

Writing the Research Proposal

A good research project begins with a need to know. You may need to know what it would take to make a change in your personal life or you may need to know a new way of approaching a problem or issue you or someone you know are experiencing. You may need to find the answer to a burning question about history, society, or life. You may need to know a new skill or concept or you may simply need to find out more information about a topic. Academic research projects have led to such diverse discoveries as the connection between pesticides that are used in traditional farming methods and cancer and the best way to change a bad habit. Research forms the basis of all academic disciplines. That is why it is important, no matter what your area of study, that you learn how to construct an academic argument and find credible information as support.

The Research Proposal provides an opportunity for exploring and thinking about a topic before actually committing to a specific research subject. This document can be revised many times as you go along, but the final copy should describe the direction and purpose of the research project. It should spell out the main research questions and concerns.

The Research Proposal will contain the following sections:

- **Section 1**

The background or introduction section provides a description of the basic facts and importance of the research area. In other words, what happened that made you want to learn more about this subject/topic? Did you see something on television that sparked your interest? Did something happen to you personally that caused you to want to know more about this topic? Does this topic affect someone you are close to? Or is there some other reason you **need to know** the information you are asking questions about?

Use first-person narrative (in other words, you can use "I") to explain what motivated you to inquire about this particular topic. Include enough details to help the reader understand the importance of this topic.

- **Section 2:**

Provide a list of goals that will be achieved through the proposed research. What are the benefits/impact that will be generated by learning about this issue and its significance? What do you hope to learn as a result of your research and what do you hope to teach others or how do you hope to affect them.

- **Section 3:**

What are some of the current opinions about this topic? Where do you hear people talking about this issue and what does it mean to them? What do you know about what has been done by others in terms of researching this issue? Why is this subject still relevant?

- **Section 4:**

Think about the information already available on this subject and how we've learned what we currently know. What source materials do you think will be most helpful to you? Common methods would be surveys, case studies, tables, interviews, academic journals, podcasts, television shows, movies, etc.

Due
April 13

Sample Bibliography/ Works Cited
Please Provide Working Title

Bibliography: The History of....

Blanco, Richard L. ed. *The American Revolution, 1775-1783: An Encyclopedia*. 2 vols.

Hamden: Garland. 1993. Print.

Boyle, Anthony T. "Re: Utopia." *E-mail to Daniel J. Cahill*. Web. 21 June 1997.

"Earth seen from space during the Apollo 8 mission: Life Magazine." *Time Inc.* Google

Images. December 1968. Web. 29 Sept. 2009.

Heartbreak House. By George Bernard Shaw. Dir. Robin Lefevre. Perf. Philip Bosco

and Swoosie Kurtz. Roundabout Theatre Company, American Airlines Theatre,

New York. 1 Oct 2006. Performance.

"History of the Internet." *MIT News and Information*. Massachusetts Institute of

Technology, 2009. Web. 27 Sept. 2009. < www.mit.edu >.

The Holy Bible. New York: Macmillan, 1997. Print.

Hutcheon, Linda, and Michael Hutcheon. *Bodily Charm: Living Opera*. Lincoln: U of

Nebraska P, 2000. Print.

"It Barks! It Kicks! It Scores!" *Newsweek* 30 July 2001: 12. Print.

It's a Wonderful Life. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel

Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell, RKO Productions, 1946. DVD.

James, Scott. "21st Century Technology." *Encyclopedia of Technology*. 2005. Print.

Keillor, Garrison. *A Prairie Home Companion*. With Ledward Ka'apana and

Owana Salazar. 12 Oct. 2002. Minnesota Public Radio. Web. 18 Oct. 2002.

Komando, Kim. "Password Security." *WCBS News Radio*. WCBS, New York. 20

May 2002 Transcript. Web. 23 May 2002.

APC 20

Guidelines for Writing an Annotated Bibliography

An **annotated bibliography** is a list of potential sources that includes brief summaries of the content of each article. **Your annotated bibliography will include five (5) sources and will give you an opportunity to read and evaluate sources for your argument essay**, so that you can determine if and how they will be used in your paper. It will also give you practice using MLA format for citations.

Try to find a variety of sources. You can use articles, books, handbooks, pamphlets, videos (TedTalks, documentaries, television shows, and movies), podcasts, and interviews – there are a variety of texts that could work and they do not have to be print sources. You are welcome to use the databases to search for all of your sources. If you do use other print or internet sources, they must be cited correctly in MLA format. Please do not use Wikipedia as a source.

Length: To include all of the sections described below, you will need at least 750 words. There is no penalty for extra length, but you should be able to keep it below 1000 words.

Guidelines for your Annotated Bibliography

Your annotated bibliography should contain at least five sources that you intend to cite in your argument essay. Please include the following:

1. A statement of scope: 3-5 sentences to explain your topic and what you are hoping to argue in your paper. – This could come from your Proposal.
2. A complete, correct works cited entry **for each source**.
3. A concise (2-3 sentences) description **of each source**, including what type of publication it's from, the credibility of the author(s) and very brief summary of its contents.
4. A brief (1-3 sentences) evaluation **of each source** that explains why you feel this source will be useful in your paper, and where you might include the information in your paper.

A sample entry is below. You will have an entry like this for each of your sources, for a total of five entries. Your entries will be double spaced and indented in MLA format. (Note: Use a hanging indent -- the arrow below should not be in your entry however. It is there to simply show you how to do a hanging indent.)

Strong, Colby. "Early Treatment of New-Onset Child and Adolescent Migraine May Prevent Disease Progression." *Neurology Reviews* 17.12 (2009): 20. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 18 Oct. 2010.

This medical journal article features the results of a study of conducted by researchers at New Jersey Medical School that examines whether or not early treatment of migraine prevents worsening disease. The authors conclude that preventive therapy is very important in recurrent migraines in order to stop them from becoming more severe and frequent. This information will be useful in the section of the paper that evaluates the importance and efficacy of various medical intervention in the treatment of adolescent migraine. It also contains statistics about the frequency of migraine that might be useful in the introduction of the paper.