



What is a Research Paper?

- A research paper is like a report.
- Before you write it, you use books, articles, the internet, and other sources to find information about your topic.
- You gather information from these sources and use that information in your paper to tell your readers about your topic.

Choosing a Topic

- Pick a topic
 - You may have a list of approved topics to choose from, or you may have to choose on your own.
 - Try to choose something you are interested in.
- For example:
 - Thanksgiving



Narrow Your Topic

- “Thanksgiving” is a very broad topic. Try make your topic smaller and more specific by asking a question like:
 - *What about Thanksgiving do I want to write?*
- Smaller Topic:
 - The History of Thanksgiving





Questions

- Now you should come up with some questions you can research about your topic:
 - When was the first Thanksgiving and why was it held?
 - What happened at the first Thanksgiving?
 - How has this celebration/event changed over time?

Creating an Outline (Prewriting)

- An easy way to organize your research paper is to use an outline.
- Use your questions as main points and add a small amount of information (not full sentences) as sub points.
- You will use your outline while you are doing your research and can fill in your sub points as you go along.

- A. Introduction – Topic
- B. Main Point #1 (Question)
 1. Sub Point
 2. Sub Point
 3. Sub Point
- C. Main Point #2 (Question)
 1. Sub Point
 2. Sub Point
 3. Sub Point
- D. Main Point #3 (Question)
 1. Sub Point
 2. Sub Point
- E. Conclusion (Wrap-up sentence)



Example Outline

- A. Introduction – The History of Thanksgiving
- B. When was the first Thanksgiving and why was it held?
 - 1. Plymouth
 - 2. Fall of 1621
 - 3. Harvest Celebration
- C. What happened at the first Thanksgiving?
 - 1. Pilgrims and Wampanoag
 - 2. Menu – no pumpkin pie!
 - 3. 3 day celebration
- D. How has this celebration/event changed over time?
 - 1. Then...
 - 2. Now...
- E. Conclusion (Wrap-up sentence)



Before You Begin to Research

- After you have narrowed your topic and decided on the questions you want to research, it is time to look for sources of information.
- Before we talk about that, we should talk about something called **Plagiarism**.

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is **stealing**.
 - If you go to someone's house and take his or her iPod without asking and pretend that it is yours, that is stealing.
 - Reading a book or an internet article, copying the words from it, and pretending they are your original thoughts is also stealing.



Plagiarism



- Plagiarism is **against the law**.
 - UCLA Law has compiled a list of lawsuits filed over the last 100 years for plagiarism in the music industry alone at this website: <http://cip.law.ucla.edu/song.html>
- College students have been *expelled* from school for plagiarism.
- Students caught plagiarizing, *at the very least*, fail their assignments.



How to Avoid Plagiarism

- To avoid plagiarism, give credit to the source of your information:
 - **Book** - list the title and the author of the book.
 - **Article** - list the author of the article and where you found the article (like in an encyclopedia, magazine, or newspaper)
 - **Web site** - list the author (if the name is available), the website name, and/or the URL (web address).

Sources Cited

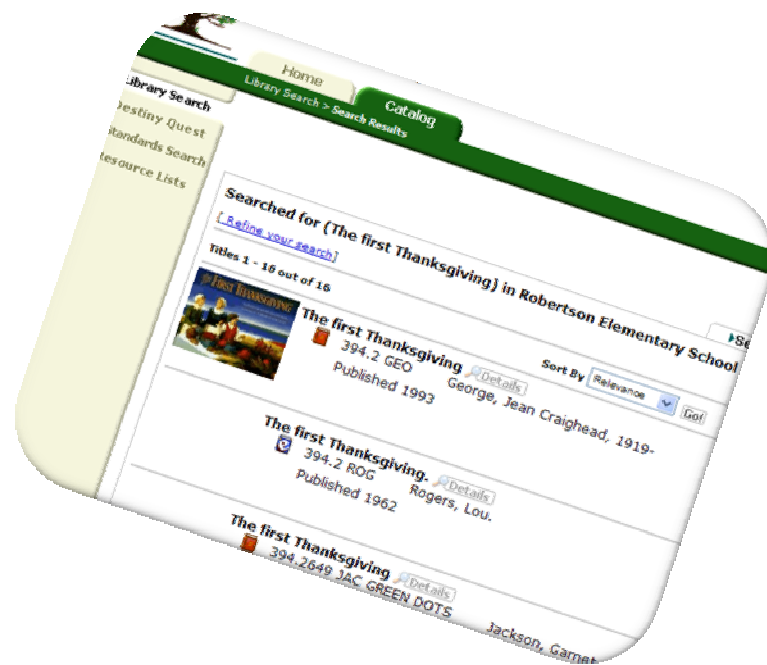
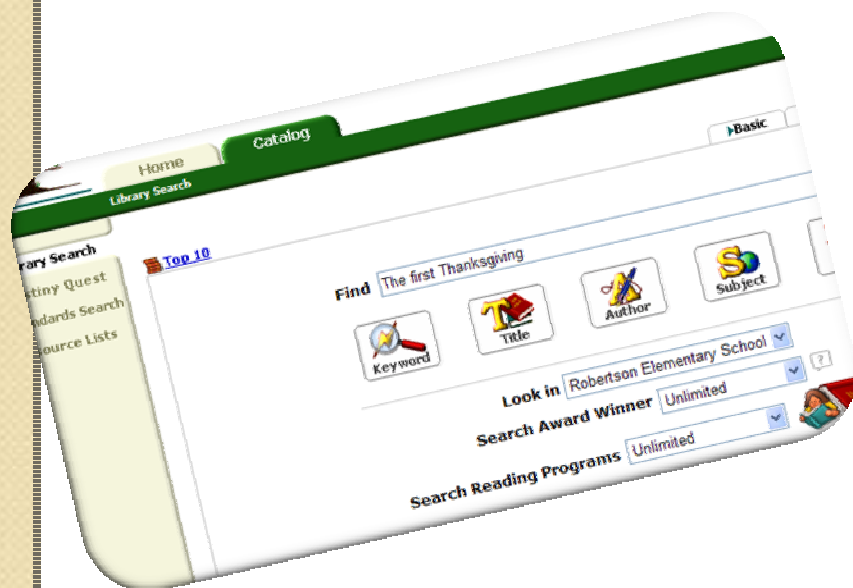
- Keep track of all the sources from which you gather information.
- After you write your paper, create a “Sources Cited” page and list all of the sources you used to gather your information.

Sources Cited

1. The True Story of the First Thanksgiving by Colleen Adams
2. Why We Have Thanksgiving by Margaret Hillert
3. The History Channel Website:
<http://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving>
4. The Library of Congress Website:
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/nov25.html>

Getting Down to Research

- Reliable Sources
 - The Library
 - Ask your librarian for help
 - Use Destiny to find paper sources



The Internet

- Reliability
 - Since anyone can post anything to the web, you have to be careful about choosing your sources.
- Good Bets are:
 - Education websites (.edu)
 - Government websites (.gov)
 - Some Non-Profit websites (.org)
 - Teacher approved sites
 - Websites maintained by someone you know – like your teacher.





Taking Notes

- As you are researching your topic, keep notes of the information you find. You may want to use index cards – one card per source.



My Notes:

The first Thanksgiving was celebrated by the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag Indians in the fall of 1621.

Source:

Scholastic Website:

http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic_thanksgiving/feast/



Rough Draft

- Once you have completed your research, you are ready to create your rough draft.
- Use your outline and your notes to help you.
 - Think about these things as you write:
 - Do I have a clear beginning (first paragraph), middle, and end (conclusion)?
 - Does my beginning grab (hook) my readers' interest?
 - Have I put my facts and ideas in an order that makes sense?
 - Do all of my ideas relate to my topic?
 - Does my conclusion summarize or wrap up my message?



Revise

- Once you have completed your rough draft, it is time to read through and revise your writing for organization and sentence structure.
- You may choose to have a peer or teacher review your writing and offer suggestions on improving your work.



Editing

- Now it is time to fix all of the errors in your writing.
- You may choose to have a peer review your writing using the CUPS method to help you edit your work:
 - **C** = capitals
 - **U** = understanding
 - **P** = punctuation
 - **S** = spelling

Publishing

- Once you have revised and edited your work, it is finally time to write your final draft – then submit your finished product.
- Congratulations – you have completed your first research writing assignment!

