

# Research Paper Survival Guide



Chariho Regional High School

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## Choosing a Topic

To start your research paper, you should first choose a topic that is of interest to you. You do not want to write about something that you have no interest in because it will be boring and hard to write about. Once you have chosen a topic to write about you will need to create a **thesis statement**.

## Creating a Thesis Statement

Once you have chosen a topic, you need to develop a thesis statement. The thesis sentence is a clear, concise statement of the position you will defend in your paper. The thesis sentence should argue a position, not summarize information.

Here are some helpful hints when developing your thesis:

- Make sure your thesis reflects the *full scope* of your argument.
- Avoid using a thesis that is *too broad* to be defended in your paper or *too narrow* to be a full response to the assignment. Make sure your reader can easily *identify* your thesis sentence.

## Creating an Outline

An outline is used to help you organize your thoughts into a research paper. Some people find it easy to work off an outline, while others find it more difficult and prefer to just write out a paper.

### Writing your introduction

HOOK – (your hook is a lead sentence that captures the theme of your essay while engaging the reader)-

Expand upon or explain hook-

Tie into topic-

Expand on topic-

**THESIS STATEMENT-**

### Body

Topic Sentence (This sentence is what the paragraph will be explaining.)

DETAILS: (Supporting details and quotes for evidence supporting topic sentence.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Your body should consist of as many paragraphs needed to fully explain and support your thesis statement!

### Conclusion

Restate your thesis and include any important information to bring closure to your paper. (5 sentences minimum)

Topic Sentence

**Details:**

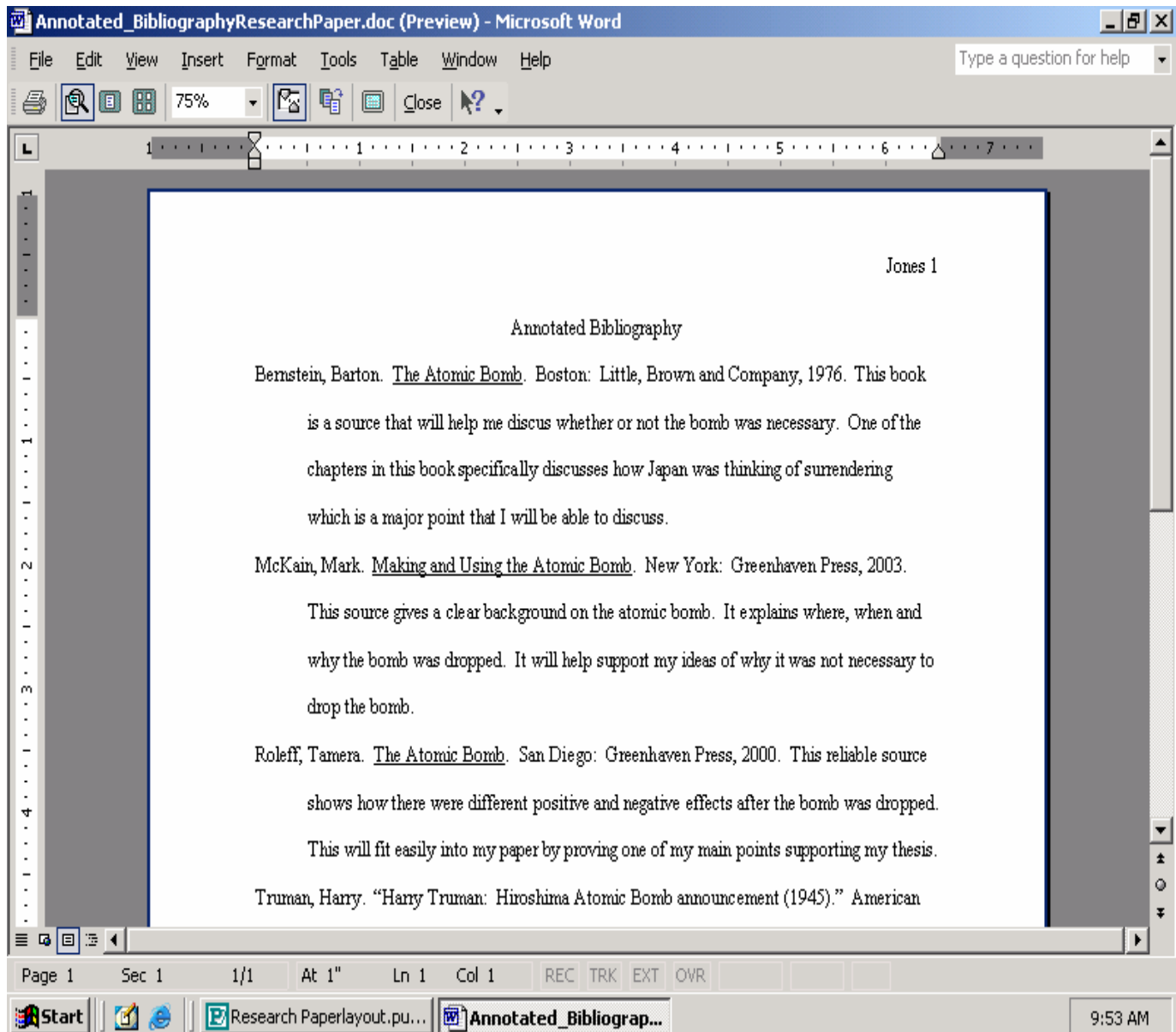
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## How to Create an Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is just like a regular works cited page, except you must write a 2 - 5 sentences about the source, and how it relates to your research paper. Cite your sources the same way you would for your works cited page, and add your paragraph at the end of the citation. You must also alphabetize your sources the same way as you would your works cited page.

When setting up your annotated bibliography, you must set a hanging indent. To see how to set up a hanging indent, go to page 9. It will give you step-by-step instructions on how to do this.

This is an example of what your annotated bibliography should look like:



## Setting Up Your Paper

Most people lose a lot of easy points because they do not know how to set up their paper correctly. There are specific MLA steps that need to be taken to set up your heading, margins, spacing, and page numbers.

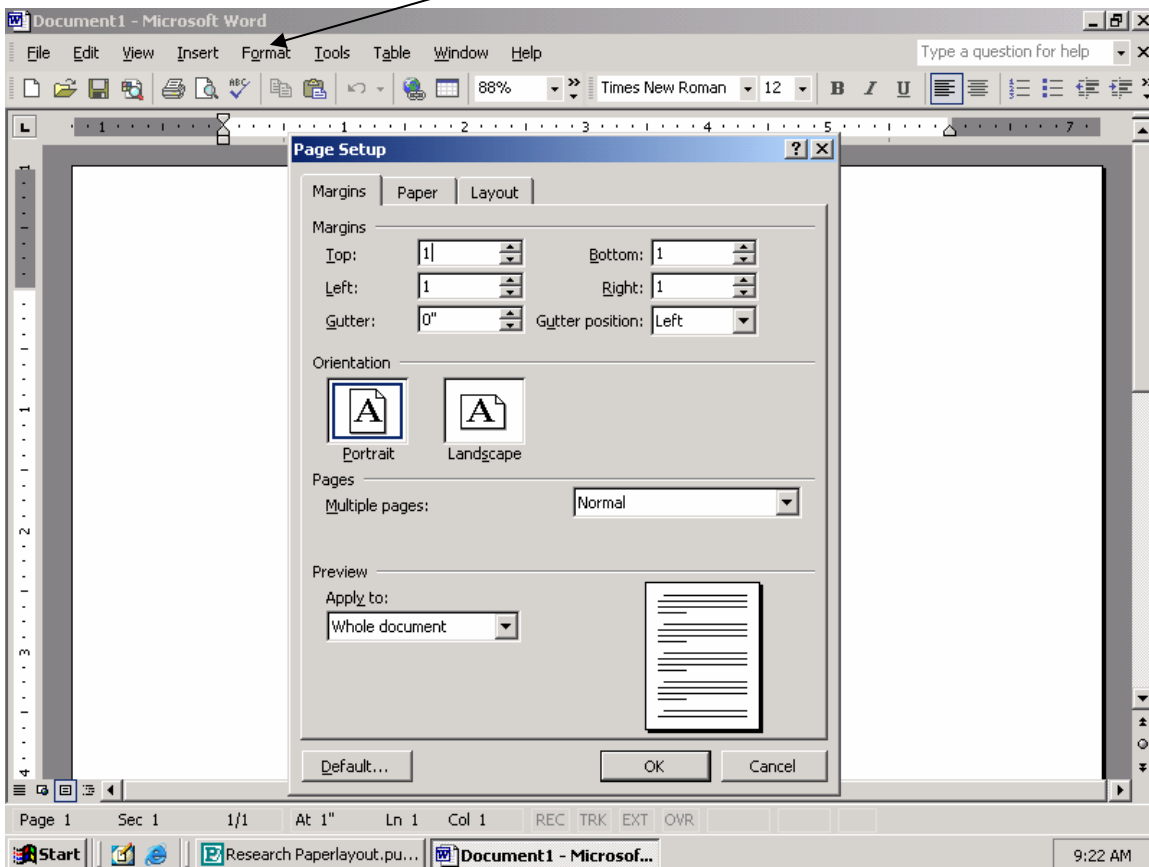
### Margins

Margins should be 1 inch on the top and bottom, and 1 inch on both the left and right. To set up your margins follow these steps:

1. "Click" File
2. "Click" Page set up
3. Type 1 in the box labeled "Top"
4. Type 1 in the box labeled "Bottom"
5. Type 1 in the box labeled "Left"
6. Type 1 in the box labeled "Right"
7. Close dialog box.
8. "Click" Format > Font
9. Select Times New Roman in the box labeled "Font"
10. Chose 12 from the box labeled "Size"

This is the "Format" button.  
"Font" is the first choice when

Here is what your screen should look like:

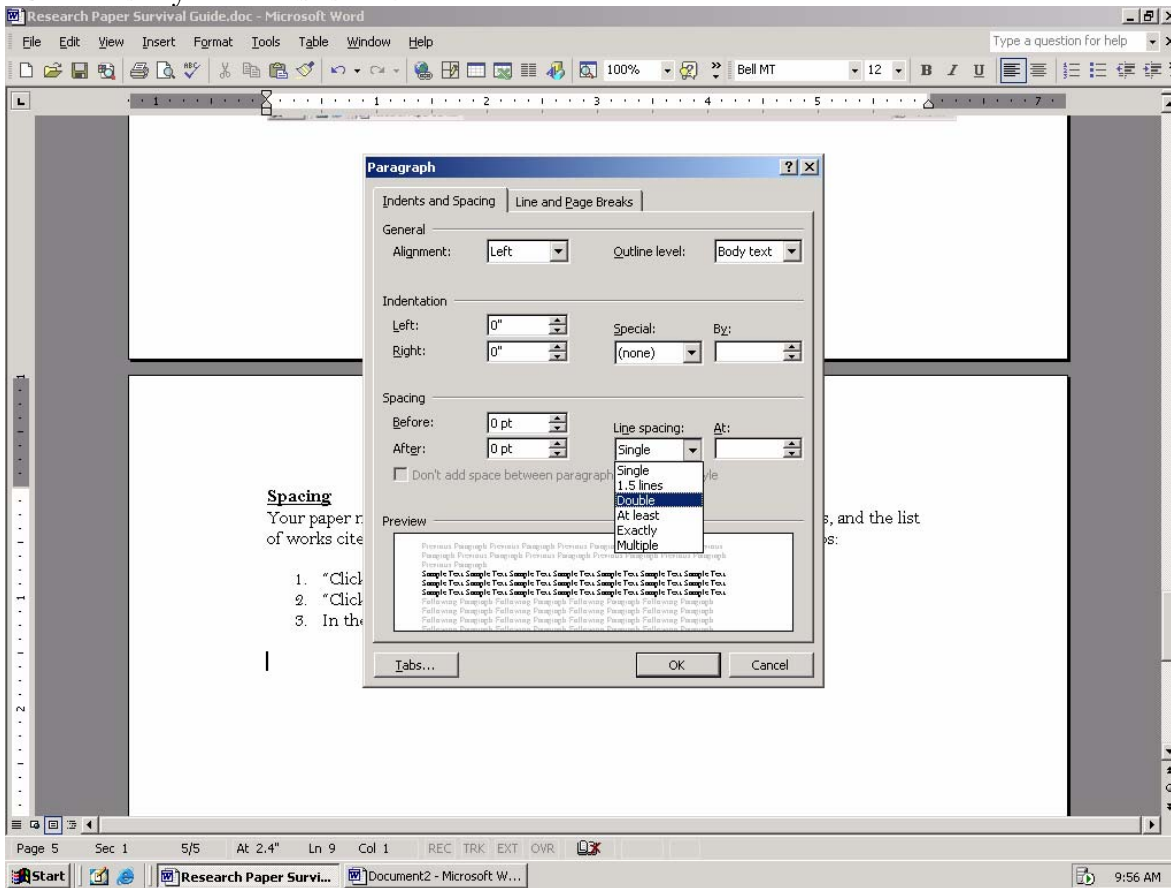


## Spacing

Your paper must be double spaced throughout including quotations, notes, and the list of works cited. To set up your paper to be double spaced, follow these steps:

1. “Click” Format
  2. “Click” Paragraph
- In the drop down menu that says “Line Spacing” select Double

Here is what your screen should look like:



*Note: There are two spaces after an end mark (period, question mark, exclamation). One space follows commas, colons, and semi-colons.*

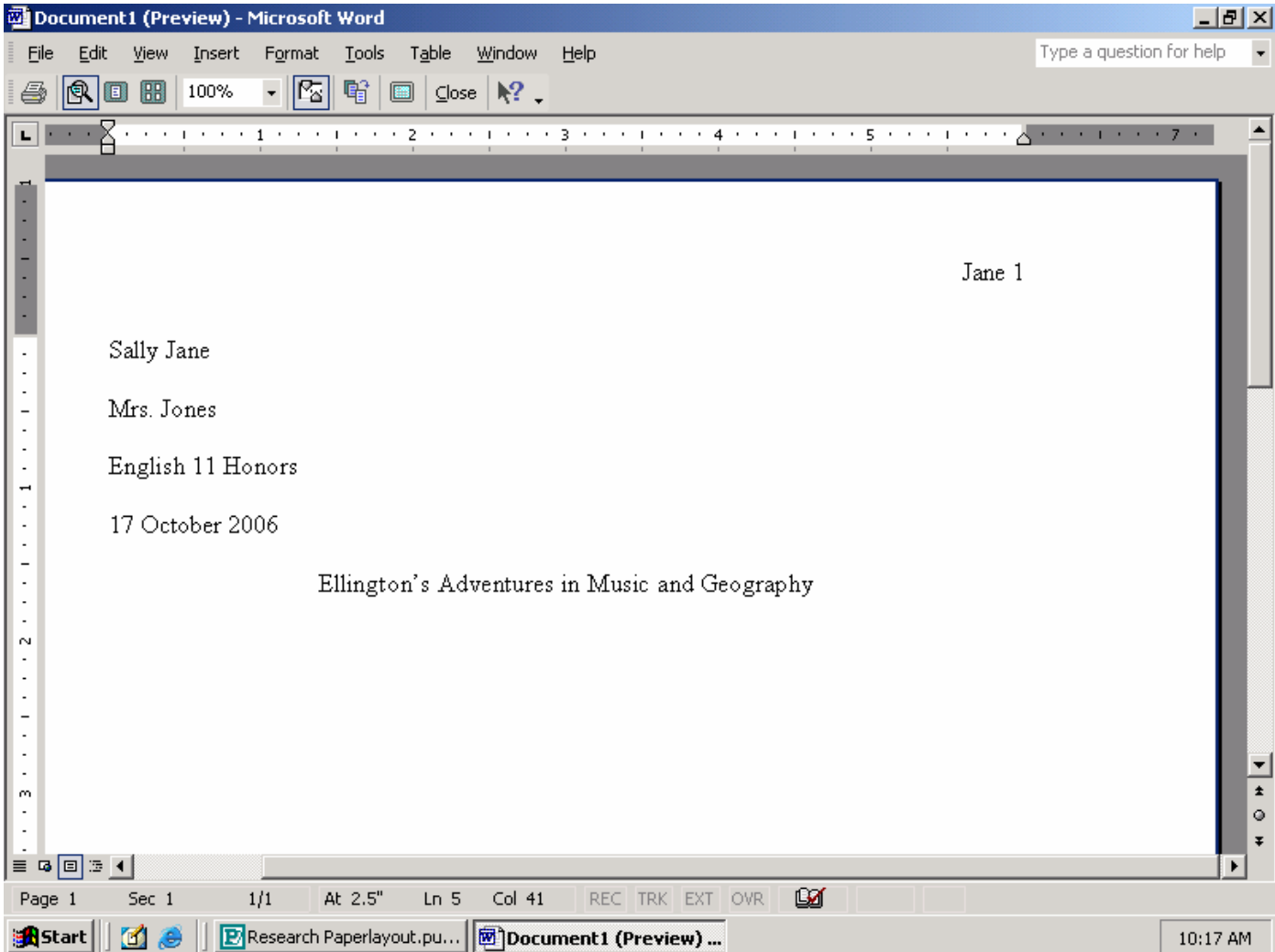
## Heading and Title

A research paper does not need a title page, but it does need a heading that includes your name, your teacher's name, the class, and the date that the paper is due.

Your name should be flush with the left margin. Be sure to use your first and last name. Hit enter once and type your teacher's name. Hit enter once and type your class. Hit enter once and type the due date of the paper in day month year format. Hit enter once then click the center alignment button and type the title of your paper.

**DO NOT UNDERLINE, PUT YOUR TITLE IN QUOTATIONS, OR USE ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.**

Here is what your screen should look like:

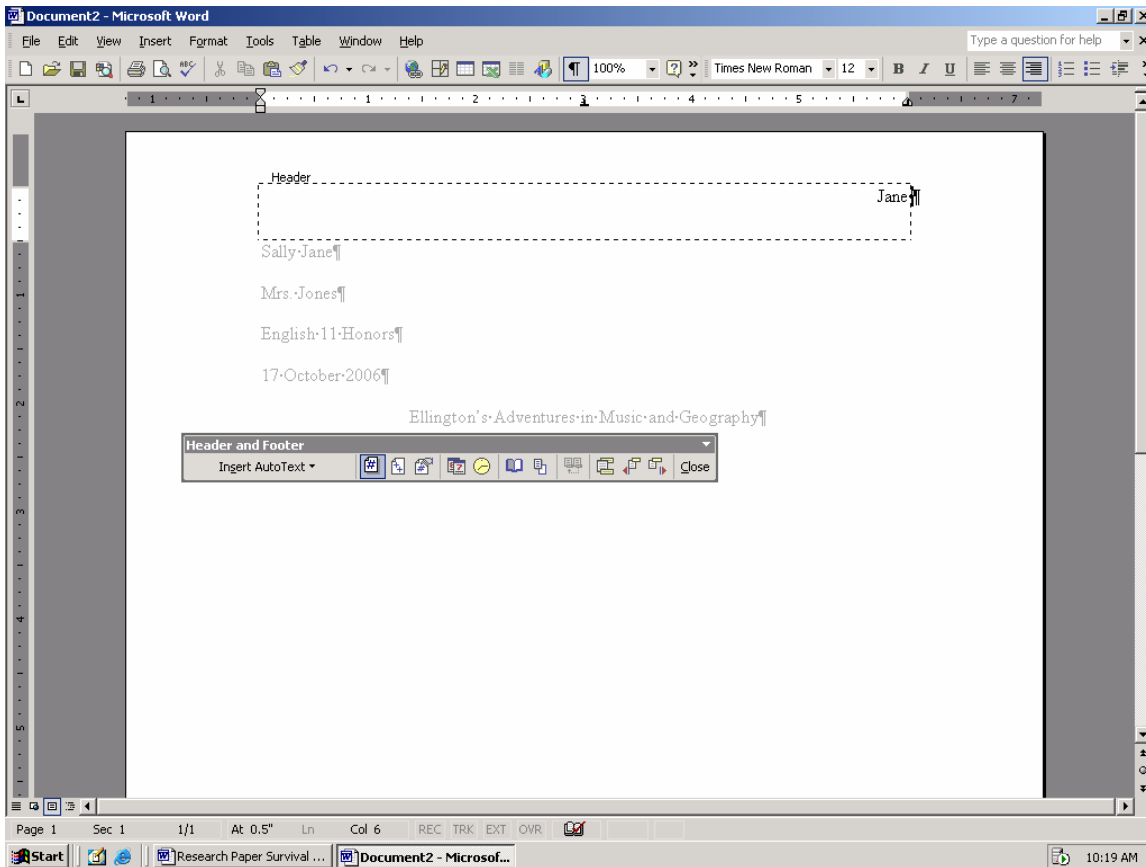


## Page Numbers

Page numbers should be at the top of every page and be preceded by your last name. They should be placed in the header of your paper. To do this, follow these steps:

1. "Click" View
2. "Click" Header and Footer
3. "Click" the right alignment button
4. Type your last name and hit the space bar once
5. "Click" the Insert page number button. (It looks like the number symbol; #)

Here is what your screen should look like:



## Quoting

To better prove your point in your research paper, you must use quotes for evidence. You can not just take a quote and use it as your own however; you must give credit to the person who said the quote. To do this you must follow the MLA format. However, citations will vary depending on the source. Be sure to check your MLA handbook.

### Parenthetical Documentation

#### Indirect Quotes

Even if you do not directly quote someone, you just use his or her idea, you still need to give them credit. To do this, you would type your borrowed idea, use an open parenthesis then the author's last name and the page number of the document where this information can be found followed by a closed parenthesis with a period outside the parenthesis.

Ex. MLA documentation uses parenthetical citation to reference sources within the text of your research paper, noting the author's last name and page number where the information used in your paper can be found (Gibaldi 238).

#### Direct Quotes

Using a direct quote would be using someone else's work word-for-word. To do this, use an open quotation type the text, close the quotation, then use an open parenthesis type the author's last name and the page number where the text can be found, close the parenthesis, then a period.

Ex. "References in the text must clearly point to specific sources in the list of works cited"(Gibaldi 238).

#### Using Quotes more than three lines long

A direct quote that takes up more than three lines in your research paper must be indented, and italicized. To do this, you must set a left and right indent.

1. Select the lines that are included in your quote.
2. "Click" format.
3. "Click" paragraph
4. In the indentation box, type 1 in the left box and 1 in the right box.
5. Type your quote as you would a direct quote.

Ex.

In To Kill a Mockingbird, Bob Ewell, father of Mayella Ewell who was accusing Tom Robinson of rape, claimed he looked right through the window of his house and watched Tom rape his daughter:

Well, Mayella was rasin' this holy racket so I dropped m'load and run as fast as I could but I run into th' fence, but when I got distangled I run up to th' window and I seen—  
Mr. Ewell's face grew scarlet. He stood up and pointed his finger at Tom Robinson. '—  
I seen that black nigger yonder ruttin' on my Mayella! (Lee 173)

## How to Create a Works Cited Page

Along with citing your sources in your research paper, you must give more information in the Works Cited Page including the title of source, and where, when, and by whom the source was published by.

**Your works cited page must be in alphabetical order according to the first word in your citation.**

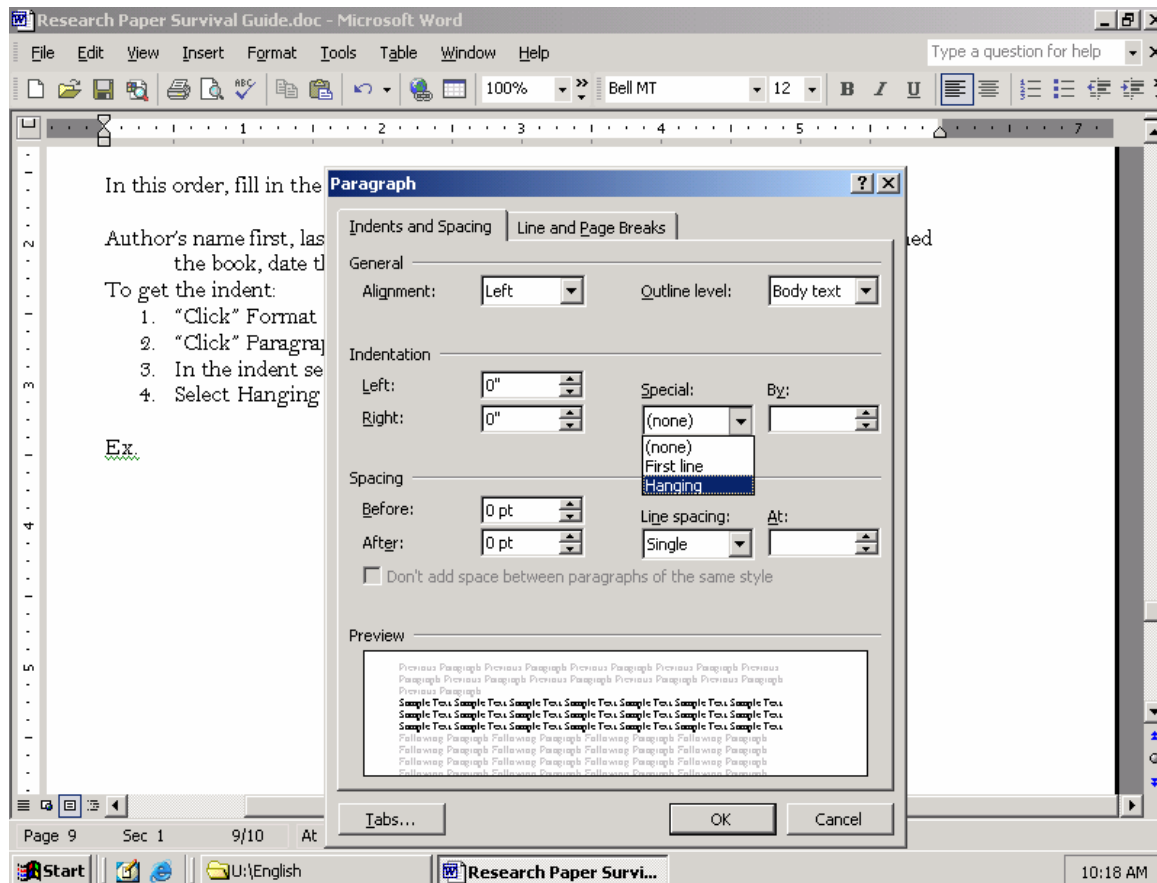
### A single author book

In this order, fill in the information about your source. Follow all formatting:

Author's name first, last. Title of the book. Where the publication was: who published the book, date the book was published.

To get the indent:

1. Select the entry
2. "Click" Format
3. "Click" Paragraph
4. In the indent section "click" the drop down box, Special select "Hanging"



Ex.

Fukuyama, Francis. Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution. New York: Farrar, 2002.

### **A Book by Two or More Authors**

To cite a book by two or three authors, list their names as seen on the cover of the book, not necessarily in alphabetical order. Reverse the order of only the first author and add a comma, then put the other authors in “normal order”.

Ex.

Marquart, James W., Sheldon Ekland Olson, and Jonathan R. Sorensen. The Rope, the Chair, and the Needle: Capital Punishment in Texas, 1923-1990. Austin: U of Texas, P 1994.

### **A Reference Book**

A reference book is a book an encyclopedia or a dictionary. To cite these in your works cited page, give the name of the article in quotations and underlined, the name of the book, the edition of the book, and the date it was last published.

Ex.

“Ginsburg, Ruth Bader.” Who’s Who in America. 56th ed. 2002.

### **A Book with No Author**

Sometimes you will use a book that does not give an author. To cite these, you would do exactly what you would do for a single author book, just leaving out the author’s name.

Ex.

New York Public Library American History Desk Reference. New York: Macmillan, 1997.

### **A Newspaper Article**

When you cite a newspaper article, you must give the name of the author, the newspaper, and the city of publication. Next give the complete date – day, month, and year. ***Abbreviate all the names of the months except May, June, and July.*** Finally, give the page number and section where you can find the article.

Ex.

Jeromack, Paul. “This Once, a David of the Art World Does Goliath a Favor.” New York Times 13 July 2002, late ed.:B7

### **An Online Newspaper Article**

When citing an online newspaper article place the author first, followed by the article title; then the newspaper title, followed by the date, edition, section and page of the article; finally the date of which you visited the website and the website address.

Ex.

Verhovek, Sam Howe. "Some in Seattle Believe Two Microsofts Might Be Better Than One." The New York Times. 1 May 2000. Retrieved 3 June 2001 <[http://www.nytimes.com/library/tech/00/05/biztech\\_articles/01seat.html](http://www.nytimes.com/library/tech/00/05/biztech_articles/01seat.html)>.

### **An Online Source**

When citing an online source place the author’s name first if it is given. Then the title of the web site if it is given, name any institution or organization associated with the site, the date of which you visited the site and the website address.

Ex.

Gesterland, Richard. WorldBiz.com. 1 May 2001 <<http://www.worldbiz.com/>>.

### **On-line Subscription Data Base**

When researching a topic, you may use an online data base such as EBSCO, or ABC-Clio. To cite these, first place the title of the article first, then the topic of the article. Next place the year of publication followed by the name of the data base. Finally put the date you visited the site.

Ex.

"Scottsboro Boys case." American History. 2006. ABC-CLIO. 10 Mar. 2006 <<http://www.americanhistory.abc-clio.com>>.

A special thank you to the Chariho High School English Department for their help.

Sources also gathered from:

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers Sixth Edition. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

*Created By:*

*The students in Office Management III, 2008*