



## GUIDELINES FOR LIBRARY RESEARCH PAPERS:

One library research paper may be submitted within a single semester, but not extended beyond one semester. The paper must be accompanied by an end of semester research presentation. Any appropriate, contemporary, scientific/environmental subject or issue may be researched and presented; however, all library research paper topics must be pre-approved by your STARS learning guide. Research papers are graded on the quality of the sources used, organization of the information, grammar and proper formatting, and the student's comprehension and logical discussion of the subject matter.

### *What is involved in producing a good library research paper?*

The library research paper involves selecting a topic, problem, or issue and doing extensive research in books, scientific journals, and online sources; then writing an organized and comprehensive report. Always write scientifically (in 3<sup>rd</sup> person and in past tense).

**Sources:** The paper must provide at least 5 internet sources; as well as vital information from at least 3 book sources and 2 journal/magazine sources – (10 sources in all). The paper should provide a great deal of well referenced background information on the topic, including: history of the topic or issue, current developments, vital issues, opposing arguments (if relevant), and possible future directions or trends. The library research paper may also be built around and include data from STARS expeditions and field studies in which the student is actively involved, such as monitoring marine life, land animals, birds, plants, or some other aspect of the environment.

**Formatting:** The body of the paper must be no less than 2,500 words in length – (does not include *Works Cited* section). The paper must be double-spaced, use “only” 12pt Times New Romans or Arial font, with 1½ inch margins all around. Title, headings, and sub-headings, must be centered but not bold, underlined, or italicized. Do not place extra spaces between paragraphs. *Works Cited* section must be listed on its own page and properly formatted. Place your name and the submission date in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. All consecutive pages must be numbered in the upper right hand corner. Correctly spell and use scientific terms and names of organisms.

### **Introduction:**

- Introduce the subject, and explain the importance of the topic.
- State the main idea (or thesis) of the paper and/or the goals.
- Preview any important points that will support the main idea.
- Provide appropriate background information and definitions to support understanding of the topic.
- Briefly state the global importance of the topic.

### Main Body:

- This section gives the bulk of the information. Here you will develop a thesis (your main idea) and support your thesis using others' research.
- Organize the material in a logical manner and use headings or subheadings, where appropriate, to help organize your information. Have two to four major points that support your thesis.
- Build a focused discussion assembled from ideas taken from various sources and paraphrased by YOU. Do not just present a series of summaries or simply regurgitate someone else's information. As much as possible, make the information flow together in your own words.
- Include all necessary parenthetical citations in the main body of the paper. Make sure the citations are properly formatted, and also referenced alphabetically on the *Works Cited* page.
- When possible, use data tables, charts, graphs, or illustrations to support the main ideas. Be sure to properly cite all graphics and photographs.

### Summary:

- Present a summary of the main points of your paper by restating your thesis (main idea) and tying your major supporting points together to show how they have proven your thesis.
- Present a particular viewpoint, a final opinion, or make a call to action; remembering that you are writing formally and scientifically (in 3<sup>rd</sup> person).

### Works Cited (must be on separate page):

- Categorize – internet sources, books, journals/magazines, illustrations.
- Alphabetize – all sources within each category.
- Format – in accordance with MLA formatting (See STARS Website – Tools).