

Research Paper Guidelines

Taken from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Sixth Edition*.

Rosedale Bible College
2003-2004

Formatting Standards

Paper: white 8.5 x 11 inch paper.

Margins: 1 inch top, bottom, sides.

Spacing: double-space, including quotations, notes and works cited.

Heading and Title:

- No Title Page
- Starting at the 1/2 inch top margin in the top right hand corner of the first page, type your last name and page number.
- At the 1 inch margin place your name, double-space, instructor's name, double-space, course name, double-space, date, double-space.
- The Title is centered, is not underlined or in quotation marks, and is followed by a double-space.

	Your last name & Page #
Your Name	
Your Instructor	
Your Course	
The Date	
	Your Title
Your first sentence.	

Indentation: The first sentence of each paragraph should be indented 1/2 inch.

Page Numbers: Number all pages preceded by your last name consecutively in the upper right hand corner in the top margin, 1/2 inch from top and flush with the 1 inch right margin. No

punctuation. (In MS Word the View pull down menu allows you to insert and format headers and footers.)

Plagiarism: As expressed by an earlier edition of the MLA Handbook, “to use another person’s ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source is to plagiarize. Plagiarism, then, constitutes intellectual theft. Forms of plagiarism include the failure to give appropriate acknowledgement when repeating another’s work or particularly apt phrase, when paraphrasing another’s argument, or when presenting another’s line of thinking. In writing your research paper, then, you should document everything that you borrow—not only direct quotations and paraphrases but also information and ideas.”

Quotations:

- Quote only words, phrases, lines and passages that are particularly interesting, vivid, unusual or apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible. Changes must not be made in the spelling, capitalization, or interior punctuation of the source.
- Quotations up to four lines are placed in quotation marks, but not set off in the text.

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” wrote Charles Dickens of the eighteenth century.
- Quotations over four lines are set off in the text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch, and do not take quotation marks. They are double-spaced.

At the conclusion of Lord of the Flies, Ralph and the other boys realize the horror of their actions:

The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed 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 little boys began to shake and sob too. (186)

Parenthetical Citation: The parenthetical citation connects the borrowed material to the works cited page. Usually the author’s last name and a page reference are enough to identify the source and the specific location from which you borrowed. (Because of the connection between the citation and the works cited page, much of what follows will be easier to understand once you have referred to the Works Cited instructions.)

Punctuation: The actual reference is placed before the final punctuation in the sentence, except in block quotations of 4 lines or more when it follows the final punctuation, see the quote from The Lord of the Flies above. If a quotation ends in an exclamation point or

question mark, retain the original punctuation within the quotation mark and follow with the reference and the sentence period outside the quotation mark.

He attacked “taxation without representation” (32).

But

Dorothea Brooke responds to her sister, “What a wonderful little almanac you are, Cilia!” (7).

Other Examples:

Medieval Europe was a place of “raids, pillages, slavery, and extortion” and of “traveling merchants, monetary exchange, towns if not cities and active markets in grain” (Townsend 10).

In the parenthetical citation above, (Townsend 10), refers to the more complete entry on the works cited page

Townsend, Robert M. The Medieval Village Economy. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.

Variations:

- If the author’s name has already been stated, it is not repeated in the citation.

Townsend wrote that Europe was a place of “raids, pillages, slavery and extortion” (10).

- If the works cited pages include two or more authors with the same last name, the parenthetical citation must include a first initial. (J. Showalter 100)

[Please note in the previous example and the following 3 examples that were they actual citations the parentheses would appear before the final punctuation.]

- Periodicals are treated just like books in the parenthetical citation. (Hallin 5)
- If there are two or three authors, list each last name. (Smith, Jones, Lee 55)
- If there are more than three authors, give the first author’s last name followed by et al. (Thompson et al. 16-18)

- Electronic sources are also cited.

To cite an *entire* work

If there are no page numbers or other reference markers in the source, include the citation in the text rather than in a parenthetical citation.

Joanne Merrian reported on a parody of Shakespeare performed by the Muppets.

On the Works Cited page there would be an entry (See the Works Cited section for an explanation of the all the elements in the citation) :

Merrian, Joanne. "Spinoff: Monsterpiece Theatre." Online posting, 30 Apr. 1994. Shaksper: The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conf. 23 Sept. 2002
<http://www.shaksper.net/archives/1994/0380.html>.

To cite *part* of an electronic work.

"The study of comparative literature," Bill Readings wrote, "takes off from the idea of humanity" (6).

On the works cited page there would be an entry as follows:

Readings, Bill, "Translatio and Comparative Literature: The Terror of European Humanism." Surfaces 1.11 (1991): 19 pp. 22 Sept. 2002
 <<http://www.pum.umontreal.ca/revues/surfaces/vol1/readi-a.html>>.

Works Cited Page: This page appears at the end of your paper. It contains more complete entries for all the works cited in your paper.

- "Works Cited" is centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- The page is double-spaced.
- Works are arranged alphabetically by the authors' last names, or when there is no author, by the title of the work.
- Page numbers are continued into the Works Cited page. For example, if the last page of the text of your paper is page five, the Works Cited page will be page six.

- Begin at the left margin, but the following lines of the same entry are indented ½ inch. (This is called a *hanging indent*, and can be set up on the horizontal ruler of MS Word.)

Sample Entries:

Books. Generally speaking, cite the author's name, last name first, followed by a period; the title, underlined and followed by a period; the place of publication followed by a colon; the publisher followed by a comma and the year followed by a period.

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

Two books by the same author. Use three hyphens instead of the author's name on all but the first entry. Cite works in alphabetical order by title.

Sproul, R. C. Not a Chance. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995.

---. The Psychology of Atheism. Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974.

Reference Books. Editors are not cited. Omit publication information for familiar reference works like the dictionary or general knowledge encyclopedias. However, signed articles are listed by author. The title of the article appears in quotation marks.

"Mandarin." The Encyclopedia Americana. 1994 ed.

Mohanty, Jintendra M. "Indian Philosophy." The New Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia. 15 ed. 1987.

Journals. Begin the citation with the author's name. The title of articles is placed in quotation marks. The journal name is underlined and is followed by the volume number, the year of publication in parentheses, a colon and then the inclusive page numbers of the article.

Wellum, Stephen J. "Divine Sovereignty-Omniscience, Inerrancy and Open Theism: An Evaluation." Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society. 45 (2002) : 257-277.

Magazines. Magazines differ from most journals in page numbering and frequency of publication. A volume number is not listed in the Works Cited entry. The title of the article is in quotation marks. The title of the magazine is underlined. If the article is not on consecutive pages, cite the first page followed by a plus sign.

Guthrie, Stan. "Doors into Islam." Christianity Today 9 Sept. 2002: 34+.

Electronic Publications-databases, scholarly projects, professional websites and online periodicals.

The citation may have five elements:

Author's name. "Title of the Document." Information about print publication.

Information about electronic publication. Access information.

Zeki, Semir. "Artistic Creativity and the Brain." Science 6 July 2001: 51-52 Science Magazine. 2002. Amer. Assn. for the Advancement of Science. 24 Sept. 2002 <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/293/5527/51>.

The Works Cited entry above gives us all five elements. Note that the electronic publication element includes the title of the website, the date of its latest update and the sponsoring organization. The Access information element includes the date of access and the URL [uniform resource locator/web address].

When citing extremely long URLs it is preferable to shorten the URL to the appropriate search page.

Many sites on the internet do not provide all of the above information. Cite what is available.

Other Examples of Electronic Sources:

- From an online scholarly project:

"John Flavel, Life." Christian Classics Ethereal Library. 3 Sept. 2003

<<http://www.ccel.org/f/flavel/>>.

- From an online journal site:

McGurn, William. "Pulpit Economics." First Things 122 (2002): 21-25. 11 Sept. 2002

<<http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0204/articles/mcgurn.html>>

- A magazine article from an <http://www.oplin.lib.oh.us> database or other online subscription service. Includes the location where you accessed the database:

Hawaleshka, Danylo. "Mennonite Millionaires." Macleans 14 Jan. 2002: 22+

Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Rosedale Bible Coll., Rosedale. 11 Sept.

2002 <<http://www.oplin.lib.oh.us>>.

- a personal or professional website:

Roth, Mark. Anabaptists 3 Sept. 2003 <<http://www.anabaptists.org/>>

Special Considerations when Citing the Bible:

In parenthetical citations the titles of books of the Bible are abbreviated. Notice that the chapter is followed by a period rather than a colon. The official list of MLA abbreviations is in the MLA Handbook.

The convention of using underlining and quotation marks to indicate titles does not apply to the names of sacred writings, including all books and some versions of the Bible. Bible, King James Version, Gospels or Genesis should not be underlined, but published editions of the Bible would be: The Jerusalem Bible or The New International Version appear with underlining in the parenthetical reference and on the Works Cited page.

In the parenthetical reference to the Bible, you *may* cite the book, chapter and verse.

In one of the most vivid prophetic visions in the Bible, Ezekiel saw, “what seemed to be four living creatures,” each with the faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (New Jerusalem Bible, Ezek. 1.5-10). John of Patmos echoes this passage when describing his vision (Rev. 4.6-8)

On the works cited page, Bible references are treated like other published works:

The New Jerusalem Bible. Henry Wansbrough, gen. ed. New York:

Doubleday, 1985.

The Holy Bible. King James Version. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.

(In the last citation, n.d. abbreviates no date)

General Writing Guidelines

Selection of a topic. Before settling on a final topic, make sure you understand the amount and depth of the research required and the type of paper expected. Consult with your instructor.

Research. Research at Rosedale Bible College means working in the library.

- Search for books using the online catalog. If you are researching a topic, start by searching in the subject field. If you want a broader search use the key word search. Use the links within an entry to cross-reference similar materials.
- Use the “Christian Periodical Index” to look up topics in journals and magazines.
- Use the Oplin databases on one of the computers in the computer room for online sources and databases, if you have a local library card.
- Browse for your topic in likely sources in the reference section of the library.

Taking Notes. Make sure you gather all the information you need for your Works Cited page. Make and mark quotations carefully.

Developing a thesis statement. A thesis statement is a single sentence that formulates both your topic and your point of view. It is your answer to the central question or problem you have raised. Consider these questions.

1. What are you trying to achieve, describe, explain, argue or persuade?
2. Who is your audience?

Developing an Outline. Outlining can be useful in helping you see the logical development and progression of your argument. There are many arrangements: chronological, cause and effect, process and logic, deductive (general to specific) or inductive arguments (specific to general).

Write down your thesis statement and then your major points, and then refine each point.

Revise and rewrite. It is very unlikely that your first draft of a paper will be adequate.