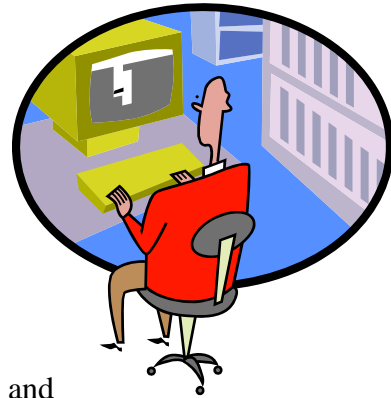


# RESEARCH PAPERS

## • The Process

- How do I begin researching my topic?
- What kind of information should I use?
- Where do I go to find the appropriate information?



Here is a step by step summary of the process:

- Choose a topic.
  - Check with your instructor to see if the nature and scope of the topic is appropriate.
  - Often the instructor can help you better define or narrow your topic.
- Talk with the **NECI librarian**—[library.neci.edu](http://library.neci.edu)—to locate sources—books, periodicals, and on-line sources.
- Read sources and take notes.
  - Often students find note cards helpful for recording their notes.
  - Note cards can also be used later to help you organize your information.
- Often your research will result in further defining/refining your topic.
- Find out from instructor:
  - What format is required for citations—MLA, APA, Chicago.
  - Format for final draft—title page? Report cover? Single or double spaced? Font, including size?
- Begin a rough draft.
  - Sometimes an instructor will want to look at a draft so that he/she can offer feedback before the final draft is submitted.
- Revise and add to draft based on feedback.
- Do more research from other sources if necessary.
- Write final draft, including in-text citations and separate page for bibliography, using the citation style designated by the instructor.

## • Plagiarism

- When you write a research paper, you need to tell the reader where you obtained your information, even if you put the information into your own words.
- Students here at NECI have had to revise papers over and over again because they have not given credit to the sources of their information or have used language in their paper that is too much like the language of the source of the information.

Here's a great site for writing in general—Purdue University's On-Line Writing Lab (OWL). It also contains some very good guidelines for avoiding plagiarism.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/03/>

## • **MLA Citation Style—Works Cited and In-text Citations**

- When writing a paper, how do you document where you found your information?

→ There are **two kinds of documentation**. You need both in your research paper:

1. **Bibliography or Works Cited**—a list of all the sources of information you used in your research.
2. **In text citations**—documenting the **source of a direct quotation** or a **paraphrasing of information** in the **body of the paper**.



- There are several citation styles used to document where the writer found information. Many NECI instructors choose the **MLA** style, the one most commonly used by colleges and universities for academic/research writing.

- **This web site will do this citation work for you!**

<http://citationmachine.net>

- Choose the **MLA** format (or the format that your instructor has chosen).
- Choose the kind of source: book, magazine, internet site, etc.
- Then find in your book, magazine, or internet source the information asked for in each field.
- Some fields can be left blank if your source does not include the information needed in a particular field. For example, many internet articles do not include the name of the author.
- Submit the entries and the site will put the information in the correct MLA format, which you then can copy and paste to your own document/paper.
- You will need to make **2 changes** once you have copied and pasted all your citations to the Bibliography or Works Cited page of your paper.
  1. **Double space the entire Works Cited/Bibliography page (the citationmachine format is single spaced).**
  2. **Put your list of sources in alphabetical order, using the first word in the entry, either the last name or the first word of the title if there is no author.**
- You shouldn't have to make any changes to the in-text citations.

## **QUESTIONS?**

Contact Jackie Burke (802.595.9367; [jackie.burke@neci.edu](mailto:jackie.burke@neci.edu)) or Gale Rome (802.225.3327; [gale.rome@neci.edu](mailto:gale.rome@neci.edu)).

Or stop by one of the Learning Centers—7 School Street (Gale Rome) or the lower level of Alumni Hall (Jackie Burke).