

Student/Teacher Writing Guidebook for Grades 3-8

Harbor Country Day School

Table of Contents

1. Writing Vocabulary Terms and Language
2. The Six Traits of Writing, Essay Organization Guidelines, and Heading
3. Outlines of Essays in Each Academic Area
4. Suggested Research Websites
5. Sample Rubrics
6. MLA Format

Writing Vocabulary Terms and Language

Term	Definition	Grade Introduced
Introduction	The first paragraph of an essay. This is where you state your thesis and your topic sentences.	4th
Body	The middle paragraphs in an essay. Each must contain a topic sentence and details to support the topic sentence.	3rd
Conclusion	The final paragraph of an essay. In this paragraph the writer restates the thesis statement and topic sentences. It sometimes contains a final thought.	4th
Thesis Statement	This is the main point of the entire essay. You spend your whole essay proving this point.	4th
Topic Sentence	This is the main point of each body paragraph. The topic sentences are first stated in the introduction, then repeated in the body paragraphs and in the conclusion.	3rd
Counter Argument	This is found in some persuasive essays. It states one reason why a person may oppose the writer's thesis and reasons why the thoughts of opposition are incorrect.	4th
Transition Words	Help the writer move from one paragraph to another.	3rd
Bibliography	All the sources consulted while preparing to write your essay. Some of the items you cite in your work; some you do not.	5th
Works Cited	A list of the sources you have taken information from and included in your paper.	4th
Indent	An indent is NOT a single space between paragraphs. It is one tab space in from the margin. Only the first sentence in each paragraph is indented.	3rd

**** Note** Works Cited and Bibliography are not the same. In Works Cited you only list items you have actually cited. In a Bibliography you list all of the material you have consulted in preparing your essay whether or not you have actually cited the work.

The Six Traits of Writing

Ideas	The content, or main theme and its supporting details. Can be looked at the heart of the message.
Word Choice	The use of precise, colorful, and rich words to communicate.
Organization	The internal structure of the writing.
Voice	The personal voice of author comes through. This gives a sense of the person speaking. It also includes writing to match a proper audience.
Sentence Fluency	The writing flows together with varied and engaging sentence structure
Conventions	Mechanical correctness, including spelling and grammar.

Essay Organization Guidelines

Indent at the beginning of each paragraph.

Use size 12, Times New Roman font.

Double space.

Heading

Name

Date

Class

Topic

Essay Outlines

History Essay

Introduction

- Thesis Statement
- Topic Sentences

Body 1

Body 2 (All body paragraphs begin with a respective topic statement)

Body 3

Conclusion

- Restate thesis statement
- Restate topic sentences

English Essay

Introduction

- Topic Sentence
- Book cited with author
- Thesis Statement
- Topic Sentences (examples)

Body 1

Body 2 (All body paragraphs begin with a respective topic statement (examples))

Body 3

Conclusion

- Restate thesis statement
- Restate topic sentences
- Closing statement (final thoughts/argument)

Science Lab Report

Materials

Procedure: Paragraph form

Data/Results

Conclusion: At least two paragraphs

Questions: Answers any questions the lab asks

Suggested Research Sites

General Research Engines Grades 3+

- Google Research on HCDS website (found on the HCDS Library Links Page)
- Sweet Search- www.Sweetsearch.com
- Web Path Express (login to this through the HCDS library page)
- Suffolk Web- <http://live-brary.com/kids>

General Research Engines Grades 6+

- Virtual Reference Library (login to this on your town library website using your library card)
- Library Spot- <http://www.libraryspot.com/>
- Ref Desk- <http://www.refdesk.com/>

Online Encyclopedias

- Factmonster-www.factmonster.com
- DK Online Encyclopedia- <http://www.dke-encyc.com/>
- IPL2 for Kids- <http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/>

Current Events

- Dogo News- www.dogonews.com
- Time for Kids - <http://www.timeforkids.com/>
- Indy Kids- <http://indykids.org/main/>

Social Studies Grades 3+

- Ducksters-www.Ducksters.com
- Kids.Gov-www.kids.usa.gov
- Mr. Donn-www.mrdonn.org
- Social Studies for Kids-www.socialstudiesforkids.com
- Mr. Digg-www.digonsite.com
- National Geographic Word Atlas- <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids-atlases/>
- National Geographic-<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>

Social Studies Grades 7+

- Library of Congress- www.loc.gov
- Avalon Project- www.avalon.law.yale.e
- Stanford History Education Group (SHEG)- www.sheg.stanford.edu
- World Digital Library- <http://www.wdl.org/en/>

Science

- NASA -<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/#.U59HW5T-4ml>
- National Geographic- <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>
- National Science Digital Library- <http://nsdl.org/>

Sample Writing Rubric Grades 3-8

Writing Traits Rubric	6 Exemplary	5 Strong	4 Proficient	3 Developing	2 Emerging	1 Beginning
Ideas and Content -main theme -supporting details	-exceptionally clear, focused, engaging with relevant, strong supporting detail	-Clear, focused, interesting ideas with appropriate details	-Evident main idea with some support that may be general or limited	-Main idea may be cloudy because supporting detail is too general or even off topic	-Purpose and main idea may be unclear and cluttered by irrelevant detail	-Lacks central idea, development is minimal or non-existent
Organization -structure -introduction -conclusion	-Effectively organized in a logical and creative manner -Creative and engaging introduction and conclusion	-Strong order and structure -Inviting introduction and satisfying conclusion	-Organization is appropriate, but conventional -Attempt at introduction and conclusion	-Attempts at organization, may be a list of events -Beginning and ending not developed	-Lack of structure, disorganized and hard to follow -Missing or weak introduction and conclusion	-Lack of coherence; confusing -No identifiable introduction or conclusion
Voice -personality -sense of audience	-Expressive, engaging, sincere -Strong sense of audience -Show emotion: humor, honesty, suspense, etc	-Appropriate to audience and purpose -Writer behind the words comes through	-Evident commitment to topic -Inconsistent or dull personality	-Voice may be inappropriate or non-existent -Writing may seem mechanical	-Writing tends to be flat or stiff -Little or no hint of writer behind words	-Writing is lifeless -No hint of the writer
Word Choice -precision -effectiveness -imagery	-Precise, carefully chosen -Strong, fresh, vivid images	-Descriptive, broad range of words -Word choice energizes writing	-Language is functional and appropriate -Descriptions may be overdone at times	-Words may be correct but mundane -No attempt at deliberate choice	-Monotonous, often repetitious, sometimes inappropriate	-Limited range of words -Some vocabulary misused
Sentence Fluency -rhythm -flow -variety	-High degree of craftsmanship -Effective variation in sentence patterns	-Easy flow and rhythm -Good variety in length and structure	-Generally in control -Lacks variety in length and structure	-Some awkward constructions -Many similar patterns and beginnings	-Often choppy -Monotonous sentence patterns -Frequent run on sentences	-Difficult to follow or read aloud -Disjointed, confusing, rambling
Conventions -spelling -capitalization -punctuation	-Exceptionally strong control of standard conventions of writing	-Strong control of conventions, errors are few	-Control of most writing conventions, occasional errors	-Limited control of conventions, frequent errors do not interfere with understanding	-Frequent significant errors -May impede readability	-Numerous errors distract the reader and make the text difficult to read

MLA Format

What is MLA Style?

The Modern Language Association (MLA) developed a style guide for academic writing. MLA provides guidelines for the creation of a bibliography or sources cited page and the corresponding parenthetical (within the text) citation.

Why is it important that a writer cites their source?

As a writer, you are responsible to give proper credit to your sources. If you fail to give proper credit to a source, you have committed plagiarism.

Parenthetical Citation

What is Parenthetical Citation?

Parenthetical citation is when a writer directly puts into the text a note from where he or she got the information. Parenthetical or “in-text” citation allows your reader to know from what source each idea/fact came.

This is how it looks in the text of your paper:

“By the end of September, American and French troops met Cornwallis’s 800 British and Hessian troops at Yorktown” (Appleby, 165).

In the example above, notice that the author’s name and the page number on which this fact was found are set off from the text within parentheses. Note also that the punctuation of this parenthetical citation is important. The reader would understand from this citation that on page 165 of Appleby’s book, this fact is mentioned. Furthermore, since the words are contained within quotes, the above example illustrates that this is a direct quote from that page.

MLA Sources Cited Samples

Book

Author's last name, first name. Title of the book. City of Publication: Publisher, Date of publication.

Example:

Scott O'Dell. Island of the Blue Dolphins. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960.

Print Encyclopedia

Author (if available). "Article Title." Title of Book. Edition. Date of Publication.

Example:

(no author) "Selected Motor Vehicle Statistics." The World Almanac and Book of Facts. 1st ed. 2000.

Website

URL or www address. Author or website name, date you found the information.

Example:

<http://www.mountvernon.org/meet-george-washington>. Mount Vernon.org, September 22, 2012.

Online Database

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Original Print Source Title. Date. Online source name. Date accessed <URL link>.

Example:

Freeman, Gregory A. "Code Alpha: The President is Coming!" American History. October 2006. Academic Search Premier. 6 October 2006

<<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=7&hid=1&sid=13275eeb-239a-4ec6-a998-d2ca6dc9f66%40sessionmgr101>>.