

Research Papers for Social Studies Classes

Requirements

The student will choose the topic, within their area of study, subject to the teacher's approval. Classes have the following requirements:

World Geography: 6-7 page paper.

World History: 10 - 11 page paper.

Schedule/Due Dates

Topic and thesis statement -	10/17/08
Bibliography -	12/10/08
Note cards -	01/15/09
Outline (sentence) -	02/11/09
First draft -	03/04/09
Final paper -	04/17/09

Format

- MLA format (graded): Margins - 1" sides, top, and bottom; Font - Times New Roman, size 11 or 12; double spaced; parenthetical documentation; works cited/bibliography page; last name and page numbers at the top right of the page. Examples are shown on the next few pages. See the MLA Handbook.

Research Paper Topic and Thesis

Topic: Include the subject you've chosen and why you chose it. "Because it interests me" is **not** satisfactory. Tell me why it interests you.

Thesis Statement: Answer these questions - What purpose will you try to achieve in the paper? Do you want to describe something, explain something, argue for a certain point of view, or persuade your reader to think or do something? Your statement may change as you work on the paper but should be set before writing the final draft. It must be part of your opening paragraph. The statement provides a guide, keeping you on track with your topic. It also helps you limit the topic. For example: The Battle of Midway may be suitable for a ten to twelve page paper while all of World War II is much too large to cover in ten or twelve pages. Samples on the next page:

Ima Student

Mr. Maurais

Pennsylvania History

September 3, 2007

The Battle of Midway

Topic:

I chose the Battle of Midway because WW II is one of my favorite subjects. Midway was a very important battle and my grandfather was in the Navy, stationed on the aircraft carrier USS Hornet at Midway.

Thesis Statement:

The Battle of Midway was the turning point of the war against the Japanese in World War II. This paper will describe the planning, strategies, events, outcome, and eventual impact of this pivotal engagement.”

Bibliography Examples

The following are typical styles of entries for Bibliographies. Not every possibility is in this short list of examples; see the handbook or a teacher for others if needed. The format is taken from the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. The entries in the bibliography are in alphabetical order, last name first. Use one inch margins all around and “hanging indents” to indent the second or subsequent lines of an entry. For example:

Last Name, First Name Middle Initial. Title of the Book That You Had to Research to Complete This Wonderful Paper. Where Published: Publisher’s Name, Year.

1. A Book by a Single Author

Wilson, Frank R. The Hand: How Its Use Shapes the Brain, Language, and Human Culture. New York: Pantheon, 1998.

2. An Anthology or Compiled Resource edited by someone who’s name appears on the title page.

Feldman, Paula R., ed. British Women Poets of the Romantic Era. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1997.

3. Two or More Books by the Same Author

Wilson, Frank R. The Hand: How Its Use Shapes the Brain, Language, and Human Culture. New York: Pantheon, 1998.

- - -, The Brain: How Its Use Can Be Confusing When Facing an Overwhelming Research Topic. Chicago: Mobster Press, 2001.

4. A Book by Two or More Authors

Marquart, James W., Sheldon Ekland Olson, and Jonathan R. Sorensen. The Rope, the Chair, and the Needle: Capital Punishment in Texas, 1923-1990. Austin: U of Texas P, 1994.

5. An Article in a Reference Book (Encyclopedia or Dictionary, etc.)

“India.” New Encyclopedia Britannica. 15th ed. 1989.

6. Online Information (There are as many variations of online documentation as there are for offline resources though we will keep them as simple as possible. See the MLA Handbook or Mr. Maurais). A typical entry from an online scholarly project or information database:

Name of Project. Editor if given. Publication information, date of the publication or last update, and name of any sponsoring institution or organization. Date the resource was accessed and the network address.

For example:

Civil War Battles in the West. Ed. John P. Doe. The Civil War Project. 1998. U of Maine, Presque Isle. 20 Oct 2001 <<http://www.ume.presqueisle.edu/history/civilwar>>.

See the most recent MLA Handbook for internet examples.

Taking Research Notes

1. Its Time to Read! Now that you've finished your bibliography, its time to read the materials and gather information, quotes, and ideas to use in your paper. Here's some helpful hints to follow while reading those carefully selected sources:

- a. Take notes as you read; don't trust yourself to "jot it down later."
- b. Ask yourself questions.
- c. Write down significant phrases.
- d. Note those places your sources disagree on your subject.
- e. Record facts that seem to interest one source but not another.
- f. Write down your opinions and thoughts also. Ideas may pop into your head while reading, even ideas as good or better than some of your sources.

2. Notes, Note Cards, and More Notes. People take notes in different ways. Some people use 3 x 5 cards, putting a different thought on every card. Others write their notes in a notebook of some sort. Either method is appropriate for our classes.

- a. If you are using a notebook, use that notebook only for your research paper until the paper is done. Your notes will be neater, less confusing, and easier to find.
- b. Review your notes daily. You'll be able to find them more easily when needed and rereading them will stir up thoughts that will contribute to the final paper.
- c. What to include in your notes:
 1. A short statement in your words telling you what the thought means.
 2. Always include the bibliographic references (the same information you needed in your bibliographies).
 3. The page number where you obtained the quote or idea (you'll need it later).

4. A one word description of your note, such as: Quote, Fact, Idea, etc.

3. Notes, Either Card or Book

a. This information is what is required; how you do it and what order you put it in is up to you. MLA format is not graded for notes, but it is a good time to practice on the bibliographical information.

b. Neatness and readability are **important** and graded.

c. There is a minimum of two notes required per research paper page.

World History: 10-11 pages = 20-22 notes.

Ima Student

Mr. Maurais

U.S. History

September 3, 2002

The Sentence Outline in MLA Format

I.

A.

1.

a.

(1)

(a)

(b)

(2)

b.

2.

B.

II.

Notes:

1. Double-space every line. Have one inch margins all around. Center the title of your paper.
2. If there is an *A*, common sense tells us there must be a *B*; if a *1*, there must be a *2*; etc. Use a double – if there is no subsequent number or letter.
3. Write out your outline using short phrases first, then turn them into sentences. The process will be quicker and less painful that way. Use your topic/thesis statement as your introductory

sentence. It will help you focus on what you are writing about.

4. If possible, put those facts, quotations, and ideas that you developed from your sources (and put on your note cards) into the outline where you think they will go. Use the outline as a tool to organize the structure of the paper.

5. The outline will be graded for format and complete sentences (objective grade). There is no specific required length; though it should be extensive enough to support the length of paper you are writing (subjective grade). Make an honest effort; all the work you put into this will pay off when you write the paper.