



Research: How to Argue, Cite and Explain

Important notice:



At the end of this presentation there is a link to a Microsoft Forms quiz. It is recommended that you score 80% or higher.

Please take your time viewing and studying this material before you proceed with the quiz.

Objectives:



After studying this module, the student will:

- Recognize the importance of academic research.
- Evidence claims through the integration of quotes.
- Visualize the MLA basic format.

What Is Research?



“Research is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings.” (qtd. in O’Donell)

Simply enough, **research is a search for knowledge.**
We research to make informed decisions, verify information
and, most importantly, learn new things.

What Is a Research Paper?



A research paper is **an academic text** through which the knowledge acquired during the research process is argued in a clear and detailed manner.

“(...) think of the research paper as a living thing, which grows and changes as the student explores, interprets, and evaluates sources related to a specific topic.” (Purdue OWL)

Why Research?



Researching involves **learning what others know, exploring their discoveries, and contributing your own ideas** as an academic researcher.

In a research paper, we show that we can **engage in an active intellectual dialogue** by **citing, giving credit, and developing a point of view in response to the sources** we have consulted.

What Do You Need?



To start writing a research paper, you must have three things:

- 1) **a research question:** a clear and focused question that states what you are seeking to learn.
- 2) **a thesis statement:** an argument, point of view or posture you take as a scholar with regards to the research question.
- 3) **reliable sources:** the reference work used to support your claims and prove the thesis statement.

Integration of Sources

How to Ace Research Paper Quotations

Avoid Hit-and-Run Quotations



Also known as “floating quotations,” hit-and-run quotations occur when **citations are not properly integrated in the paragraph** and, instead, **seem to be dropped** into the text **without the context needed to understand its meaning and relevance.**

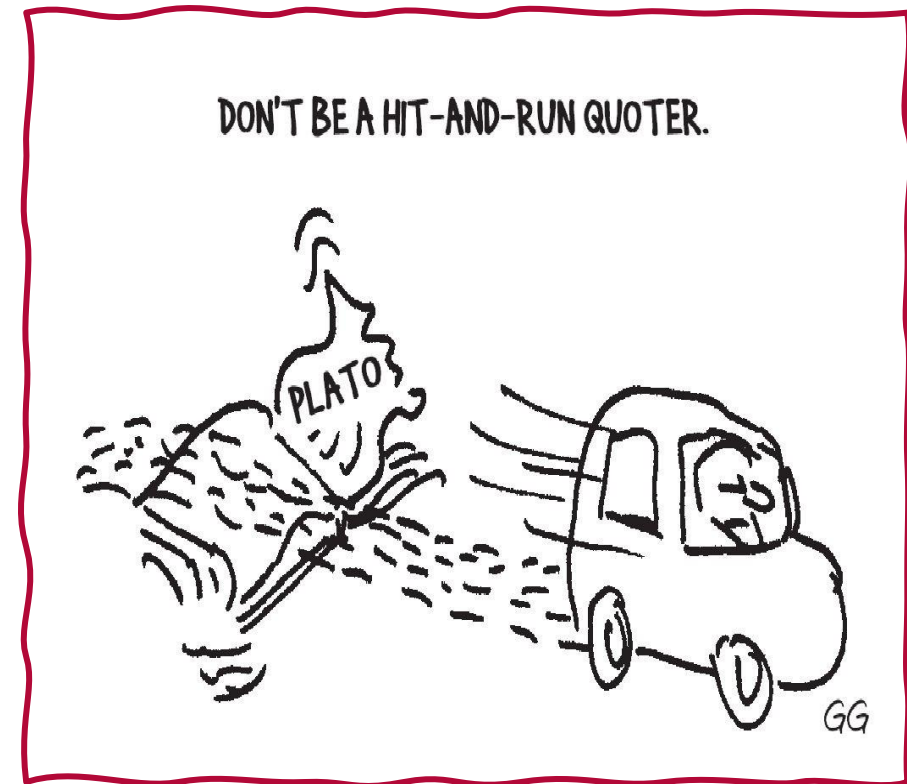
Keep in mind that the purpose of quoting sources is to **include proof that substantiates your own claims.** Thus, each piece of evidence should be **introduced** and integrated **logically** and **meaningfully.**

Avoid Hit-and-Run Quotations

Example:

Marcel Mauss writes about the gift as a social phenomenon. “Societies have progressed in so far as they themselves, their subgroups, and lastly, the individuals in them, have succeeded in stabilizing relationships, giving, receiving, and finally, giving in return.” (Mauss 82)

I agree with Mauss on this point. The author also claims that...



Source: *They Say, I Say* by Gerald Graff

Avoid Hit-and-Run Quotations



These type of quotations **make our writing unclear and confuse the readers further**, leaving them with more questions than answers:

Who is Marcel Mauss? Where is the quote from?

What does the quote mean? Why is it relevant?

Avoid Hit-and-Run Quotations



Additionally, in the previous example, the quotation does not work effectively because:

1. **A claim has not been made.**
2. **The quotation has not been appropriately introduced.**
3. **A meaningful connection between a claim and the quotation was not established.**
4. **The quotation has been abandoned to continue onto a new point.**

ACE: Argue □ Cite □ Explain



Instead, **use the following acronym** to cite effectively:

A



Before you cite, **argue a claim**. Lay the foundation for the point you want to make.

C



Carefully select and **cite a relevant quote** that supports your claim.

E



After you cite, **explain what the quote means** and how it relates to your claim.

STEP #1 Argue: Make a Point

Each paragraph in the research paper should strive towards the same purpose: **stating a claim** and **substantiating it with concrete evidence**. If we review the previous example, an assertive point would be:

In his book *The Gift*, the French anthropologist Marcel Mauss upholds the social and political importance of the gift as a cultural phenomenon.

Here, not only is a claim made, but the reader is also familiarized with the source the analysis is based on.

STEP #2 Cite: Provide Evidence

Once you have stated your claim, **cite a relevant passage** that proves your point. Citations must always be properly introduced. For example:

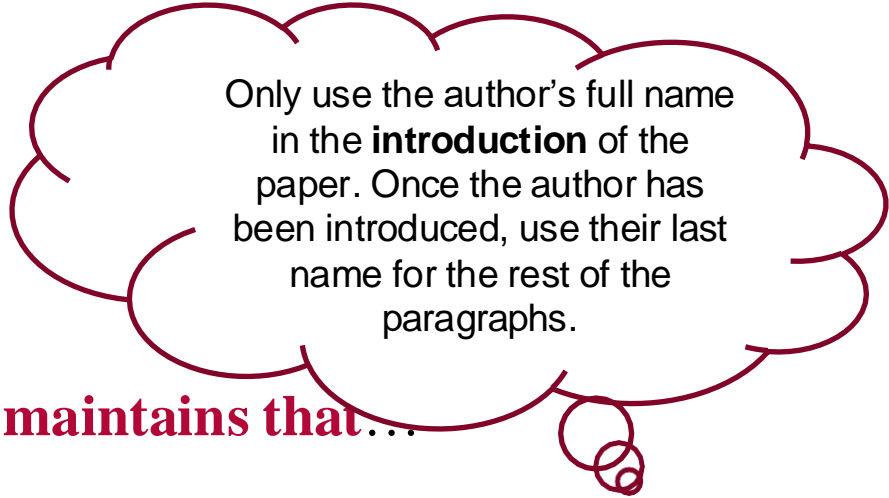
As the author himself puts it: “Societies have progressed in so far as they themselves, their subgroups, and lastly, the individuals in them, have succeeded in stabilizing relationships, giving, receiving, and finally, giving in return” (Mauss 82).

The initial phrase lets the reader know whom you are citing and serves as a **steady transition from the claim to the citation.**

STEP #2 Cite: Provide Evidence

Here are some templates you can use to introduce citations smoothly:

1. [Author's last name] **states**...
2. **As the prominent author puts it**...
3. **According to** [author's last name]...
4. **In her/his book**, [*Book Title*], [author's last name] **maintains that**...
5. **In** [author's last name]'s **view**...



Only use the author's full name in the **introduction** of the paper. Once the author has been introduced, use their last name for the rest of the paragraphs.

STEP #3 Explain: Make Connections



Finally, **explain the quote to reinforce the claim.** Make a **meaningful connection** between your claim and the citation. For example:

Mauss' point is that, since the first ages, gift-giving or the exchange of goods has been crucial for the establishment of peaceful and diplomatic relationships not only between individuals, but also between nations. Ultimately, it is the act of giving that leads each party into forming alliances for their mutual benefit.

By explaining, **you build a bridge between the source's words and your interpretation of them** which creates a fruitful dialogue.



STEP #3 Explain: Make Connections

Here are some templates you can use to incorporate your explanation:

1. **In other words,** [author's last name] **believes...**
2. **In making this comment,** [author's last name] **urges us to...**
3. [Author's last name]'s **point is that...**
4. **The essence of** [author's last name]'s **argument is that...**
5. **That is to say,** [Author's last name] **claims that...**

ACE: Argue □ Cite □ Explain



When employing this technique, the result is a direct, compelling and informative paragraph:

In his book *The Gift*, the French anthropologist Marcel Mauss upholds the social and political importance of the gift as a cultural phenomenon. As the author himself puts it: “Societies have progressed in so far as they themselves, their subgroups, and lastly, the individuals in them, have succeeded in stabilizing relationships, giving, receiving, and finally, giving in return” (Mauss 82). Mauss’ point is that, since the first ages, gift-giving or the exchange of goods has been crucial for the establishment of peaceful and diplomatic relationships not only between individuals, but also between nations. Ultimately, it is the act of giving that leads each party into forming alliances for their mutual benefit.



Formatting the Paper

What the MLA Research Paper Looks Like

Formatting Your Paper



Following the MLA style manual will help you **document sources** and **organize the overall appearance of your paper**. Here are some general guidelines:

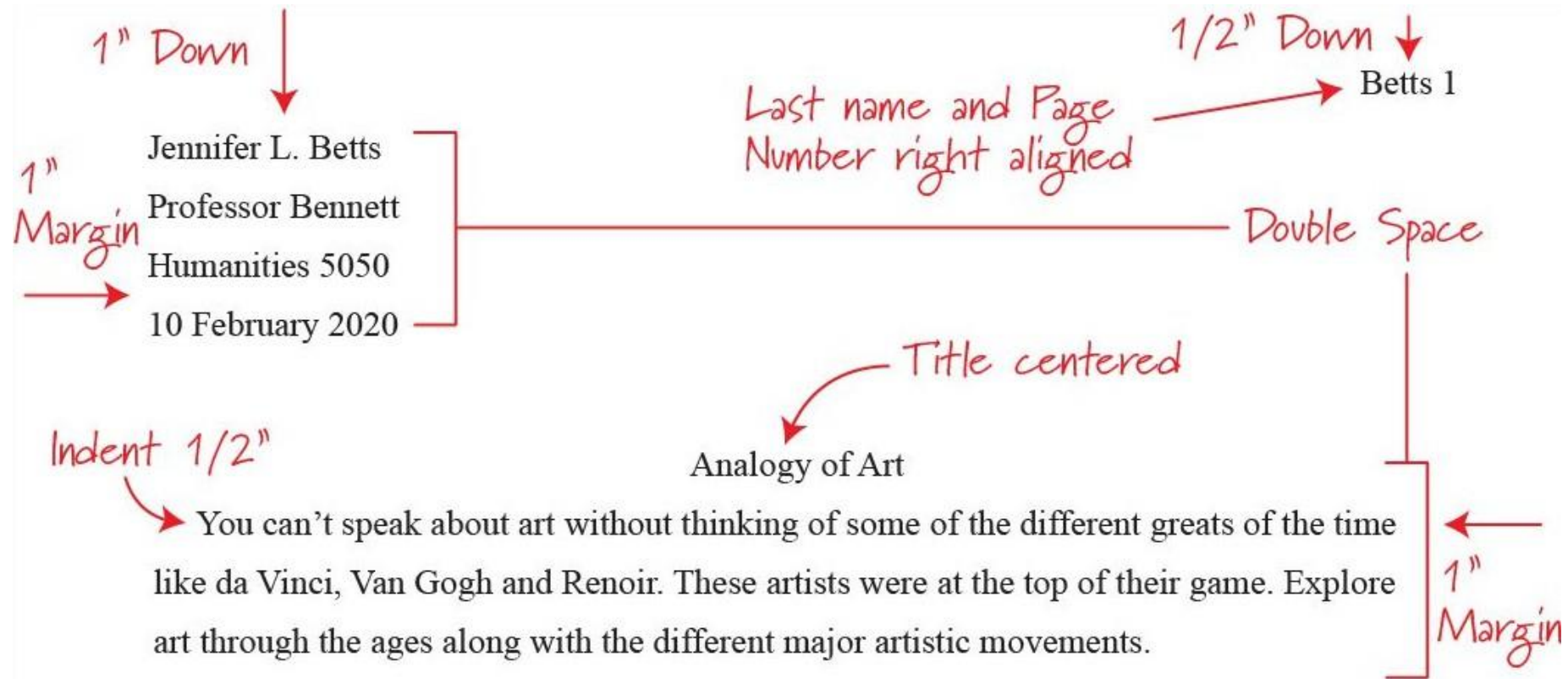
- **Margins:** One-inch margins.
- **Spacing:** All text should be double-spaced.
- **Font:** Times New Roman, 12 pt.

Formatting Your Paper



- **Page number:** Last name and page numbers are placed in the upper right-hand corner of the header in every page.
- **Heading:** Include in the following order: your name, your professor's name, the course number and date in the top left of the first page.
- **Title:** Centered. DO NOT use **bold**, underline or *italics*.
- **Paragraph indentation:** Insert a half-inch indentation in the first line of each paragraph.

MLA Sample Paper



Source: *Bibliography.com*

MLA Research Paper Checklist



MLA Format

- ✓ The **heading** is properly formatted—student's name, professor's name, course number, and date are at the top left of the first page.
- ✓ The whole document has been **double-spaced**.
- ✓ **One-inch margins** were used on all sides.
- ✓ The **page number** and student's last name has been placed at the top right in all pages.
- ✓ The **font** is Times New Roman, 12 pt.

MLA Research Paper Checklist



Title

- ✓ The title is **engaging** and **reflects the main topic** of the paper.
- ✓ The title of the essay has been **centered** and **capitalized**.

Introduction

- ✓ The introduction provides the **essential information** (author, work, topic, approach of the essay).
- ✓ The thesis **addresses the research question** and is **clearly stated**.

MLA Research Paper Checklist



Body

- ✓ Developmental paragraph structures are **clear** and **effective**.
- ✓ Each paragraph is unified by **a topic sentence**.
- ✓ **Transitional words and cues** have been provided to guide the reader.
- ✓ Every claim is stated, developed, and argued **logically** and **meaningfully**.
- ✓ All citations have been properly **introduced** and **explained**.

MLA Research Paper Checklist



Conclusion

- ✓ The conclusion is a **restatement of the main points and thesis statement** of the paper without being repetitive.
- ✓ The conclusion is effective and provides a sense of closure.

Grammar

- ✓ The paper was **proofread** and **edited** thoroughly (spelling, punctuation, etc.).

References



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O'Donell, Jonathan. "What is research?". *The Research Whisperer*. WordPress, <https://researchwhisperer.org/2012/09/18/what-is-research/>. Accessed 8 Mar. 2021.

After completing the module, click on the following link to take the quiz and send the report to your professor:

<https://forms.office.com/r/AWC0HKWvyz>

Thanks for using our resources!



To know more about our Center and the services we provide, visit:

<http://generales.uprrp.edu/competencias-linguisticas/>