9th Grade Research Paper

All 9th grade students in Lincoln Public Schools are required to do a research paper using MLA formatting. The purpose of this paper is for students to demonstrate his or her writing and research skills to help teachers assess if students need further writing instruction next year. It will also help assess what specific writing and research skills need to be further developed this semester.

For this assignment, you will write a paper in which you research any topic of your choosing. Research shows, and I know because I did a lot of it, that we go to the Internet with specific purpose, like to answer a question. While it might seem easy to come up with a one-word topic and jump right into the world wide web to find out all we can about it, that is actually a daunting task. How many hits would you get for “Cesar Chavez”? 32,900,000. Are you going to go through all 32 million hits? No.

What should you do instead? You might have a topic of interest in mind, but this paper will be a lot easier if you turn your topic into questions. Think about what you would like to know about your topic. Why is Cesar Chavez important to our history? Why is he controversial? Why was Chavez successful in helping immigrant workers when others were not? A lot of questions can come from developing the 5 Ws: who, what, when, where, and why. Some questions you may only be able to ask if you have minimal background knowledge on your topic already. (Ask others to help you generate some questions.) Some questions may not have answers because your questions are random due to a lack of background knowledge. (Again, do not be afraid to ask others to help you create questions.)

Once you have generated some questions, avoid using the WWW to do your research. LHS and all universities have access to databases. Databases are an excellent source for researching because they are easy to navigate, trustworthy, and timely. Some of the databases that LHS has on our media center website are even the same ones that universities pay for, too. Always start your research at the databases. Spend some time just navigating them to get used to using them. Your English teachers at LHS will always tell you to start there for research: The sooner you get comfortable using them, the easier your research experiences will be.

For this paper, you will need to locate at least three sources for your paper. All of the sources you take information from to use in your paper will need to be entered into a Works Cited page. The easiest way to write up a Works Cited page is to use Noodletools (or EasyBib). Be sure to keep track of where (which database or website) you find your source from so you can easily and accurately make your Works Cited page.

After you have researched the answers to your questions, you will need to read your research and generate an outline for the paper. This expository research paper will follow the typical structure of a 3x3 outline or a 5-paragraph essay. Once your research, reading, and outlining are done, you will begin to write your paper. The final product needs to be at least 1000 words long and use MLA style. Please do not start writing your paper until after we have had our instructional lessons on MLA style and other writing lessons. Students will also upload his or her papers to turnitin.com to check for plagiarism.

Before you write ask yourself these general questions:
1. Who is my audience?
2. For what purpose am I writing?
3. What requirements do I need to fulfill?
4. What is my timeline for completing the work?

Outline a 3X3 expository essay or 5-paragraph essay
*You will need to know Roman Numerals.

I) Introduction
   a) attention getter
   b) claim (the thesis or statement of argument)
   c) forecast (lists major points & is a separate sentence from claim)

II) First point
    a) transition
    b) main idea/point
    c) research
    d) analysis
*In the writing itself, the research and analysis may be intertwined

III) Second point
     a) transition
     b) main idea/point
     c) research
     d) analysis

IV) Third point
    a) transition
    b) main idea/point
    c) research
    d) analysis

V) Conclusion
   a) restate claim
   b) summarize points
   c) connect back to the attention getter
   d) zinger or memorable sentence
Citing Source in a Research Paper Using MLA Style

* Purdue OWL website is a great resource!

**Purpose of citing sources**
There are two main purposes for using either MLA or APA (or Chicago or Turabian). The first, and most important, is to build your ethos as the writer. Using research and giving credit to the sources helps establish that you, as the writer, are the expert and trustworthy with this information. The second purpose is for the reader. The reader should be able to find the sources you cite if they want to. A reason a reader might want to do this is twofold: he or she is intrigued by a source you used and wants to read the whole article, or the reader wants to double-check the validity of a source you used. Either way, using a standard format to cite sources makes it easy for everyone to read the Works Cited page (or Bibliography for APA) and easily access information.

Modern Language Association (MLA)- humanities, literature, language
American Psychological Association (APA)- science, research

**In-text and parenthetical**
Every time you use information from a source you must give it credit. There are two ways to give credit to your source: in-text and parenthetical. For both ways you should always try to include the author’s last name and page number(s). You may list more information for in-text citations; you may include other information if neither author’s name nor page numbers are not available. Notice in the examples below where the citations are.

**In-text citation example:**
Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).
Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).
On page 263, Wordsworth investigated Romantic poetry’s “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.”

**Parenthetical citation example:**
Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

**When to cite**
You will give a citation, either in-text or parenthetical, with every chunk of information that goes with that source. In-text citation will go at the beginning of a chunk; however, parenthetical citations will go at the end of a chunk. You will re-cite a source if you use information from it at a later point in the paper.

- You cite source A, then you talk about what source A said. Then you want to talk about source B information. You must then site source B and give information. Afterwards, you want to go back to something from source A, cite source A again.
- The two New Mexico towns where Rudolfo Anaya grew up, Pastura and Santa Rosa, is where he gets his inspiration for his writing (Con Davis-Undiano). In fact, for the past twenty years, he has sat in his study for two or three hours each weekday morning with a shelf full of New Mexican artifacts and a glass window facing the Rio Grande Valley (Clark). His inspiration has come from the land around him, as he calls it the “spirit of the place” (Latinopia Word Rudolfo Anaya), and also the people. “Much is in the blood, because the blood has memory, memory that has been imprinted, encoded, from the past--the whispers of the blood are stories” (Con Davis-Undiano). Anaya believes that the people and land around him inspire his stories and it is his work to tell the story. As he reflected on his life for Bless Me, Ultima, he found connections to his childhood in both people and place but wanted to go deeper with meaning, symbols, and images (Latinopia Word Rudolfo Anaya). The themes Anaya grapples with in his texts are “spirituality and healing; Chicano tradition and myth; the sacredness of the land; the role of shaman-like figures as mentors and guides; and the quest for personal communal and cultural identity” (Clark).
Can you identify what information goes to what source in the following paragraph?

- While *Bless Me, Ultima* has been recognized for its “cultural uniqueness” and accredited for its use of Chicano characteristics, but not everyone has been so appreciative (Kanoza). In 2005, a school in Colorado gave all copies to two parents who complained about the profanity in the book; the parents threw the copies in the trash. In 2009, a school in California banned the book from English classes after a complaint from one parent of profanity and anti-Catholic ideation (“Banned Book Week”). In another California town, one whose makeup is ⅔ Latino, it is no longer in the classroom or on the summer reading list. One mother complained to the superintendent the book’s themes “undermine the conservative family values in our home.” The removal took place before the superintendent had finished reading the book. These should come as no surprise since the novel made the topped banned books of the 1990s as number 75. It has been banned in other states, such as New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas (Mehta).

**Citations**

Use your Works Cited page to determine what information to use in the paper. Sources will be cited twice, because they will be listed in detail in the Works Cited page as well as briefly mentioned in the essay. Be sure to make your Works Cited page before you start researching or the citations in your paper will not be correct.

Use variety when citing in your paper. Try not to always use parenthetical citations or all in-text citations. There can also be a combination of both in one sentence. A simple way to set up an in-text citation is to say, “According to…” Starting all of your citations this way, though, is boring. Here are some other variations. However, remember, whichever variety you choose to always try to include the author’s last name and page numbers when available.

- According to the [kind of source] *Title*, published [date], it *states*…
- The [kind of source] *Title*, published date *explains*…
- The [kind of source] *Title*, published date *details*…
- In the [kind of source] …
- In the [date] edition of the *Title*, it *articulates*
- “[some information from source],” as explained in/on the [kind of source] *Title* from [date], “…”

Here are some synonyms to the word “states”:

- Mentions
- Tells
- Expresses
- Makes known
- Reports
- Puts forth
- Contends
- Maintains
- Paints a picture
- Writes
- Identifies
- Says
- States
- Explains
- Details
- Identifies
- States
- Explains
- Details
- Informs
- Chronicles
- Articulates
- Claims
- Recounts
- Discloses
- Ascertains

**Missing information**

What should you do if a source does not list an author or the source is an online edition, thus it does not have pages? This is why it is important to do your Works Cited page first. Ultimately, you will use the information gathered in your WC page. If the source does not list these two crucial things, you will cite the source using the first word(s) listed in the WC page. If the first words are in quotes or italicized in the WC page, you will also do that to it in the paper. If the first thing listed in the WC page for a source is a long title, such is the case in the example below, you may shorten the title for the parenthetical citation.

**Example of entry in Works Cited page**


**Parenthetical citation using the WC information**
We see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has "more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change" ("Impact of Global Warming").

In-text citation using the WC information

In the article, "The Impact of Global Warming in North America," we see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has "more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change."

**Punctuation**

Punctuation always goes on the inside of quotation marks with one exception- parenthetical citations. There is not a good way to explain this, so study these examples. “Blah blah” (author #).

Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).

The authors state, "Tighter gun control in the United States erodes Second Amendment rights" (Smith, Yang, and Moore 76).

“Much is in the blood, because the blood has memory, memory that has been imprinted, encoded, from the past--the whispers of the blood are stories” (Con Davis-Undiano).

The themes Anaya grapples with in his texts are “spirituality and healing; Chicano tradition and myth; the sacredness of the land; the role of shaman-like figures as mentors and guides; and the quest for personal communal and cultural identity” (Clark).

His inspiration has come from the land around him, as he calls it the “spirit of the place” (Latinopia Word Rudolfo Anaya), and also the people.

**Anomalies**

There are certain situations in which there are specific rules for citing sources that are rarely used but still important to know. You will need to research these situations.

- A source with multiple authors
- More than one source that has the same last name
- More than one source by the same author
- Citing a source that is more than X number of quoted words
- Citing an indirect source (source within a source)
- Multiple sources to be cited in a parenthetical source

**Paraphrasing vs. Quoting**

Just like you want to use variety in your word choice, also use variety in what you choose to quote or paraphrase. Directly quoting too much makes a paper a cut and paste. Be sure when you paraphrase that you are putting the source in your own words. Simply deleting a word or changing one word is not enough. When paraphrasing, you must change word choice, sentence structure and order, and make deletions. Turnitin.com will help you see how well you are paraphrasing. A good rule of thumb is no more than 150 quoted words in a paper.

**Formatting the paper**

The whole paper (including the heading and title) should be double-spaced in Times font with a size of 12-point. The heading should be in the top left corner and listed in this order: your name, the teacher’s name, the course title, and the date (5 February 2015). The title is centered after the heading. The title is not italicized, underlined, or otherwise made different from the rest of the text style (unless a title of book, etc, is in the title, EX: Animal Farm as a Revolutionary Endeavor). The first letter of all important words are capitalized in the title (as they are also on the Works Cited page). A header is on every page ½ inch from
the top right that includes your last name and the page numbers. Each new paragraph should be indented (not 5 spaces in) ½ inch. MLA asks for only one space between sentences unless otherwise noted by teacher; either way is acceptable to Aten. Reference online sources when unsure of how this should look; Purdue OWL is also an excellent reference for this.