Guidelines for a Research Paper

Be sure that your paper meets the assigned page requirements (3-5 pages), bibliography, using standard one-inch margins, 12-point font, Times New Roman, and double spacing.

It must cover the topic effectively and present a well-developed thesis, supported by evidence from sources.

It must in some way demonstrate an understanding of the development of scholarship on the topic—that is, the paper itself must incorporate in the text and notes an adequate discussion of the scholarly works on the subject.

Remember that in text citations are required.

It must demonstrate mastery of the conventions of the discipline—i.e., the physical appearance of the paper, grammar, syntax, punctuation, etc.—in accordance with the Modern Language Association (MLA) Manual of Style format and the citation guide.

Be sure to incorporate research from scholarly journals from the library database and/or other source.

It must have a title page that includes your name and an appropriate title for your research.

Pages, including bibliography, must be numbered, starting on the first page of text. The one exception is the title page, which should not have a number. The first page of text of the paper should be page 1.

**Proofread. Set your word processor to catch all mistakes!**

Carefully use spelling and grammar check built into word-processing programs.
IN GENERAL, THE RESEARCH PAPER IS GRADED ON WHAT A STUDENT DEMONSTRATES ABOUT HIS/HER:

- research skills
- ability to think critically about a topic and the sources necessary to study and limit that topic
- ability to combine information and ideas into a focused, organized, supported argument
- ability to write a grammatical, stylistic, mechanically correct essay
- ability to document and list sources accurately and usefully

SPECIFICALLY, THE RESEARCH PAPER IS GRADED ON:

- title page (clarity, usefulness, accuracy)
- title (usefulness, accuracy)
- introduction (specificity, clarity, appeal)
- thesis (clarity, initial presentation, use throughout paper, thoughtfulness, accuracy)
- arguments/evidence (breadth, logic, quality, use)
- organization follows the outline (clarity, logic, consistency within paragraphs, in overall paper)
- focus
- sentence structure
- punctuation (usage, spacing)
- voice (avoidance of passive)
- person (avoidance of first and second)
- tense (logic, consistency)
• spelling (avoid using contractions)
• proofreading
• page numbering (in text, in notes, and in bibliography)
• use of MLA Manual of Style
• research (depth, breadth)
• documentation (giving credit for ideas, facts, words)
• quotations (appropriateness, logic, ellipses and brackets, identification of authors, punctuation, transition into text)
• conclusion (thoughtfulness, appeal, appropriateness, usefulness)

PAPER REQUIREMENTS:

1. The topic must be approved by the professor prior to writing the paper. This is to allow for guidance on a topic that may be too broad or too narrow.
2. You will need AT LEAST 3 sources acceptable for scholarly research. These will include 1 article from a database; 1 web site; and one other source (personal interview, book, magazine, newspaper, or any other reputable and authoritative source).
3. The student will create an outline before writing the first draft of the paper.
4. The paper order will follow the outline order.
5. Students will participate in peer editing, giving feedback to a classmate and receiving feedback from a classmate.
6. The final draft will be free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes, express clear thought, and include at least 3 in text citations (one from each source listed on the works cited page).
7. The paper will be written in the student’s own words, giving credit to the author when quoting or using words directly stated in the material.

8. The paper will be typed in MLA format according to guidelines listed on the library website.

9. There will be a SEPARATE works cited page, with attention to detail for MLA formatted sources.

FINAL PRODUCT:

1. Title page with no page number in MLA format

2. Outline

3. Final draft of research paper, MLA format, follows outline order, page numbers begin here.

4. Separate MLA formatted citation page with final page number.

5. All material in the order listed placed in a pocket folder and turned in on the date due as listed in the class calendar and on D2L.