography, rough draft, final copy of paper or project which includes a works cited, Xeroxed copies of all sources, and any other pertinent information which is requested by the teacher. (To avoid plagiarism, students will be instructed at the beginning of the research process that all sources will be checked.)**

This Research Methodology Booklet merely highlights the main components of the research paper. For those needing additional information, there are many sources available in texts as well as online. The MLA Handbook is an excellent guide and all teachers in grades 6 - 12 should have a copy of the most recent edition. McDougal, Littell's Writer's Craft, currently used in English classes grades 6-10, presents the MLA format in a clear and concise manner. Other sources used in the preparation of this booklet are listed at the end in the Works Cited. In addition, a **Research Paper/Project Checklist** is included at the end of this booklet, which can be used as a whole or in part for students to keep track of their progress.

The following identifies, explains, and elaborates upon the sections of the research paper or project. Please follow this guideline and feel free to reproduce it in whole or part as a student handout.

I. Selecting a Topic/Forming a Thesis

- A. Students shall be given a topic that reflects an interdisciplinary connection or is literary by nature, or is appropriate for the grade level. The topic must have the potential to be focused into a statement with a point of view, so it must be neither too broad nor too narrow.
- B. The main point or idea must be clearly expressed in a statement. The thesis statement is the purpose of the research paper.

II. Working Bibliography

- A. Following the selection of a topic and the formation of a thesis statement, a list of sources, called a working bibliography, should be compiled.
- B. Sources should be evaluated for bias, authority, and relevance and currency.

III. Note Cards*

- A. The use of note cards has proven to be an efficient way of gathering and organizing material. Effective note taking will help students with documentation and prevent plagiarism.
- B. Students may paraphrase, summarize, and directly quote sources on their note cards.
- C. Students may use print or electronic note cards (computerized format).

*See the MLA Handbook/Writers' Craft text for examples of Note Cards.

IV. Note Taking

Note taking may be used in place of note cards, especially in grades eleven and twelve. The following information on note taking is based on the fact that many colleges and universities require students to use note taking as a tool in the process of research:

There are various ways of taking notes without using note cards. The following gives an example of note taking without note cards:

A. General Note Taking Instructions

1. Locate one good source and don't waste time looking for other things.
2. Prepare your notepaper with a title and a sub topic.
3. Record MLA bibliography information for each source on a "rough" page before you begin note taking.
4. Identify notes with a source number to accurately cite the source of information.
5. Use reading strategies -- "chunk" text, pencil down, skim and scan--- to locate information that matches your sub- topics.

B. Notes Marked with Dashes

1. Use a sheet of white lined paper.
2. Use a dash before the notes.
3. Don't be too brief.
4. List source numbers in the margin in front of the notes.
5. After a day or two, sort through your notes. Cross out notes that no longer work.
6. Lastly, place the number that mirrors the sub-topic on the dash.

Example:

----Dewey achieved order for a number of libraries in the world. p. 82

---- Dewey arranged his books based upon invention of Baconian order of history. p. 125

V. The Outline

- A. Outlines are optional. If required, the outline shall be created using the MLA style.
- B. This outline will help organize ideas and the research that has been gathered. Teachers will decide whether or not the outline will be a part of the final paper.

VI. The Format of the Paper

- A. The format of the paper must be word-processed.
- B. Except for page numbers, all margins should be one inch. The beginning of paragraphs should be indented one-half inch (one tab). Long, set-off quotes should be indented one inch (two tabs) from left margin.

- C. The **entire** paper is double spaced using 12-point font, Times or Times New Roman, or Courier, Courier New, New York or Palatino.
- D. There is no title page. The student's last name and the page number will be located one half inch down from the top right hand margin. Beginning one inch from the top of the first page and flush with the left margin, have the student type his/her name, instructor's name, the course, and the date (day, month, year) on separate lines, double spacing between the lines. Double space again and center the title. Do not underline, quote, bold face, or italicize the title. Double space again and start the paper.

Example:

Jones 1

Mary Jones

Mr. Brown

English - Grade 9

8 December 2009

The Seven Wonders Of the Ancient World

- E. All pages are numbered consecutively in the upper, right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top. Students should use their last name plus page name. Example - Jones 1. The first page and the works cited pages are numbered.
- F. The paper should be paper clipped in the upper left-hand corner.
- G. Parenthetical documentation is used when citing sources.

VII. Parenthetical Documentation (Source Citation)

To avoid plagiarism, the student must provide complete documentation. The style of documentation is parenthetical. (End notes and footnotes are considered obsolete, and will not be taught in English classes. However, they may be taught in social studies and history classes where they are acceptable and used on the college level.)

- A. "If the information, idea, or statement is not common knowledge and if it came from an outside source, then (the student) must credit that source. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism" (Shepherd 40).

- B. Parenthetical citations usually contain the author's name and a page number. If the author's name is not given, the citation should include just enough information to help the reader locate the source in the alphabetized list of Works Cited.
- C. All citations, except for set off long quotes, are placed at the end of the sentence but before the end mark. For a long quote that is set off from the text, place the citation two spaces after the end punctuation.
- D. The following are examples of parenthetical citations:

1. Basic Citation

“...in the morning” (Brown 92).

2. Long Quote

...the message (Brown 106).

3. Citation with author's name in text:

Brown states ... is always true (83).

4. Citation of Works Cited list containing more than one source by some authors - include a shorter version of title:

(Smith, Chronicle 47).

5. Citation of works found in different editions:

--For novels use chapters: (Steinbeck 173: ch. 13).

--For short stories/essays use paragraphs: (Updike 47; par.8).

--For poems use lines: (Frost 33; 6-10).

--For plays use **Act: Scene:** (*Macbeth* 5:5).

--For famous plays, the author's name can be omitted.

6. Citation when no author is listed, use a shorter title: (“Dust Bowl” 53).

7. Citation of work with two or three authors: (Gibaldi and Achert 72).

8. Citation of more than three authors: (Bryant et. al. 425).

9. Citation of a quotation appearing in a source, use the abbreviation qtd. in:

(qtd. in Lewis 219).

10. Citation of non-paginated source:

(Lewis).

11. Citation of multi-volume work that is not alphabetically arranged, give volume and page number:

(Smith 2: 147)

12. Citation of more than one page:

(Smith 47-49).

VIII. Works Cited

A. The Works Cited list should be on a separate page at the end of the paper.

1. The page is numbered.
2. The words Works Cited are centered at the top margin. Double space and begin.
3. Begin each source entry at the left margin. Indent run-over lines one tab from left margin.
4. Double space within and between each entry.
5. Arrange all entries alphabetically. Do not number them.
6. If citing more than one work per author, replace the author's name in subsequent references with three hyphens.

B. The following are examples of works cited entries. Please note the punctuation within each entry and that MLA style uses double spacing between **and** within each entry. For a complete list of all sources, consult The MLA Handbook.

BOOK BY ONE AUTHOR OR EDITOR

Parker, Mary. *Hyperspace: A Scientific Study*. New York: Random House,
1999. Print.

Rafferty, John J., ed. *Reshaping Education*. Secaucus, NJ: Elementary
Publishing, 2002. Print.

BOOK BY 2 OR 3 AUTHORS OR EDITORS

Miller, Paul, and Linda A. Kerrigan. *Capital Punishment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. Print.

Rabid, Roger S., Joseph Gilman, and Peter K. Welsch, eds. *Exploring Hyperspace*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2001. Print.

BOOK BY MORE THAN 3 AUTHORS

Name the First and Add *et al.* ("and others").

Quickman, Mark, et al. *Earthquakes*. New York: Norton, 2000. Print.

2 OR MORE BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR(S)

Smith, Susan, and Robert Jones. *French Cuisine*. New York: Parker & Sons, 2001. Print.

- - -, *Global Cooking*. Boston: Hood Publishing, 2000. Print.

BOOK BY CORPORATE AUTHOR

American Medical Association. *The AMA Handbook*. New York: Bantam, 2002. Print.

PAMPHLET: TREAT IT LIKE A BOOK**WORK WITHIN A WORK**

Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*. *Black Theater: A Collection of Playwrights*.

Ed. Jane Peters. New York: Dodd, 1990. 222-76. Print.

Jones, Ann. "About Emerson." *American Essays*. New York: MacMillan, 1999: 143-49. Print.

MAGAZINE OR NEWSPAPER

Carson, Margaret. "Brain Waves." *Discover* Nov. 2001: 70-89. Print.

"Decades of Spies." *Newsweek* 3 June 1998: 1-4. Print.

Gowers, John J. "Job Seekers Today." *New York Times* 24 Mar. 2002, late ed.: A9+. Print.

Towers, Alice B. "Smoke-Free America." *Record* [Hackensack, NJ] 19 May 2000, C7-12. Print.

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION

United States. Dept. of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Occupational Outlook Handbook*.

Washington: GPO, 1998. Print.

DICTIONARY OR ENCYCLOPEDIA

If Alphabetical Arrangement, You May Omit Vol. & Page #.
Only List Edition (if stated), and Year of Publication for Familiar Encyclopedias.
List # of Vols. For Unfamiliar Encyclopedias.

"Alabaster." *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 14th ed. 1999. Print.

"Bosnia." *The Encyclopedia Americana*. 2000. Print.

Mohanty, Jitendra M. "Indian Philosophy." *The New Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropaedia*.

15th ed. 1987. Print.

Trainor, Ruth. "Medical Ethics." *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*. Ed. Warren T. Reich. 4 vols.

New York: Free, 1978. Print.

CD-ROM

Donnelly, John. "What Babies Know." *Richmond Morning News* 23 Aug. 2001: 5C.

NewsBank CD News. CD-ROM.

Kumbier, William A. "Science Fiction." *WorldBook 1997 Multimedia Encyclopedia*.

Deluxe ed. 1997 ed. CD-ROM.

Latham, Henry. "Hemingway's Style." *Discovering Authors*. Detroit: Gale, 1992. CD-ROM.

INTERVIEW

Grisham, John. Interview with Barbara Walters. *Inside Insights*. ABC. WABC, New York.

9 Jul. 1996. Television.

Jones, Harry. Personal Interview. 22 Oct. 2001.

Landers, Carolyn. Telephone Interview. 10 Nov. 2002.

PERFORMANCE

The River. Chor. Alvin Ailey. Dance Theater of Harlem. Williams Center, Rutherford, NJ.

4 Mar. 1995. Performance.

RADIO PROGRAM

"Shakespeare Putdowns." Narr. Robert Smith. *Daytime Talk*. Natl. Public Radio. WNYC,

New York. 8 May 1996. Radio.

SOUND RECORDING

Indicate Medium [Ex: CD, LP (long playing record); Audiotape; Audiocassette, etc.]

Marsallis, Branford. *Romances of Saxophone*. English Chamber Orch. Cond.

Andrew Litton. Audiocassette. CBS. 1986. CD.

TV PROGRAM

"Yes...But Is It Art?" Narr. Morley Safer. *Sixty Minutes*. CBS. WCBS, New York.

19 Sept. 1999. Television.

VIDEOCASSETTE or DVD

It's a Wonderful Life. Dir. Frank~Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore.

1946. Republic, 1988. VHS.

Medicine at the Crossroads. Prod. 13/WNET and BBC TV. PBS Productions. 2000. DVD.

INTERNET:**Electronic Book**

Nesbit, E(dith). *Ballads and Lyrics of Socialism*. London, 1908. *Victorian Women Writers*

Project. Ed. Perry Willett. Indiana U. April 1997. Web. 26 Apr. 1997.

Email

Jones, Mary E. "Re: Moose Crossings." Message to the author. 9 Sept. 2009. E-mail.

Encyclopedia

Marshall, Ed. "Tidal Waves." *Britannica Online*. Vers. 99.2. Oct. 2000. *Encyclopedia*

Britannica. 10 Mar. 2003

Magazine

Alison, Ann. "Book Battles." *Time*, 7 Jun. 2000. Web. 12 Apr. 2003.

Newspaper

Jennings, Mary. "Ethics of Human Cloning." *New York Times*. New York Times, 12 Jun. 2001, forums sec. Web. 8 Nov. 2003.

Web Site

Smith, Laura. "Genetic Engineering." *ScienceSite Online*. 2001. Web. 5 Jan. 2002.

The Research Paper/Project Check List

I. Topic _____

II. Subtopics (Can Become Keywords) (List Synonyms Where You Can)

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

III. Sources

A. At least 3 formats: print, non-print, Internet Web Sites.

B. Minimum number of sources _____.

C. Source card for each one. Use MLA style.

IV. Read/Think/Select

A. Use Boolean Operators, when you can, to connect subtopics, ideas, or keywords.

AND - All terms must be present.

OR - At least one term must be present.

NOT - Excludes specific terms.

B. Print Sources

1. Is there a useful Index?

2. Is there a good Table of Contents to help you outline your topic/organize your subtopics?

3. Is there useful, specific information for your Subtopics?

C. Web Sites (Be critical.)

1. Authority

a. Are authors listed?

b. Are credentials and/or contact through e-mail, etc., given?

2. Organization

a. Is information updated frequently?

b. Is there easy keyword searching and/or a useful Index or topic browsing?

c. Is there useful, specific information for your Subtopics?

3. Treatment

a. Is there stereotyping? Are biases easy to identify?

b. Does it show both sides of an issue, or more than one point of view?

c. Is the information accurate when compared to other print sources?

4. Ratings

a. Is the site rated? By whom?

b. What are the criteria and/or any awards given?

V. Note taking

A. At least 10 notes for each Subtopic.

B. Minimum number of notes _____.

VI. Sort and Number Notes

VII. Write Rough Draft from Notes

VIII. Type/Create/Present Finished Product

IX. Circle the information below as you check your final product:

Finished Product: Typed Paper /Project Works Cited (Using MLA Style)

Presentation: Interview Multimedia Oral Poster

 Skit/Script Typed Report with Parenthetical Documentation

Other:

Works Cited

"The Eisenberg/Berkowitz Big Six Skill Model of Information Problem-Solving." 19 Jun. 1998.

Libraries Unlimited, 1999. Print.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook*. Fourth Edition. New York: Modern Language Association, 1995. Print.

Humanities Department and the Arthur C. Banks Jr. Library. *A Guide for Writing Research Papers Based on Modern Language Association (MLA) Documentation*. 2002. 30 Jan. 2003. Print.

Stanley, Deborah B. *Practical Steps to the Research Process for High School*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1999. Print.

The Trustees of Indiana University. *Writing Tutorial Services*. "Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It". 1998. 21 Jan. 2003. Print.

University of Alberta Libraries. *Writing a Research Paper*. "The Research Paper". 2002. 30 Jan. 2003. Print.