

Writing Workshop

Write an Informative Text

Research Writing: Research Report

Defining the Form A **research report** presents and interprets information gathered through the extensive study of a subject. You might use elements of a research report in writing lab reports, documentaries, annotated bibliographies, histories, and persuasive essays.

Assignment Write a research report on a subject that is both interesting and worth exploring in depth. Include these elements:

- ✓ a *thesis statement* that is clearly expressed
- ✓ *factual support* from a variety of reliable, credited sources
- ✓ a *clear organization* that includes an *introduction*, a *body*, and a *conclusion*
- ✓ a *bibliography* or *works-cited list* that provides a complete listing of research sources formatted in an approved style.
- ✓ error-free grammar, including use of *adverb clauses*

To preview the criteria on which your report may be judged, see the rubric on page 1013.



Writing Workshop: Work in Progress

Review the work you did on page 977.

WRITE GUY

Jeff Anderson, M.Ed.

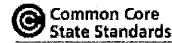
What Do You Notice?

Examples that Build an Argument

This excerpt is from Alan Axelrod's historical research study *Nothing To Fear: Lessons in Leadership from FDR*. Read it several times.

He could then and there have given in to the fog of fear, but he chose not to. He chose instead to understand polio, to see clearly the extent of his disability, and then to assess—also clearly—his options for overcoming that disability.

What do you notice about these sentences? Discuss your observations with a partner. Consider how you can use examples to build an argument in your research report.



Writing

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question.

Reading-Writing Connection

To get a feel for research writing, read the selection from *Nothing To Fear* by Alan Axelrod on page 567.

Prewriting/Planning Strategies

Brainstorm for categories. Identify an area of general interest and list specific related categories. For example, from the area of art, you might list sculpture, painting, and ceramics. Repeat the process: from painting, you might list Impressionism, Cubism, and Pop Art. Continue listing categories until you find a topic to research.

Review notebooks. Flip through the notebooks you keep for each class in school to find subjects or ideas that spark your interest. Choose one of these as the topic of your research paper.

Identify an open-ended research question. Before you begin, compose a question about your topic. This question may become your thesis statement, or it may lead up to it. The question will also help focus your research into a comprehensive but flexible search plan, as well as prevent you from gathering details that are too broad for your purpose. As you continue to learn more about your topic as you research, you may find it necessary to change, refocus, or adapt your original question.

Question: *How did the Impressionist school of painting begin?*



Gathering Details Through Research

Use a variety of primary and secondary sources. To get a full view of your topic, use *primary sources* (firsthand or original accounts, such as interview transcripts and newspaper articles) and *secondary sources* (accounts that are not original, such as encyclopedia entries).

Find appropriate sources. Analyze and apply evaluative criteria to assess that your sources are appropriate to the purpose of your report and your audience. You may find the information you need to answer your research question in specialized and authoritative resources, such as almanacs (for social, cultural, and natural statistics), government publications (for law, government programs, and subjects such as agriculture), and information services. Also, consider consumer, workplace, and public documents. Consult your librarian on the best sources to use. You can find sources of specific information through an online search, a card catalog, or by using more advanced tools:

- **Databases:** Access databases of information to find appropriate sources. For example, the Modern Language Association (MLA) database indexes articles on topics within the humanities.
- **Indexes:** Locate magazine or newspaper articles by consulting the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*.

Gathering Details Through Research (continued)



Question your sources. As you locate information, choose sources representing a variety of viewpoints. If you find information you do not trust, consult a second source to verify its validity.

Record and organize information. Take notes as you locate and connect pertinent information from multiple sources, and keep a reference list of every source you use. This will help you to make distinctions between the relative value and significance of specific data, facts, and ideas.

- **Source Cards:** Create a card that identifies the author, title, publisher, city, date of publication, and page number of each source you consult. For Internet sources, record the name and Web address of the site, and the date you accessed the information.
- **Note cards:** For each item of information, create a separate note card that includes both the fact or idea and its source.

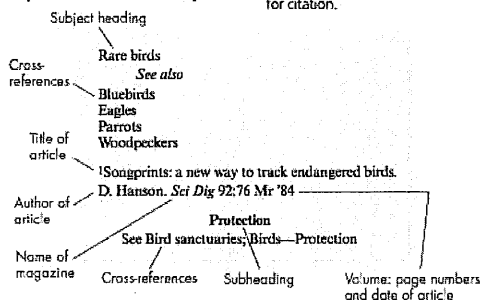
Quote accurately. Responsible research begins with the first note you take. Be sure to quote and paraphrase your sources accurately so you can identify these sources later. In your notes, circle all quotations and paraphrases to distinguish them from your own comments. When photocopying from a source, include the copyright information. Also, remember to include the Web addresses of printouts from online sources.

Writing

7. Synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources; integrate information into the text selectively, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Sample Readers' Guide Entry



Source Card

[A]

Marsh, Peter, M.D. *Eye to Eye: How People Interact*. Topsfield, MA: Salem House Publishers, 1988.

(p. 54)

Note Card

Gestures vary from culture to culture. The American "OK" symbol (thumb and forefinger) is considered insulting in Greece and Turkey.

Source Card: A

Drafting Strategies

Propose a thesis statement. Write a sentence that takes a position and can be supported by most of your research. A thesis statement is a controlling idea that gives your essay coherence.

- **Sample Thesis Statement:** *Claude Monet's use of light in his water lily paintings typifies Impressionist techniques.*

Choose a text structure. Use your thesis statement and knowledge of your audience to choose an organizational structure. Consider these options:

- **Chronological order:** Present events in the order in which they occur. This is ideal for reporting a subject's history.
- **Order of importance:** Present details in order of increasing or decreasing significance. This is ideal for building an argument.
- **Comparison and contrast:** Present similarities and differences. This is ideal for addressing two or more subjects.

Write an outline. Review your note cards and build a road map that shows your plan for integrating and presenting key information. In an outline, use headings to identify the main idea in each section, and order these ideas so they flow logically. Use this outline to develop your draft.

Make direct references to sources. Use these methods to incorporate the facts, examples, and quotations you have found:

- **Direct Quotation:** Enclose a writer's exact words in quotation marks. Omissions should not alter the intent of the passage. Indicate omitted words with **ellipses**, or dots.
- **Paraphrase:** Restate a writer's specific ideas in your own words, accurately reflecting the writer's meaning.
- **Summary:** Condense an extended idea into a brief statement in your own words to introduce background information or review key ideas.

Credit your sources. To avoid **plagiarism**—presenting another's work as your own—include documentation every time you use another writer's ideas. Note the author's last name and the page numbers of material used. Later, use these notes to create formal citations in a bibliography or works-cited list at the end of your paper.

Plan for visuals. You may include visual aids, such as charts, maps, and graphs, to organize and display information in your report. Whenever you include additional information—whether it is visuals or quotations—be sure to make a clear link from your thesis to the data you include and reference.

Revising Strategies

Evaluate your sources. Underline any fact in your draft that may not have a trustworthy source. For example, you may have found information from a newspaper or a Web site known for sensationalizing or exaggerating events. Confirm this information through a more reliable source, such as an established encyclopedia, a scholarly Web site, or a reputable newspaper.

Model: Evaluating Sources

A good way for people to convey a positive message is to avoid certain movements.
~~When people cross their arms it is always a sign of panic.~~

The writer found that this claim was supported by only one source. Since it was not important to her basic argument, she chose to delete it.

Revise to vary word choice. Except for specific terminology required by your topic, avoid overuse of particular words and expressions. Review your draft to identify words that you may have overused. For each, use a dictionary and thesaurus to generate a list of possible synonyms, and substitute them as appropriate.

Example Synonym Banks

invention: innovation, development, contrivance, device

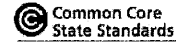
theory: belief, policy, system, position, idea, supposition

Peer Review

Exchange drafts with a partner. As you read each other's reports, circle or highlight words that recur repeatedly. Working together, identify replacements to improve word variety in the writing.

Revise to follow a consistent research format. As you finalize your report, be sure that it meets your teacher's criteria for length, format, and documentation of sources. The Modern Language Association (MLA) requires standardized parenthetical citations of sources and a works-cited list that includes only the sources used in the report.

To credit sources within a research paper, include direct documentation in the form of footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations. At the end of your paper, provide a reference list giving complete bibliographic information. If possible, use the footnoting function in a word processing program to aid your efforts.



Writing

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

Language

3.a. Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual appropriate for the discipline and writing type.

Writers on Writing

Gary L. Blackwood On Showing, Not Telling

Gary L. Blackwood is the author of the excerpt from *The Shakespeare Stealer* (p. 787).



To me, research is as much fun as beachcombing: You never know what fascinating items you're going to find. Since books are generally more reliable than the Internet, I do most of my beachcombing in libraries. I know that some people consider nonfiction dull, but I find good nonfiction more compelling than a novel, because I know the events really happened. Who could invent a story as singular and mysterious as that of Kaspar Hauser, which I came upon while researching my four-volume work *Unsolved History*?

"It helps to read sentences aloud."

—Gary L. Blackwood

Professional Model:

from *Perplexing People*,

a volume in the *Unsolved History* series published by Benchmark Books (Marshall Cavendish), Sept. 2005

Sometime in the afternoon of May 26, 1828, a peculiar boy of about sixteen appeared, seemingly from nowhere, on a street in the German city of Nuremberg. His clothing was shabby and ill-fitting and he walked with a peculiar, strange waddling gait, as though intoxicated. His face wore a vacant expression; he spoke and understood only a few words. Within a year he would become one of the best-known and most-discussed, most celebrated and controversial people in Europe. . . .

The police questioned the boy, but his replies consisted of two phrases in ungrammatical German: "Don't know" and "I want to be a horseman as my father is." When they gave him paper and a pen and asked to write his name and address, he produced a series of scribbles, of which only two were intelligible: "cavalryman" and "Kaspar Hauser."

Writing can be factual without also being sleep-inducing. I try to liven things up by using vivid adjectives.

To add interest and a feeling of authenticity, I use a lot of quotes from primary sources—people who actually witnessed or participated in the events or chroniclers of the time.

Good prose—whether it's fiction or nonfiction—is clear and concise. I do a lot of cutting of superfluous words and phrases, and I may reword a sentence half a dozen times before I'm satisfied with it.

Documenting Sources

You must give proper credit to the people whose ideas and words you have borrowed. Failing to do this raises legal and ethical issues. Libel, slander, copyright infringement, and plagiarism are serious accusations. Good writers are thorough and accurate in citing all of their sources.

When citing sources, follow a specific format. Modern Language Association (MLA) style calls for citations in parentheses directly following the material being cited.

- For print works, provide the author's or editor's name followed by a page number. If the work does not have an author, use a keyword or phrase from the title.

Citing a Print Work: . . . body language makes up approximately 65 percent of human communication (Aylesworth 3).

- For Web sources, give the author's name and the title of the article, if any, or title of the site.

Citing a Web Source: [Unsolvedmysteries.com](http://unsolvedmysteries.com) describes a lottery winner whose dreams reveal a winning ticket ("Winning the Lottery").

At the end of your report, give information for each source you cite. MLA style calls for an alphabetical *Works Cited* list.

- For books, give the author's name (last name first), the title of the work, the city of publication, the name of the publisher, and the year of publication.

Entry for a Book: Aylesworth, Thomas G. *Understanding Body Talk*. New York: F. Watts, 1979.

- For articles in periodicals, give the author's last name, first name, title of the article, the name of the magazine, the date of the issue, the volume and issue number, and the pages of the article. For any month with more than four letters, abbreviate the month by using the first three letters followed by a period.

Entry for a Periodical Article: Kreisler, Kristin V. "Why We Dream What We Dream." *Reader's Digest*. Feb. 1995: 28.

- For Web sites, give any of the following information that is available, in this order: author's name, title of the page, title of the site, date of last update, and name of the sponsoring organization. Give the date you consulted the site and its full URL, or Web address.

Entry for a Web Site: "Winning the Lottery in Your Dreams." *Unsolved Mysteries*. 11 March 2000. <http://unsolvedmysteries.com/usm397.html>

For more information on citing sources using MLA style, see page R36.



Writing

8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Language

1.b. Use various types of phrases and clauses to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

3.a. Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual appropriate for the discipline and writing type.

SIX TRAITS WRITER'S TOOLBOX SIX TRAITS

Sentence Fluency Voice Organization Word Choice Ideas Conventions

Revising to Combine Sentences Using Adverb Clauses

Adverb clauses can be used to combine information from two sentences into one sentence. Often, the revised sentence will make the intended meaning more obvious.

Two sentences: I joined the panel. Jay is the leader.

Combined: I joined the panel because Jay is the leader.

Identifying Adverb Clauses A clause is any group of words with a subject and a verb. An *independent clause* can stand by itself as a complete sentence; a *subordinate clause* is not complete because it does not express a full idea. An *adverb clause* is a subordinate clause that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb in a sentence. It begins with a subordinating conjunction that tells *where*, *when*, *in what way*, *to what extent*, *under what condition*, or *why*.

When: After I read the report, I agreed with the mayor.

Condition: Dan will ask for a refund if you will go with him.

In what way: The bulldog yawned as if he were utterly bored.

Why: I drew a map so that they would not get lost.

Combining Sentences When combining two short sentences using adverb clauses, follow these steps:

1. Look for a relationship between the ideas of the two clauses.
2. Select the appropriate subordinate conjunction to show that relationship. Place the adverb clause at the beginning or end of the combined sentence—wherever it conveys your intent more clearly.
3. Use a comma to separate a subordinate clause only when it begins a sentence.

Grammar in Your Writing

Review several paragraphs of your report and highlight any consecutive short sentences that you find. Look for a possible adverbial relationship (*where*, *when*, *in what way*, and so on) in two of the sentences. Following the steps outlined here, combine the sentences using an appropriate subordinating conjunction.

PH WRITING COACH

Further instruction and practice are available in *Prentice Hall Writing Coach*.

Common Subordinate Conjunctions

after	because	since	when
although	before	so that	whenever
as	even though	unless	whether
as soon as	if	until	while

Student Model: Lyndsey Regan, Canyon Country, CA

Body Language

When we speak to other people, they are not only listening to our actual words, but sensing our facial expression, tone of voice, gestures, level of eye contact, posture, and movements as well. Nonverbal communication, or body language, makes up approximately 65 percent of human communication (Aylesworth 3). Body language has a major impact on how others perceive what we say. It can also be a tool for miscommunication when the speaker and listener are from different cultures or are communicating through technology that deprives them of visual cues. In fact, we often realize the importance of body language only when we cannot interpret someone else's body language correctly.

In *Eye to Eye: How People Interact*, Dr. Peter Marsh explains that before we speak, our gestures, posture, and facial expressions are already broadcasting messages to those around us. While we are speaking, these gestures continue to communicate messages—usually clarifying what we are saying, but sometimes contradicting us in telltale ways (Marsh 116–119).

Often, body language is an unconscious act that triggers the most developed senses in other people—hearing and sight (Aylesworth 18). That is why body language is such a great way to emphasize words and ideas. Many people take advantage of this. Advertisers, for example, cast actors in their commercials who use body language that appeals to viewers.

Studies have shown that people's body language changes when they are not telling the truth (Vrij, Edward, Roberts, and Bull 239–263). If someone's body language is inconsistent with what he or she is saying, people tend to believe what the body is telling them. A good way for people to convey a positive message is to avoid certain movements, like fidgeting or letting your eyes wander. Instead, good communicators maintain steady eye contact, nod in agreement, and smile. You may notice that people on television, like hosts of infomercials and talk-shows, generally display this positive body language when speaking.

The opening line captures the reader's attention by presenting a surprising perspective.

Lyndsey expresses her thesis statement clearly and concisely.

Lyndsey smoothly introduces a research source and explains the ideas it provided.

Body language is usually learned, but it can also be inherited. It is affected by age, gender, background, and situation. The meaning of body language can change depending on cultural context. According to Dr. Marsh, each culture has developed its own repertoire of symbolic gestures, many with original associations that have now long been forgotten (Marsh 53–54). This sometimes causes people to be alarmed by foreign visitors or nervous around people when they visit new countries.

In the United States, people have a wide variety of regional influences because the country is a melting pot of diverse cultures. A gesture that means the same thing throughout the United States is the "OK" sign made with the thumb and forefinger. This gesture is interpreted similarly in some European countries, but if you were to perform this sign in Greece or Turkey, it would be considered very insulting (Marsh 54).

There are other cultural differences in body language within Europe. In Germany, body language often reflects social status, and Germans often use body language for emphasis. Italian gestures are often passionate, emotional expressions communicated with the face, arms, and shoulders. Italians often use body language to clarify themselves or to express urgency. In France, people tend to use more formal gestures. They are generally not as expressive or insistent as Italians. The body language of the French is not nearly as casual as we are used to in America (Ruesch and Kees 23–25). As you can see by exploring a few examples from different cultures, there are many differences in body language. Therefore, when you communicate with people from other countries, take special care in your use of body language.

Technological advancements in our society affect the way we communicate. For example, when we speak on the telephone, we are unable to see the person on the other end of the line. The message that a person may be trying to convey may be misinterpreted without the additional visual information provided by his or her body language. With electronic mail, there is no visual or verbal communication whatsoever. As a result, people cannot completely understand the meaning of what is being communicated. Therefore, people using e-mail should be careful about what they write. To avoid miscommunication, communicating the old-fashioned way—in person—may be the best approach.

Whenever Lyndsey presents a specific piece of evidence that is not her own idea or common knowledge, she cites it using the appropriate format.

Lyndsey's organizational structure is logical and clear. First, she discusses how body language is used in a variety of cultures. Next, she gives examples of what happens when we do not have body language to guide us.

In conclusion, body language is a significant component of communication, even though we are often not aware of it. Body language, like facial expression and gestures, frequently enables people to clearly understand one another, but we must remember that people cannot always be read like a book. With cultural differences, body language can take on different meanings, and this allows for potential miscommunication. Changes in technology present a different kind of problem, but with a similar result. When body language cannot be seen, people may misinterpret the meaning of the communicator, making them angry or confused. As you can see, the additional information we provide with our body language plays a major role in how we communicate our thoughts and ideas.

Works-Cited List

- Aylesworth, Thomas G. *Understanding Body Talk*. New York: F. Watts, 1979.
- Marsh, Peter, M.D. *Eye to Eye: How People Interact*. Topsfield, MA: Salem House Publishers, 1988.
- Ruesch, Jurgen, and Weldon Kees. *Nonverbal Communication: Notes on the Visual Perception of Human Relations*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969.
- Vrij, Aldert, Katherine Edward, Kim P. Roberts, and Ray Bull. "Detecting Deceit via Analysis of Verbal and Nonverbal Behavior." *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, Winter 2000: 239-263.



Language

3.a. Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual appropriate for the discipline and writing type.

After her conclusion, Lindsey presents the complete information for the works cited in her report using MLA format, a common style for citation.

Editing and Proofreading

Review your draft to correct errors in format, grammar, and spelling.

Focus on format. Follow the manuscript requirements by including an appropriate title page, pagination, spacing and margins, and citations. Make sure you have used the preferred system for crediting sources in your paper and for bibliographical sources at the end. Double-check all punctuation and capitalization.

Notice unusual consonant groupings. Some words are difficult to spell because they contain unusual letter combinations. Certain consonant groupings, such as the *rh* in *rhythm*, don't occur in many words. Other consonant groups are hard to hear (exhilarating) or contain a silent letter (silhouette). Be sure to double-check these problematic words.

Publishing and Presenting

Consider one of the following ways to share your writing:

Deliver an oral presentation. Read your research report aloud to your classmates, or consider recreating the report as a multimedia presentation using presentation software. Add appropriate visual aids as needed, such as charts, maps, and graphs.

Organize a panel discussion. If several of your classmates have written on a similar topic, plan a discussion to compare and contrast your findings. Speakers can summarize their research before opening the panel to questions from the class.

Reflecting on Your Writing

Jot down your answers to this question:

How did writing a research report affect your understanding of your topic?

Rubric for Self-Assessment

Find evidence in your writing to address each category. Then, use the rating scale to grade your work.

Criteria	Rating Scale
Focus: How clear is your thesis statement?	not very 1 2 3 4 5 very
Organization: How logical and consistent is your organization?	1 2 3 4 5
Support/Elaboration: How effective and varied is your support?	1 2 3 4 5
Style: How well do you summarize background information?	1 2 3 4 5
Conventions: According to an accepted format, how complete and accurate are your citations?	1 2 3 4 5



Spiral Review

Earlier in the unit, you learned about **main and subordinate clauses** (p. 976).

Review your research report to be sure that no subordinate clause stands by itself.

PH WRITING COACH

Further instruction and practice are available in *Prentice Hall Writing Coach*.