

RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES 2008-09

All high school **Juniors** are required to complete a research paper before they graduate from Covenant Christian Academy. Students will not be classified as Seniors until the paper is completed. The purpose of this task is to demonstrate that they have the ability to do independent research and to write a well organized paper. Parents are responsible to see that this is completed and that the specific elements are turned in to the superintendent by the deadline dates listed below. Parents should proofread the paper for correctness of grammar, spelling, structure, and documentation of sources. The student should make corrections before turning the paper in to the school. The superintendent will read the papers, mark any errors, and return them to the students. Students will be **required** to correct any mistakes and return the paper to the superintendent. Any grades given for the paper will be assigned by the parents, **not** the superintendent. The paper should be typewritten on computer and **double-spaced**. Some students have opted to write a longer paper in order to earn a half credit for Independent Research. The following guidelines list requirements for both credit and non-credit papers.

Length: Non-credit- **8-10 pages** using at least **6 sources** including both books and periodicals- (no more than two online sources may be used).

Credit-15+ pages using at least 12 sources including both books and periodicals (no more than 4 online sources may be used). Student should spend at least 45 hours of total time in research, writing, correcting, etc.

Format: Each paper must have the following:

Title Page with Title of the Paper, student name, grade, & year

Outline-Include **Thesis Statement** at top and a simple outline of the contents of paper.

Text-Main body of paper (A good introduction, 7 + pages of information, and a good conclusion paragraph=8 pages total)

Documentation of sources **within the text** using parenthetical citation

Works Cited Page -Alphabetical (by author's last name) list of works used in paper with publication information. (6+ sources must be cited in the paper)

****Note**** You must *give credit* to the author for any *ideas* or information that you found in his work including those you paraphrase.. If you don't, you are practicing **plagiarism** (stealing someone else's ideas or writing). Direct quotes should be enclosed in quotation marks or if they are over 3 lines long, set off from the rest of the work in a block quotation (indented 10 spaces from left). All ideas, words, phrases, or thoughts that are borrowed from someone else must be properly documented in a citation (parentheses) after the sentence.

When choosing a topic, be sure to narrow it down enough to be covered in the required number of pages. **For topic approval**, email Mrs. DeVine at s.devine@comcast.net with your topic and preliminary thesis and she will approve it or give you suggestions on how to make it acceptable.

Reference Books: For general information about how to write a paper use **A Quick Reference to The Research Paper** by Sorenson (available at CCA). For specific information about how to put citations in the paper and how to write the Works Cited page, consult the **MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers** by Gibaldi and Archtert (available at Off-Campus Bookstore).

A **Research Paper Workshop** will be held at CCA on Aug. 25 from 1:00-3:00. We will use the **Quick Reference to the Research Paper** as our guide. Please sign your student up if you want them to attend.

Deadline Dates: Items must be turned in on or before the due dates.

August 25- Title, preliminary thesis, and list of at least 5 sources (Author, Title, Publisher, Date)

October 20- Thesis Statement, Outline, Rough Draft-include citations & Works Cited

December 4- Final Draft-Title page, Outline w/thesis, Text w/citations, Works Cited

HELPFUL HINTS

- *1.** Begin research in the summer and be sure that you document your sources very well. **Put down all publication information when you do your research** because you may not be able to find the source again. If you take notes from a source, **write the **page number** you took the information from at the end of each paragraph.** This will save you a great deal of time later. Remember: Good sources are necessary for a good paper. ****Warning:** Do not use Wikipedia or blogs as your sources. These are not credible sources.
- *2.** Some people like to **make a copy of articles from periodicals or from the internet.** If you do this, be sure to write down the necessary publication information on your copy of the article so you don't have to come back to find it later. Read the article from beginning to end, then read it again and highlight parts of the article you think you might use in your paper.
- *3.** Write your preliminary thesis statement after reading through several sources. **Refine this statement as you write your paper.** A thesis statement should be a clear and direct synopsis of your paper in one sentence. A thesis should be one side of an argument that you intend to prove, not just a statement of the obvious. Poor Thesis: Home schooling is great. Good Thesis: Home schooled students are out-scoring their public school counterparts on achievement tests due to individualized instruction, a warm loving environment, and strong parental involvement. (Your basic premise is that homeschooled students score higher and you have given some of the specific point you will use to show why or how).
- *4.** When you begin to write your rough draft, **put the citations in as you go.** Citations consist of the author's last name and the page number where you found the information from that source. Example: (Smith 29). Each page should have 2 or more citations.. If you paraphrase part of an article you have copied, you might want to highlight the parts you used. This will help you find this material again quickly if you need it. If you use library books, use pieces of paper, tabs, or paper clips to mark pages that have pertinent information for your paper. You may want to take notes from the books either on 5 x 7 cards or on your computer. Always put in page numbers when you make notes because you will need them for your citations!!
- *5.** Use materials from all your sources and **try not to let one source dominate your paper.** Weave the sources together all through the paper, don't just put everything one source says, then everything the next source says, etc. See if you can take information from 2 or more sources and put it together to support your point.
- *6.** Keep direct quotations to a minimum. **Only 10% or less of a paper should be direct quotation.** In an 8 page paper, that is only about 150 words. Use these for emphasis. Read your sources until you know your subject well enough to paraphrase what the authors are saying.
- *7. Write your rough draft as soon as possible after you have done your research** and read all of your materials. If you wait too long, the information will get cold and you will have to read it all again. If a thought strikes you while you are reading, jot it down to use later when you write. Organize your thoughts before you begin writing. You should have a preliminary thesis and a rough outline before you start the writing process.
- *8.** Write in **3rd person.** Do not use 1st or 2nd person pronouns: "I",you, we, our,me". Do not use **contractions** in formal writing.
- *9. Have someone else proofread your paper.** Read it out loud to yourself and to a parent or teacher. Does it make good sense? Does it prove your thesis? Does your thesis need to be refined to more accurately represent what you have found in your research?

When in doubt, please ask. Mrs. DeVine is always willing to help answer your questions. Just email or call and set up an appointment with her. s.devine@comcast.net