M.D.H.S. Style Manual

1. TOPIC ASSIGNMENT AND TOPIC SELECTION

A. If You Have Been Assigned A Specific Topic In An Assignment:
   - read the question or assignment carefully
   - underline key words or phrases
   - check a dictionary for connotations of words that have several meanings
   - read the list of terms of instruction
   - limit your topic if it is broad or general
   - ask yourself all the questions you can think of that apply to this topic. Have classmates ask you questions as well. Ask about the origins of the situation or object, its parts, the relationship of the parts to the whole, causes, effects, implications, etc. Find your specific approach to this topic
   - decide the audience for whom you are writing
   - write a statement of purpose

B. If You Are Required To Select A Topic:
   - read the question or assignment carefully
   - underline keys words or phrases
   - check a dictionary for connotations of words that have several meanings, for language variations, for accents and/or gender
   - read the list of terms of instruction
   - try to choose a topic that appeals to you. You may want to consider a topic with which you are familiar and attempt to broaden your knowledge. Or, you may choose a topic that you know little about and wish to explore this area. Regardless, choose a topic that will provide a POSITIVE challenge, you may be working on it for some time.
   - adjust your focus on your topic so that it fits the criteria of the assignment
   - you may wish to do some preliminary research to ascertain the availability of resources
   - write a statement of purpose
C. Understanding The Expectations Of The Wording Of Your Assignment:

Various instructional words have very specific meanings and you will encounter a variety of them throughout your academic career. Always clarify the teacher's interpretation of the instructional words in the assignment. The following is a list of generally accepted definitions for instructional words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyse</td>
<td>Break down and examine all parts or elements of and explain relationships between parts. This pattern is used when describing the steps or stages of a process. You will usually describe the process in chronological order, step-by-step.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause and Effect</td>
<td>Trace a result back to its source and look for both immediate and ultimate causes and results. Find a system of organizing the causes and effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Identify the categories within a topic and sort data into these categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Explain the differences and similarities, concentrating on the similarities. Use specific examples to be clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Explain the differences, again using specific examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Explain the meaning of, or identify the main characteristics. Usually, a definition includes a classification and one or two identifying characteristics. Avoid the use of &quot;is when&quot; or &quot;is where&quot; when writing a definition. Make sure to give the limits of the definition. Example: amulet - an ornament worn as a charm against evil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Recount, characterize, sketch, or relate in sequence of story form.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluate | Carefully appraise the problem, citing both advantages and limitations. Emphasize the appraisal of authorities and, to a lesser degree, your personal evaluation.

Explain  | Clarify, interpret, and spell out the material you present. Give reasons for differences of opinion or of results, and try to analyse causes.

Identify | Capture the identity of giving one or two main distinguishing or essential characteristics.

Illustrate | 1. Explain or make clear by using examples, comparisons or facts. 2. Draw a diagram or sketch.

Justify | Prove or give reasons for decisions or conclusions, taking pains to be convincing with examples.

Outline | Trace ideas in order by following main ideas, supporting ideas, and details in the order in which they have been presented.

Prove | Establish that something is true by citing factual evidence or giving clear logical reasons.

Relate | Show how things are related to, or connected with, each other or how one causes another, correlates with another, or is like another.

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D. Writing A Statement Of Purpose

A statement of purpose is a sentence which states our intentions for the essay. It clarifies whether you wish to inform, persuade or entertain your reader, and gives some indication as to how you will approach your topic.

E. What Type Of Paper Are You Writing?

There are a variety of ways to communicate through writing. Some are very loose and unstructured; others are very formal and require considerable organization and research.
Where most students tend to concern themselves with the length of the paper, less consideration is given to the type of paper. This is bad. Ask your teacher to give you clear instructions as to what type of paper you are writing. Some examples of various papers are:

a) **The Report**
This form of writing requires you to communicate facts, data, etc., without original thought or opinion.

b) **The Thesis Essay**
This form of writing will require you to state your thesis and then to develop your arguments to substantiate your point of view. You will select facts and arrange arguments designed to convince your reader that your thesis is valid.

c) **The Discussion**
This form of writing requires you to discuss the significance or importance of a particular concept. This will require a clear definition of the problem followed by presentation of information which deals with ALL sides of the question.

d) **The Formal/Research Essay**
This form of writing will require a great amount of thought and research before you begin writing. Your research will help you focus on a thesis or a central idea. Your work will be detailed and organized, including footnotes and bibliography. This is a more elaborate product than the thesis essay. It should include material from secondary sources. This assignment may require you to keep a log of your progress and to confer with your subject teacher as you proceed.

II. **RESEARCH**

No matter what kind of essay you are writing, it will involve research. Your subject teacher can indicate which type or research is required in a particular subject area.

**Primary Research**
This occurs when you yourself make some observations on a particular topic. You may design questionnaires, experiments, or interviews to help you gather data first-hand about an idea you wish to explore, but
essentially that idea came from you applying your knowledge to a new situation.

**Secondary Research**
This requires you to consult other sources than your own knowledge: newspapers, magazines, documents, journals, encyclopaedias, books. You consult those sources not just to obtain facts, but to learn what others think or know about your topic. Your essay may contain sections in which you cite these authorities to help prove your point; that requires correct documentation.

**Plagiarism:**
Plagiarism is a very serious offence. It involves passing off as your own someone else’s words or ideas without giving credit to the author. Even if you paraphrase the ideas, you must identify your source for your readers. You can best avoid plagiarism by keeping organized notes during your research.

**Note taking:**
You will find it most convenient to gather the important information about your source the first time you use it to gather information.

You will need to record the following bibliographical information:
- the title and edition
- the author and/or editor
- the publisher
- the place and date of publication
- the volume number (if a magazine or journal)

In addition, as you take notes from the source, note carefully the page number from which a useful quotation or fact was taken. You may also wish to include the library from which you obtained the source, and the call number, if a book.

Some researchers use a separate index card or piece of paper for each source they consult, and write the appropriate bibliographical information on it. Computers now make it easy to create a data base or each consulted source. Whatever system you use, it is important to keep sources separate and record all pertinent information.

If, while you are researching, other ideas occur to you, write them own in a different colour to clarify which are your ideas and which came from another source.
Remember that secondary research is intended to support your main points, not substitute for them.

III. THE THESIS

If the paper you will be writing does not require you to write a thesis, then you can skip over most of this section. However, you should know that a thesis is to the essay what a topic sentence is to a paragraph. Your writing will improve if you understand the principles of developing a thesis. Your thesis will provide you with a focus for your writing and define the boundaries and scope for your supporting arguments. It is important to have a clear thesis prior to writing your first draft.

A. What Is A Thesis?

A thesis is a single sentence that shows your position on a particular issue. This position will be made clear by the development of arguments and the presentation of evidence which proves the thesis to be valid. Your teacher can provide you with examples specific to your subject area and the nature of the assignment.

B. How Do You Support A Thesis Statement?

Ask yourself “What has caused you to think this statement to be correct?” Write down 5 or 6 responses. Choose 3 or 4 that you can best answer. The answers become the arguments you will develop to support your point of view.

C. Outlining Your Essay

Your essay will include an introduction, a body and a conclusion. Your aim in the introduction is two-fold:

a) to capture the reader’s attention and
b) to state your thesis.

The most common way to do this is to begin with a broad general statement about your topic, then narrow it down to your statement of thesis. This places your thesis in the last sentence of your introduction where it will receive the most emphasis.

In the body of your essay, you will develop the argument which supports your thesis. First, decide in what order you will present your arguments. Place each argument in the body in a paragraph of its own:

a) state your point directly and positively in the first sentence of the paragraph
b) explain, clarify, qualify, amplify or elaborate on your point

c) give evidence in the form of a quotation, a reference, or paraphrase information you have found in your research

d) interpret or explain how the evidence relates to the point you were making.

Your conclusion will restate your thesis in different words and then move out to a more general concluding statement. However you structure it, be certain your conclusion relates to your introduction.

D. How Do You Arrange Your Arguments?

Your outline may indicate an obvious arrangement of arguments. Try to choose an organization that best suits your topic. Some possibilities are:

- general to specific
- most important to least important
- most familiar to least familiar
- chronological order

IV. DOCUMENTATION

Because you are borrowing the words, facts, or ideas of others when you do research, you must tell readers that you have borrowed the material and from where you have borrowed it. To make sure your work is honest rather than plagiarized; you must acknowledge all borrowed material in two locations:

1. **with in-text parenthetical citations** within your essay, and,

2. **with an alphabetized list of your sources** on a separate page at the end of your essay.

*You must give credit to the author of anything you use*
in your essay, not only direct quotations and paraphrases, but also opinions and ideas, and facts or figures (unless the material is widely known, such as a date).

Teachers require special documentation styles or formats in their students’ essays. In the past, this has meant using either numbered footnotes at the bottom of each page or numbered endnotes at the end of the essay, followed by a bibliography listing all sources. Footnotes and endnotes have been replaced with the more modern technique of using embedded citations (also known as in-text parenthetical citations) within the text of the essay. These citations are placed at the end of a quotation or paraphrased sentence and are placed in parentheses. An embedded citation serves two purposes. The citation tells readers that the material is borrowed, and it also refers readers to more detailed information about the source so that they can locate it.

The older term, Bibliography, has been replaced by Works Cited or References because sources now usually include electronic and visual material as well as print sources.

The two documentation styles used most often are:

Modern Language Association (MLA) which is used for English, history, the arts, and languages. This style gives authors’ names and page numbers for citations which are embedded in the essay, and then has a Works Cited list, containing full bibliographic information, at the end of the essay.

American Psychological Association (APA) which is used for science, the social sciences, business, and mathematics. This style gives authors’ names, publication dates, and page numbers for citations which are embedded in the essay, and then has a References list, containing full bibliographic
information, at the end of the essay.

For each research assignment, ask your teacher which documentation style should be used. Examples from the MLA Style are given below. Examples of the APA style are available in the school library.

**MLA Documentation Style**

**EMBEDDED CITATIONS**

**Format:**

The author's last name and the page number from which the quotation, paraphrase, or idea is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference must appear in your Works Cited list. The author’s name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation, but the page number should always appear in the parentheses.

**Examples:**

**Direct Quotation --- One Author:**

Some argue that “a dream is the fulfillment of a wish” (Freud 154). Freud states that “a dream is the fulfillment of a wish” (154).

**Paraphrase of Author’s Idea --- One Author:**

The historian, Crane Brinton, believes that the French and Russian revolutions had similar causes. (Brinton 155).

**Direct Quotation - More Than One Work by the Same Author:**

“There is room enough in anyone’s backbone for too much duplicity” (Laurence, Jest 182).

**Long quotation:**

Place quotations longer than four lines in a block of lines and omit the quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line,
making sure you indent. Single-space the quotation. Your citation should come after the closing punctuation mark.

Ralph and the other boys finally realize the horror of their actions:

The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to the first time on the island; great shuddering spasms of grief began to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other boys began to shake and sob too. (Golding 186)

Direct Quotation --- Plays:

When quoting from plays, cite the act, scene, and line numbers for Shakespeare's plays, and the page number, act, and scene (if any) for other plays.

Later in King Lear Shakespeare has the disguised Edgar say, "The prince of darkness is a gentleman" (3.4.147).

In Death of a Salesman, Linda defends Willie Loman by stating:

He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He's not allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person. (Miller 56; act 1).

MLA Style: Preparing Your Works Cited List

This list, placed on a separate piece of paper at the end of your essay, should include all the sources you have quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate any sources you cite. Each
source you cite in your essay must appear in your Works Cited List.

General Rules:

- Arrange your sources in alphabetical order by the last name of the author.
- List the author by last name, follow it with a comma, and then first name.
- If a source has more than one author, invert only the first author's name, then continue listing other authors.
- If a source has no author, put it in the list by title. When putting it in alphabetical order, ignore 'A', 'The' or 'An' in the title.

'A', 'The' or 'An' in the title.
- You may choose to underline the title or to use italics. Be consistent by using one form only in your Works Cited List. Both forms are correct. Examples which follow will consistently be underlined.
- Indent second and third lines five spaces.
- Double-space between entries.
- Capitalize each word in the titles of books, articles, etc., not including 'A', 'The', or 'An' if they appear in the middle of the title.

'An' if they appear in the middle of the title.
- For well-known encyclopedias, it is not necessary to list the publisher or place of publication.
- Usually it is only necessary to list the edition number (if any) and the publication date.
- If you are listing more than one source by the same author, put the sources in alphabetical order by title, and instead of repeating the author's name, use three hyphens (- - -).
MLA Style Works Cited List: Basic Forms for Sources in Print

BOOKS
Follow the general format shown below and in the examples:

Author(s). Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

One author:


Two authors:


More than two authors:


No author given:


Book by an Editor:


A part of a book, such as an essay in a collection:


Print encyclopedia with author given:

**Print encyclopedia article, with no author given:**


**Government Publication:**


**Pamphlet:**


**A translated work:**


**A novel or a play from a book that is a collection of several novels or plays:**


**MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS OR JOURNALS**

**Format:**

Author(s). “Title of article.” *Name of Magazine*. Day Month Year: Page Numbers.

**Magazine article with author given:**


**Newspaper article, with author given:**


**Newspaper article, with no author given:**

**MLA Style Works Cited List: Basic Forms for Electronic Sources**

**BASIC FORMS FOR CD-ROM AND COMPUTER DISK SOURCES**

Treat sources on CD-ROM or diskette the same as you would for sources in print, with two main additions: the medium ("CD-ROM, "Diskette") without quotation marks, and the distributor of the electronic work, if one is given, as well as the publisher.

**Encyclopedia article on CD-ROM, with no author given:**


**Encyclopedia article on CD-ROM, with author given:**


**CD-ROM Periodical Database:**


**CD-ROM Newspaper Article Database:**


**BASIC FORMS FOR ONLINE SOURCES**

**Note:** If it is available, list the date of the latest revision of the site. It is also necessary to list your date of access because online sources are often updated and information available at one date may not be available at a later date. Be
sure to include the complete address for the site, and enclose the address in <angled carets> so that the address is clear.

**ONLINE ENCYCLOPEDIAS**

**Article in an online encyclopedia, with no author:**


**Article in an online encyclopedia, with author:**


**ONLINE NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES DATABASE SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**Format:**

Author. "Article Title." **Original Source of Article** Date of original source: page numbers. **Product name.** Name of Library subscribing to the service. Date of access <electronic address of subscription product>.

**A magazine article found in an online subscription database:**


**A newspaper article found in an online subscription database:**


**A reference source found, in an online subscription database (no author)**

WEB PAGES ON THE INTERNET

Example:
Author(s). Name of Page. Date of Posting/Revision [if available]. Date of Access <electronic address>.

A personal or professional Web site, no date of posting available:


A personal or professional Web site, with date of posting available:


MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS ON THE WEB (NOT ON ONLINE DATABASES)

Format:
Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Journal Issue or Year: Pages. Date of Access <electronic address>.

Example:


Online Government Publication:


DISCUSSION LISTS AND NEWSGROUPS

A Usenet Group:
E-MAIL MESSAGES
Author(s) name. “Title of message.” E-mail. Date.

Personal e-mail message:

ONLINE IMAGES, VIDEO, AND AUDIO CLIPS
Format:
"Description or title of image, video, or audio clip." Date of posting. Type
of image. Retrieval date <Internet address>.

Example:
2002 <ftp://explorer.arc.nasa.gov/pub/SPACE/GIF/ s31-
04-015.gif>.

OTHER TYPES OF SOURCES

VIDEOCASSETTE OR DVD
Format:
Title. Director (if known), and Producer (if known). (Date). Title. Format. Distributor, Date.

Example:

Video, CBC News in Review:


DVD:

TELEVISION OR RADIO PROGRAMME

Format:
Episode Title. Name of Program. Format. Name of network. Local station, city. Date.

Example:

AUDIO RECORDING, TAPE OR CD

Example:

IMAGES

Slide/Transparency:

Cartoon:

Map:

ORIGINAL WORKS OF ART

As Viewed at a Museum or Art Gallery:

As Viewed in a Book:
1987.

**LIVE EVENT**

**Stage Play:**


**Concert:**


**Interview:**


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**MLA Style: Sample Essay Showing Embedded Citations**

**Reducing Acid Rain: A Success Story?**

Acid rain is an environmental issue that affects plant and animal life, lakes and rivers, buildings and structures, and human beings. Precipitation that contains acidic gases such as sulphur dioxide or nitrogen oxide has the potential to cause serious environmental problems. Since the 1960’s scientists have studied the harmful results of acid rain and looked for ways to reduce harmful atmospheric pollutants (Howard and Johnston 16). In recent years, efforts to reduce the negative effects have been successful. People have recognized acid rain as a serious environmental threat and have taken steps to stop it (Anderson 121).

Laws reducing air pollution have helped to reduce the
initial causes of acid rain. In the 1970s a drop in the fish population and changes in lakes and forests alerted environmentalists to the problem (Lucas). In response, the federal and provincial governments together created the Eastern Canada Acid Rain Program, aimed at reducing the amount and type of pollutants allowed into the atmosphere (Environment Canada). In 1991 the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement was signed, designed to control air pollution that would move from one country to another. A recent report states that “in the Great lakes region, there has been a 76% reduction in toxic substances and that greater numbers and diversity of wildlife, including frogs, turtles muskrats and herons are reappearing in the area” (Environment Canada).

Public awareness of the dangers of acid rain to the environment has led to voluntary measures that have a positive effect. Some large corporations have used technology to control dangerous emissions and are now using energy more efficiently. Other companies have done their part by inventing and manufacturing environmentally friendly products used by both industry and individuals (Lucas). There are many things that ordinary people are doing in their homes and yards and while shopping and travelling, to reduce acid rain emissions.

Many people automatically turn off lights and electrical equipment, reduce their driving and select public transportation or carpool, take up sports that do not require the use of fuel, make responsible choices when shopping, recycle at home and at work, and express opinions to elected officials regarding environmental policies. (Ferguson)
MLA STYLE: SAMPLE ‘WORKS CITED’ LIST


A Note about Annotated Resource Lists

Sometimes your teacher will require an Annotated Works Cited list either when the project is completed or during Stage 2 when you are locating and selecting resources.

Set up your list in the same way as in the example above, but include an annotation of about five lines for each entry, which gives the following information:

- The author's background and qualifications (this may be difficult for Web sites)
- The author's thesis/point of view
- Details about the specific information present in the source
- A comment on whether the source is biased
- A comment on the usefulness of the resource

(The above sections on documentation and the MLA Style are taken from: 2003, Toronto District School Board. Student Research Guide.)
V. THE FINAL COPY - GENERAL LAYOUT

A. Paper
8 1/2 x 11 typed, double spaced, one side of unpunched, unlined white paper. Retain a copy of your paper.

B. Title Page
State title of the paper, teacher's name, your name and the date. Course code and section should also be included.

C. Table of Contents
Not always necessary. Check with your teacher.

D. Page numbering
All pages are numbered consecutively beginning with the second page of the body of the essay. Number the pages of the main text in Arabic numerals, placed in the upper right-hand corner. Pages before the beginning of the text should be numbered in lowercase Roman numerals in the upper right-hand corner.

E. Headings
When using sections and subsections, follow this guide:
• centre spaced underlined, for major headings
• side spaced underlined, for minor headings
• there should be no red underlining

F. Margins
Left and top of page 2.75 cm. Right and bottom 2.5 cm.

G. Spacing
Double spaced throughout, except for longer quotations which are single spaced.

H. Title
The title appears on the first page of the essay. Centre the title 5 cm from the top of the page. Capitalize, but do not underline your title.

I. References
Include endnotes, then bibliography as the final pages of the paper.
VI. INDEPENDENT STUDY CONFERENCE

The Conference is a discussion that occurs either between the teacher and student or students at different times during the process of the independent study.

A. The context of the conference will be relative to the current stage of your ISP. Because an ISP is a progression of stages, conferences early in the project may deal with:
   • topic selection
   • narrowing the topic
   • setting goals/objectives
   • determining a plan of action (process)
   • format
   • research

B. Towards completion of the project, conferences may deal with:
   • editing, revision
   • process evaluation (keeping students "on track")
   • format
   • clarifying concerns

Your subject teacher must inform you of the following:
   • number and dates of conference
   • format
   • conference length
   • expected stages to be complete
   • any items required at the interview

C. Tips for Students:
   • be on time
• be an expert on your topic and be confident about what you know
• be prepared with any questions you have about your topic
• be prepared to summarize orally your topic
Take notes on what your teacher says about your topic and follow up on any research suggestions made. Remember that the interview isn’t only for teacher evaluation; it should also help you work out difficulties with your topic.

VII. PREPARING FOR A PRESENTATION

Many students feel insecure about facing their peers to give a seminar or other presentation; however, students who prepared their work conscientiously and who follow these guidelines will breeze through their presentations with ease. Read on for the secrets of success!
• Know your text. Be able to go to specific portions of the material to support points you wish to make.
• Don’t ever chew gum or eat while presenting.
• Don’t ever read a presentation. Eye contact is essential for presenters to gauge whether or not the listeners are following the material.
• Rather than taking a sheaf of notes, take a clear and simple outline which states the few points you wish to make.
• Relax. Everyone will be in the same position sooner or later. To prepare, you might try deep breathing.
• Don’t become so fixated on what you convey that you alienate the participation of others. Remember that the purpose of your presentation is to discuss the material and the issues that it raises with the members of the class. The presentation is not for the teacher.
• Although you want to encourage discussion, you must control it.
• Always bring the class back to a specific point you want to make.
• Remember that you are interpreting, not rehashing, the information. Examine what the writer says.
• Talk to your audience. Be knowledgeable enough about your topic to jump around it when you talk. Don’t become stuck on chronological sequence.
• Use your voice to its best advantage. Consider volume, tone, pitch, and inflection when conveying your material. All of these can help you emphasize a point.
• Leave your listeners with a definite impression of your topic in about four major points. Naturally, there will be other points to make, but keep reiterating the major ones.
• To help listeners make notes, show your outline on an overhead or on the board so that they know what to expect.
• Encourage class participation and welcome criticism of points you have made. This strategy may start an argument that makes your seminar truly interesting.
• Radiate energy and enthusiasm. These are contagious and will allow your listeners to become involved in your presentation.
• Book any necessary A-V equipment well ahead of time, and be sure you are familiar with its use.
• A video is a tool to help you convey aspects of your topic; it should not comprise the whole presentation. Lead into the video by suggesting what the class should look for, and summarize what you hope they noticed.
• Utilize pictures, posters and diagrams.