Writing Resources

IDEAS and CONTENT

Defends and/or persuades with support and clarity, using relevant evidence.
The thesis statement proposes an idea that is supportable and addresses the importance of the topic.

What Not to Do in an Introduction by Shmoop *3:03 minutes*	This video discusses what should and should not be included in an essay introduction.
Writing an Effective Thesis Statement by Video Scribe *1:45 minutes*	This video explains what a thesis is and how to write a complete thesis statement.
Quotation Sandwich by PowToon *2:21 minutes*	This video explains how to effectively introduce and explain quotes in your paper using the quote sandwich method.
Using Textual Evidence in Essays by Writing Workshop *4:19 minutes*	This video outlines how to effectively add textual evidence to an essay about a piece of writing that uses MLA format.
Using Citations Effectively by Shmoop *3:27 minutes*	This video explains how to appropriately use and write citations.
In-Text Citations by No Red Ink and EasyBib *2:50 minutes*	This video explains what in-text citations are, why they are important, and examples of using them in instances of direct quotes and paraphrasing.
How We Cite - UNC Writing Center *1:53 minutes*	In much of your academic writing, you will use outside sources of information. How can you integrate sources into your papers? And how should you cite them?

A **thesis statement** is usually made up of three different parts. Every thesis needs these things:

- **Topic:** Identify what you are writing about. Include the title(s) and author(s) of the text(s), if applicable.
- **Claim:** Answer the question the prompt is asking.
- **Main Ideas:** What are the 3 main reasons you can support your claim? This will outline the body paragraphs of your paper. You will need specific examples from your source(s) to support each reason.

Topic (Title/Author of text) + Claim (Your position) + Main Points (reasons to support) = Thesis

Writing Resources

Common Writing Errors and How to Fix Them

Writing Error: Writing a thesis as an announcement. **The Fix:** Avoid announcing the topic with these phrases: "This paper will discuss…." "This paper will show…" "I am going to prove that…." "I am going to talk about…"	**Writing Error: Writing a descriptive thesis that has no argument.** **The Fix:** Use an *arguable t*hesis. If someone can't disagree with you, keep working on it!
Writing Error: Writing in first person. **The Fix:** Avoid using the first person ("I" "me" "my"). First person is appropriate for personal essays, writing reflection, autobiography, short stories, narration, etc. but not for formal papers.	**Writing Error: Using second person in formal writing.** **The Fix:** Avoid the second person ("you" "your" "you're").
Writing Error: Citing long quotations incorrectly. **The Fix:** When a quotation is longer than three lines: single space it, indent it on both sides by one inch, and don't use quotation marks. Or, better yet, don't use long quotes; I would rather you paraphrase.	**Writing Error: Citing quotes incorrectly.** **The Fix:** Cite author and page number in parenthesis following a quote. *"Be sure to give credit where credit is due" (author, page number).*
Writing Error: Citing dialogue incorrectly. **The Fix:** Cite dialogue like this. "'Wake up, Arnold,' he said. 'I'm talking!'" (Author, page number). See the little apostrophes inside the quotation marks?	**Writing Error: Trying to prove your point with statements of opinion and no text/evidence.** **The Fix:** Do not speculate. PROVE your statements with evidence from the text/source. If I told you that the sky was fluorescent green last night at 3:35 am you might not believe me. However, if I showed you pictures of it and cited a science journal, I'd surely have a better chance of convincing you.
Writing Error: Putting in words you do not need. **The Fix:** Avoid wordiness, cut out extra words like "well", "anyway", "very" and "you know".	**Writing Error: Writing in the past tense.** **The Fix:** Write in the present tense ("Odysseus loves Penelope." Not: "Odysseus loved Penelope.")

Writing Resources

VOICE

Demonstrates involvement with the text and speaks purposefully to the audience in an appropriate, individualistic, and engaging manner.

[How To Write Hooks or Attention-Getting Openings](#) by USA Test Prep *2:05 minutes*	This video goes through various ways to make your hook appealing to your reader.
[Writing Grabby Intro Sentences](#) by Shmoop *3:03 minutes*	This video explains how to write a grabby introduction sentence by putting things into context, making it snappy, and keeping it simple.

ORGANIZATION

Organizing ideas in a clear, logical, detailed, and coherent manner using appropriate structures to enhance the central idea or theme. Transitions between and within paragraphs to show relationships among ideas.

[Structuring your Essay](#) by Online Writing Center *3:10 minutes*	This video discusses the importance of a strong structured essay and the components of the intro, body and conclusion.
[Including Transitions](#) by Shmoop *3:20 minutes*	This video explains the importance of including and using transitions in your writing.
[Writing a Killer Conclusion](#) by Shmoop *4:59 minutes*	This video explains the importance of writing a strong conclusion and how to write one.
[What Not to Do in a Conclusion](#) by Shmoop *3:06 minutes*	This video discusses things that should not be included in writing your conclusion.

Writing Resources

CONVENTIONS

Standard English rules for grammar/usage and mechanics
Integration of quotations and documentation of ideas and sources using MLA format

[Titles: Italics or Quotation Marks](#) by Learning Engineer *3:40 minutes*	In this video, it goes over the rules of italicizing or quoting titles of books, poems, paintings, essays, tv shows, movies, etc.
[Run Ons and Compound Sentences](#) by Online Writing Center *3:00 minutes*	This video goes over how to create complex and interesting sentences without creating run-on sentences.
[Sentence Fragments](#) by Shmoop *4:40 minutes*	This video goes over how to create complete sentences.
[Outlining](#)by Shmoop *2:37 minutes*	This video goes over the rules of italicizing or quoting titles of books, poems, paintings, essays, tv shows, movies, etc.

MLA Formatting

[MLA Formatting The Basics](#)by Online Writing Center *3:20 minutes*	This video defines academic formatting, the parts of an MLA paper, and how to set up an MLA paper.
[MLA Style Citing](#) by Shmoop *2:32 minutes*	This video explains MLA and how to format your essay.
[MLA Formatting -](#) The Basics by Purdue OWL *3:00 minutes*	This video explains MLA and how to format your essay.
[MLA Style Citing Sources and Formatting](#) by Connections Academy *Handout*	Not only does a good research paper include thorough research and thoughtful analysis, it should also follow specific rules for citing your sources and formatting. This brief guide will illustrate how to correctly reference your sources and set up your paper.
[Sample Paper with Directions](#) by Connections Academy *Handout*	This document is an example of how a paper should look in MLA format.

Writing Resources

[MLA Citation Machine](#) [ONLINE MLA CITATION GENERATOR](#) [MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#) *Websites*	This site will help you generate a perfect MLA citation. Just fill in the information from your source and the citation machine will generate a citation to use in your paper.

Overall Essay Writing Help

[Revision Strategies](#) by Online Writing Center *2:34 minutes*	This video goes over the revision strategies of purposeful reading strategies, reverse outlining, feedback from outside readers, and reading out loud for writing an essay.
[Top 10 Essay Writing Don'ts](#) by Shmoop *3:37 minutes*	This video explains 10 things to avoid when writing an essay.
[Writing a Cohesive Essay](#) by Shmoop *3:53 minutes*	This video discusses different essay structures and how to write a coherent and organized essay.
[The Punishable Perils of Plagiarism](#) by TedEd *3:47 minutes*	Fighting plagiarism is serious business. From brainchild-snatching to wholly quotables, plagiarists have plenty of wily ways to pass others' work off as their own -- and all of them are threats to original thinking. Melissa Huseman D'Annunzio imagines what would happen if a Department of Plagiarism Investigation were on the case.