

Name: _____ Homeroom _____

Due date: _____

Research on the Hilltop

Researching a topic requires essentially three skills:

- Finding the best and truest of what has been written and said about that topic
- Doing the above most quickly
- Giving proper credit to the sources you use to write about the topic.

This research packet has been developed to help you with the *process* of researching. **YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO HAND IN THIS PACKET WITH ALL OF YOUR NOTECARDS!**

Research can be fun and it can be very frustrating. You're searching for information and many times must *re-search* when you come up to a dead end. Search and re-search.

The Internet has made research a little easier, but also a lot more difficult. There is a lot of *bad* information out there! At City Honors, your Research Queen, Mrs. Holden, encourages the use of books and databases before heading to the big bad world of the Google.

If you are on a schedule, you need to decide how you'll spend your research time to get the job done most efficiently. This research guide shows you not only how to find what you want quickly, but also how to make your plan for finding only what you need, not whatever you stumble upon while surfing the Internet or flipping through books.

Finally, this research guide shows you how to keep track of what you find, and how to give credit to others who have studied and published materials about your topic before you. You will use 3x5 index cards to do this. We make bibliographies not only out of respect (and because law requires us to), but also to help others find the sources we used to complete our research. Sometimes the order of items in a bibliography is hard to remember, so we hope the examples in the guide will help.

1. *Understanding the Assignment*

Answer the questions in the section below in order to make sure you understand the assignment.

- A. What is the general topic of the assignment?
- B. How many sources will I need?
- C. What is the final product (paper, poster, oral report, etc.)?
- D. Is there a set length to the project? If so, what is it?
- E. When is each component of my assignment due?

2. *What Makes a Good Topic?*

Ask Yourself the Following Questions:

- A. Is this topic PERTINENT?
 - Does it have to do with the subject at hand?
 - If the assignment is to research fruits grown in Kentucky, don't choose to research "bananas" - it is not pertinent.
- B. Is it RICH?
 - Can you find enough information on it?
 - Don't research "Women jockeys who have won the Triple Crown" if there are none.
- C. Is it NARROW ENOUGH for the assignment?
 - Don't choose "Viruses" for a two page science paper on "Diseases." Choose, instead, "Measles."

3. *Brainstorming for a Topic*

A. Brainstorm a list of topics that interest you and that fit the parameters of the assignment. List them:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

B. Consider which topic interests you most and note it:

4. *Finding Sources*

In the past you may have used the Internet or a newspaper to find information for a school project. There are many places to look but some may be better than others. For example, you wouldn't wait for next year's almanac to get the score of last night's game. Nor would you go on line to find movie times if the newspaper is in front of you. In the same way, when doing longer research, you want to find the right tool for the job. Here are some good places to start!

City Honors School Library Web Page

- One stop shopping for books and web sites (at school & at home)

CHS Library Databases

- Visit <http://www.cityhonors.org>
- Click Library (up top)
- Click Research Online (on the left)
- Databases are collected on this page. See (or email) Mrs. Holden (mholden@buffaloschools.org) for passwords.

Buffalo and Erie County Public Library

- Use the library sources from home! Visit <http://www.buffalolib.org>
- Click Databases
- Type in your library card number, and you'll have access to even more databases than we have at school!

5. *Brainstorming for the Best Sources*

List the sources that are likely to be the most useful for learning about your topic:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Now, look at your list. Cross out any sources that, on second thought, might not be useful.

6. *Evaluating Your Sources*

Your next step is to visit the library where you will locate and study the sources you listed earlier.

Gather your sources and then consider the following questions:

- Did you find enough information to meet the requirements of the assignment?
- Are your sources understandable to you?
- Are your sources current enough? Not out of date?
- Are your sources too broad or too vague?
- Do you know how to access the information at home, if needed?

More questions to ask about your sources:

Who is the AUTHOR of this book or web site?

- What are the author's credentials? Do you know anything about the author's education, training or experience?
- In the case of web sites, do you know whether they are commercial, educational, governmental, etc.? (.com, .edu, .gov)

Is the CONTENT of the book or site accurate and reliable?

- Is there support for statistics and facts?
- Could you verify the information in other sources?
- How current is the information? If it is a web site, when was it last updated?

Do you know the PURPOSE of the information? Is it intended to inform, teach, sell, persuade, entertain?

- Does the presentation of the information seem fair?
- Can you distinguish between facts and opinion?

7. *Library Worksheet*

List Your Possible Sources:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

State Your Topic:

List Five Questions You'd Like to Answer About Your Topic:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

8. *A Note About Plagiarism*

Your research paper is a collaboration between you and your sources. To be fair and honest, you must indicate when you borrow another writer's ideas or words. You do this by documenting, or citing, your sources. "Citing your sources" means nothing more than telling your reader whose ideas or words you have used and where you found them. To use someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is dishonest. It is called plagiarism.

Plagiarism is very serious. At City Honors School, intentional plagiarism is considered a violation of the Honor Code.

Two different acts are considered plagiarism: (1) borrowing someone's ideas, information, or words without citing the source and (2) citing the source, but paraphrasing the source too closely, without using quotation marks to indicate that words and phrases have been borrowed.

You must, of course, document all direct quotations. You must also document any ideas borrowed from a source: paraphrases of sentences, summaries of paragraphs or chapters, statistics or little-known facts, and tables, graphs, or diagrams.

The only exception is common knowledge or information that your readers could find in any number of general sources because it is commonly known. For example, everyone knows that Frankfort is the capital of Kentucky. It is common knowledge and would not have to be cited.

In summary: Do not plagiarize. Document all quotations and borrowed ideas. Avoid paraphrases that closely resemble your sources. *

* The text of this section is adapted from Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook for Writers*. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1991.

9. *Using Sources: Keywords*

Before actually using your sources, it is helpful to think of all the words that might be used to describe your topic. These words are your Keywords. List all that you can think of.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

As you read your sources, keep a list of additional words or phrases that seem to be important to your topic.

10. *Using Print Sources*

Gather a number of books that may be pertinent to your topic. Ask yourself the following two questions in order to identify which sources will be the most useful:

- Is your topic listed in the Table of Contents? If so, how? List the words the author uses to describe your topic and the page numbers where your topic can be found.
- Is your topic listed in the Index? If so, how? List the words the author uses to describe your topic and the page numbers where your topic can be found. Do you find additional related topics or a "see also" reference?

11. *Using Online Sources*

Get online to search for useful web sites. It is often a good idea to begin with an encyclopedia like World Book or one of the databases you find on Facts on File. Online encyclopedias and databases often direct you to specific websites that are related to the subject.

- Using the keywords you identified, find three or more sites that are both current and authoritative. Remember to ask questions about the reliability of the sites you find.
- List the most promising ones by web address and name.

Name of Website or database

Address of Website

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

12. *Taking Notes*

The most important part of the research process is *staying organized*. Note cards will help you with this task. Generally, make notes in your own words because they reflect your thinking, not someone else's. You should use direct quotes only when the author's words are particularly striking, when you want to refer to an expert's knowledge or opinion, or when you want to hold an author accountable for a particular idea or statement.

A. What is a note card?

A note card is simply a 3"x 5" index card on which you write information from your sources. Note cards contain the information that you might include in your written or oral report. There are also electronic versions of note cards that your teacher may ask you to use.

B. There are different kinds of note cards:

- Source Cards
- Quotation Cards
- Note Cards

SOURCE CARDS:

When you begin working on your research, you will go to a variety of sources for information. Each time you begin working with a new source, you should complete a source card.

On each card you will record:

- All the publication information required to include this source in your Works Cited list.
- A code letter that you will use on all note cards that come from this source.
- The call number of the book or URL (in the case of a web site) so you can locate it later.

Source A

937
HIN

Hinds, Kathryn. *The Ancient Romans*. New York: Benchmark Books, 1997

Make a SOURCE CARD for each source you use:

- Books
- Magazines
- Web sites
- Pamphlets
- Interviews, etc.

You might not use anything from that source, in which case the card can later be thrown away, but it is still a good idea to make a card for each source. Get in the habit of doing this before you do anything else. Two examples of Source Cards:

In addition to your note cards, you will also use create a *working bibliography*. REMEMBER! When you use an article from a database, the citation is already done for you and you just need to copy and paste the citation into your *working bibliography*.

As you find print sources, use the Landmark Citation Machine to create the citation and copy and paste it into your *working bibliography*.

For web sites, as you find a site that is useful and from which you take notes, immediately create a citation for your *working bibliography*. On the note card, just put which source it is (source A, B, C, etc.) and the title of the web page.

QUOTATION CARDS:

Quotation cards are used to record a quote, word for word, from the source.

- Always include the writer/author of the quote
- Punctuate correctly with quotation marks
- Only use direct quotations for very important passages
- Don't copy sentences from a source without showing you are using a direct quotation

Quote
A
p.16

Contributions of Augustus

"Because of Augustus and the stable form of government he created, Rome was able to survive for centuries more."

Kathryn Hinds

NOTE CARDS

Evaluate the material you have read to make sure the information is worth recording.

Paraphrase or summarize the information; do not write down the information word for word.

You may also wish to add personal reactions or other comments on your notes. If so, circle them, write them in a different color, or use some other method to distinguish them.

<p>Notes A p.16</p> <p>Contributions of Augustus</p> <p>Augustus helped the government of Rome to be stable and so the empire lasted for several centuries. There were other reasons that it lasted. Augustus conquered a lot of land, and more people had enough to live well so they were more content.</p>

A Note About Notes:

A note card should contain information about only one piece of information. Give each note a distinct title. Do not use the same title on any two cards, but use similar titles for notes on the same topic. Good titles on your cards will pay off!

All Note Cards Should Have These Items:

- **Label**
Located in the upper left hand corner, this label clearly describes the information in the note.
- **Source Code**
Located in the upper right hand corner, this code comes from the source card and is used to identify the source of the note.
- **Specific Page Number**
Located next to the source code, this reminds you of the specific page from which you took the note.
- **Note**
This is the information you took from the source.

13. *Organizing & Outlining Your Information*

Now that you have collected information on your topic, it is time to organize that information so that it can be the most useful to you.

Sorting and Grouping

Go through your note cards and divide them into general categories. For example, if your topic is Gladiators, you may find that you have collected notes on the following related topics: weapons, training, types of gladiators, when and where gladiators were used.

Write YOUR general topic here:

Now, sort your note cards into general categories. List the categories:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Do you have cards whose information does not fit into any of these categories?

If so, do you think the information might be useful to you, or should you just discard that card?

Evaluating your Information

Of the categories you've listed, for which do you have the most information?

For which category do you have the least information?

Has your research enabled you to answer all of your original questions?

If not, what information do you still need?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Have any new questions come up that you need to research?
If so, list those new questions.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Look back over the work you've done so far. Do you have all of the information that you need to complete this project? If not, return to the library for a little more research. It is much easier to conduct more research now, before moving on to the next step.

14. *Outlining Your Information*

Keep the following guidelines in mind when writing your outline:

- Put your thesis statement at the top.
- Make items at the same level as parallel as possible.
- Use sentences, unless phrases are clear.
- Use the following system of numbers and letters:

Thesis:

I.

A.

B.

1.

2.

a.

b.

II.

- Always use at least two subdivisions for each category. Nothing can be divided into fewer than two parts!
- Limit the number of major sections in the outline: if the list of roman numerals begins to be too long, find a way to combine the items into a few major categories with subdivisions.
- Be flexible: be prepared to change your outline as you write your draft.
- IF YOU NEED GUIDANCE WITH WRITING YOUR OUTLINE, ASK YOUR TEACHER. ***YOU MAY ALSO USE THE PROGRAM, INSPIRATION, WHICH IS AVAILABLE ON ALL SCHOOL COMPUTERS!***

Example of Thesis and Outline

Thesis: There are many kinds of waves in nature

I. Seismic Waves

A. Characteristics

1. P wave - strongest type of body wave
2. Longitudinal
3. Travel through either liquid or solid matter

B. Effects

1. Results in liquid or solid vibrating uncontrollably
2. Vibrations-compression or expansion of rocks

II. Sound Waves

A. Characteristics

1. Pure tone - the simplest sound wave

2. Characterized by frequency

B. Behavior

1. Light waves and sound waves - same actions
2. Reflect and scatter

Note that the topics beside the roman numerals are general topics. These correspond to the categories into which you sorted your note cards. Details about those categories are found in the subdivisions.

Information about constructing an outline from: Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook for Writers*. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martins Press, 1991.

Sample outline from: Robb, Laura. *Reader's Handbook: A Student Guide for Reading and Learning*. Wilmington, MA: Great Source Education Group, 2002.

You "document" your work when you acknowledge and give credit for ideas or information you have borrowed and used in your paper.

Document whenever you:

- use an original idea from one of your sources, whether you quote or paraphrase it
- summarize original ideas from one of your sources
- use factual information that is not common knowledge (common knowledge is information that recurs in many sources)
- quote directly from a source

You provide documentation for your reader in two places:

- at the end of your paper (works cited page)
- within the body of your paper (in-text documentation)

A. How to Write Your Works Cited/Bibliography Page

- Use the Citation Machine (<http://www.citationmachine.net>), which is linked from the City Honors Library web page, to create your citations.
- Your *working bibliography* is also known as the Works Cited page. You should have the words Works Cited centered at the top of the page.
- Hit the return key two times and choose left justification.
- Copy and paste your citations from the Citation Machine into your document. For your final Works Cited page, citations should be listed in alphabetical order by the first letter in the citation (which might be an author's last name or a title of a work).