

The North Penn Writing Guide for Students

The North Penn School District promotes the research and writing processes as an interdisciplinary element of effective instruction. This *North Penn Writing Guide* provides the foundation and information needed for students to engage in research and writing in all academic curricula. The skills reflected in this guide are aligned with the PA ELA Core Standards. The goal of this document is to provide a **How-To Guide** to prepare and write a scholarly paper.

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To The Student:

This *North Penn Writing Guide* is designed to help you write a formal, scholarly paper in any course you take in the North Penn School District. While many of the references are for English and Social Studies courses, the process, formatting and style apply to all academic disciplines. Your teacher will give you a writing and or research assignment with specific requirements. Use this guide to help you through the process of writing and researching.

As you begin the writing process, consider the purpose of the writing assignment as you select and focus on a topic. A good paper always begins with selecting a topic that interests you and developing a thesis or position to defend. In the research process, you will collect and analyze information about your topic, and you will gather quotations and text-based evidence to support your thesis. You will create an outline that organizes your information and thoughts. As you examine your information and think about proving your thesis, you will write the rough draft. Finally, after revising and proofreading the paper, you will submit it through Turnitin.com.

Always remember to ask your teacher for assistance at any step in this process! Good writing takes time and effort...and several revisions.

GOOD LUCK IN THIS WRITING PROCESS!

Step 1 Select, Define, and Focus a Topic

How do I select a good topic? A good topic:

- 1. Meets the requirements and scope of the assignment.** Consider the scope of the project will be, how much time you have, and what kind of information you are required to include. Your topic should fit the theme or subject of your class. Is your assignment informational or argumentative? Are you responding to a text, a novel, or a play?
To select and focus your topic, examine the assignment carefully.
- 2. Interests you and your reader.** Choose a topic both you and your reader—usually your teacher and classmates—will enjoy learning more about. Consider topics that are significant to you, your family, your community, or that have always been areas of interest that you want to learn more about.
- 3. Can be researched.**
 - Choose topics that focus on issues and ideas for which some information already exists.
 - Choose a topic that addresses the issues or questions in your class.
 - Beware of topics that are so broad or basic or self-evident that you might have a difficult time producing interesting opinions or analysis about them.

How do I Get Started?

The ability to develop a good research topic is an important skill. A teacher may assign you a specific topic, but most often teachers require you to select your own topic of interest.

Before selecting your topic, make sure you know what your final project should look like. Read your assignment carefully to make sure you understand what your teacher expects. If any part of the assignment is unclear, ask your teacher to explain. Next, write down any potential topics that seem interesting. Write down all of your thoughts about your topic without worrying about what you do not yet know. Your teacher may give you a graphic organizer to use in this step.

Review your notes and highlight the most interesting ideas, problems, issues, or concepts that you wrote down. If you know very little about your topic, the pre-search will help focus your topic further.

What is Pre-Searching?

You may have heard of researching, but what does pre-searching mean? Pre-searching is a preliminary step to help you understand your topic well enough to begin to refine and focus it. It is also a "test drive" to help you decide whether and how to proceed with a topic you have chosen.

When you do not know where to start with a topic that is new to you, reference books can provide quick access to background information. Consult on-line valid resources. Read about topics that interest you and make notes about anything you find intriguing, want more information about, or do not understand.

Pre-searching, or exploring the information available on a particular subject, also helps define a workable topic. Your topic must be narrow and focused enough to be interesting, yet broad enough to find adequate information for your research.

The librarian in your IMC will be able to help you find these resources.

Once you have a general idea of your paper, you will need to focus your thoughts and write a position on the topic.

Step 2

The Thesis Statement

A thesis statement is the controlling idea of an essay, critical paper, and/or research paper. Asserting a position or defending a point of view, the thesis is scholarly in nature and assumes a formal, academic tone. A thesis statement does not have to consist of a single sentence; an analytical thesis may contain several sentences that clearly state a central argument in response to a query or prompt. While the thesis must be sufficiently broad enough to allow development, it must be specific enough to demonstrate focus. The thesis both reflects and generates substantive research, critical analysis, and synthesis of thought. The thesis encompasses what you will prove in your paper and how you plan to do so.

Develop and Write the Thesis Statement

While there may be variations in the writing of thesis statements, the following guidelines apply to the writing process as taught in the North Penn School District.

1. The thesis statement is a one-sentence (or occasionally two-sentence) statement of the central idea you wish to develop in your research paper or essay. Essentially, the thesis statement establishes a context for the reader.
2. The thesis statement should be exact and succinct in its wording. Its language should be carefully considered so that it says exactly what you want it to say while creating interest for the reader.
3. The thesis should not be a simple statement of fact because this does not allow for expansion of topic. In addition, it should be neither too broad in scope, for this results in information that is too general in nature, nor too vague, for this results in a lack of focus. The key to an effective thesis is its clarity and comprehensiveness.
4. The thesis statement should not assume a neutral stance. To be a thesis that matters, your thesis must answer ‘Why?’ or ‘So what?’ or place the central issue in terms of an ‘Although’ proposition.
5. The tone of the thesis helps to establish author’s purpose; therefore, your choice of diction is critical. The tone of the thesis should take into consideration both the subject being addressed as well as the audience whom the writer is addressing.
6. The thesis statement should give focus to your essay or research. **As a roadmap for the body of the essay, the thesis provides the reader with an understanding and expectation of what is to come.**
7. The thesis statement predicts, foreshadows, indicates, or implies what the body paragraphs will contain.
8. The thesis statement is usually located as the last sentence of the opening paragraph. However, the thesis statement may be found anywhere within the first paragraph. Furthermore, when employing inductive reasoning in an argumentative paper, the thesis may actually be located in the concluding paragraph.
9. Generally, however, the thesis statement should be part of an introductory paragraph or two that not only establishes a context for it but also creates for the reader a desire to read the essay.

10. The three-pronged thesis statement is one type of thesis statement that effectively provides focus for an essay or research paper. Such a statement is most effective when used in informational, persuasive, or argumentative essays or formal research papers, for it indicates the three areas or subtopics to be developed in the essay/research paper.
11. The grammatical concern with the three-pronged thesis is that the areas of focus are parallel in nature; that is to say, all three subtopics must have the same grammatical structure.
12. Some thesis statements focus only on one central area of study because the research is devoted to the development of one specific idea. This is not incorrect. The whole point of a thesis is to focus the reader's attention and prepare him or her for what is to follow. You should not contrive ways to create a three-pronged thesis if you are only developing a single concept.
13. The thesis statement and, subsequently, thesis paragraph should not contain detailed examples or in the case of literary criticism, evidentiary quotations. These should be reserved for the body of your paper.

Check List for a Thesis Statement

1. Does the thesis statement provide focus for the research paper or essay?
2. Does the thesis statement indicate or imply the areas of development of the essay or research paper?
3. Is the thesis statement interesting? Does your thesis address any or some of the following questions:
 - Why?
 - So what?
 - Who?
 - How?
 - Where?
4. Is the thesis statement concise in its wording?
5. Is the thesis statement grammatically correct? Is it parallel in structure? Is it a complete sentence? Is it punctuated correctly?
6. Is the thesis statement contained in an introductory paragraph that provides context and substantive background?

In many cases, your teacher will accept or approve a thesis to make sure you are on the right track.

Remember that the foundation for an excellent paper rests on the quality of the thesis statement.

The thesis is the most important sentence in your paper!

Once you have a thesis statement, you will gather information to support your position using primary and secondary sources.

Step 3 Gather Information

Gathering information is the research component to support your thesis or your argument. You will use both primary and secondary sources in your papers. Both types of sources provide information and support for your thesis.

Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary sources: The raw materials of history -- original documents and objects which were created at the time under study

Secondary Sources: Accounts or interpretations of events created by someone without first-hand experience'

Examples

<i>Primary Sources</i>	<i>Secondary Sources</i>
Diaries	Encyclopedia Articles
Letters	Biographies
Interviews	Non-fiction Texts (interpreted by a third party)
Speeches	Journal, Magazine, and Newspaper Articles (not written at the time under study)
Eyewitness Accounts	
Videos at the time of the event of the event	
Photographs	
Laws or Statutes	
Legal Documents (birth certificates, marriage certificates, etc.)	
Historical Journal, Magazine, and Newspaper Articles (from the time)	
Autobiographies/Memoirs	

Evaluate the Validity of the Sources

Who	Does the author or responsible party have relevant credentials for the topic? If the source is a website, is it affiliated with a trustworthy institution or organization?
What	Is the information presented fact or fiction? Does the source promote a particular point of view? Does the source seek financial gain? Is information in this source consistent with other known reliable sources?
When	Is the information current enough for your needs?
Where	Does the author cite reliable sources of information? If the source is a website, from which domain is it? If the source is a website, is it a personal website (look for a tilde (~) in the URL)

Analyzing Primary Sources

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Primary_Sources.pdf

TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES



Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. Encourage them to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.

OBSERVE

Have students identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

What do you notice first? - Find something small but interesting. - What do you notice that you didn't expect? - What do you notice that you can't explain? - What do you notice now that you didn't earlier?

REFLECT

Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

Where do you think this came from? - Why do you think somebody made this? - What do you think was happening when this was made? - Who do you think was the audience for this item? - What tool was used to create this? - Why do you think this item is important? - If someone made this today, what would be different? - What can you learn from examining this?

QUESTION

Have students ask questions to lead to more observations and reflections.

What do you wonder about...
who? - what? - when? - where? - why? - how?

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.

Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:

Beginning

Have students compare two related primary source items.

Intermediate

Have students expand or alter textbook explanations of history based on primary sources they study.

Advanced

Ask students to consider how a series of primary sources support or challenge information and understanding on a particular topic. Have students refine or revise conclusions based on their study of each subsequent primary source.

For more tips on using primary sources, go to

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers>

As you gather information, you will take notes that pertain to your topic and address your thesis.

Step 4 Take Notes

Note taking: Recording information from sources that supports a thesis.

Citations for sources should be completed before notes are taken. These citations may be in electronic or paper format. Citations are notes, frequently on note cards, that identify the sources you may use in your paper; citations record the bibliographic information about the source that will appear in your Works Cited page. The Works Cited page is a listing of all the resources you have used to write the paper.

While the examples in this Writing Guide have the appearance of 3 x 5 index cards, you may use the electronic version of taking notes. See your librarian or teacher to learn to use Noodletools or other on-line formats to take notes from primary and secondary sources. **The information and analysis remains the same regardless of the format used.**

Sample Source Card:

The image shows a rectangular box representing a source card. The card is divided into several horizontal sections by blue lines. In the top right corner, the number '3' is written, with an arrow pointing to it from the label 'Source #'. In the middle section, an MLA citation is provided: 'Wroble, Lisa A. *Kids During the Renaissance*. New York: PowerKids, 1997. Print.' An arrow points from the label 'MLA citation' to the citation text.

Researchers use notecards to extract, synthesize and organize information to support a thesis. (If the final product is an argumentative essay, notecards may also include the counterpoint to the argument.)

Some teachers have their students use electronic tools for note taking (NoodleTools, EasyBib, etc.) while others prefer handwritten notes (Cornell notes or index cards). Your librarian can help with this step.

Regardless of the method of note taking, all notes should include the following:

- the source and location (page number) of the information
- a way to arrange or group notecards by topic or idea that corresponds to your outline (slug, tag)
- a place to record the information (quotation, paraphrase, and analysis)

Three Types of Note Cards:

All notes must relate to and prove the thesis.

Direct Quotation: This notecard contains a direct quotation from the source and is punctuated with quotation marks at the beginning of the quotation and at the end.

Paraphrase: A paraphrase reflects the meaning of the selected textual passage but uses the words of the student writing the paper. Be careful when paraphrasing NOT to plagiarize.

Summary: A summary notecard offers in a sentence or two, the thoughts the student gathers while reading a source. Be careful NOT to plagiarize.

Sample Quotation Notecard:

The diagram shows a rectangular notecard with a red horizontal line at the top and blue horizontal lines below. The text is as follows:

Topic or idea → **Daily Life** 3 ← Source # referring to the # in the upper right corner of the bibliography source card

Note → In a village during the Renaissance, "Isabella and her mother went to the market every day. They bought vegetables, bread, and fish or meat for their meals."

(Only one idea per card.)

9 ← Page #

Sample Paraphrased Notecard:

The diagram shows a rectangular notecard with a red horizontal line at the top and blue horizontal lines below. The text is as follows:

Topic or idea → **Daily Life** 3 ← Source # referring to the # in the upper right corner of the bibliography source card

Note → In Renaissance villages, girls traveled with their mothers every day to the market. They bought food for their family including vegetables, bread, and fish or some other meat.

(Only one idea per card.)

9 ← Page #

Sample Summary Notecard:

The diagram shows a rectangular notecard with a red horizontal line at the top and blue horizontal lines below. The top-left corner contains the text "Daily Life". The top-right corner contains the number "3". The middle section contains the text: "Not unlike most families today, people during the Renaissance went to the market for food. What they bought then is similar to what we buy now: vegetables, bread, meat, and fish." The bottom-right corner contains the number "9".

Labels with arrows pointing to the notecard:

- Topic or idea → Daily Life
- Note (Only one idea per card.) → Not unlike most families today, people during the Renaissance went to the market for food. What they bought then is similar to what we buy now: vegetables, bread, meat, and fish.
- Source # referring to the # in the upper right corner of the bibliography source card → 3
- Page # → 9

You will take notes from primary and secondary sources. When you select a quotation and write it on the note card, you include an analysis of the quotation as it relates to the outline.

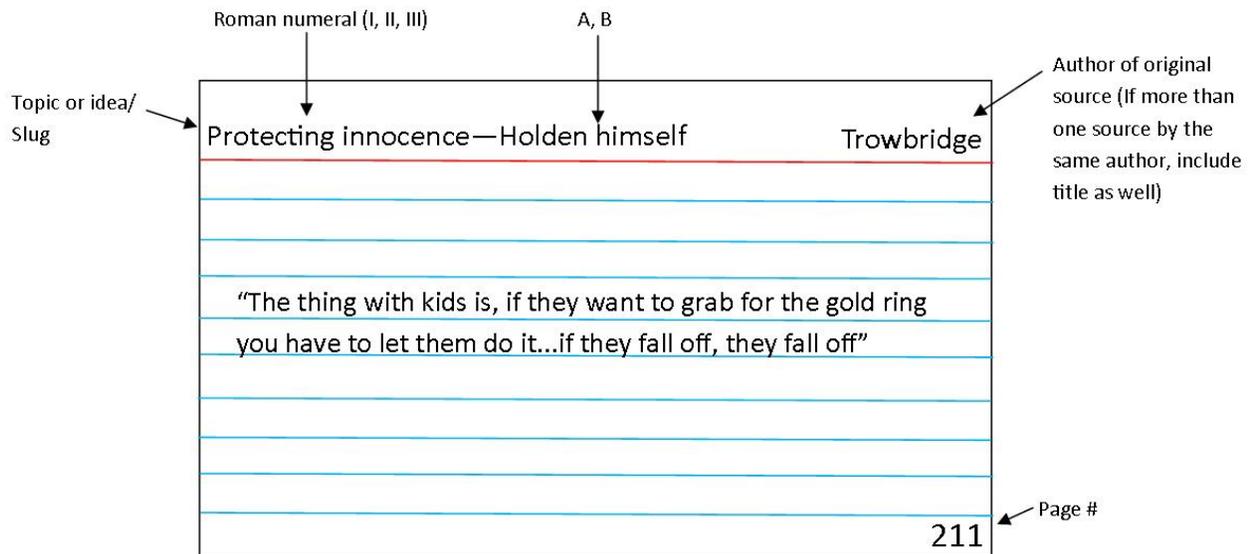
Primary Source Notecard with Analysis:

The diagram shows a rectangular notecard with a red horizontal line at the top and blue horizontal lines below. The top-left corner contains the text "Protecting innocence—Holden's Realization". The top-right corner contains the name "Salinger". The middle section contains a quotation: "The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring you have to let them do it...if they fall off, they fall off". The bottom section contains an analysis: "Symbolically, Holden realizes that he cannot be a 'catcher in the rye.' By articulating this thought, Caulfield finally accepts that the children have to grow up and learn things on their own. Even his sister has to experience life and those things that Holden has always tried to keep from her." The bottom-right corner contains the number "189".

Labels with arrows pointing to the notecard:

- Roman numeral (I, II, III) → (points to the top-left area)
- A, B → (points to the top-left area)
- Topic or idea/Slug → Protecting innocence—Holden's Realization
- Author of original source (If more than one source by the same author, include title as well) → Salinger
- Detail → "The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring you have to let them do it...if they fall off, they fall off"
- Analysis → Symbolically, Holden realizes that he cannot be a "catcher in the rye." By articulating this thought, Caulfield finally accepts that the children have to grow up and learn things on their own. Even his sister has to experience life and those things that Holden has always tried to keep from her.
- Page # → 189

Secondary Source Notecard:



Analyze the Information for a Literature-Based Paper

Once you have found specific textual evidence supporting your thesis and sub-topics of your paper, you will need to analyze the information.

- Address how or why the specific action (textual evidence) relates to a specific topic.
- Use analytical verbs to move from the textual evidence to the analysis.
- Use active not passive voice.
- Create a variety of sentences when analyzing the textual information.
- Avoid restating the quote.

Example

Topic:

Protecting innocence – Holden’s realization (From the novel, *Catcher in the Rye*)

Textual evidence:

“The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it...if they fall off, they fall off.”

Analysis:

Symbolically, Holden realizes that he cannot be a “catcher in the rye.” By articulating this thought, Caulfield finally accepts that children have to grow up and learn things on their own. Even his sister has to experience life and those things that Holden has always tried to keep from her.

As you take notes and analyze the information, you will plan your paper, organize your thoughts and create an outline for the whole paper.

Step 5

Outline the Research/Literature-Based Paper

You may ask, “Why do I need to outline?” Outlining helps you to

- Organize ideas.
- Create a clear structure.
- Ensure developed paragraphs.
- Maintain focus on thesis.
- Ensure clear support of ideas.

Depending on the type of writing, you may write your outline prior to researching (as with the critical paper) or after researching (as with the social studies research paper). In either case, outlining is **ESSENTIAL** to the creation of a successful paper. You may be taking notes and revising your outline concurrently.

Consider your outline as the **PLAN** or **STRUCTURE** of the paper. Most formal papers have at least three main topics reflected in the Roman numerals. The Roman numerals align with the three prongs of your thesis statement. The main topics are usually more than one paragraph.

When outlining, be sure to . . .

1. Identify your topic or thesis statement.

2. Arrange your main points in a logical order and list them in the outline. This order can be changed later, as you evaluate your outline.

3. Create sub-points beneath each major idea. By convention, each time you have a new number or letter, there need to be at least two points (i.e. if you have an A, you need a B; if you have a 1, you need a 2; etc.).

By this point, your outline should be taking shape: use the traditional format below.

- I.
 - A.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - B.
 - 1.
 - 2.
- II.
 - A.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - B.
 - 1.
 - 2.

4. Evaluate your outline. Look over what you have written. Does it make logical sense? Is each point suitably fleshed out? Is there anything unnecessary? Are there any changes you need to make to the order of subtopics or supporting details of your outline?

5. Ensure parallelism in your outline. It is important that your final outline utilizes parallel structure, which in essence means that your outline is grammatically consistent. Subtopics must be parallel with subtopics (both in your thesis and on your outline), paragraph topics must be parallel with paragraph topics, and supporting evidence must be parallel with supporting evidence. See the following resource for instructions on ensuring parallelism in your outline: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/01/>.

Research papers, critical papers, and other types of research writing may require that you approach an outline differently. However, all outlines will utilize the same format. Regardless of the way your outline takes shape, the purpose remains the same – to organize your ideas prior to writing your draft. Your outline should be double spaced like the body of your paper.

Additional Sources:

<http://writingcenter.cos.edu/2011/10/making-an-outline/>

<http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/outline.html>

<http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/outline.html>

Outline Example Template

Thesis Statement:

- I.** First Subtopic in Thesis (topic of the first section of your paper)
 - A.** 1st Supporting Paragraph Topic in Section I
 - 1. Supporting Evidence
 - 2. Supporting Evidence
 - 3. Supporting Evidence
 - B.** 2nd Supporting Paragraph Topic in Section I
 - 1. Supporting Evidence
 - 2. Supporting Evidence
 - 3. Supporting Evidence
 - C.** 3rd Supporting Paragraph Topic in Section I
 - 1. Supporting Evidence
 - 2. Supporting Evidence
 - 3. Supporting Evidence
- II.** Second Subtopic in Thesis (topic of the second section of your paper)
 - A.** 1st Supporting Paragraph Topic in Section II
 - 1. Supporting Evidence
 - 2. Supporting Evidence
 - 3. Supporting Evidence
 - B.** 2nd Supporting Paragraph Topic in Section II
 - 1. Supporting Evidence
 - 2. Supporting Evidence
 - 3. Supporting Evidence
 - C.** 3rd Supporting Paragraph Topic in Section II
 - 1. Supporting Evidence
 - 2. Supporting Evidence
 - 3. Supporting Evidence

Note: Your paper may have fewer or more paragraph topics or points of supporting evidence. However, remember that if your outline includes a “I”, “A” or “1”, it must always be followed by a “II”, “B”, or “2”.

Outline Example
from <http://writingcenter.cos.edu/2011/10/making-an-outline/>

Thesis: By lowering the barriers of physical appearance, the unique anonymity of Internet communication could build diversity into community.

- I. No fear of being prejudged
 - A. Unknown physical attributes
 - 1. Gender
 - 2. Age
 - 3. Race
 - 4. Style
 - B. Freer communication
 - C. No automatic rejection
- II. Inability to prejudge others
 - A. No assumption based on appearance
 - 1. Body type
 - 2. Physical disability
 - 3. Race
 - B. Discovery of shared interests and concerns
 - 1. Sports and other activities
 - 2. Family values
 - 3. Political views
 - C. Reduction of physical bias

Example from **The Little Brown Compact Handbook, Sixth edition by Jane E. Aaron*

Remember, the roman numerals (I, II) are used for the main topic sentence and capital letters are used for subtopics. The Arabic numerals (1, 2) are used for supporting details or examples.

Once you have finalized your thesis, gathered your information, taken your notes, and written your outline, you are ready to begin writing your rough draft.

Step 6 Write The Rough Draft

To write your rough draft, you will be incorporating your thesis, your outline, your research, and your quotations into the written document. Your paper represents the best critical thinking and analysis you can apply to the research and preparation. Your analysis of the topic is essential to the development of your thesis.

To begin: organize your outline and notecards so that your notecards are in the order of the information on your outline!

Format

1. **Number:** Number all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, 1/2- inch from the top. Your last name and consecutive page numbers are to appear on all pages beginning with the second page. Directions below are to be used with Microsoft Word.

Adding Page Numbers and Inserting Name on Research/ Critical Paper

- ADD PAGE NUMBER FIRST BEFORE INSERTING NAME
 - On the **Insert Tab** click page number (pick from drop down menu usually Top of page option #3)
 - Close Header Footer
 - On the **Page Layout Tab** Click on **Page Setup**
 - Under **Layout** Check Different first page
 - Click OK
 - Tap on Page 2
 - Double Click in Header area and inset name in front of number
 - Close Header Footer
2. **Follow the outline EXACTLY or REVISE** the outline to match the order in the paper.
 3. Use correct **parenthetical documentation**. (See Step 7 in *Writing Guide*)
 4. Place the proper North Penn heading on the 1st page.
Heading and title of paper

Student's Name

Teacher's Name

Course Name, Class Period (ex. – English 10, Period 2)

Date: 11 November 2014 (European Style)

Title of the Paper

5. Allow 1” margins all around, double space entire paper (including the Works cited page), use Times New Roman, 12 point font.
6. The title of your paper is centered on the line after the date in the heading. It does not receive any punctuation.

Sections of the Rough Draft

Introductory paragraph

In form, the introductory paragraph must resemble an **inverted pyramid**, starting with general information and gradually becoming more focused as you lead up to your thesis, the most important sentence in the paper. You must begin your introductory paragraph with a **general statement or a broad philosophical statement** about the topic, e.g., “Recurring motifs weave through prose, poetry, and music.”

If you are writing a critical paper that analyzes a literary work, the next sentences must mention the **titles of the novels/plays (italicized) and the authors’ names**. You may also include a statement of **plot** and of **theme**.

Usually, your final sentence(s) is your thesis statement. It clearly states the **purpose** of your paper and **how** you intend to prove your thesis (“hows” represent your Roman numerals in your outline). This information must remain parallel throughout the paper.

Include in the introductory paragraph:

- General statement about the topic
- General information about the novels/plays, such as time, place, theme, characters’ first and surnames, and/or conflict. *OR*
- General information about the research topic such as location in history or geography, background of the topic, basic timely issues
- Introduction of your topic
- Thesis statement (See Step 2 of Writing Guide for the development of a thesis statement.)

First Paragraph Structure
Broad statement about topic
Background information
Previews the thesis
Context of the thesis/argument
Concise statement of theme/topic
Thesis statement

Body Paragraphs

The body paragraphs of the paper must follow your outline.

You will include the information and quotations gathered on your note cards in the writing of the rough draft. (See Step 7 for details about parenthetical documentation which describes how to document your quotations.)

Consider each Roman numeral a “chapter” in your paper. A chapter may be a single paragraph or multi-paragraph.

- Each paragraph must contain a strong topic sentence stating the topic to be discussed in the paragraph. Topic sentences must contain outline words. Words and their synonyms in your outline are key words and are repeated throughout the paper to create continuity and focus.
For example, corrupt, immoral, contaminated, foul, and tainted describe the barriers to Gatsby’s failure to achieve his dream.
- Use transitions to move from one outline area to the next or from one supporting detail to the next.
- Each paragraph must contain a thorough discussion of details (embedded details), examples and supporting evidence.
- Each paragraph must contain strong analysis of details and quotations. Explain and interpret each detail/quotation and relate it to the topic sentence.
Your note cards will contain analysis: include this material as you write.
 - ✓ These paragraphs include accurate quotations.
 - ✓ These paragraphs include accurate documentation.

Concluding (“Clincher”) Statements

A concluding sentence, or “clincher” statement, is a sentence at the end of each body paragraph that

- summarizes the paragraph’s main ideas.
- connects supporting points to the thesis.
- (often) provides a transition to the next paragraph topic.
- leaves the audience with a reminder of how the points made in the paragraph support the thesis.

Because clincher statements, like topic sentences, connect to the thesis argument, they should be analytical in nature.

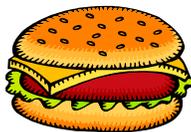
Think of your paragraph like a hamburger:

The top bun is the topic sentence.

The middle ingredients are the supporting sentences.

The bottom bun is the concluding sentence.

Like the topic and concluding sentences, the buns hold everything together and resemble each other, although they are not exactly alike. Adapted from [http:// time4writing.com](http://time4writing.com)



EXAMPLE (Social Studies)

Thesis: Although women in contemporary Japan do not experience the same equality enjoyed by their Western counterparts, women in 21st century Japanese society face new demands to support their families in addition to their traditional private roles.

Topic Sentence:

Public opinion in Japan regarding gender role division between the public and private spheres appears to be changing.

Concluding Sentence

These and other figures from the same survey clearly indicate a trend toward increased popular acceptance toward “non-traditional” gender roles in Japan.

Next Paragraph Topic Sentence:

The same trend may also be noted in popular perceptions of women’s life priorities.

Notice that the concluding sentence reflects but does not replicate the topic sentence. It also serves to transition to the next paragraph topic.

From http://writesite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/m3/m3u2/m3u2s5/m3u2s5_2.htm

EXAMPLE (English – Literature-Based Paper)

Thesis: Holden’s fear of adulthood and his desire to protect innocence stem from his experiences with loss and corruption in the world. (Reference the novel *Catcher in the Rye*)

Topic Sentence:

Allie’s death was a devastating experience with loss that contributes to Holden’s intense desire to protect innocence.

Clincher Statement:

Though the death of Allie was a major factor that influenced Holden’s view of the world, other experiences with loss also played a role in Holden’s attitude towards growing up.

Next Topic Sentence:

Another experience that has caused Holden to fear adulthood was witnessing the death of his classmate, James Castle.

Conclusion

- The conclusion of your paper moves from specific to general (pyramid style).
- The conclusion synthesizes the points of your thesis or argument.
- The conclusion answers essential questions or universal questions raised by your thesis.
- The level of thinking and analysis is important to your conclusion. Refer to Webb's Depth of Knowledge/Bloom's taxonomy.
- **Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate** are the key strategies to use. You have analyzed throughout your paper using your text-based evidence; your conclusion sums up your analysis and offers the highest level of critical thought.

The paper ends with a broad philosophical statement or comment about the topic

Remember that the last thing said is the first thing remembered!!!!

*Information taken from *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* Sixth Edition, ED. Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert

Part 7 Document Sources and Prepare the Works Cited

As you write your scholarly paper, you will need to document your sources 1) within the text of the paper and 2) at the end of the paper with a Works Cited page.

How to Use Quotations

Blending quotations and paraphrases into your paper is a special skill that takes practice. Your quotation must align with the topics on your outline and serve as an example or explanation of your writing. Good writers incorporate quotations and analysis together in their papers.

In the body of your paper, there are several ways to indicate which of your sources you are citing or documenting a quote or idea. You need to specify the **source** (by **author's name**, or if there is no author, by **title**) and the **page number(s)**. You may work the information into the flow of your sentence, or you may place it in parentheses.

Basic Parenthetical Documentation of a Quotation:

Bruno demonstrates his friendship when he takes "hold of Shmeul's tiny hand in his and squeezed it tightly" (Boyne 212). *Note the quotation marks surround the quotation, the final period comes after the parentheses, and there is no comma between the author's name and the page number from which the quotation came.*

Examples from the NPHS IMC web-site:

- **Works with a named author: (Note that there is no comma within the parentheses.)**
 - Some observers have stridently suggested that the sky is falling (**Little 37**).
 - **Chicken Little** stridently suggests that the sky is falling (**37**).
 - In her analysis, **Chicken Little** urgently claims, "The sky is falling!" (**37**).
 - "The sky is falling!" (**Little 37**).
- **Works with no author:**
 - The possibility of the sky falling has made newspaper headlines recently ("**Sky Falling?**").
 - The blogosphere has been buzzing with speculation regarding this point (*Falling Sky Net*).
- **Works with a corporate author:**
 - Research confirms these observations (**Committee for the Study of Stratospheric Descent 117**).
 - Research by the **Committee for the Study of Stratospheric Descent** confirms these observations (**117**).

For additional, current information, refer to the NPSD web-site: the NPHS library link.

[OWL guide to in-text \(parenthetical\) documentation](#)

Part 8 Submit the Final Copy

The submission of the final copy of the paper is the final step to completing the formal, academic paper. Students usually receive a check-list from the teacher to review their papers prior to submission. Teachers may have detailed specifications for the final format of the paper. The guidelines in this *Writing Guide* reflect the protocols and practices of the MLA format. In many cases, you will be given a peer editing check-list.

North Penn School District requires students submitting formal, scholarly papers with research and citations to do so using Turnitin.com to prevent plagiarism. The district's plagiarism policy is reflected in the discipline code. The teacher will instruct the students to follow either Option A or B described below. Students may ask their teacher or librarian for guidance through this process.

Turnitin.com - PLAGIARISM PREVENTION

OPTION A

The North Penn School District requires you to submit your paper to Turnitin so that you can look at your own paper critically and avoid plagiarism.

Turnitin compares your paper against "billions of internet documents, archived internet data that is no longer available on the live web, a local repository of previously submitted papers, and a subscription repository of periodicals, journals, and publications."

The comparison document is called an Originality Report which matches similarities between your submission and Turnitin's database of documents.

All of the instructions below were obtained from the turnitin.com website: http://pages.turnitin.com/rs/ipmaparadigms/images/Student_Manual_en_us.pdf.

First, you must create a user profile.

TO CREATE A USER PROFILE

1. Go to www.turnitin.com and click on the "Create account" link next to the "Sign In" button
2. Click on the "student" link
3. The "Create a New Turnitin Student Account" form must be completed to create a new student user account
4. Your teacher will provide you a class ID number and a case sensitive Turnitin class enrollment password. Enter those in the relevant spaces.

5. Enter your first name, last name, and a valid e-mail address to use as your login for Turnitin
6. Create a user password. The user password must be between six and twelve characters long and contain at least one letter and one number. Re-enter the password to confirm it.
PLEASE WRITE IT DOWN SOMEWHERE SO YOU DON'T LOSE IT.
7. Select a secret question from the drop-down menu. Enter the answer for the question.
Remember and keep this information. The answer is case and space sensitive
8. Review the user agreement. To continue using Turnitin, click on "I agree -- create profile"
9. From the completed user profile creation page, click on "Log in to Turnitin"

TO LOGIN TO TURNITIN

1. Go to www.turnitin.com
2. At the top right enter the e-mail address and password associated with your Turnitin student user account in the appropriate fields
3. Click the "Sign In" button to log into the student homepage

SUBMITTING A PAPER BY SINGLE FILE UPLOAD

1. To submit a paper, click the "Submit" button next to the paper assignment.
2. The paper submission page will open. Enter a title for your paper (put your name in the title). To select a paper for submission, click the browse button and locate the paper on your computer. Your paper must be in one of the following formats: MS Word, WordPerfect, RTF, PDF, PostScript, HTML, plain text (.txt).
3. After entering a title for your paper and selecting a file, click "Upload" to upload your paper. A status bar will appear displaying the upload progress.
4. Review the preview panel. This is a text only version of the paper being uploaded. Confirm it is the correct version of the file to send.

5. Click the "submit" button. Warning: This step must be completed, or the submission is not finished.
6. After the submission has is complete, a digital receipt is displayed on screen. A copy is also sent via e-mail to the address for the user login. Save the receipt and the paper ID it contains, as this is proof of a completed submission.
7. If your paper is in a format that Turnitin does not accept, you can submit it by cut and paste.
 - a. To submit a paper this way, select cut & paste upload using the pull down at the top of the form.
 - b. Copy the text of your paper from a word processing program and then paste it into the text box in the submission form. If you submit your paper using the cut and paste method, you can skip steps 4-6 above.

ORIGINALITY REPORTS

The Originality Report provides a summary of matching or similar areas of text found in a submitted paper. When an Originality Report is available to be viewed an icon is placed in the "Originality Report" column of the class portfolio page. Overwritten or resubmitted papers may not generate a new Originality Report for a full twenty four hours. The Originality Report icon shows a percentage and a corresponding color indicating on an index where this percentage falls in terms of matching content. This percentage is the Similarity Index. **Please see the Turnitin website for directions on how to view Originality Reports and determine what they mean.**

RESUBMITTING

Based upon your originality report, you may want to edit your paper and resubmit it. You may do so multiple times before the due date of your paper. Any second or subsequent submission will overwrite the original file submission in this assignment. Multiple files cannot be uploaded to the same assignment.

This is an amazing opportunity for you evaluate your own work for plagiarism.

Please take advantage of it.

"Turnitin Student User Manual." *Turnitin*. IParadigms, LLC., 2014. Web. 27 May 2014.

<http://pages.turnitin.com/rs/iparadigms/images/Student_Manual_en_us.pdf>.

OPTION B

Turnitin compares your paper against “billions of internet documents, archived internet data that is no longer available on the live web, a local repository of previously submitted papers, and a subscription repository of periodicals, journals, and publications.”

The comparison document is called an Originality Report which matches similarities between your submission and Turnitin’s database of documents.

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3. After entering a title for your paper and selecting a file, click "Upload" to upload your paper. A status bar will appear displaying the upload progress.
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5. Click the "submit" button. Warning: This step must be completed, or the submission is not finished.
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7. If your paper is in a format that Turnitin does not accept, you can submit it by cut and paste.
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<http://pages.turnitin.com/rs/iparadigms/images/Student_Manual_en_us.pdf>.

Appendix A: A Writer's Checklist

This checklist is applicable to all formal, academic writing. **The first 13 rules are to be applied to all formal secondary writing.** The remaining items are to be specified by the teacher for the individual assignment and/or grade level. Your teacher may also have a checklist for specific assignment. The state standards include grammar or writing conventions as part of the overall expectations in the ELA PA Core Standards.

Note: Follow the *North Penn School District Writing Guide* for format and process guidelines.

**Good writers will apply all of these guidelines
to be considered **EXCELLENT WRITERS!****

The Top Thirteen – Rules for all writing!

1. Avoid sentence fragments, run-ons and comma splices

- **Avoid sentence fragments.** Make sure all sentences have subjects and verbs.

Wrong: The taller of the two brothers.

Right: Jake is the taller of the two brothers.

- **Avoid run-on sentences.** When joining two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction (and, or, but), be sure to insert a comma before the conjunction.

Wrong: Mrs. Jones cut pieces of stained glass with a diamond wheel and her husband put the pieces together with wax and lead.

Right: Mrs. Jones cut pieces of stained glass with a diamond wheel, and her husband put the pieces together with wax and lead.

- **Avoid run-on sentences or comma splice errors.** (sentences that run together with no punctuation between them, or run together with only a comma between them)

Wrong: Louisa ran errands all day for her boss, now she is exhausted.

Right: Louisa ran errands all day for her boss; now she is exhausted.

2. Use the third person

Use **he, she, they, him, her, them**

Avoid *second* person-- you

Do not use *first* person pronouns unless directed to do so. For example: I, we, us

3. Use of verbs

Avoid shifts in verb tense.

Wrong: Once we rested, we are able to reach the top of the hill.

Right: Once we rested, we were able to reach the top of the hill.

Avoid use of passive voice.

Wrong: Passive: The ball was pitched by Babe Ruth.

Right: Active: Babe Ruth pitched the ball.

When analyzing literature, use the present tense/active voice as much as possible.

Wrong: Atticus Finch defended Tom Robinson with integrity and aplomb.

Right: Atticus Finch defends Tom Robinson with integrity and aplomb.

Beware of the banal is.

Wrong: Louise Mallard is planning for a bright, fulfilling future.

Right: Louise Mallard plans for a bright, fulfilling future.

4. Do not refer to a point or passage from the source.

- **Never refer to points in the book, play, or short story. Refer to events only.**

Wrong: At the end of the story, Boo Radley saves Scout and Jem's lives.

Right: While walking home from the Halloween pageant, Bob Ewell attacks Jem and Scout, and Boo Radley heroically saves their lives.

- **Do not refer to the "composition" in the text of the composition**

Wrong: This composition will prove that Peyton Farquar fulfills his dying wishes in an instant as his body drops from the Owl Creek Bridge.

Right: Peyton Farquar fulfills his dying wishes in an instant as his body drops from the Owl Creek Bridge.

5. Never use "is when" or "was when" or "is where" or "was where."

Wrong: At the beginning of Act Four is when Abby steals money from Reverend Parris and disappears from Salem.

Right: As people of Salem begin to question her credibility, Abby steals money from Reverend Parris and disappears from Salem.

6. Avoid faulty parallelism. All grammatical elements in any compound structure must follow the same form.

Wrong: I love swimming, skiing, dancing, and to walk.

Right: I love swimming, skiing, dancing, and walking.

Note: All elements in formal outlines must be parallel.

7. Citations: quotation punctuation

Quotation marks ALWAYS follow commas and periods.

Wrong: Mr. Henry pointed at the ocean. "The boat tipped over", he cried, "about 100 yards due east of here".

Right: Mr. Henry pointed at the ocean. "The boat tipped over," he cried, "about 100 yards due east of here."

8. Avoid misplacing commas and periods when closing a sentence with a quotation.

Wrong: I cried at the end of Anne Tyler’s “Average Waves in Unprotected Waters”.

Right: I cried at the end of Anne Tyler’s “Average Waves in Unprotected Waters.”

Wrong: I cried at the end of Anne Tyler’s “Average Waves in Unprotected Waters”, which is my favorite short story.

Right: I cried at the end of Anne Tyler’s “Average Waves in Unprotected Waters,” which is my favorite short story.

9. Vary sentence structure

Use phrases and clauses in complex sentences to achieve sentence variation.

Example of standard structure: Courtney plans to take yoga lessons during her summer vacation.

Example of a sentence variation: During her summer vacation, Courtney plans to take yoga lessons.

10. Using and blending quotations

After quoting or paraphrasing, never write, “This quote shows or proves.”

Wrong: This quote proves that Holden Caulfield abhors phonies.

Right: Obviously, by his reaction to Ernie’s comment, Holden abhors phonies.

Punctuating Titles

11. When referring to literary works, *italicize* titles of long pieces such as novels, plays, long poems, movies. Note that underlining titles is no longer used.

Wrong: “The Odyssey” “The Great Gatsby” “Titanic” “The Crucible”

Right: *The Odyssey* *The Great Gatsby* *Titanic* *The Crucible*

12. Use quotation marks to punctuate short stories and poems.

Wrong: *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* *The Road not Taken*

Right: “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” “The Road not Taken”

13. Capitalize major words in *your* composition titles. NEVER underline or place quotation marks around your own title at the top of compositions.

Wrong: a Matter Of Time

Right: A Matter of Time

Language Usage

14. Do not use slang or informal language.

Wrong: Puritan *kids* were to be seen and not heard.

Right: Puritan children were to be seen and not heard.

15. Do not use abbreviations, such as vs. for versus, Rev. Hale for Reverend Hale.

Do abbreviate titles, such as Dr., Mrs., PhD, Jr.

26. Do not use *so* to join independent clauses. You may use *so that* as a subordinating conjunction.

Wrong: A group of geologists took a trip to Indonesia so they could learn more about various volcanos in the area.

Right: A group of geologists took a trip to Indonesia so that they could learn more about various volcanos in the area.

27. *Not only* and *but also* are “married.” Do not separate them or insert a word between them.

Wrong: Not only was she nice, she was pretty, too.

Wrong: Not only was she nice, but she also was pretty.

Right: Not only was she nice, but also she was pretty.

*****Note:** When there are two clauses involved, do not forget the comma (see above example). When there are not two clauses, omit the comma (see below).

Right: She was not only nice but also pretty.

28. Use apostrophes correctly

Wrong: The Feeney’s are in Disney World.

Right: The Feeneys are in Disney World. (Feeney is the name of the family and is used as a plural in this example.)

Example: *Most commonly made mistake with an apostrophe:*

It’s = it is (subject/verb) Its = (possessive)

Composition Style Guidelines

29. Never introduce dialogue with *says* or *said*. YUCK, boring!!!

Wrong: Charlie said, “I never want to see you again.”

Right: Charlie bellowed, “I never want to see you again!”

30. Do not use contractions.

Wrong: Daisy can’t make up her mind.

Right: Daisy cannot make up her mind.

31. Avoid vague use of *this* as in *this is*. Use *this* as an adjective but not as a pronoun. This must be followed by a noun.

Wrong: This is an example of bad behavior. (vague)

Right: This behavior demonstrates a lack of good breeding. (specific)

32. Never refer to “the reader.”

Wrong: The reader can clearly see that Oedipus adores his daughters.

Right: Oedipus clearly adores his daughters.

33. When referring to a piece of literature such as a poem, novel, short story or play, do not refer to it as *such*. It is redundant.

Wrong: I loved the play *The Crucible* and the short story “Old Milon.”

Right: I loved *The Crucible* and “Old Milon.”

Appendix B

Why Study Grammar?

The study of grammar has consistently plagued both teachers and students alike. The question of why we teach it and subsequently how we teach it is at the heart of every discussion regarding grammar and the study of writing. There is a sound reason grammar is important: Grammar is the glue that holds our language together, the universal structure that enables us to communicate effectively with one another. Without this structure and its accompanying rules, communication would be an impossible task, a virtual linguistic free-for-all. Yet, the study of grammar is more than simply identifying parts of speech and grammatical constructions. The study of grammar entails identification of grammatical elements and, more importantly, their usage in both oral and written communication. The two aspects of study cannot be separated from one another.

The North Penn School District believes that the teaching of grammar should be an integrated approach, one that identifies and explains basic grammatical elements and concepts, provides students with recurring practice of these concepts, demonstrates their usage in literary texts, and employs them in student writing. The expectation is that students will move from recall to extended, critical thinking. This process facilitates student understanding of the structure of language, appreciation for an author's craft and literary style, and application to individual writing.