
Compiled and edited by the LAHS Social Studies Department 2011/12
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Introduction

This guide is designed to help you research and compose research projects for Social Studies classes at Los Altos High School. In this guide, you’ll find information on how to gather and sift information, how to plan your writing, how to insert and use the information you’ve found, and how to put everything together into a finished product.

Maybe the best thing about the guide is that the principles here can be used for any social studies class, from freshman World Studies to senior Civics, and every class in between. So obviously it will be worth it to you to keep this in a safe place and not lose it – it will be a guide you can put to work every time you’re doing a major project for social studies.

Our department’s teachers have contributed their expertise to this guide, stemming from combined decades of experience in the classroom and as college students. We’ve also collaborated with the English department in gathering information about citations and frequently used sources of information for papers and other projects.

We hope you find this guide to be useful as you learn history and then express what you’ve learned in writing. Good luck and enjoy the journey – we wish you an enlightening research experience from here to graduation!

—Los Altos High School Social Studies Department
1. **Create a Calendar**
   Make a calendar, using the steps below and the checklist.
   - **Due Dates:** Fill in the calendar. Start by listing the due dates for the project. You may want to put these dates in your planner.
   - **Research Steps:** Then work backwards to create dates for the different steps of the project. This should keep you accountable and focused throughout the process.

2. **Conduct initial research and choose a topic**
   - **Initial Research:** Begin the research process by doing some initial research to help you select a topic. This is a good time to use Wikipedia. You should never cite Wikipedia in a formal paper but you can use it to give you a general idea about a topic and as a jumping off point for your research.
   - **Topic Selection:** Your initial research should guide your thoughts in the general direction you want to take the paper. Some teachers may give you multiple prompts to choose from or some may select the topics for you. Otherwise your initial research should lead you to your topic selection.

3. **Create a research question** (For seniors only)
   - **Research Question:** Once you have a topic in mind you should create a question to answer with your research. This question will guide your future research and the focus of your project.
   - **Focusing the Question:** Make sure the question is something that can be reasonably answered in the amount of time you have to research it. Questions that are too broad will leave you unfocused. Questions that are too narrow will be limiting.

4. **Find Sources**
   This is not always as easy as it may seem. Make sure that you save some time to do this step. You should begin by going to the library to find books that are relevant to your topic or searching the web to find sources.
   - **A word of caution...not all websites are good.** In fact there are many that have false information on them. Stay away from Wikipedia or any other site that any person can contribute to. While Wikipedia is a good place to get started and do some initial research, it is not a website that can be cited as an authoritative source.
   - **Infotrac:** A good place to get started doing research is Infotrac, the school’s database. There are many quality sources about an array of topics on Infotrac. The school pays to have access to this site so you should use it.
   - **Good web sources:** When you begin looking for websites you should figure out where they came from. Preferable websites end in .edu, .org, .gov, or .mil. These sites are generally developed by universities and colleges (.edu), by professional organizations (.org), the state or federal government (.gov), and by the military (.mil).
   - **Beware of bias from all sites,** people generally write from one position or another so be alert to what the author’s biases may be. Other good places to look are the archives of news sites like the BBC or Reuters, but once again beware bias. Bias can taint your sources and damage the credibility of your paper.
   - **Ask for Help:** If you are uncertain about a website, ask the teacher or librarian if it is a viable source.
   - **See “Beyond the library” for alternate sources.**

5. **Take notes and find passages or quotes that shape/support your perspective**
   Once you have your sources you should begin reading and taking notes on them. Look for information that you can use to shape/support your opinion or information that is germane (relevant) to your topic.
• **Note taking:** What should you take notes on? This can be one of the hardest parts of your research. You should take notes on information that will (1) give you a better understanding of the topic, (2) you can use to develop your thesis cite in your paper to help support your thesis, and (3) anything that is profound or compelling to you.

• **Note taking Formats:** There are many different ways to take notes – you can use index cards and organize the evidence and information by topic, Cornell notes, or color-coded notes (to list a few). It doesn't matter what system you use, but use one system consistently.

• **Write down Quotes & Sources:** When you find specific passages or quotes you should write them down, as well as the source and a page number to refer back to later. For websites you should copy and paste the URL. This will make citing your sources much easier.

6. **Create a thesis and a broad outline**

   • **Developing a Thesis:** Once you have selected your topic, done some investigation, and selected what you will write about you should come up with a thesis. Your thesis will guide your research and your writing. Make sure that your thesis makes an argument that you can support with evidence. Thesis should be 1-3 sentences in length.

   • **Create a broad outline:** After you have a thesis you should be able to create a broad outline for your paper. You should be able to map out the basic structure of your paper and the key sections or subheadings that will be addressed. Creating topic sentences for each subheading will improve your outline and some teachers may require it.

7. **Create a “works cited” page**

   Once you have taken notes from a book you should create a works cited page. This page will include all sources that you use in your paper.

   • **MLA Format:** Your citations should be in MLA format. The easiest way to cite your sources is to go to [www.easybib.com](http://www.easybib.com). This site will create a citation for you without too much effort on your part. For a more detailed account of MLA format and how to cite sources in your text and on your works cited you should go to [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/) and click the MLA format guide at the bottom-left corner of the screen.

   • **Where to Put the Works Cited:** The works cited sheet will appear at the end of your paper so the reader can see where you got your information and find your sources if necessary. The works cited should be organized in alphabetical order.

8. **Create a more detailed outline**

   Once you have taken your notes and have compiled supporting evidence for your paper you should create a more detailed outline that includes your in-text citations.

   • **Structure the Paper:** You should map out the structure of your paper by listing the topics for each section or subheading.

   • **Topic Sentences:** This is a good time to create your topic sentence for each section or subheading if you have not done so already.

   • **Evidence:** Then place the passages or quotes in the outline that you are going to cite using the proper MLA in-text citation format.

9. **Write the paper**

   Once you have your detailed outline finished then you should begin writing. This should actually be the easy part because you have done your research, you have found your supporting evidence and now you just have to get all of your ideas out on paper.

10. **Edit the paper**

    Ask a friend, parent, or a teacher to look over your paper. If you don’t have anyone to look over your paper then you should do the editing yourself. At the very least you should read over your paper to make sure that it all makes sense and there are no factual inaccuracies or punctuation/grammar errors. If you are going to edit the paper it would be a good idea to set it aside for a day or two and then revisit it to get a different perspective.

11. **Finalize paper** – Once you have edited your paper now all that is left is to finalize it and turn it in.
Research Paper Checklist

Use this as a resource to make sure that you are staying on task and taking the necessary steps to complete your research paper. Check off the steps as you complete them and if you get stuck ask Mr. Bjorklund for help.

☐ Create a research calendar based on assignment guidelines.

☐ Conduct initial research and find a topic.

☐ Find sources

☐ Read and take notes. Find passages or quotes that shape/support your perspective.

☐ Write your thesis and a broad outline of your paper.

☐ Create a works cited page.

☐ Make a detailed outline that includes topic sentences, passages, and quotes that support your perspective. This outline should also include proper in text citation in MLA format.

☐ Write a draft of your paper.

☐ Edit your paper.

☐ Finalize your paper.
Stalin the Devil

"My Children, it is permitted you in time of grave danger to walk with the devil until you have crossed the bridge" (Roosevelt qtd. in Walker 45). During WWII The United States allied with the USSR and Stalin, the devil that President Franklin Roosevelt is speaking of in the above quote, in order to defeat Hitler. It is clear how Roosevelt felt about that decision and at the war’s conclusion Roosevelt was proven right, Stalin was the devil, and he showed his tail and pitchfork to the world by forcing the United States into the Cold War. The rivalry between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. known as the Cold War spanned 46 years; it polarized the world and brought it to the brink of nuclear disaster. Stalin is to blame for initiating the Cold War, his open aggression, his paranoia, and his anti-capitalist rhetoric forced the United States into the Cold War.

1. Stalin’s Aggression

Stalin's open aggression played an integral role in instigating the Cold War. There were numerous occasions that Stalin did not have to act aggressively but he chose to. This belligerence forced the United States to defend their interests and themselves, and baited them into the Cold War. Stalin's decision to blockade Berlin was a clear act of aggression. He felt extremely threatened by the unification of allied zones into West Germany and the introduction of the Deutschmark. Stalin decided that he needed to act on this perceived threat, and blockaded West Berlin in the hopes of forcing the United
States to leave the city. He risked starving the people to push his communist agenda. The British-U.S. Berlin airlift saved the city and showed Truman’s resolve in the face of aggression. The United States was just doing what was best for the German people while Stalin was thinking only of himself and his power. PMH Bell states that before the blockade, "Stalin had been thinking for some time about squeezing the western powers out of West Berlin" (92). Stalin’s move was calculated and it was blatantly combative. He planned to force the Western powers out of Berlin by starving the people of West Berlin. The unification of West Germany and the introduction of the Deutschmark were just the excuse that he needed to enact his scheme. Stalin’s belligerence clearly led to this confrontation and to increased tensions with the West. If Stalin had cared about the needs of Berliners he would not have blockaded the city and this crisis may have been averted...
Works Cited

"BBC - History: Cold War." BBC - Homepage. Web. 06 Nov. 2009.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/coldwar/>.


"Journal of Cold War Studies." Harvard University | Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS).


Random Student

Mr. Teacher

Subject

1 June 2011

Stalin the Devil

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"BBC - History: Cold War." BBC - Homepage. Web. 06 Nov. 2009.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/coldwar/>.


"Journal of Cold War Studies." Harvard University | Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS).


Research Paper Don’ts

You cannot get an A or may be docked a full letter grade if...

- There is no clearly identifiable thesis.
- A major element of the paper is missing e.g. charts, in-text citations, tables, illustrations, etc.
- The prompt is not completely discussed or properly addressed.
- The paper is shorter than required.
- The paper and citations are not in MLA format
- The paper has 5 or more spelling, punctuation, and formatting errors (multiple or repeated).
- There is no works cited page.

(Disclaimer: If you do not do any of the research don’ts listed above it does not mean you will get an A. Your paper must also meet the standards of the rubric)

MLA Format Requirements

- Proper heading in the upper-left of the first page (See sample paper)
  - First and Last name
  - Teacher name
  - Subject
  - Date e.g. 1 January 2014
- Running header, upper-right corner of each page (see sample paper)
  - Last name and page number
  - Should be in the heading of the paper not the body of the paper
- Size-12 font
- Times New Roman Font
- Double-space maintained throughout
- 1-inch margins
- Title should be centered same font as the rest of the paper
- All subheadings (if used) should be numbered and aligned left
- All quotes or paraphrasing should be cited using parenthetical format (see pg. 13)
Basic In-Text Citation Rules

In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what is known as parenthetical citation. This method involves placing relevant source information in parentheses after a quote or a paraphrase.

General Guidelines

- The source information required in a parenthetical citation depends (1.) upon the source medium (e.g. Print, Web, DVD) and (2.) upon the source’s entry on the Works Cited (bibliography) page.
- Any source information that you provide in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. More specifically, whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text, must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited List.

In Text Citations: Author Page Style

MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear on your Works Cited page. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence. For example:

- Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).
- Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).
- Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

Both citations in the examples above, (263) and (Wordsworth 263), tell readers that the information in the sentence can be located on page 263 of a work by an author named Wordsworth. If readers want more information about this source, they can turn to the Works Cited page, where, under the name of Wordsworth, they would find the following information:


Citing a Work by Multiple Authors

For a source with three or fewer authors, list the authors' last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation:
Smith, Yang, and Moore argue that tougher gun control is not needed in the United States (76). The authors state, "Tighter gun control in the United States erodes Second Amendment rights" (Smith, Yang, and Moore 76).

For a source with more than three authors, use the work's bibliographic information as a guide for your citation. Provide the first author's last name followed by et al. or list all the last names.

Jones et al. counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels lawmakers to adjust gun laws (4). Or Legal experts counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels lawmakers to adjust gun laws (Jones et al. 4).
Citing Non-Print or Sources from the Internet

When creating in-text citations for electronic, film, or Internet sources, remember that your citation must reference the source in your Works Cited. Sometimes writers are confused with how to craft parenthetical citations for electronic sources because of the absence of page numbers, but often, these sorts of entries do not require any sort of parenthetical citation at all. For electronic and Internet sources, follow the following guidelines:

- Include in the text the first item that appears in the Work Cited entry that corresponds to the citation (e.g. author name, article name, website name, film name).
- You do not need to give paragraph numbers or page numbers based on your Web browser’s print preview function.
- Unless you must list the website name in the signal phrase in order to get the reader to the appropriate entry, do not include URLs in text. Only provide partial URLs such as when the name of the site includes, for example, a domain name, like CNN.com or Forbes.com as opposed to writing out http://www.cnn.com or http://www.forbes.com.

Formatting Long Quotes

For quotations that extend to more than four lines of verse or prose: place quotations in a freestanding block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented one inch from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. Only indent the first line of the quotation by a half-inch if you are citing multiple paragraphs. Your parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks. (You should maintain double-spacing throughout your essay.) For example:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)

Citing Indirect Sources

Sometimes you may have to use and indirect source. An indirect source is a source cited in another source. For such indirect quotations, use “qtd. in” to indicate the source you actually consulted. For example:

Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as “social service centers, and they don’t do that well” (qtd. in Weismann 259)

For more examples of MLA in-text citation see the Owl at Purdue writing lab at:
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
What is a paragraph?

A paragraph is a collection of related sentences dealing with a single topic. Learning to write good paragraphs will help you stay on track during your drafting and revision stages. Good paragraphing also greatly assists your readers in following a piece of writing. You can have fantastic ideas, but if those ideas aren't presented in an organized fashion, you will lose your readers (and fail to achieve your goals in writing).

The Basic Rule: Keep One Idea to One Paragraph

The basic rule of thumb with paragraphing is to keep one idea to one paragraph. If you begin to transition into a new idea, it belongs in a new paragraph. There are some simple ways to tell if you are on the same topic or a new one. You can have one idea and several bits of supporting evidence for that idea within a single paragraph. You can also have several points in a single paragraph, as long as they relate to the overall topic of the paragraph. If the single points start to get long, elaborate on each of them and placing them in their own paragraphs.

Elements of a Paragraph

To be as effective as possible, a paragraph should contain each of the following: A Topic Sentence, Unity, Coherence, and Adequate Development. As you will see, all of these traits overlap. Using and adapting them to your individual purposes will help you construct effective paragraphs.

A topic sentence

A topic sentence is a sentence that indicates in a general way what idea or thesis the paragraph is going to deal with. Although not all paragraphs have clear-cut topic sentences, and despite the fact that topic sentences can occur anywhere in the paragraph, an easy way to make sure your reader understands the topic of the paragraph is to put your topic sentence near the beginning of the paragraph. (This is a good general rule for less experienced writers, although it is not the only way to do it). Regardless of whether you include an explicit topic sentence or not, you should be able to easily summarize what the paragraph is about.

Unity

The entire paragraph should concern itself with a single focus. If it begins with a one focus or major point of discussion, it should not end with another or wander within different ideas.

Coherence

Coherence is the trait that makes the paragraph easily understandable to a reader. You can help create coherence in your paragraphs by creating logical bridges and verbal bridges.
Adequate development

The topic (which is introduced by the topic sentence) should be discussed fully and adequately. Again, this varies from paragraph to paragraph, depending on the author's purpose, but writers should beware of paragraphs that only have two or three sentences. It's a pretty good bet that the paragraph is not fully developed if it is that short.

Some methods to make sure your paragraph is well-developed:

- Use examples and illustrations
- Cite data (facts, statistics, evidence, details, and others)
- Examine testimony (what other people say such as quotes and paraphrases)
- Use an anecdote or story
- Define terms in the paragraph
- Compare and contrast
- Evaluate causes and reasons
- Examine effects and consequences
- Analyze the topic
- Describe the topic
- Offer a chronology of an event (time segments)

How do I know when to start a new paragraph?

You should start a new paragraph when:

- **When you begin a new idea or point.** New ideas should always start in new paragraphs. If you have an extended idea that spans multiple paragraphs, each new point within that idea should have its own paragraph.
- **To contrast information or ideas.** Separate paragraphs can serve to contrast sides in a debate, different points in an argument, or any other difference.
- **When your readers need a pause.** Breaks in paragraphs function as a short "break" for your readers—adding these in will help your writing more readable. You would create a break if the paragraph becomes too long or the material is complex.
- **When you are ending your introduction or starting your conclusion.** Your introductory and concluding material should always be in a new paragraph. Many introductions and conclusions have multiple paragraphs depending on their content, length, and the writer's purpose.
Beyond the Library and Internet

Frequently, students will focus all their research efforts on Internet sources – which, as we’ve seen, are not always reliable – or on just the books they see in the school library. Other sources can work just as well and can give more accurate information.

• **Films.** If the movie was based on actual events (Hollywood releases these) or is a deliberate narrative of actual events (like a documentary produced by the History Channel), this is a great way to find information on many topics you will study. Ask your teacher about some titles that are relevant to your subject, and then find out where they can be borrowed (public library, video rental stores, Netflix, Redbox, etc).
  
  o *If you’re not sure whether a film is really a reliable source, ask your teacher.*

• **Interviews.** These are especially good for more recent historical periods (e.g., the Vietnam War, the 1980s, etc), since most of the people who lived through those events are still around. These can be relatives, neighbors, friends, or even faculty members. Also, our Social Studies department is full of teachers that make their living by remembering the past, and they have all studied various parts of it, so asking them for a few minutes of time to share their recollections or understanding of the past is an excellent way to gather information.
  
  o *When you are interviewing a teacher, come to the interview with a list of questions that pertain to your topic but that you may not have found answers to in your other research.*
  
  o *Take careful notes on their answers. If it helps, and if the teacher gives you permission, record the interview and then play it back later when you have time to take down detailed responses.*
  
  o *Always remember to thank the teacher and to cite his or her contributions on your Works Cited page!*

• **Sound Recordings.** People have been writing music for hundreds of years about the events of the day; since sound recordings were invented in the late 19th century, we have a massive amount of musical history. The advantage of using the music of the time is that it was written while events were going on, not after they had already happened and could be interpreted for someone’s benefit. Listening to these songs and writing down the lyrics can give you some great insight on people’s concerns in the past. Some of this is on the Net (e.g., iTunes), and some is available through CDs, cassettes, or even old LP records. Your teacher or librarian can help you look for these if you’re not sure where to begin.
• **Magazines and Newspapers.** Like sound recordings, these are immediate accounts of what happened in the past, so they aren’t simply third-hand summaries of historical events (like textbooks can be, for instance). Most major newspapers have extensive archives online, and so do many magazines. Also, on campus we have some excellent collections of copies of historical magazines (e.g., American Heritage) that contain articles written by professional historians about the past. See your teacher to find these and learn how to borrow them for research.
MLA Works Cited Page: Basic Format (From Owl at Purdue)

According to MLA style, you must have a Works Cited page at the end of your research paper. All entries in the Works Cited page must correspond to the works cited in your main text.

**Basic Rules**

- Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page at the end of your research paper. It should have the same one-inch margins and last name, page number header as the rest of your paper.
- Label the page Works Cited (do not italicize the words Works Cited or put them in quotation marks) and center the words Works Cited at the top of the page.
- Double space all citations, but do not skip spaces between entries.
- Indent the second and subsequent lines of citations five spaces so that you create a hanging indent.
- List page numbers of sources efficiently, when needed. If you refer to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on your Works Cited page as 225-50.

**Additional Basic Rules New to MLA 2009**

- For every entry, you must determine the Medium of Publication. Most entries will likely be listed as Print or Web sources, but other possibilities may include Film, CD-ROM, or DVD.
- *Writers are no longer required to provide URLs for Web entries.* However, if your instructor or publisher insists on them, include them in angle brackets after the entry and end with a period. For long URLs, break lines only at slashes.
- *If you’re citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database, you should type the online database name in italics.* You do not need to provide subscription information in addition to the database name.

**Capitalization and Punctuation**

- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc, but do not capitalize articles (the, an), prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle: *Gone with the Wind,* *The Art of War,* *There Is Nothing Left to Lose.*
- *New to MLA 2009:* Use italics (instead of underlining) for titles of larger works (books, magazines) and quotation marks for titles of shorter works (poems, articles)

**Listing Author Names**

Entries are listed alphabetically by the author’s last name (or, for entire edited collections, editor names). Author names are written last name first; middle names or middle initials follow the first name:

Burke, Kenneth
Levy, David M.
Wallace, David Foster
Do not list titles (Dr., Sir, Saint, etc.) or degrees (PhD, MA, DDS, etc.) with names. A book listing an author named "John Bigbrain, PhD" appears simply as "Bigbrain, John"; do, however, include suffixes like "Jr." or "II." Putting it all together, a work by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would be cited as "King, Martin Luther, Jr.," with the suffix following the first or middle name and a comma.

More than One Work by an Author

If you have cited more than one work by a particular author, order the entries alphabetically by title, and use three hyphens in place of the author's name for every entry after the first:

Burke, Kenneth. A Grammar of Motives. [...]  
---. A Rhetoric of Motives. [...]  
When an author or collection editor appears both as the sole author of a text and as the first author of a group, list solo-author entries first:


Work with No Known Author

Alphabetize works with no known author by their title; use a shortened version of the title in the parenthetical citations in your paper. In this case, Boring Postcards USA has no known author:

Baudrillard, Jean. Simulacra and Simulations. [...]  
Boring Postcards USA. [...]  
Burke, Kenneth. A Rhetoric of Motives. [...]
**Source Citation and Analysis Template**

If you are struggling to put together citations and analysis to support your thesis, the following template may be of use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation 1</th>
<th>Citation 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduce the quote or by giving a description or stating the title of the source and the author.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insert the quote or a paraphrasing of the author’s words and the appropriate parenthetical citation.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analyze the quote and discuss why it supports your thesis</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Research Paper Rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>-Background information sets the context of the paper and shows a deep understanding of the topic and connects to the thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Thesis is clear and concise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Thesis clearly outlines the rest of the paper and it addresses the prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>-Background information sets the context of the paper and shows a good understanding of the topic and connects to the thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Thesis is clear but may not be concise or complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Thesis outlines the rest of the paper and it addresses the prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>-Background information is basic, sets a vague context for the paper, and shows an understanding of the topic. It may not connect to the thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Thesis is mostly clear but it may not be concise or complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Thesis may not completely outline the rest of the paper or address the prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>-Background information is vague, it does not set context for the paper, and shows a basic understanding of the topic and may not connect to the thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Thesis vague and not concise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Thesis does not completely outline the rest of the paper and may not address the prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inc.</strong></td>
<td>-Background information absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Thesis is absent or extremely vague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Thesis fails to outline the rest of the paper or address the prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity &amp; organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>-Paper is organized in a way that strengthens it and shows mastery of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-All evidence is well-introduced, clear, and concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Commentary and analysis link the evidence to the thesis and show a nuanced understanding of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Paragraphs are well concluded and transitions are clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>-Paper is organized well and in a manner that shows a good understanding of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-All evidence is adequately introduced, clear, and concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Commentary and analysis link the evidence to the thesis and show a good understanding of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Paragraphs are well concluded and transitions are clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>-Paper organized in a manner that shows an understanding of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Most evidence is introduced and clear but some may be vague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Most of the commentary and analysis link the evidence to the thesis but some may not be fully developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Paragraphs are concluded and transition to the next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>-Paper not well organized and shows a basic understanding of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Most evidence is not introduced, or it may be vague, unclear, or missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Most of the Commentary and analysis do not link evidence to the thesis and are not fully developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Paragraphs are weakly concluded and the transitions need work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inc.</strong></td>
<td>-Paper lacks organization and shows little understanding of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Evidence is vague or missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-There is little or no commentary and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Paragraphs are not concluded and the transitions need work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content &amp; Accuracy</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-The paper shows an outstanding understanding of the topic</td>
<td>-The paper shows a good understanding of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-All ideas are clear and well-argued and show a nuanced understanding of the topic</td>
<td>-All ideas are clear and well-argued but some may not be fully developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-The paper uses clear in-text citations that strengthens the paper</td>
<td>-The paper uses good in-text citations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-There are 1-2 inaccuracies</td>
<td>-There are few inaccuracies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatting &amp; Conclusion</td>
<td>-Paper is completely in MLA format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-There are at least 8 in-text citations</td>
<td>-There at least 8 in-text citations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-In-text citations add depth to your paper</td>
<td>-In-text citations strengthen your paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-No grammatical or spelling errors</td>
<td>-1-2 grammatical or spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Conclusion is strong and shows a deep understanding of the significance of the topic</td>
<td>-Conclusion is good and shows a fair understanding of the significance of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-The paper is not in MLA format</td>
<td>-There are 1 or no in-text citations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>