

Printers on Writing a Good Research Paper

When writing a research paper that is based on your use of a primary source (or several primary sources) from the medieval period, you should observe carefully the following guidelines:

1) A title which is not vague, but pinpoints the exact inquiry or study you are making. For example, bad= "Marriage in the Middle Ages"; but good= "The Idea of Marriage According to the 12th c. Heloise in her Correspondence with Abelard."

2) An introduction or a preface, clearly marked as such, which a) states precisely what you are attempting to do in your paper. This may be put in the form of a question, stated as a problem, posed as a controversial hypothesis, or as a challenge to a previous view; b) describes your primary source(s) of information: why you selected this source; is it our only source? who wrote the source? when? why? to whom? is it biased? is it reliable? was it read in the Middle Ages? how great was its influence? what is the historical context (political, social) in which it was written? c) entices, intrigues the reader (this is usually accomplished by posing an interesting question or problem in very straightforward language, giving, at this point, only the bare minimum of background information necessary for the reader to understand the problem.

3) The body of your paper: may I remind you, quoted from the MLA Handbook, p. 1:

The research paper, the final product of research, is not a collection of other persons' opinions but a carefully constructed presentation of an idea- or series of ideas- that relies on other sources for clarification or verification. Learned facts and borrowed opinions must be fully documented in the research paper, usually through endnotes or footnotes, but always in such a manner that they support rather than overshadow the paper itself.

DO NOT DIRECTLY QUOTE SECONDARY SOURCES IN YOUR PAPER! Only primary sources should be directly quoted and only to support your arguments or observations with examples.

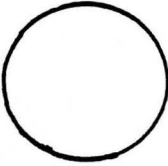
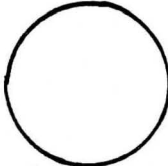
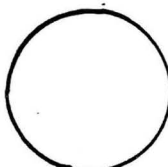
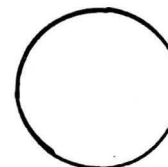
Regarding a good writing style, you may find very helpful the list of objectives on the following page. Also, you might wish to refer to a basic writing manual, such as Strunk and White, Elements of Style.

4) Conclusion: this should a) summarize the evidence you have presented and b) draw a conclusion that answers or corresponds to your opening paragraph.

5) Make sure to re-read your paper for typos, spelling, grammatical errors before submitting it. The neat, careful form in which it is presented indicates to me the effort you have put into the paper as a whole.

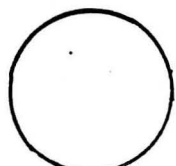
Writing Evaluation Sheet

Student number (name) _____ Date _____ Professor _____ Grade _____

	Partly Not			Objective
	Met	Met	Met	
PLANNING (Maximum) 25 				1. To narrow the subject and state a main point that is not too broad.
				2. To follow a clear organizational plan, such as classification, comparison, induction, etc.
				3. To develop ideas using sufficient detail: facts, examples, testimony and other specifics.
				4. To be logically consistent, avoiding non-sequiturs and fallacies of deduction or inference.
PARAGRAPHING (Maximum) 25 				5. To compose an opening paragraph that stimulates interest and introduces the subject.
				6. To unify ideas in developmental paragraphs with a single controlling idea or topic sentence.
				7. To compose a final paragraph that is conclusive and memorable.
				8. To highlight important ideas through placement, repetition, and subordination.
				9. To join ideas, sentences, and paragraphs with connectives to increase coherence.
WORDING (Maximum) 25 				10. To vary sentences avoiding monotony and achieving meaningful emphasis.
				11. To be economical of language, preventing wordiness and overloaded sentences.
				12. To choose accurate words that clearly express the intended meaning.
				13. To avoid clichés, jargon, mixed metaphors and other stylistic excesses.
EDITING (Maximum) 25 				14. To edit out typos and errors in spelling.
				15. To edit out errors in punctuation and mechanics.
				16. To revise grammatical errors and examples of substandard usage.
				17. To avoid unnecessary shifts in number, tense, mood, voice, point of view, or usage level.

() See notes on back.

TOTAL SCORE



Reader

Initials

Date

The Class Presentation of Your Research Paper

1. Main objects: a) to convey what you learned in your research to the class; b) to create discussion on the reliability of your sources, the importance or effect of your topic, the relation of your topic to the books we are reading (does it contradict, support, get mention?).
2. State precisely your thesis statement; that is, explain your argument.
3. Describe the source(s) you chose-- why you chose it, who the author is, what are his qualifications as your best source. Describe his bias, purpose, style, accuracy.
4. Difficulties you confronted in researching your topic: did the source(s) raise new problems or considerations you had not thought of before?
5. What interested you, surprised you, the most?
6. In giving the presentation you may wish to xerox diagrams, show slides, use a map, play a song, bring in illustrations, etc.
7. The final draft of your paper is due by mid-night of the day of your oral presentation. (One grade off for every day late).
8. Grade of paper: 70% written part, 30% class presentation of it.