

Preparing for Research



Gathering Evidence

We are now shifting towards more formal tones

- when you develop research for your papers, you want to collect information which backs up your thesis statement—and find data which supports your observations and opinions.
- when writing academic papers, you want to find:
 1. **facts:** examples, material proving an event or belief is a truth
 2. **statistics:** interpretations of numerical data, percentages, averages
 3. **quotations:** a statement taken from a book, magazine, web site, or speech;
quote must be from a person of authority on your subject

Gathering Evidence

All evidence must support your thesis.

1. If a fact or detail does not relate fully to the topic, then do not use it.
2. Irrelevant information appears as a stalling technique.
3. Remain focused on your theme and topic of interest.

Always acknowledge where you find:

1. concepts not your own
 2. statistics
 3. unusual data not derived from your own personal research
- Emily Dickinson published only a handful of poems in her lifetime, Tony Morrison received a Nobel prize in 1993 — these facts do *not* need citations because they are *common knowledge*, however, if ever in doubt about whether or not a citation is necessary, *cite the source to back yourself up.*

Citing Evidence

Citing evidence backs up your thesis and topic sentences.

- Your research paper consists of pages of research information from authoritative sources which back up your observations.
- Almost every paragraph will require a quotation of evidence from an authoritative figure.
- Use the parenthetical style for citations of sources (*SFW*: 284-348)

*If you have any areas of concern during the next few weeks, **ask questions**—two days before the paper is due is **not** the time to ask questions.*

FYI: The *SF Writer* refers to parenthetical citations as “in-text notes.”

We will be covering these more in-depth soon.

Parenthetical Citations

After every paraphrase and quotation, you are required to cite the source information within a parenthesis. In the in-text note different circumstances require different information. In the below example, the material was taken off a web site and does not have an author. In this case, the web entry title appears in the parenthetical citation.

Facts on File states that “the future of the space program appears uncertain.

NASA has recently bemoaned its low budget, arguing that the grand plans of the Constellation program will be difficult to carry out without greater funding”

(“Returning to the Moon”).

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Research papers make students nervous of course. They take a lot of outside time and cannot be completed in an hour before class.

Library searches are like treasure hunts. You are digging for information to support your ideas and opinions. Likewise you are seeing how your perspective holds up against other opinions in the academic world.

Always remember you need authoritative resources and evidence.

- For the next assignment you will use the library databases:

<http://www.lonestar.edu/library/14629.htm>

- Click on the text link titled: Issues and Controversies (LSCS Libraries).