

# Writing your Research Paper – tips and tools to get it right

Northwest Technical College Library

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# Where to start

## Find related terminology – create an outline!

- Pick your topic and do some background research around terminology related to your topic. This background research can be done on the open internet, through Wikipedia, or other sites. What you want to find are terms that relate to your topic – this helps you create an outline or something that lays out a plan for what you will research.
- Don't worry if your first plan for a topic changes – let your research guide you to a subject that
  - Interests you
  - Provides lots of information for you to draw from
  - Best meets the requirements of the assignment

Tip: Don't use Wikipedia as a source for your research – but it's great as a way to find terminology for your background research!

Now that you  
have an IDEA

- Begin with the Library catalog: It provides the best trusted information for your report!!!
  - Go to the ntcmn.edu website
  - Under Student Life, select Library
  - Click on “Click here to search the NTC Library Catalog”

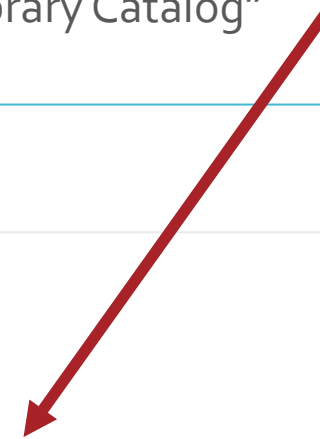
## Library

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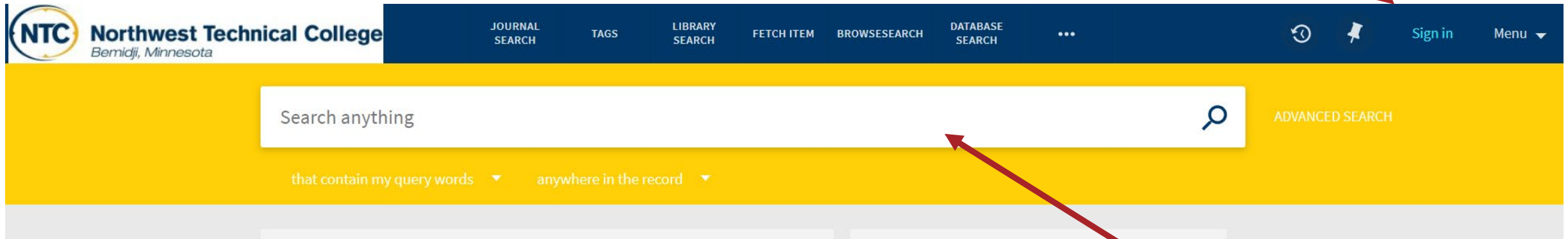
### Database Resources

[Click Here to Search the NTC Library Catalog](#)

The NTC Library features many online databases for you to access for your research needs.



First sign in with your Star ID if you haven't already. The catalog will let you into the databases if you are signed in.



Using terms from your preliminary search, enter them one by one in the search bar above.

- Try specific terms that narrow your search but also broad ones that provide greater background on your topic.
- Facets on the left side of the results page offer ways to narrow down your search.
  - Look for more recently published articles from peer-reviewed journals (hint: there are facets for both)
  - Be careful not to select articles too far off your topic – many professional research articles, at least the kind you want to use, provide abstracts or a brief synopsis of what the research is, and results found.

These are facets selected from the lists below them

emphysema



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that contain my query words

anywhere in the record

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
1



ARTICLE / multiple sources exist. see all

**Endobronchial valves in a highly parsed emphysema population.**

Shrager, Joseph B; Shrager, Joseph B (correspondence author) ; Shrager, Joseph B (record owner)  
Lancet (London, England), September 12, 2015, Vol.386(9998), pp.1022-1023

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
2



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**Endobronchial Valves for Emphysema**

Bailey, Andrew ; Jaggar, Sian  
The New England journal of medicine, 07 April 2016, Vol.374(14), pp.1389-90

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3



ARTICLE / multiple sources exist. see all

**Massive Subcutaneous Emphysema**

Pitukweerakul, Siwadon ; Pilla, Sree  
Journal of General Internal Medicine, 2016, Vol.31(6), pp.700-701



# Real World Research – Dig in

- To do well in your research you must study what the articles you find are about. Read the abstract and maybe the conclusion.
- Select articles that
  - 1. Provide supporting or conflicting evidence to your research – contrasting views shows you know your subject.
  - 2. Provide solid evidence for your topic – peer reviewed means that you can trust the information – you can't get that from the open internet!
- As soon as you find an article that you want to use – go back to the Library catalog to copy and paste the citation information to a Microsoft Word document:

Straube, C., Vazan, M., & Straube, C. (2016). IMAGES IN CLINICAL MEDICINE. Pneumorrhachis, Pneumothorax, and Subcutaneous Emphysema. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 375(9), e18–e18.  
<https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMicm1506684>



ARTICLE / multiple sources exist. see all

## IMAGES IN CLINICAL MEDICINE. Pneumorrhachis, Pneumothorax, and Subcutaneous Emphysema.

Straube, Christoph ; Vazan, Martin; Straube, Christoph (correspondence author) ; Straube, Christoph (record owner)

The New England journal of medicine, September 1, 2016, Vol.375(9), p.e18

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EXPORT RIS



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ENDNOTE



REFWORKS



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CITATION



PERMALINK



EMAIL

Click on the citation icon

MLA (7th edition)

**APA (6th edition)**

Chicago/Turabian (16th edition)

MLA (8th edition)

Harvard

Select the citation format - APA

Straube, C., Vazan, M., & Straube, C. (2016). IMAGES IN CLINICAL MEDICINE. Pneumorrhachis, Pneumothorax, and Subcutaneous Emphysema. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 375(9), e18–e18. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMicm1506684>

COPY CITATION TO CLIPBOARD

Remember to check citations for accuracy before including them in your work

# When to cite

- There are 4 instances when you should use citations to acknowledge the use of others' work and avoid plagiarism:
  - **Quote** – when you use the words of someone else in quotation marks. “Quoting is a way of weaving someone’s exact words into your text” (Bullock et al, 2017, p. 108). ← *This is an in-text citation!*
  - **Paraphrase** – one of the hardest to discern, this type includes information from another author specific to their research but in your words (Bullock et al, 2017). ← *This is an in-text citation!*
  - **Summarize** – using the main points of another’s works, especially without the details according to Bullock et al (2017).  
↑ *This is an in-text citation!*
  - **Signal phrase** – If you want to make a statement that, as Bullock, Brody and Weinberg (2017) say is different than what you say and you use the author’s names, you have given a signal that requires a citation. *This is an in-text citation!*

Citation in APA style: Bullock, R., Brody, M., & Weinberg, F. (2017). *The Little Seagull handbook : with exercises* (Third edition.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.



# Where to Cite / Know your terms

Within the Text:

- **In-Text citations** are provided to show precisely what you are using that comes from another author's work.

At the end:

- **Reference Lists** provides a full bibliographic record of in-text citations but not websites or personal communications such as if you refer to an email within your report. Most commonly used in APA.
- **Notes** can be used with superscript to explain concepts in the text. Use the footnote tool in Microsoft Word. Cite as normal in-text citation.

Know your terms well:

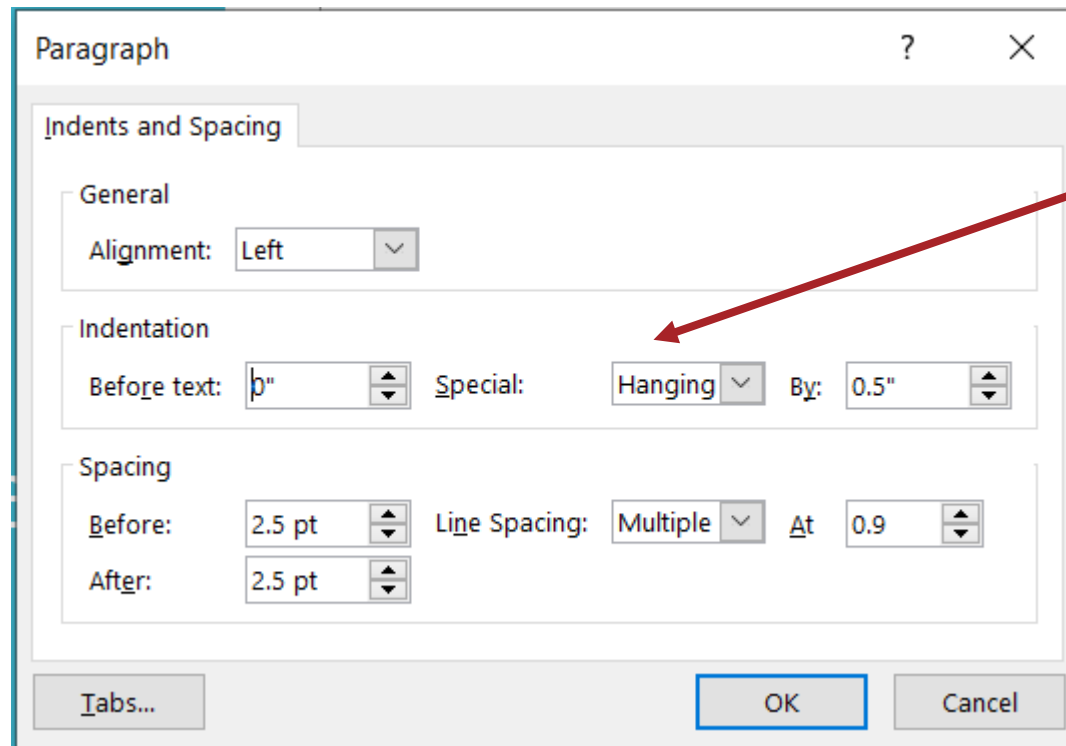
- A **bibliography, as a list of sources** is not used in APA style reports, but commonly occurs with works in history and some humanities using Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). However, Reference Lists include a bibliography, a formal list of titles and credits authors and publishers, of works cited.

# Full Citations

- Full Citations provide detailed information about sources.
- Full Citations include
  - Author – last name, initial(s). When there are 3 or more authors “et al” may be used after the first author for in-text citations but NOT in Reference Lists.
  - Year of publication – in parentheses after the last author.
  - Title – Italicized. When an edition of a work is indicated the edition is put in parentheses (as is an editor, translator, and other title related detail if required).
  - Place of Publication is used for books and other printed material where the publisher’s name is associated with a place. Journal articles do not include Place.
  - Publisher/Publication – A publisher is not italicized but a Publication name is to be italicized. When a publication is italicized the title is NOT.
  - Volume(Issue), page number or range – is given for periodical articles from journals or magazines.
  - Website URL or DOI – often a Digital Object Identifier and/or URL are listed at the end. It is not standard. Check with your instructor if this is required.

# Creating the Reference List

- The Reference List is formatted in a particular way:
  - The first line of the citation begins at the margin.
  - Next, as the words run automatically to the second line, the line is set up to be indented 5 spaces. This is set up in Microsoft Word from the toolbar in Paragraph, under Indentation, as a Hanging indentation of 5 spaces:



# View a Reference Page with different types of citations

## References

Highlighting indicates type of citation.

- Lewis, M. (2009). *Moneyball: The art of winning an unfair game*. New York, NY: Norton. **Print book.**
- Levitt, S.D., & Dubner, S. J. (2005). *Freakonomics: A rogue economist explores the hidden side of everything*. New York, NY: Morrow. **Print book with two authors**
- Gremer, J.R., Sala, A., & Crone, E.E. (2010). Disappearing plants: Why they hide and how they return. *Ecology*, 91, 3407-3413. **Journal article paginated by volume.**
- Weaver, C., McNally, C., & Moerman, S. (2001). To grammar or not to grammar: That is not the question! *Voices from the Middle*. 8(3), 17-33. **Journal article paginated by issue.**
- Gregory, S. (2008, June 30). Crash course: Why golf carts are more hazardous than they look. *Time*. 171(26), 53. **Magazine article.**
- Cruikshank, D. (2009, June 15). Unlocking the secrets and powers of the brain. *National Science Foundation*. Retrieved from [http://www.nsf.gov/discoveries/disc\\_summ.jsp?cntn\\_114979&org=NSF](http://www.nsf.gov/discoveries/disc_summ.jsp?cntn_114979&org=NSF). **A non-periodical website-**
- Corbet, C. (2007). Vehicle-related crime and the gender gap. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 13, 245-263. doi:10.1080/10683160600822022 **Article in an online journal.**
- Collins, C. (2009, August 19). Butterfly benefits from warmer springs? [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.intute.ac.uk/blog/2009/08/19/butterfly-benefits-from-warmer-springs/> **Blog Entry.**
- US Department of Health and Human Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). *Fourth national report on human exposure to environmental chemicals*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office. **Government Document.**
- Examples provided from: Bullock, R., Brody, M., & Weinberg, F. (2017). *The Little Seagull Handbook: with exercises* (Third edition.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company. |

# Tips and Tools

Ask	Always ask your instructor what is expected. They have the last say in what content is absolutely required. Use this as a guide and reference.
Use	Use the tools in Microsoft Word that you are comfortable with.
Check	Double check copied citations, any citation engine includes errors. Know what is a correct citation.
Mind	Mind your commas and periods. It matters where there is a comma, period, parenthesis, italics, colon and any punctuation in a citation. Some instructors want precision.
Standardize	The more consistent you make your formatting, the more it is acceptable. When in doubt, standardize.
Avoid plagiarism	It can be better to err on the side of too many citations rather than plagiarizing another author's works.
Write to your theme	When writing, keep in mind that the best works circle back to emphasize the important findings – your findings – what <u>you</u> have learned from the research.

# Glossary of terms

**Abstract** – a beginning section of a scholarly work, usually about 200 words, describing the content and results of research.

**Bibliographic/bibliography** – a title list of sources used in research, also refers to the source list rather than the format and structured list

**Citation** – a specific formatted list of sources and where they came from. Required for any work being published except fictional stories not based in truth.

**Conflicting evidence** – reports that appear to go against the normal or expected outcome of research.

**DOI** – digital object identifier, used in databases which host numerous professional journal articles – identifies the specific article using alpha-numeric unique numbering.

**Facets** – variable ways of narrowing down information by looking at different specific aspects of the information that are desired in the search, such as dates, types of documents, etc.

**Hanging indentation** – used mostly in Reference Lists where sorting occurs alphabetically by the first word in a sentence, such as an author's name or a terminology list like this.

**In-text citation** – a shortened form of giving credit within a paragraph of a written work, to show that specific information was repeated from another author's research and writing.

**Notes** – In APA style, notes are used to add further explanation to concepts, terms, interesting facts, that is not part of the formal text in a report or research paper yet adds valuable content to the subject being presented.

**Pagination** – numbering assigned to pages in a book or journal – the way in which pages are numbered, in some periodicals page numbering starts with the very first journal and continues into the thousands. In other journals each new issue begins with page 1.

**Paraphrase** – Explaining a concept from another author's work in your own words. Requires a citation.

**Peer-Reviewed** – a system of assuring the quality of work whereby the work is submitted to other experts in the same field of study for content review. This review ensures that the research follows acceptable scientific principles and that the results harbor some truth beneficial to the reader.

Periodical – a professional journal printed on a regular basis. Differs in content from a magazine but the word is often used to group magazines also.

Plagiarism – The presentation of the work of another author as one's own work, whether intentional or not. Plagiarism is highly illegal and can cause expulsion from school, dismissal from jobs and other career ending repercussions. It is closely tied to copyright law. Yes, there are laws that impose fines and other penalties for publicly plagiarizing another author's work. |

Quote – presenting the exact words in the exact order as in a previously written document, within quotation marks. Requires citation.

Reference List – In APA style, a reference list is composed of full citations for all in-text citations presented throughout the report.

Signal phrase – presenting evidence from another work by using the author's name within the sentence promoting the evidence. Requires citation.

Summarize – to highlight the important or major points of another author's work without going into the details. Requires citation.

A note about plagiarism – Plagiarism is theft; it is stealing the thoughts, ideas, research, and hard work that another person has put into the writing you have read. You would not want someone to steal your work and not give you credit for the time you put into a project, would you?