

Writer's Choice
Grammar and Composition

Research Paper and Report Writing

Grades 6–8



New York, New York Columbus, Ohio Woodland Hills, California Peoria, Illinois

Glencoe/McGraw-Hill

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Contents

Part 1

The Research Paper

About MLA Style	1
Due Dates for Your Research Paper	2
Narrowing Your Topic	3
Surveying Your Topic and Forming a Main Idea	4
Practice Creating Source Cards for Books	5
Practice Creating Source Cards for Online Sources	6
Practice Creating Source Cards for Various Sources	7
Correcting Sample Source Cards	8
Evaluating Sources	9
Evaluating Online Sources	10
Practice Creating Note Cards	11
Cooperative Learning: Evaluating Your Note Cards	12
Evaluating Sample Approaches to a Topic	13
Evaluating Sample Thesis Statements	14
Writing Your Thesis Statement	15
Writing Your Introduction	16
Evaluating a Sample Outline for a Research Paper	17
Creating an Outline for Your Research Paper	18
Evaluating a Sample Draft for Introduction, Body, and Conclusion	19
Evaluating a Sample Draft for Statistics, Facts, Examples, and Quotations	21
Creating Your Draft	23
Cooperative Learning: Evaluating Your Draft	25
Practice Creating Reference Entries	27
Cooperative Learning: Evaluating Your Documentation	28
Revising a Sample Draft	29
Revising Your Research Paper	30
Editing a Sample Research Paper	31
Cooperative Learning: Evaluating and Editing Your Research Paper	33
Research Paper Analytic Evaluation Rubric	34

Part 2

Report Writing

Evaluating a Sample Book Report	35
Writing a Report That Compares Two Works of Fiction	37
Writing a Report That Compares Two Characters	38
Writing a Report on a Movie	39
Answers	40

About MLA Style

The information in this book follows the MLA style of documentation as put forth in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, (5th Edition). *The MLA Handbook* was originally developed in 1977 by the Modern Language Association, a scholarly not-for-profit organization that promotes the study and teaching of language and literature. Although there are other widely accepted styles of documentation—the APA style is standard in the fields of history, anthropology, and the social sciences, and the CBE style is standard in scientific fields—the MLA style is the system most frequently used in the humanities.

All documentation systems arise from the responsibilities that writers have to other writers and to readers: each writer must give credit to the writers whose work he or she has used and must provide readers with the information they need to find and verify the sources for themselves. Understanding how research is documented can help students evaluate the ideas in other writers' work. Following a documentation style will help ensure that their own research will be taken seriously by others. Therefore, when students learn and follow the MLA style or another widely accepted style of documentation, they are likely to become stronger readers as well as stronger writers.

Although it is important that humanities students and scholars use the rules in the *MLA Handbook* to guide their research and documentation, the rules themselves are constantly being adapted to better meet the needs of the reading and writing community, especially in the face of rapid technological change. If doubt arises about the correct way to document a source, the writer should keep in mind the primary aims of documentation—to give credit where it is due and to help a reader locate the source—and provide the necessary information in as clear a manner as possible.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

Due Dates for Your Research Paper

	Date Due	Date Done	Teacher's Comments
Prewriting			
Choosing a topic			
Surveying your topic			
Stating a main idea			
Making source cards			
Taking notes from sources			
Evaluating sources			
Writing your thesis statement			
Creating an outline			
Drafting			
Writing the introduction			
Writing the body			
Writing the conclusion			
Identifying Sources			
Determining where text notes are needed			
Inserting notes into draft			
Creating a list of reference works			
Revising			
Revising the draft			
Revising the documentation			
Editing			
Editing the final draft			
Proofreading the final draft			
Creating the final paper			

Topic _____

Required Length of Paper _____

Required Number of Sources _____

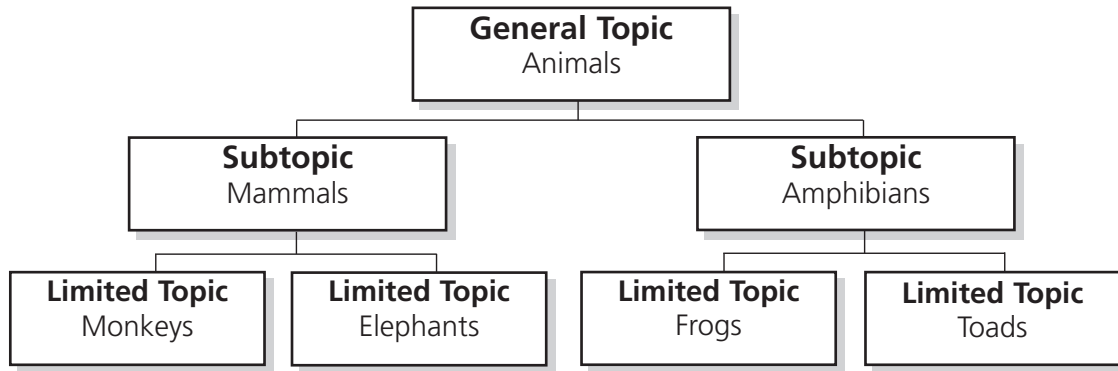
Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

Narrowing Your Topic

Directions Every subject contains both broad general topics and narrower subtopics.

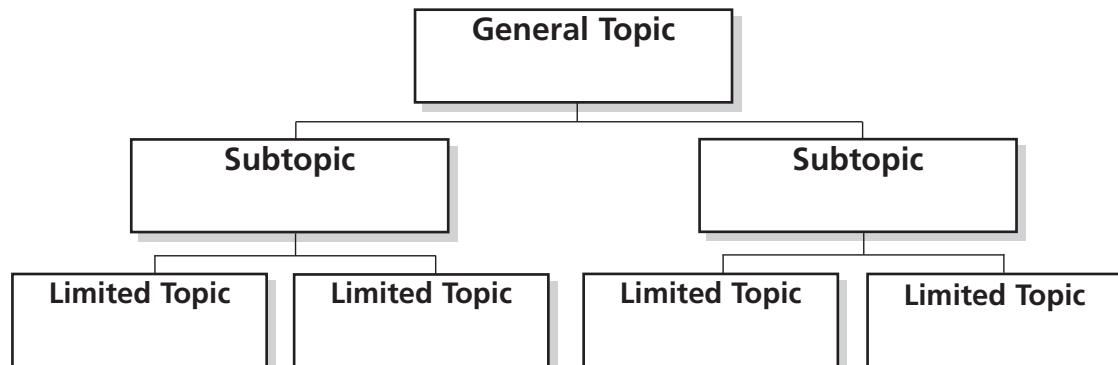


Directions Before you can begin writing your own research paper, you need to choose an appropriate topic. After you have answered the following questions, fill in the pyramid below. Write a general topic that interests you in the box at the top. Fill in the rest of the boxes with the narrower aspects of the topic.

1. How long is your report supposed to be? (You should choose a topic that is narrow enough to cover thoroughly. A subject such as animals is too broad for a research paper.)

2. How much information is available? (If you choose a very narrow topic, such as the eastern spadefoot toad, you may not find enough facts and statistics for a full-length research paper.)

3. Which aspect of the general subject interests you most? (You should like your subject.)



Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

Surveying Your Topic and Forming a Main Idea

Directions Now that you have chosen a topic, you need to survey library resources to make sure enough information is available.

1. Check the different types of resources listed below. After each type write down the specific titles that are related to your subject. (When listing periodicals, note the date as well as the title.) If you cannot find at least five different sources, consider choosing a different topic. If you happen to come across an aspect of your topic that looks more interesting than the one you originally selected, it isn't too late to change direction.

Encyclopedias (print, CD-ROM, or online versions)

Books (look in card or computer catalogs)

Magazines (see *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*)

Audio-visual resources (videotapes, audiotapes, etc.)

Other (newspapers, pamphlets, Web sites, etc.)

2. After surveying your topic, write down three questions that you hope to answer in your research paper.

3. What question will guide your research? (An example of such a question is the following: Why is the number of frogs and toads decreasing throughout the world? The rest of your research paper would concern itself with proving this statement.) Write down the goal or the main idea of your research paper.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

Practice Creating Source Cards for Books

Directions Your research paper will probably contain information from many different resources. It is illegal to include other people's work without crediting them. To keep track of your sources, you should fill out a source card for each one, as shown below. Card 1 is for a book, and Card 2 is for a magazine article. Each shows what information should be included, the correct order of the information, and the correct punctuation. Make sure you copy this information carefully from the book's title page and copyright page. At the end of your paper, you will be expected to include a list of works you used to write the paper.

Card 1

Wadsworth, Linger.
Rachel Carson, Voice for the Earth.
 Minneapolis: Lerner, 1992.

Card 2

Madson, John.
"American Waterfowl: Troubles and
Triumphs." National Geographic
Nov. 1984: 562.

Directions Below are a book's title page and copyright page. Fill in the source card at the bottom of the page, using the format shown above. Be sure to number the card. The information next to the asteriks will not be available for every source.

Title Page

The World's Disappearing Wildlife
 Dr. Maurice Burton
 Robert Burton
 Marshall Cavendish
 New York

Copyright Page

Copyright ©1978 by Marshall
 Cavendish Corporation. All Rights
 Reserved. For information about per-
 mission to reproduce selections from
 this book, write to Permissions,
 Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 575
 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY. Also
 published as a supplement to the
International Wildlife Encyclopedia.

card number _____	
name of author	
* title of a part of the book (or anthologized work)	
title of the book	
* name of the editor or translator	
* volume number	* series name
city of publication/publisher's name (abbreviated)/year published	

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

Practice Creating Source Cards for Online Sources

Directions You may want to use information you find on Web sites in your research paper. The cards below show the correct format of source cards for online sources. Card 4 is for an online encyclopedia, and card 5 is for other Web sites. You can usually find the information you'll need at the top or bottom of the site or in a separate section called "About [the name of the site]."

Online Encyclopedia

Card 4
"Wildlife Conservation." <i>Britannica.com</i> .
1999-2000. Encyclopaedia
Britannica. 23 June 2000
< http://www.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/printable/9/0.5722.79039.00.html >.

Use this order for an article in an online encyclopedia: name of author (if the article is signed); title of article; name of project; date of electronic publication or last update; name of the organization responsible for the project (if the project is sponsored); date of access; URL address.

Personal Web Site

Card 5
Rusli, Elisha. <i>Jungle Juice</i> . 23 June 2000
< http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/6535/ >.

Use this order for a personal or professional Web site: name of the person who created it; title of the site (or, if no title is given, a description of the site, such as Home Page); the name of any institution or organization associated with the site; the date of access, the URL address.

Directions Write a correctly formatted source card for each of the works listed below. Remember to number each card. Assume they are the sixth and seventh cards.

Online Encyclopedia Article

An Internet search done on June 23, 2000 located "Endangered Species," an article in the Encarta Online Encyclopedia 2000 owned by Microsoft Corporation. The URL was <http://encarta.msn.com/find/Concise.asp?z=1&pg=2&ti=761557586>.

Personal Web Site

An Internet search done on July 10, 2000 located a home page called Going Green created by Tim Ponce. The address is <http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/4990/>.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

Practice Creating Source Cards for Various Sources

Directions In addition to looking up information in books and online, you will probably use magazines and encyclopedias frequently in your research. Look at the following source cards. Notice how these cards are different from cards for books and online sources.

Article in a Magazine

Card 8

Carpenter, Betsy. "10,000 Species to Disappear in 1991." U.S. News and World Report 7 Jan. 1991: 68-69.

Use this order for an article in a magazine: author, title of article, title of magazine, date of magazine (with date written before month in a weekly or biweekly magazine), and page number. When writing the date, abbreviate the month. Punctuate as shown.

Encyclopedia Article

Card 9

Fredrickson, Leigh H. "Wildlife Conservation." The World Book Encyclopedia. 1999 ed.

Use this order for an article in an encyclopedia: author (if article is signed), title of article, name of encyclopedia, edition (if stated), and edition or copyright year. If the articles are arranged in alphabetical order, there is no need to list the volume and page number.

Directions Write a correctly formatted source card for each of the works listed below. Assume they are the tenth and eleventh cards.

Encyclopedia Article

The New Book of Knowledge, Grolier Incorporated, Danbury, Connecticut. "Endangered Species" by Richard G. Van Gelder. Copyright 1987. Edition of 1987.

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Magazine Article

"The \$25 Million Bird" by J. Madeleine Nash, on pp. 56-57 of *Time*, January 27, 1992.

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Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

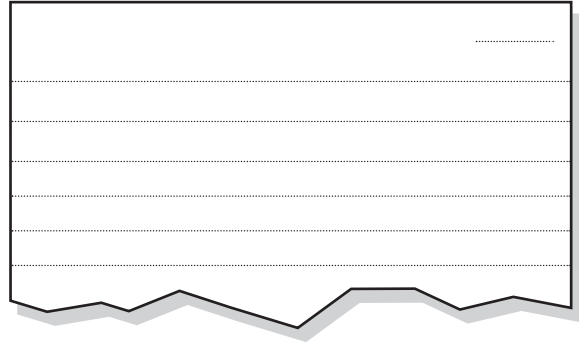
Correcting Sample Source Cards

Directions Use the information below to create properly cited source cards in the spaces provided. Assume that they are the twelfth through fourteenth cards.

Book

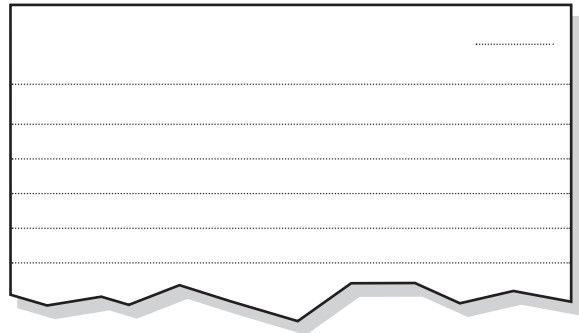
Endangered Species of the World
Laura O'Biso Socha. Mallard Press,
New York. 1991

Copyright 1991 by Michael
Friedman Publishing Group, Inc.



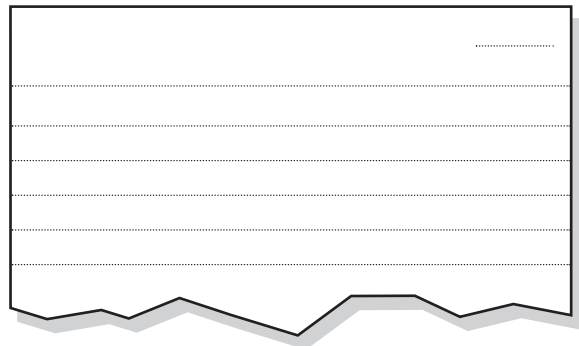
Magazine Article

National Geographic vol. 174, no. 6,
December 1988, "Quietly
Conserving Nature" by Noel Grove.
Photographs by Stephen J.
Krasemann. pp. 818–845



Online Encyclopedia Article

FunkandWagnalls.com.
"Endangered Species." 1998.
Primedia Reference.
<<http://www.funkandwagnalls.com/encyclopedia/getpage.asp?abspage=/articles/007000b/007000885.asp>>.
23 June 2000.



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Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

Evaluating Sources

Directions Research sources can all be categorized as either primary or secondary sources. Primary sources include firsthand information. Diaries, letters, photographs, and interviews with people are all considered primary sources. Secondary sources contain information that has been gathered and analyzed by an outside authority. Encyclopedias and most magazine articles and books are examples of secondary sources. You should try to use a balance of primary and secondary sources in your research. Answer the questions below to get an overview of the kinds of sources you've identified so far.

1. What primary sources are you planning on using?

2. What secondary sources are you planning on using?

3. What other types of primary or secondary sources would help round out your research?

Directions Choose one of the sources you've identified so far and answer the questions below to find out whether your source is accurate and reliable. Then refer to the questions as you evaluate the rest of your sources.

1. A good source is written by an author who knows a lot about the subject. Is the author of this source an expert on the subject? What makes you think so?

2. All authors have a primary purpose for writing. They may want to inform, to entertain, to sell a product or service, or to persuade readers to act or think a certain way. What is the author's purpose in writing this source? What makes you think so?

3. Can any facts and figures provided be checked for accuracy?

4. When was this source published? Could the information be out of date? (Remember, new discoveries are always being made, especially in science and technology.)

5. Overall, on a scale of one to ten, how accurate would you say your source is? Why?

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

Evaluating Online Sources

Directions Choose one online source that relates to your research topic and answer the questions below in order to determine the source's usefulness and accuracy. As you continue your research, you can use the same questions to evaluate other online sources as well.

1. How useful is the site?

How much information does the site offer?

How is the site organized? What parts of the site is your eye drawn to first?

Does the site contain functioning links to other sites? If so, to what kinds of sites does it link? Which of these links might help you with your research?

2. How accurate is the site?

Who or what is responsible for this site? Is it a business? An individual? A publication? A university? Or is the source of the site unclear?

All Web sites have a purpose. Some sites want to inform, some to convince people that one point of view is better than another, some to sell a product or service. What, do you think, is the purpose of this site? What makes you think so?

When was the site created or last updated? Is the information up-to-date or out-of-date?

What do you think is the overall accuracy of this site? Would you use this site in your research paper? Why or why not?

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

Practice Creating Note Cards

Directions Once you have located useful sources, you are ready to take notes on what you learn. Most research paper writers take their notes on index cards. Here are some guidelines to help you as you prepare your note cards.

1. At the top of the card, write the subject of the notes. Later this heading will help you to organize your note cards and to find the information you need.
2. Identify the author and the title of your source. You don't need to write down the publisher or the copyright date; those details are on your source cards. You just need to know where you got the information for each note card.
3. Write down one idea or fact per card. Note the number of the page where you found the information.
4. Make sure that any dates, names, or other facts are correct. If you quote material from your source, make sure you copy it word for word and put quotation marks around it. Anything that is *not* in quotation marks must be in your own words.

Imagine that you are writing a research paper on animals that are in danger of becoming extinct. Your main idea is that many endangered species can be saved. Read the excerpt from page 37 of *Birds in Peril* by John P. S. Mackenzie and create a note card for it.

The original purpose of this book was to write only about the endangered species—species officially listed as endangered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and by the International Council for Bird Preservation. On a number of counts, however, we cannot resist including the trumpeter swan. It was listed as endangered for many years but is no longer endangered. Its recovery—from a low of sixty-nine birds in 1932 to a stable level of more than seven hundred in the western United States alone—is due entirely to a dedicated group of government biologists and conservationists. The trumpeter is included here to illustrate how close a species can come to extinction and still recover.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

PREWRITING: PLANNING AND RESEARCHING

Cooperative Learning: Evaluating Your Note Cards

Directions After you have taken a number of notes for your report, exchange note cards and source cards with a partner. Tell each other what main idea you have decided on for your report. Then evaluate each other's note cards, using the questions below. After you have both evaluated each other's note cards, discuss how both sets of note cards can be improved.

1. Does each note card have a heading at the top? List any cards that don't have headings and write a heading for each one.

2. Does each note card contain one main idea? List any cards that contain information that should be split across two or more cards.

3. Do any of your partner's note cards seem unrelated to the topic or the main idea? Explain why.

4. Check the information on the note cards against the source cards your partner used. List any cards that have incorrect information—incorrectly spelled names, inaccurate dates, misused quotation marks, and no page numbers next to the information used.

5. Which of your partner's notes are most interesting? Which are least interesting? Why?

6. Reread all the comments you have made about your partner's note cards. How can these observations help you in evaluating your own note cards?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

OUTLINES AND THESIS STATEMENTS

Evaluating Sample Approaches to a Topic

Directions In preparing your research paper, you should decide which approach you want to take toward your topic. Your approach will determine what information you want to emphasize in your paper. Here are some common approaches to expository writing.

- Explain how something works, using a step-by-step process
- Compare and contrast people, places, events, or ideas
- Define something
- Classify by dividing things with common characteristics into groups
- Point out a cause-and-effect relationship

Directions Different approaches work with different topics. For example, you may have a topic that can be explained better through the use of comparison and contrast rather than cause and effect. Below are several topics and related research notes. Which approach from the list above seems best suited to each topic? Explain why.

- 1. Topic** Wildlife Refuges of the United States. **Notes:** San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge: Urban refuge. Located around the edges of San Francisco Bay. Wetlands area. Endangered species include the salt marsh harvest mouse and a marsh bird called a rail. Area receives many visitors each year. Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge: Located in Oklahoma. Set aside as a home for buffalo.

- 2. Topic** Komodo Island Dragon. **Notes:** 300-pound lizard. Lives in Indonesia. Dangerous to humans. Believed to live 100 years. Protected from hunters.

- 3. Topic** California Condor. **Notes:** Fewer than 50 condors remain. Females lay only one egg every other year, and nesting adults are easily disturbed, which results in eggs failing to hatch. Condors need large areas of wilderness to live in and wild animals to feed from.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

OUTLINES AND THESIS STATEMENTS

Evaluating Sample Thesis Statements

Directions Remember that a thesis statement is a sentence that tells briefly and clearly the central idea of a whole report or research paper. Read each of the following thesis statements for a research report about saving endangered species and answer the questions that follow them.

- A. If human beings act now, many species currently listed as endangered can be saved.
- B. The big question is whether it is better to help the animals that are in the greatest danger or the creatures that have the best chance of survival.
- C. Animals can be endangered because of natural disasters, diseases, pollution, over-hunting, or loss of their natural habitats.
- D. An endangered animal is one that will become extinct unless conditions improve.
- E. This report is about endangered animals in the United States.

1. Which thesis statement best fits the purpose of the topic? Why?

2. In which statement did the author forget to state the basic topic? Revise the statement into an appropriate thesis statement.

3. Which statement names the topic of the report but does not tell what the main idea is? Revise the statement into an appropriate thesis statement.

4. Which thesis statement would convince you to read the report? Why?

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

OUTLINES AND THESIS STATEMENTS

Writing Your Thesis Statement

Directions To create a thesis statement for your own research paper, think about your research and your main idea.

1. My paper's main idea is _____

2. Some of the most important ideas I learned in my research are _____

Directions Review the approaches listed below. Which approaches would work best with your topic? Pick two of them. (If you are writing about a current problem, you might want to pick *point out a cause-and-effect relationship* and *define something*. If you are writing about famous works of art, you might select *compare and contrast* and *classification*.) Then write two thesis statements—one for each selected approach. Read the two thesis statements carefully. Which one expresses what you most want to say about your topic? Circle that statement.

- Explain how something works, using a step-by-step process
- Compare and contrast people, events, or ideas
- Define something
- Classify by dividing things into groups with common characteristics
- Point out a cause-and-effect relationship

3. Thesis statement one _____

4. Thesis statement two _____

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

OUTLINES AND THESIS STATEMENTS

Evaluating a Sample Outline for a Research Paper

Directions Read the following outline for a research paper about efforts to save endangered species. You will find that in some instances the order of topics in the headings and subheadings is incorrect. Answer the questions below the outline. Then rewrite your new, improved outline on a separate sheet of paper.

Saving Endangered Species

- I. Introduction
- II. Causes of endangerment
 - A. Loss of habitat
 - B. Overhunting
 - C. Pollution
 - D. Introduction of predators or competitors
 - E. Establishing refuges
- III. Methods of saving species
 - A. Cleaning up pollution
 - B. Help with breeding
 - C. Reintroducing to the wild
 - D. Controlling hunting
- IV. Definition of endangered species
- V. Success stories
 - A. Trumpeter swans
 - B. Alligators
 - C. River otters are lovable creatures
- VI. Questions
 - A. Question of where to best focus efforts
 - B. Wisdom of interfering with nature
 - C. What happened to the dinosaurs?
- VII. Conclusion

1. Which heading is in the wrong place? Where would you put it to improve the order of this outline?

2. The style of one subheading does not fit the style of the rest. Which subheading is it, and how could you improve it?

3. Which subheading seems to be under the wrong heading? Name it and tell where it should go.

4. Which subheading does not fit the topic? Why?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

OUTLINES AND THESIS STATEMENTS

Creating an Outline for Your Research Paper

Directions To create an outline for your own research paper, follow these instructions.

1. Review your note cards and sort them into groups of related ideas. What main idea does each group represent? List those main ideas below.

2. Next, think of the most logical order in which to arrange your main ideas. What approach did you decide to take in your research paper? For example, if you are organizing your research paper in terms of cause and effect, you might want to begin by listing a number of effects and then describe the cause of each one. Now rewrite the main ideas you listed above, this time in the correct order.

3. Think about your audience. Is there anything in the way you have organized your information that might confuse your reader? (For example, it would be confusing to describe the answer to a problem before defining the problem itself.)

4. Next, read every note card in each group. Which ideas support other ideas? Identify the subheadings for each heading and then identify the supporting details for each subheading. On a separate sheet of paper, write the major headings and subheadings of your paper in correct outline form. Use Roman numerals (I, II, III, and so on) for the main headings and capital letters for the subheadings.

5. Study your draft outline. Is every subheading under the correct heading? If not, move it. Does every heading have supporting details? If not, either do more research or delete the heading. Does every detail match your topic and your approach? If not, the detail doesn't belong in your paper. The sample outline on page 16 is an example of an incorrect outline. Laying out your information in correct outline form can help you answer these important questions.

6. Review your completed outline. Make sure that the form is correct and that everything is in the proper order. Make sure that words are spelled correctly and that all facts are accurate. Have you left out any information? Be sure that your outline is as complete as it can be. You should be able to write your paper directly from your outline by expanding on your headings and subheadings.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

DRAFTING

Evaluating a Sample Draft for Introduction, Body, and Conclusion

Directions Read this draft of a research paper. Pay special attention to how the writer has organized the information into an introduction, a body, or the main part of the paper, and a conclusion. Then answer the questions on the next page.

In a world increasingly full of people and their creations, is there any room left for wild animals? It's true that many species have adapted to humans by feeding out of our garbage cans, perching on power lines, and nesting on billboards. But what about creatures that are shy and easily disturbed by people? What about species that need large undisturbed forests or plains in which to roam about and feed? One answer to saving these animals is to create wildlife refuges.

Over the past century many such sanctuaries have been created in the United States. In 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt created the first federal wildlife refuge on Pelican Island in Florida. Today there are more than four hundred such refuges across our nation.

Many American refuges have been set aside specifically to help preserve an endangered species. The whooping crane can find a protected home at a Texas refuge called Aransas. The American buffalo can roam safely over the National Bison Range in Montana. In Indonesia rangers at the Ujung Kulon National Park protect the endangered Javan rhino from hunters. Wildlife refuges in the United States seek to promote the survival of wildlife but not necessarily to leave the natural environment completely untouched by humans. In many refuges hikers and other visitors are welcome to enter and observe the animals. In some refuges people are allowed to hunt, fish, and boat. Wildlife managers may dam up ponds, create nesting sites, or plant food crops to help a species survive.

Wildlife refuges are an important part of the solution to how humans and animals can live in harmony. Many species have been helped. Many visitors have been educated.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. What is the main idea expressed in the introduction?

2. What technique or techniques has the writer used to get the reader's attention in the introduction?

3. What are the major supporting details provided in the body of this report?

4. Can you find any information in the body of the report that doesn't fit the main focus of the paragraph in which it is located? If so, what is this information, and should it be moved or deleted?

5. Evaluate the conclusion. How could it be improved? Make suggestions, or write an improved version below.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

DRAFTING

Evaluating a Sample Draft for Statistics, Facts, Examples, and Quotations

Directions To make your paper interesting and meaningful, you need to support your ideas with statistics, facts, examples, and quotations gathered during your research. However, you also must give credit to the sources where you found your information. There are many ways to do this. One way is to write the reference to your source at the end of the sentence containing the information. The reference should appear in parentheses. It consists of the last name of the author(s) and the page number where the information was found. In the following example the information in the last sentence comes from page 54 of a book called *Places of Refuge: Our National Wildlife Refuge System* by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent.

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia is a popular beach spot. It is also home to the piping plover, an endangered bird. Refuge officials realized that human activity was making it difficult for the birds to raise their young, so beginning in 1988 they closed two-and-a-half miles of the beach to humans during the birds' breeding season (Patent 54).

A reference in the paper needs to provide only enough information to identify the source. (The rest of the information from your source card will come later, in the source list at the end of your research paper.) In most cases all you need to provide is the author's name and the page where you found the fact or quotation. If your information comes from an unsigned article in a newspaper, encyclopedia, or other source, just list the name of the source and the page in your reference.

According to the Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, species considered endangered as of July 30, 1992, included the masked bobwhite, the American peregrine falcon, the red wolf, and the American alligator (The World Almanac and Book of Facts 677).

Directions The research paper excerpt on the next page is based on information from the two sources listed below. Read the excerpt and then answer the questions that follow.

Madson, John. "American Waterfowl: Troubles and Triumphs." National Geographic Nov. 1984: 583.

Mackenzie, John P. S. Birds in Peril. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Can a species be pulled back from the edge of extinction? If you consider the case of the trumpeter swan, the answer would seem to be yes. The trumpeter swan is native to North America. It is a very large bird. For hundreds of years it was hunted, both for food and for its skin. By 1932 only sixty-nine trumpeter swans were known to exist (Madson 583).

In 1935 the United States government set up the Red Rocks Lakes Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in an attempt to save the trumpeter swan from dying out completely (Mackenzie 42). Today nearly ten thousand of these birds exist in the United States and Canada (National Geographic 583). This "most majestic of American waterfowl" seems to be safe from extinction.

1. Look in the excerpt to find an example of a statement that should be supported with precise statistics.

2. You only need to write the last name of the author and the page number where the material was found in a reference. Which reference in the excerpt is written incorrectly?

3. Most of the time, information that is in quotation marks needs a reference. Find an example of material in the excerpt that needs to have a reference but does not. Copy the text that needs a reference.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

DRAFTING

Writing Your Introduction

Directions A good introduction does more than just introduce the thesis, or main idea, of a research paper. It grabs the reader's attention. One way to begin is with a question. Another way to open is with a surprising fact or statistic. Some writers interest their readers with a fascinating story related to the topic. Others start with a striking quotation. Think about the topic you have selected and the main idea you want to convey. Now develop one introduction for each approach listed below. Continue your introductions on a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

1. Question

2. Surprising fact or statistic

3. Story

4. Quotation

Directions Now review your four introductions. Which one do you like best? Explain why you prefer it.

5. _____

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

DRAFTING

Creating Your Draft

Directions Use your outline and note cards to write a draft of your research paper. To begin, arrange your note cards in the same order as the ideas on your outline. Read the main idea of each roman numeral heading on your outline and skim the information for that heading in your notes. Then answer the following questions.

1. Reread your thesis statement. Does the information in your note cards and your outline directly support your thesis statement? Do you need to revise your thesis statement? Do you need to eliminate some of your note cards? Why or why not?

2. Now study the headings in your outline. Are they arranged in a logical manner? Will your draft flow smoothly from one topic to the next? Can you identify any ways to improve the organization of your headings?

3. Look at the subheadings for each heading. Which heading seems to have the weakest supporting details? How could you improve the information under this heading?

4. Think of your paper from the point of view of your audience. Are there any ideas or terms that will need special explanation? If so, what are they?

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

continued from page 23

5. Are there any concepts that your audience will probably find especially interesting? What are they, and why do you think they will interest your reader?

6. Are there any parts of your paper that your audience will likely find dull? Can these parts be eliminated? Why or why not? If they cannot be eliminated, how can you make them more interesting?

7. Are there any gaps in your outline? Are there places where you need to supply more or better examples to support your ideas? If so, what are these gaps, and where might you find the information you need?

8. Can you think of anything else you want to research, check, or rearrange before you start to write your draft? If so, what?

9. Think about your conclusion. Does the information in your note cards and outline lead to a logical conclusion? Does it express your point of view on the topic?

Directions You are now ready to begin writing. Don't get bogged down by worrying about details of punctuation, spelling, or grammar—you can fix those later. The important thing is to focus on your ideas and to express them in a clear, organized way.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

DRAFTING

Cooperative Learning: Evaluating Your Draft

Directions Work with a partner and discuss each other's drafts. Use the questions below and on the next page to guide your discussion. For each question, write answers about your partner's draft. Then use your partner's comments about your draft as you continue the writing process.

1. Read the introduction and then stop. From the introduction alone, can you determine your partner's topic and thesis statement? Did you identify them correctly? If not, is the introduction unclear, or did you not read it carefully enough?

2. Did the introduction interest you immediately? Why? If it did not, suggest concrete ways for your partner to make the introduction more lively and appealing.

3. Read the body of the paper. Make a list of the main ideas. Then write down the supporting details for each main idea. Circle any main ideas that are unclear or poorly supported. Suggest to your partner ideas for improving them.

4. Which sections of the draft do you find most interesting? Briefly describe them and tell what you like about them.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

continued from page 25

5. Which sections of the draft do you find least interesting? Briefly describe them and suggest how they could be improved.

6. Describe at least one part of the draft where your partner could improve the flow of information. The information might be in the wrong order, or a transition between two ideas may need to be smoother. Suggest a way to fix the problem.

7. Are there any sections where your partner needs to define a confusing term or to supply more background information? Explain.

8. How well do you think your partner has used research sources? Has he or she used a variety of sources? Is the information from these various sources smoothly combined? Would the draft be better if there were either more or fewer direct quotations from the sources? Give your partner specific examples from the draft.

9. Read the conclusion of your partner's draft. Is it logical and well written? Does it sum up the writer's main points or conclude the draft in some other way?

10. Reread all of your comments about your partner's paper. How can these observations help you in evaluating your own paper?

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

CITING SOURCES

Practice Creating Reference Entries

Directions When you were doing research for your paper, you learned how to create source cards for books, encyclopedias, magazine articles, and online sources. These cards contain the sources of your documentation. Documentation is something written or printed that supports an idea or fact you present in a research paper. Now it is time to take this documentation and to assemble it into a list of reference works. This is publication information for all your sources, and it appears at the end of your research paper. If your source cards are complete and accurate, you can easily transfer the information onto your list of reference works. Put the entries in alphabetical order according to the author's last name (or the work's title if there is no author indicated).

Look at the information below. Each entry contains one or more errors. Format each item as a reference work entry and write the entries in alphabetical order. Begin each entry at the left-hand margin. Indent by five spaces any text that runs more than one line.

Birds in Peril. 1977. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston.
by John P. S. Mackenzie.

Peter Matthiessen. Wildlife in America. copyright 1987.
Viking. New York.

"The Butterfly Problem" by Charles C. Mann and Mark L. Plummer
in the January 1992 issue of The Atlantic. page 47.

National Wildlife, April–May 1992. p. 18: "Pulling Turtles out of the Soup"
by Watson, Jim

"Panda." <http://www.encyclopedia.com/articles/09790.html>
Encyclopedia.com.1999. Infonautics Corporation. 23 June 2000

23 June 2000 Red Wolf Reintroduction: Alligator River National Wildlife
Refuge. Fish and Wildlife Service <[http://bluegoose.arw.r9.fws.gov/NWRSFiles/
WildlifeMgmt/SpeciesAccounts/Mammals/RedWolf/
RedWolfSummaryData.html](http://bluegoose.arw.r9.fws.gov/NWRSFiles/WildlifeMgmt/SpeciesAccounts/Mammals/RedWolf/RedWolfSummaryData.html)>

Reference Works

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

CITING SOURCES

Cooperative Learning: Evaluating Documentation

Directions Exchange drafts and source cards with a partner. Be sure to include your lists of reference works. Then use the questions below to evaluate the accuracy of your partner's sources. After completing the evaluation, discuss your findings with your partner. Then use your partner's comments to improve your own documentation.

1. Read your partner's draft. Focus on each piece of documented information. List any examples of documented items that are common knowledge and therefore need no citation.

2. Can you find any facts, statistics, or quotations in your partner's draft that do not have source documentation even though they should? If so, list them.

3. Does your partner follow the correct format when he or she is naming sources? Are there any references that you think are important? If so, list them.

4. Compare the references within your partner's draft with the information on his or her source cards and note cards. Can you find any errors? If so, list them.

5. Compare the entries on your partner's list of reference works with the information on the source cards. Can you find any errors? If so, list them.

6. Pick two of your partner's source cards. Go to the library and find the sources to which the cards refer. Check the title page and the copyright page of each source. Can you find any errors? If so, list them.

7. Reread all the comments you have made about your partner's documentation. How can these observations help you to evaluate your own documentation?

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

REVISING

Revising a Sample Draft

Directions Read this excerpt from a research paper on saving endangered species. Make suggestions for revision directly on the paper. Consider the organization, the use of transition words, the style, the references, and the clarity and completeness. All of the information in the paper is correct. The facts come from the book *Last Chance to See* by Douglas Adams and Mark Carwardine (New York: Harmony Books, 1990). After you have made your suggestions, answer the questions following the excerpt.

Imagine a fat, greenish parrot that doesn't know how to fly or defend itself. For thousands of years, it doesn't need to because it lives in an island country where there are no predators. Then human beings from other continents sailed over the seas to this country and settle it. In the holds of the boats that they sailed over the seas in are cats, rats, and other creatures that prey on birds. The chubby little parrot, which is called a kakopo, begins to die out.

All of this really happened. Long ago there was hundreds of thousands of kakopos in New Zealand. There are only forty of the birds (Adams and Carwardine 109). However, the government of New Zealand is making an extraordinary effort to save the kakopo.

Conservation officials realize that the bird could survive only under New Zealand's original conditions. So they found two uninhabited islands, Codfish Island and Little Barrier Island, and got rid of every cat, weasel, or other predator. They trained a few individuals and they trained a few dogs and they tracked and captured the remaining living kakopos in New Zealand. These birds were transported to the refuges where they are carefully guarded by wardens (*Last Chance to See* 120–122).

Will the effort be successful? Unfortunately they breed very slowly, and most of the survivors are male. The birds have survived the move.

1. What did you like most about the excerpt? What didn't you like about the excerpt?

2. Do you think your revision suggestions improved the excerpt? In what ways?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

REVISING

Revising Your Research Paper

Directions Evaluate your own research paper. Use the following questions to guide your evaluation. Then use your answers to make improvements in your paper.

1. Read the introduction. Put yourself in the place of your audience. Would you want to continue reading? Try to make the introduction more engaging. (Remember, although the style of a research paper is formal, it doesn't have to be dry or boring.)

2. Read the rest of the paper. Try to find any examples of misplaced or unnecessary information. Identify areas in your paper where you would relocate misplaced information.

3. Remember that your reader doesn't have the benefit of all the background research you have done. All he or she knows is what you put into the paper. Identify any unexplained terms or hazy concepts that you need to explain more clearly.

4. Evaluate the style of your paper. Do you need to vary your vocabulary or sentence structure? Did you use too many linking verbs and not enough action verbs? Are your sentences too short and choppy or too long and rambling? Give examples of sentences that can be improved.

5. Have you remembered to put in your own words everything except direct quotations from your sources? Have you correctly referenced all information taken from your sources? Reread your paper and list any sections that may need additional source information.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

EDITING AND PRESENTING

Editing a Sample Research Paper

Directions Proofread the following section of a completed research paper. Read the paper several times, each time looking for different kinds of errors. Use the list of reference works at the end of the paper to check the documentation. Add your corrections directly on the paper. Proofread for these errors:

- omitted words
- misspelled words
- grammar and usage
- punctuation errors
- capitalization errors
- documentation errors

One of the most hopeful developments in wildlife conservation occurs when an animal is successfully brought back, or reintroduced, to a region from which it once disappeared. For reintroduction to work, something in the environment must be improved. New laws may protect animals that were once overhunted. Polluted waters may have been cleaned up. Humans may have built new nesting sites to take the place of original nests, which were somehow lost. Once an animal has vanished from an area, people usually have to become involved to bring it back.

One animal that has been successfully reintroduced is the wild turkey, a native American bird. Seven to ten million of these birds once ranged across the United States (Smithsonian, 54). These birds were so numerous no one could really imagine what it would be like without them. "They (turkeys) seemed to be everywhere within their Eastern range, from southern Ontario to Florida and Mississippi, and west from the prairies of Illinois and Missouri to the easternmost parts of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, with especially dense populations in the Ohio River valley" (Madson 56). However, by the middle of this century, this distinctive American game bird had become extinct in eighteen states (DiSilvestro 46). Concerned individuals realized that there were only about thirty thousand of the birds left in a few remote regions (Madson 54). In the mid-1950s a new net was invented that could be used to trap these shy, clever birds. Wildlife managers found that they could go to areas where wild turkeys still lived, capture some birds and transport them to regions where people were eager to reestablish the wild turkey. The plan worked. Today there are over three million turkeys spread all over the place (Madison 59).

continued on page 32

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

continued from page 31

The state of Missouri now has too many wild turkeys! Worked out a clever deal. Every year Missouri trades some of its extra turkeys to Kentucky in exchange for river otters. David Hamilton, a wildlife specialist with the Missouri Department of conservation says, "We want otter and Kentucky wants turkey. We've got plenty of turkey, and since Kentucky doesn't have surplus otter, they have to get them in Louisiana" (Schwartz 138). This type of trading among states to preserve endangered wildlife has become common practice.

Although these playful acrobats are not on the federal list of endangered species, they have disappeared from many states (DiSilvestro 182). In 1976 residents of Missouri voted yes on a "conservation sales tax" (Schwartz 146), and one of the popularest programs paid for by this tax has been otter reintroduction. Hundreds of people usually show up to watch as the lively little animals are released into a river. Some disappear quickly, but others prance and play for their delighted audience.

Many species, like the wild turkey, has become endangered because they were hunted for food. Others were trapped for their fur, as the otter. Wolves, however, was driven away from their original homes by settlers who hated and feared them. Is there any hope for their reintroduction?

Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began to reintroduce the red wolf to lands in North Carolina (Grove, 818). The results are very good. For example, at least 22 wolves were born during the five years of the program. And the people who live near the area is enthusiastic about the project.

Reference Works

DiSilvestro, Roger L. The Endangered Kingdom. New York: Wiley, 1989.

Grove, Noel. "Quietly Conserving Nature." National Geographic Dec. 1988: 818-845.

Madson, John. "A Very Wise Bird Is the Turkey." Smithsonian May 1990: 54-59.

Schwartz, David. "Otters: The Stand-up, Slide-down Comics." Smithsonian June 1989: 138-146.

Red Wolf Reintroduction: Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Fish and Wildlife Service. 23 June 2000 <<http://bluegoose.arw.r9.fws.gov/NWRSFiles/WildlifeMgmt/SpeciesAccounts/Mammals/RedWolf/RedWolfSummaryData.html>>.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

EDITING AND PRESENTING

Cooperative Learning: Evaluating and Editing Your Research Paper

Directions With a partner evaluate each other's completed research papers and reference works pages. To help your partner identify problems in his or her paper, use a pencil to underline any errors. Then identify the exact nature of the problem by writing the correct abbreviation in the margin. See the list of problems and abbreviations below.

- misspelled word (SP)
- grammar or usage error (GU)
- punctuation error (P)
- documentation format error (DOC)
- wrong word (WW)
- omitted word (O)
- capitalization error (CAP)

Directions Further evaluate your partner's paper by answering the following questions:

1. Is the appearance of the paper neat and appropriate? Can you recommend any format changes that would improve the appearance or make the paper easier to read?

2. Is the title appropriate? Why or why not?

3. Did the writer cover the subject in enough detail to give you a thorough understanding of it? Was the approach well-rounded, or did the writer take a one-sided view of the subject? Explain.

4. What did you learn that surprised you?

5. What did you like about the paper? Why?

6. If your partner wanted to improve the paper, what suggestions would you make?

7. Reread all the comments you have made about your partner's paper. How can these observations help you evaluate your own paper?

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Research Paper Analytic Evaluation Rubric

Focus/Organization • The paper’s topic is neither too broad nor too narrow. • The paper includes an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. • The introduction includes a thesis statement that presents the central idea of the paper. • All the information presented in the paper relates to the thesis. • The ideas are sequenced effectively and logically.	Comments Score _____/35
Elaboration/Support/Style • General ideas are supported with facts, examples, opinions, and quotations taken from a variety of sources. • Sources are cited correctly within the text and in a Works Cited list. • Statements that aren’t in the writer’s own words are set off with quotations, and credit is given to the sources from which ideas are paraphrased.	Comments Score _____/35
Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics • The writing is free of misspellings, and capitalization is used correctly. • Sentences are punctuated correctly, and the piece is free of fragments and run-ons. • Standard English usage is employed. • The paper is neat, legible, and presented in an appropriate MLA format.	Comments Score _____/30

Engagement in the Writing Process

The student

- ☐ made a prewriting plan
- ☐ discussed the draft with a partner or small group
- ☐ contributed questions and suggestions to other writers
- ☐ revised the draft
- ☐ proofread the final draft

Comments

Overall Score /100

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

WRITING A REPORT: FICTION

Evaluating a Sample Book Report

Directions Read the following report on the book *Ash Road* by Ivan Southall, published in 1966. As you read, notice the strong points and weak points of the report. Then answer the questions on the following page.

Ash Road is an award-winning book by the Australian writer Ivan Southall. It is a thrilling tale of how people change and grow when they face danger.

The story is set in a farming community at the edge of the central Australian bush, or outback. The events take place in January, which is the middle of summer in Australia. There had been little rain, and the land has been baked dry and brown by the summer sun. Australia lies between the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific.

The morning of January 13, several of the inhabitants of Ash Road smell smoke, but they all ignore the danger at first. Gradually, they come to learn that a brush fire is raging a few miles away and is spreading toward their small community. Peter's grandparents want to send him away, but he thinks they are babying him. Pippa's sister Julie gets lost, but really she is at Grandpa Tanner's. As the fire gets closer, there is another problem: Lorna's dad becomes very ill, but there is nobody to take him to the hospital, since everyone is fighting the fire.

The children of Ash Road get separated from their parents and each other. Many of them behave heroically. Lorna struggles to save her father, Pippa helps her little brother Stevie escape to safety, and Peter rescues his grandmother. The ending is so awesome! It's like some really amazing disaster movie only more like real. It looks as if the fire is just about to destroy Ash Road when a cloudburst puts out the flames!

This is an excellent book for many reasons. The characters are interesting and believable. The events are complicated, and the author describes them in a clear and understandable way. This is an adventure story that you will not be able to put down. It is also a tale that will teach you a lot about human nature.

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. What information in this report is incomplete or confusing?

2. Where has the writer added information that doesn't fit?

3. Which information in the report should be left out so as not to spoil the suspense?

4. What is the author's thesis statement?

5. List a detail that the author uses to support the thesis statement.

6. Where does the author use language that is too informal for a book report? Copy the example.

7. Can you think of anything else you would change about the report?

8. Did the writer of the book report succeed in making you want to read this book? Why or why not?

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

WRITING A REPORT: FICTION

Writing a Report That Compares Two Works of Fiction

Directions Select two works of fiction to compare. They should have a key feature in common, such as the same author or the same basic subject. You might pick two examples of the same type of fiction, such as science fiction or fantasy. As you read, take notes on the ways the books are alike and how they are different. You may want to copy the following chart onto another sheet of paper so you have more space to fill in the boxes.

Feature	Book 1	Book 2
Title		
Author		
Number of pages		
Date of publication		
Type of fiction		
Subject		
Main characters		
Setting (time and place)		

Directions Answer the following questions. Continue your answers on another sheet of paper if you have to. Make sure you use specific examples from the books to support your conclusions. Use the chart above to help organize your ideas, but don't limit your answers to the features listed on the chart. You might also want to compare the books' styles (formal? informal?) or structures (Who tells the story? Do the events jump backward or forward in time?).

1. What are the main similarities between the two books?

2. What are the main differences?

3. Compare your personal responses to the two books. Which did you like better and why?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

WRITING A REPORT: FICTION

Writing a Report That Compares Two Characters

Directions Choose two fictional characters that share some important feature. They might be two very different individuals that share adventures in the same novel, or they might be similar types of people from different books. Use the questions below to compare and contrast them.

1. How are the circumstances of the two characters alike or different? (Consider their homes, families, friends, occupations.)

2. Compare and contrast the characters' appearances.

3. What are the characters' greatest strengths?

4. What are the characters' greatest faults or weaknesses?

5. In the course of the story, what challenges do the two characters face?

6. What happens to change these characters in some way?

7. Which character do you like better, and why?

Research Paper and Report Writing

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

WRITING OTHER REPORTS

Writing a Report on a Movie

Directions Writing a report on a movie is similar in many ways to writing a book report. Watch the movie carefully; you may want to take notes as you watch. The credits at the beginning and end of the movie will tell you important information, such as who directed and who acted in the movie. After watching the movie, answer the questions below.

1. What is the title of the movie?

2. Who is the director?

3. Where is the movie supposed to be taking place? (If the credits tell where the movie was actually filmed, give this information, too.)

4. At what point in time does the movie take place?

5. Name the actors and actresses who play the main characters in the movie.

6. Give the name and a brief description of each main character.

7. Summarize the main events of the plot.

8. What is the most striking image, or picture, that you can remember from the movie?

9. Is there anything else you especially want your readers to know about this movie? (You might describe the music, the costumes, the special effects, some clever dialogue, or the movie's theme.)

10. What did you especially like or dislike about the plot, characters, or dialogue? How could the movie have been improved?
