

# Saint Joseph Regional High School Research Paper Process

**Research Paper**  
**Saint Joseph Regional High School**

**Due Dates**

There are SIX due dates for your research paper:

- 1) **Working Thesis Statement** – End of Week I  
Must be typewritten.
  - 2) **Presentation of Your Brown Paper Bag** (with your last name clearly and boldly printed on the outside) & **Library Card** (must be from your local library) – Beginning of Week II
  - 3) **Five Bibliography Cards** – End of Week III  
THREE cards must be from books & the cards must be 3” x 5”.
  - 4) **Draft Outline** – End of Week IV  
Must be typewritten
  - 5) **Fifteen Note Cards** – End of Week V  
TEN Note cards must be from your bibliography books; the cards must be 4” x 6”.
  - 6) **Final Paper** – End of Week VI  
Must be typewritten & double-spaced.  
\*\* NOTE: In addition to your final paper, you must also hand in
    - a. Your Final Outline
    - b. All of your Bibliography Cards (put your last name on all cards)
    - c. All of your Note Cards (put your last name on all cards)
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- **Late assignments will not be accepted.**
  - **Assignments #1 - #5 are each worth 10% of the total grade for your project; you final paper will be worth 50% of your total grade.**
  - **If you do not have class on a due date, the assignment is due on the day before that date.**

### **Stages of the Research Process**

- 1. Preliminary Research** – Discover a Topic to Write About
- 2. Write a Thesis Statement** (or Statement of Controlling Purpose)
- 3. Find & Record Your Sources** (Compile a Working Bibliography)
- 4. Write a Draft Outline**
- 5. Information Organize Your Material** (Prepare Note Cards)
- 6. Write your Rough Draft**
- 7. Rewrite, Revise & Proofread**
- 8. Document Your Sources**
  - a. In-Text Citations**
  - b. “Works Cited” Page**

# 1. Preliminary Research – Discover a Topic to Write About

## A) Find a General Topic that interests you.

- What activities do you enjoy?
- What subjects do you enjoy reading about?
- What books have you enjoyed reading?
- What subjects from your classes have captured your interest and attention?
  - a. What questions do you really want the answer to?
    - Who, what, where, when, how and why?
    - I.e. What is the truth about genetic cloning?
      - What did Franklin Roosevelt know about the Japanese plan to attack Pearl Harbor?
      - Is a great pitcher is more valuable to a baseball team than a great everyday player.
      - Who's a better poet: Robert Frost or Thomas Hardy?
      - Why did John Steinbeck write The Grapes of Wrath?
- What commonplace things are mysteries to me that I would like to understand more completely?

## B) Once you find a general subject narrow your research to a *specific* topic within the general subject. Preliminary research will be helpful in choosing a specific topic.

- Read encyclopedias.
- List questions about the subject.
- Brainstorm with classmates, friends or family members.
- Go to the library and read about the subject matter you are interested in,

## Before deciding on a topic, evaluate it.

- Your topic should be interesting.
- Your topic should be covered in readily available resources.
- Your topic should be *significant yet narrow* enough to be fully treated.
- Your topic should be objective. You need to support the arguments you make with facts.
- *Your topic should not be straight biography, history reporting or retelling of a literary work.*
- *You should not simply rehash material available in other sources.*
- *You should look for a **unique** angle or approach to the topic.*

## 2. Write a Thesis Statement (or Statement of Controlling Purpose)

### A thesis statement controls or guides your research

A thesis statement should:

- b. Support or argue vs. a policy (i.e. genetic cloning should be illegal.)
- c. Establish or prove false one or more statements of fact (i.e. FDR knew the Japanese were going to bomb Pearl Harbor.)
- d. Determine the relative value of two things (i.e. a great pitcher is more valuable to a baseball team than a great everyday player.)
- e. Explain the theme(s) of a literary work (i.e. Steinbeck wrote The Grapes of Wrath to warn about the dangers of exploiting migrant workers.)

REMEMBER:

- You are attempting to **persuade** the reader of your paper that your thesis is correct.
- You may change your thesis as you do research.

### 3. Find & Record Your Sources (Compile a Working Bibliography)

#### Put together a list of potential sources

- a. Other people
- b. The government
- c. Library, media center
- d. Bookstores
- e. The Internet
- f. Reference works – almanacs, atlases, dictionaries, encyclopedias

#### Evaluate possible sources

- a. Is the source authoritative?
- b. Is the source unbiased?
- c. Is it necessary for it to be up-to-date?
- d. Is the work written at an appropriate level?
- e. Does the source come highly recommended?

#### Prepare Bibliography Cards (record source)

Every time you find a source that *might* be useful prepare a bibliography card. Your collection of cards forms your **working bibliography**.

Bibliography cards enable you to:

- a. Find the source again
  - b. Document your paper
  - c. Prepare a list of **works cited** which will appear at the end of your paper
- Use a 3” x 5” index card
  - Top-right corner of the card – **write source number**
  - Top-left corner – **write complete bibliographic entry on the source**
  - Bottom-right corner – **write the place where you found the source**
  - Bottom-right corner – **write Dewey decimal system number if appropriate**
  - Put card in stack

Donnelly, Barry. <u>Steinbeck’s Genius</u> . Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Really Useful Publications, 2007.	3 (Source Number)
Author Title Place of Publication Publisher Date of Publication	
SJR Regional Library	813.15

## 4. Organize Your Material (Write a Draft Outline)

### Create a Draft Outline

The Draft Outline begins with the **Thesis Statement**. It is divided into two or more major sections introduced by Roman numerals (I, II, III, and IV). Each section is divided into two or more subsections introduced by capital letters (A, B, C).

As an example:

**Thesis Statement:** The purpose of this paper is to show that Steinbeck's novel expressed a strong political message; it warned that exploitation of migrant workers would cause them to rise up as a group against their oppressors, the state and wealthy landowners.

- I. The historical background of the migrant situation
    - A. The Dust Bowl of the 1930's
    - B. The migration to California
    - C. The nature of California agriculture
    - D. The living conditions among the migrants
  
  - II. Steinbeck's opinions about the migrant situation
    - A. Steinbeck's publication of *Their Blood is Flowing*
    - B. Steinbeck's descriptions of the migrant lives.
    - C. Steinbeck's warning about the consequences of exploitation.
  
  - III. Steinbeck's message about the migrant situation in *The Grapes of Wrath*
    - A. The Joads as self-absorbed passive victims
    - B. The Joads as active agents of change
    - C. The conclusion of the novel as a warning
    - D. The title of the novel as a parallel between the migrant system and Babylon
- Each **section** can come from a **guideline** you developed when writing your **Note Cards**

## 5. Gather Information (Prepare Note Cards)

**Note Cards** should be 4" x 6" to distinguish them from **Working Bibliography Cards**.

### Three types of Note Cards:

- a. Direct quotation
  - b. Paraphrase
  - c. Summary
- **Working Bibliography Cards** provide the sources for your paper.
  - **Note Cards** provide the ideas, quotes, paraphrases, & summaries that will become your research paper.

### **Note Cards** will include:

- a. Source Number (take this number from the working bibliography card)
- b. Guideline (keep cards with similar guidelines together)
- c. Note (this should be a quotation, paraphrase, summary or a combination of those types of notes)
- d. Page Reference.

Joad's Migration to California  
(Guideline)

3  
(Source Number)

The Joads headed to California with high hopes, but once there, according to the critic Michael Doherty, they discover that for them "California ia not a Promised Land but a man-blighted Eden." 171  
(Note & Page Number)

## 6. Write your Rough Draft

- Align your note cards with your **Draft Outline**
- **WRITE**
  - a. **Write an introduction**
    - i - It should grab the reader's attention
    - ii - It should present the paper's thesis statement and main ideas.
  - b. **Write your body paragraphs**
  - c. **Write your conclusion**
    - i - The concluding paragraph(s) is (are) usually one or two paragraphs long.
    - ii - The most common way to conclude a research paper is to restate the main idea. In addition, you may wish to use the conclusion to tie up any loose ends left by the body of your paper to explain the consequences of accepting the truth of your thesis statement, to call on the reader to take some action, to explain the importance or the value of what the reader has learned from the paper or to make projections about the future.

## 7. Rewrite, Revise & Proofread

## 8. Documenting Your Sources

- **In-Text Citations**
- **Works Cited Page**

### In-Text Citations (Quotes or Citations in your Paper)

#### Quoting

If the quotation is TWO OR ONE line(s) or less, put it in quotation marks and place it in the text of your paper. For example:

The Joads head to California with high hopes, but once there, according to the critic Michael Doherty, they discover that for them “California is not a Promised Land but a man-blighted Eden.” (Donnelly, 171)

If a quoted passage runs more than THREE lines, set it off from the text of your paper. Put a colon after the statement that immediately precedes the quotation; begin a new line; indent the entire quotation TEN spaces from the left-hand margin; and leave out the quotation marks. For example:

The extent of the desperation was made clear in a report written in 1939, the year that *The Grapes of Wrath* was published:

The State Relief Administration estimates that most significant agricultural workers only have employment for six months in the year or less; and that the average yearly earnings per family...[were] \$289 in 1935. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 4)

- In-Text quotations usually consist of the author’s **Last Name** and the **Page Number** in parentheses within the text whenever you have borrowed material. If there is no author, use the first item (the title, for example) from the **Works Cited** entry.  
Examples: (Donnelly, 171) or (Encyclopedia Britannica, 4)
- In-Text quotations from Internet sites follow the same pattern as those for print sources: use the author’s last name and if available, the exact page number. Since most documents found in electronic databases usually do not have fixed page numbers, most in-text citations will consist of the author’s last name in parentheses.
- NOTE: If you use another’s words, thought or ideas, you must cite the source within your paper – “**In-Text**” – as well as in your **Works Cited** list at the end of your paper.

**Works Cited** – this page follows the last page of your research paper. It is a list of the sources in your paper. For example:

### Works Cited

- Donnelly, Barry. Steinbeck's Genius. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Really Useful Publications, 2007. (Book)
- Fields, Theresa. Steinbeck: Master of his Genre. April 2005. January 25, 2007.  
[www.lucidcafe/Steinbeck.com](http://www.lucidcafe/Steinbeck.com). (Website with an Author)
- Norgard, Eric. "Steinbeck Museum Opens in California". New York, New York: Newsweek, 2/11/02. (Magazine Article)
- Salvati, Paul. Sour Grapes: A Refutation of Steinbeck. . Goshen, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001. (Book)
- "Steinbeck, John." Encyclopedia Britannica 2006-2007. January 30, 2007  
[www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com) . (Website without an author)
- Steinbeck, John. The Grapes of Wrath. 1939 New York, New York: Chelsea Publishers, 2006. (Book)
- Steinbeck's Short Stories, Anthology of . Salinas, California: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2005. (Book without an author)

#### General Format and Punctuation for MLA Works Cited (for books):

1. Author's (or editor's) last name, first name.
2. *Title of the Book* (italicized or underlined)
3. City of Publication: (followed by a colon).
4. Publishing company, (followed by a comma)
5. Year of Publication

#### MLA Internet site citations generally include the following:

1. Author's Last Name, First (if available)
  2. "Title of the Short Work, Article or Internet Page" (surrounded by quotation marks “ ”)
  3. Editor of the project of site (if available)
  4. Date of electronic publication or the latest update
  5. Institution or organization associated with the website (if applicable)
  6. Date you retrieved the source from the Internet.
  7. Web page address (URL)
- Go to [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org) for more information on how to cite other sources (magazines, newspapers, interviews, etc.)
  - This guide is largely a condensation of Writing Research Papers McDougal, Little