

# THE RESEARCH PROCESS

6. Evaluation



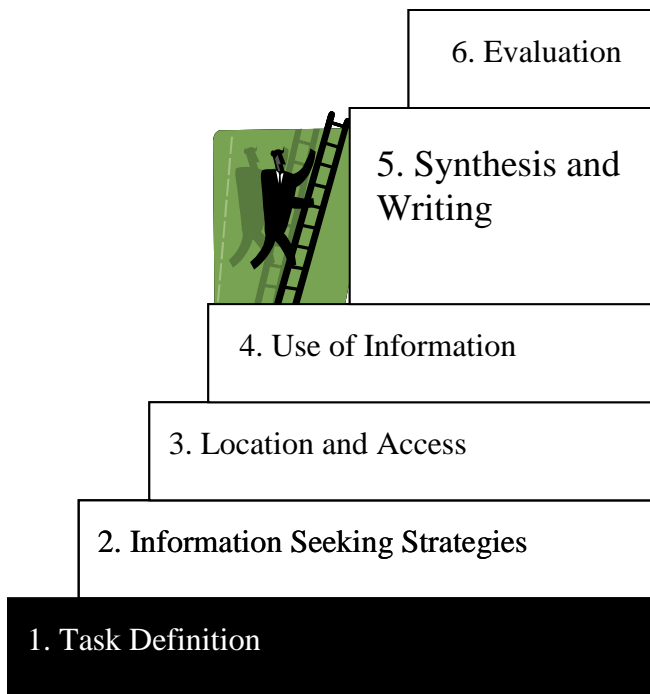
5. Synthesis  
and Writing

4. Use of Information

3. Location and Access

2. Information Seeking Strategies

1. Task Definition



# 1. Task Definition

## Step-at-a-glance:

- Find a subject
- Make an assertion
- Make sure you have reasons to support your assertion
- Write an SD3R thesis

### **1.1 What is a Research Paper:**

A research paper is an academic piece of writing that requires analytical thinking. It is a work that attempts to prove something using collected data and facts. Traditionally there are three key factors that make up a research paper: thesis, argument, evidence. These three keys are essential for the creation of a well developed paper. Your work should attempt to argue an opinion about a subject using research (a collection of facts, quotes, data, and other opinions).

#### **A research paper is not. . .**

- a collection of the all the sources you can find on a topic.
- a race to see how many sources you can include, but rather whether your ideas are supported by the sources you use.
- a review of all the information in a field describing what's been said.
- a personal essay like an editorial or a newspaper column.
- only what secondary sources say about your topic.

At the heart of the research paper is the thesis. A thesis is a statement that provides your readers with a guide to your argument. It describes the focus and significance of your main topic, as well as, identifying the objective of the paper. A good thesis attempts to argue a main point by using evidence to support the main idea. When writing a thesis statement, make sure that the thesis is not vague and general. Try to keep a narrow focus as you develop your ideas. A good statement will allow your reader to decide if they agree or disagree with you. It will be the focus of your evidence and arguments throughout the rest of your paper that will help sway your reader to your side of the argument.

Remember the very basic structure of a paper is: thesis, argument, evidence.

## 1.2 How to Develop your Thesis:

To develop a thesis, there are 4 main steps to keep in mind.

A. Find a subject about which you can make an argument.

- Select a **SUBJECT** that interests you, and decide on a position you want to argue related to the topic.
- Once you select a position, research to see if there is enough information about your subject.
- After the early research, decide if you agree or disagree.
- Try writing three to five sentences to explain your idea.

B. Make an assertion based on clearly stated evidence; this will be the **DIRECTION** of your project.

- Turn the statement into a claim. This will be a personal opinion about the subject based on facts and information collected earlier.
- Narrow your ideas into one main **DIRECTION**.
- Write three to five sentences explaining your idea.

C. Make sure you can reach a conclusion and that you have **REASONS** to support your conclusion.

- A strong thesis statement is followed by a body of evidence and a strong conclusion.
- Rewrite your statement to make it clear and coherent.
- Make sure that you have clearly stated the **REASONS** why you believe in your **DIRECTION**.

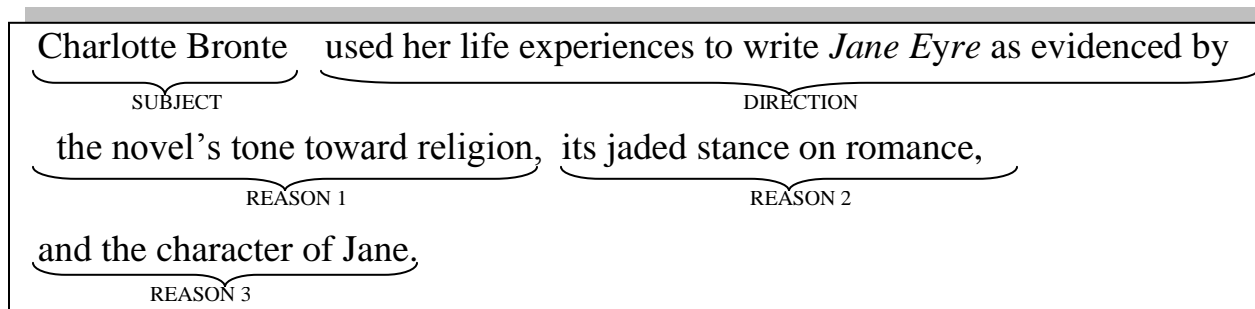
D. Write the opening paragraph and create the structure of the main body of text.

- A good location for the thesis statement is at the end of your introductory paragraph.
- Keep your ideas clear and focused.
- Use the thesis as an outline for your project.

When creating a thesis statement, the following strategy is often successful:

**Subject + Direction + 3 Reasons**

An example of a basic SD3R would look like:



An example of a sophisticated SD3R would look like:

While many influences inspire a work of literature, it is clear that experiences from  
Acknowledges the complexity of the SUBJECT

Charlotte Bronte's SUBJECT own life served as her muse when she composed *Jane Eyre*.  
DIRECTION

The novel's reverent tone toward religion, REASON 1 as well as its jaded tone toward romance,  
REASON 2

offer insight regarding Bronte's attitude toward these same subjects. Furthermore, the  
Shows significance

obvious parallels between Bronte's life and the character of Jane, REASON 3 offer undisputable  
 proof of a biographical influence.

### **Brief Example of Development:**

When developing your thesis from your topic, try to focus your generalized and vague ideas into one narrowly developed statement. Do not leave it up to your reader to “fill in the blanks”. Give your reader all the information up front, leading them only in the direction you want them to go. Ask your self questions that both support and counter what you are trying to say and attempt to answer them.

**General subject:** World War I

**Direction:** There is a lot to talk about in World War I. A paper could focus on the use of new technology, the role of the Irish in the war, or the reasons for the conflict. If you found the technology really interesting in class you might want to choose this as your direction.

**Personal Questions:** How did technology impact the outcome of the war? Is there a lot of information about this? Could I write a paper about this topic and direction? Does this have a theme that can be found in other historical events?

**SD3R:** As the first major industrial war, the technology used in World War I created historically high causality rates due to the destructive use of trench warfare, poison gas, and heavy artillery.



## 2. Information Seeking Strategies

### Step-at-a-glance:

- Consider all possible sources where you can find information that will help your research.
- Ask a librarian or teacher for additional suggestions.
- Choose the best sources.

### 2.1 Determine all possible sources.

Consider both print and electronic sources. Students may be unfamiliar with many sources. A first step, is to begin searching for sources that will help define a thesis statement and give information useful to the argument and proof. Libraries hold a wealth of sources. Librarians can help guide you to many unfamiliar sources.

*Warning:* exclusively using a general search engine such as Google is not good research.

Teachers may require a certain number of sources to make sure students are broadly considering the topic. Students must consider more than just superficial facts.

Note: Understand the difference between **Primary and Secondary Sources**.

**A Primary Source** is an original document that describes an event and is written by its witnesses, participants, or first recorders, or a primary document is a person's original writing and thoughts. These sources are usually where the original information first appears. Some types are: diaries, speeches, letters, interviews, autobiographies, results of experiments or original research, etc.

**A Secondary Source** is any writing other than a primary source that interprets, analyzes, or explains information from primary sources. Secondary sources are one step removed from the event being described but provide the background necessary to understand the primary sources. Some types of secondary sources are: most books, journal articles, histories, criticisms, commentaries, and encyclopedia articles.

Students must question the validity and accuracy of all information especially that found on the Internet.

Questions to consider:

- Who is the author? What are his/her credentials, educational background, professional expertise? Is contact information provided?
- What institution or publishing body is printing this book or article or posting this site? Is this publisher objective or biased toward one point of view?
- Is the content opinion or fact? Is there a bibliography of sources used by the author? Does the work attempt to inform or persuade?
- Is the information current? If the information is time-sensitive, how recently was the book/article published or how recently was the web site updated?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information relevant to the thesis?

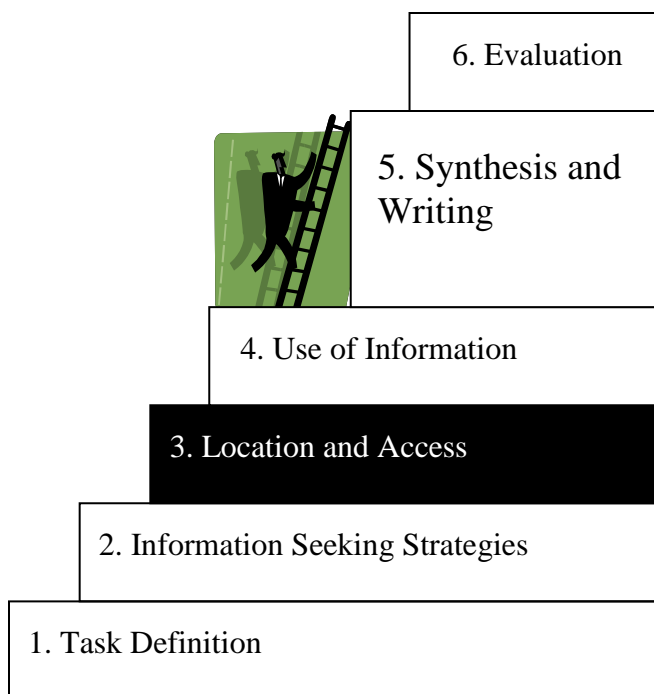
## 2.2 Select the best sources.

### Most reliable sources:

1. Nonfiction book: gives a full treatment of a topic with in-depth consideration and careful documentation including a list of sources used by the author.
2. Primary source: autobiography, speech, diary, interview, original document, etc.
3. Scholarly article: published in an academic journal and/or for a university press. These articles are peer reviewed or face close editorial scrutiny.
4. Sponsored web site: posted by an authoritative institution or a professional or governmental organization, e.g. The American Red Cross, The American Medical Association, or The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.
5. Encyclopedia article: offers a brief overview of a topic. While this may provide a good starting point, most high school teachers expect more in-depth sources.
6. Online subscription databases: massive collections of published articles, most full-text, stored electronically i.e. InfoTrac and eLibrary. These databases contain searchable almanacs, scholarly journals, serials, directories, newspapers, and more. Each database has its own search engine. You cannot access these subscription databases through a common search engine like Google. Though accessed online, these sources are not considered web sites since they usually appear first in a print format.
7. Newspaper articles: rarely reflect careful research and sometimes lack objectivity. Nevertheless, they can provide useful background information and sometimes are a primary source.
8. Individual web sites with a specific author who has academic credentials, expertise, and authority in the field and who provides contact information.
9. Popular Magazine articles: do not face critical review by experts and seldom provide in-depth coverage of a topic. Be cautious as some of these appear in Online Subscription Databases.

### Least reliable sources (avoid these):

1. Search engines: indiscriminately include billions of commercial sites and amateurish opinions, as well as authoritative web sites i.e. Google, Ask, Yahoo, etc.
2. Wikipedia: essentially a blog indiscriminately including information posted by amateurs, experts, and pranksters.
3. Individual web sites without an author or reputable, institutional sponsor or with an author lacking credentials who may or may not possess accurate knowledge on a topic.



## 3. Location and Access

### Step-at-a-glance:

- Go to a library.
- Find the print and electronic sources.
- Find the sections of information you need within sources.

### 3.1 Locate sources

Go to a library. Often reading an encyclopedia article about your subject will introduce you to the main ideas, pertinent dates, important people, or specific terms and key words related to the topic. This is only a jumping off point.

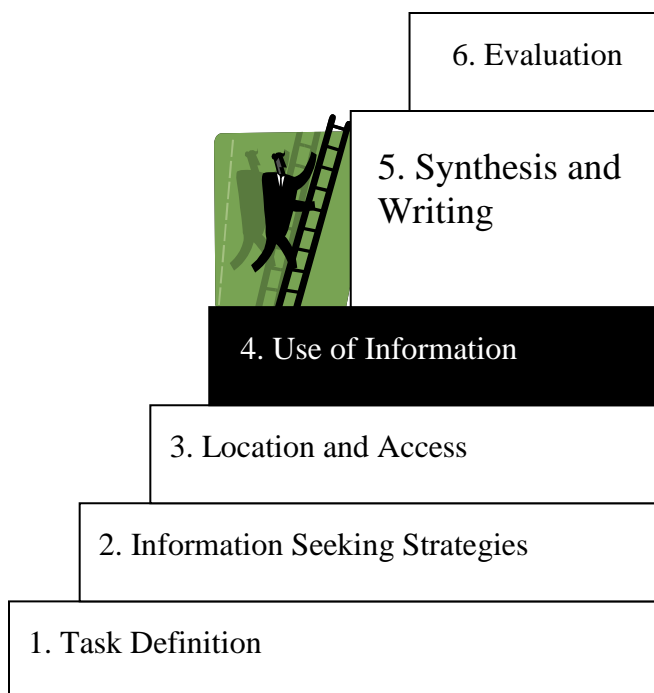
- Find a book entirely or partially on your topic.
- Explore reference books related to your subject.
- Locate primary sources.
- Use built-in database search tools to find journal articles preferably in scholarly journals. Weymouth students have access to subscription databases in school at the high school library catalog home page or at home online at the Weymouth High School Library Media Center page (choose the databases button and use your public library bar code number).
- Use an *advanced search* feature on a general search engine, limiting the domain to edu or gov or org sites, depending on your topic, to locate sponsored web sites posted by authoritative, professional, or governmental institutions, organizations, or individuals.
- Understand how to limit or narrow a search to focus on pertinent information. Use Boolean Operators to narrow or expand your search.
- Know when to ask for help.

### 3.2 Find information within the sources

- Use the index or the table of contents of the books to locate the pertinent sections, and read them.
- If there are primary sources, read them.
- Read the journal articles.
- Search within the authoritative web site(s) to find useful information. Read it.

Students may begin to form and refine their thesis statements as they gain knowledge about their subjects. Be prepared to revisit and refine as you read deeper into your subject and broaden your understanding.

Seek help to assess for gaps or weaknesses the information you have gathered.



## 4. Use of Information

### Step-at-a-glance:

- Read what you need
- Take notes and stay organized so you can use the information when you write
- Summarize, paraphrase, or quote when necessary
- Cite your sources along the way

#### **4.1 Read what you need:**

When you've done a good job getting sources, it is easy to be overwhelmed by the mountain of research staring you in the face. A few simple ideas will help you start this process.

1. *Read from the most general source to the most specific.* For example if you have an encyclopedia article and an article from an academic journal, read the one from the encyclopedia first. Get to know the basics of your topic first then jump into the sources that are more advanced. This will make reading those better sources much easier.
2. *You don't need to read everything.* Yes, the Internet is shiny and wonderful, but if you have a book related to your topic it is usually a better choice. Now you might be scared off from this because you're thinking, "Great, now I have to read a couple of books and do this project." This is not necessarily the case. You should use a couple of things to help you find what sections of the book you should read.
  - a. *The Table of Contents is our friend* – The Table of Contents, located in the front of the book, gives an outline of what the book will cover. Check here to see if there is a chapter or section that deals with your topic. If there is, turn to this section, and get started.
  - b. *The index is your best friend forever* – The index, located at the back of a book, will serve as a search engine for your book. Go here to look for keywords that have to do with your topic. Find out where in the book these are discussed, and read around (a few before and a few after) those pages. You should turn to the index if the Table of Contents fails you. Remember, the organization of the material might not be transparent, so you should turn here even after reading the sections you found in the Table of Contents.
  - c. *Use chapter titles, section headings and bold faced words.* They're there for a reason. Don't ignore them and get confused about what you're reading. It is a good idea to read these BEFORE you read the section. This way, you get a heads up about what to expect from this reading.

## 4.2 What to do when you're reading:

Reading is an active not a passive process; reading for a research project even more so. Ask yourself just one question . . . will you really remember all of this exactly as you read it, with 100% of every sources memorized even down to the page number, the book, the author, and the date published? I didn't think so. This is why you **MUST** take notes.

Now some teachers will require this, but even if they don't, it is a necessity. Just as there are **different** ways to write *the same thing*, **there are** *different ways* **TO TAKE notes**. You may be required to do this any number of different ways, but the core things you'll need in your notes are as follows:

1. Summarize, paraphrase, and quote when necessary –
  - a. Summarize –put what you read into your own words usually about 1 to 4 sentences. This deals with large sections of text. While this can be difficult, it's not impossible if you truly understand what you read. If you can't do this, then you probably can't use the information in your research project. Unless these are commonly known facts you will have to cite this.
  - b. Paraphrase – taking a specific section from the text (usually 1 to 4 sentences) and rewriting it in your own words. You must cite this.
  - c. Quote – taking a very specific section from the text (usually 1 to 4 sentences) and copy it down. You must cite this.
2. Take down the information in a bibliography notebook, and make sure to link that information to your notes by putting the author's last name in the top left corner of each card. The information you need changes depending on the type of source you are using so please refer to the style sheet for a complete list.
3. Keep in mind that some teachers may require you to photocopy all of your sources. Check with your teacher beforehand.

While requirements may vary, we recommend using the following format as a template to help you take notes on a 4x6 index card. Why bother with note cards? Once your research is finished you can organize these cards into groups according to your thesis, and this will speed up the writing process.

## 4.3 Guidelines for Note Cards

- Number your note cards with the same number you have assigned to each source card. For example, if you are reading an article whose source card you have assigned the number 5, all note cards that you create from that article will have the number five in the upper right hand corner. This will make citing the source much easier when you draft your paper.
- Include only one piece of information per card.
- Title each card to increase your ability to organize later.
- Indicate whether you have copied a **direct quote**, **paraphrased** the information from your source, or **summarized** the main idea.
- On the back, comment on why you took note of this information.
- Be sure to include page numbers if applicable.

Sample Source Card:

MLA Citation – this way creating your works cited page will be very quick

Reagan, Michael D. *Curing the Crisis: Options for America's Health Care*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.

1

Number your note cards with the same number you have assigned to each source card

Sample Note Card:

Title for quick reference and easy sorting later on.

Universal Healthcare

Fewer employers are providing coverage for their employees. This is causing an increase in Medicaid enrollment. At the same time, state and federal governments are cutting Medicaid budgets. If things continue this way Medicaid will not be able to survive and millions of Americans will have no health insurance at all.

(p. 19)

Summary

Indication of the type of note taken.

Number indicating that this note is from source number five.

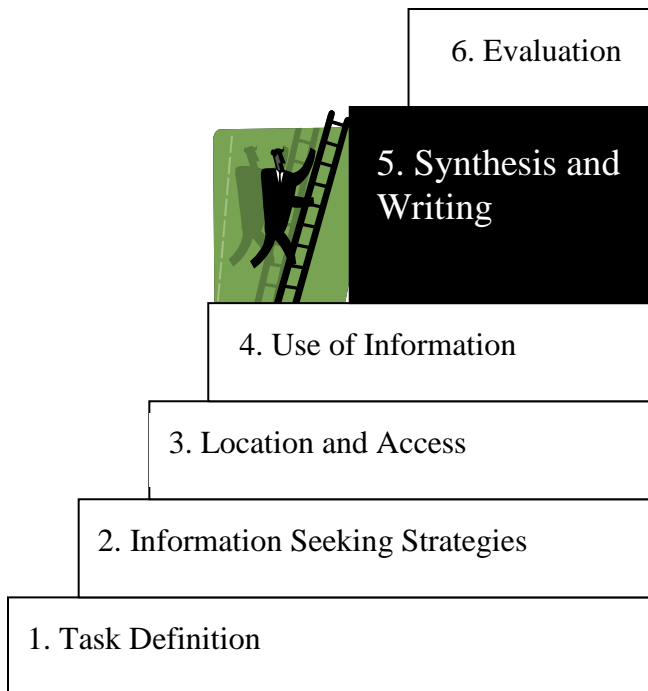
Summary of the main idea behind the article read.

Include page numbers when applicable.

## 5. Synthesis and Writing

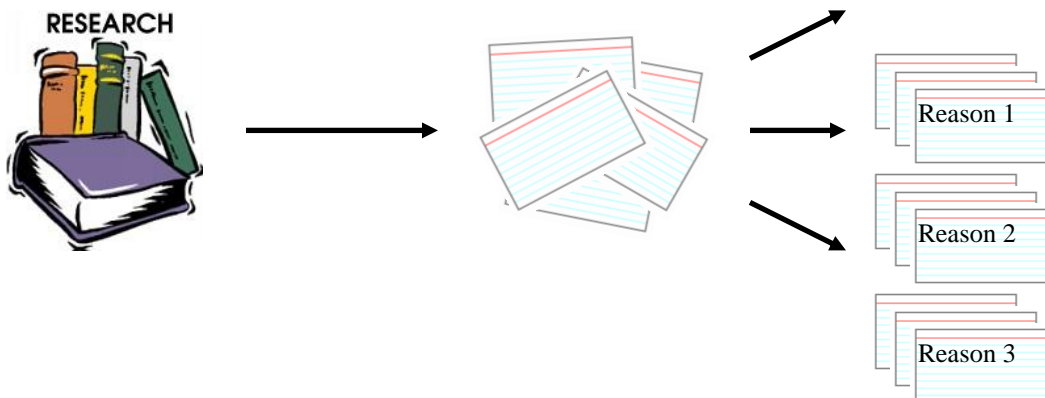
### Step-at-a-glance:

- Organize your research and revise your thesis statement
- Set aside unrelated research
- You can do it . . . just write!
- Revise, it's a process.
- Rewrite



### 5.1 Synthesis: Putting it all together

Congratulations! You now have your research in manageable notes. This is a huge accomplishment, but you aren't done yet. You need to organize your research into groups. Don't worry, you already have these groups thanks to your thesis; each reason of your thesis is a group.



What if you don't have enough research to support a reason? You must revise your thesis, or do more research. You did the research to learn about the topic. If you didn't write the perfect thesis the first time, that is okay, but you can't write without a solid thesis.

It's all right if some of your research does not fit into your thesis groups. There may be a place for this research in your introduction or conclusion, or you may just have to leave it on the cutting room floor. Remember, the goal of the research process is to support your analysis not to information dump.

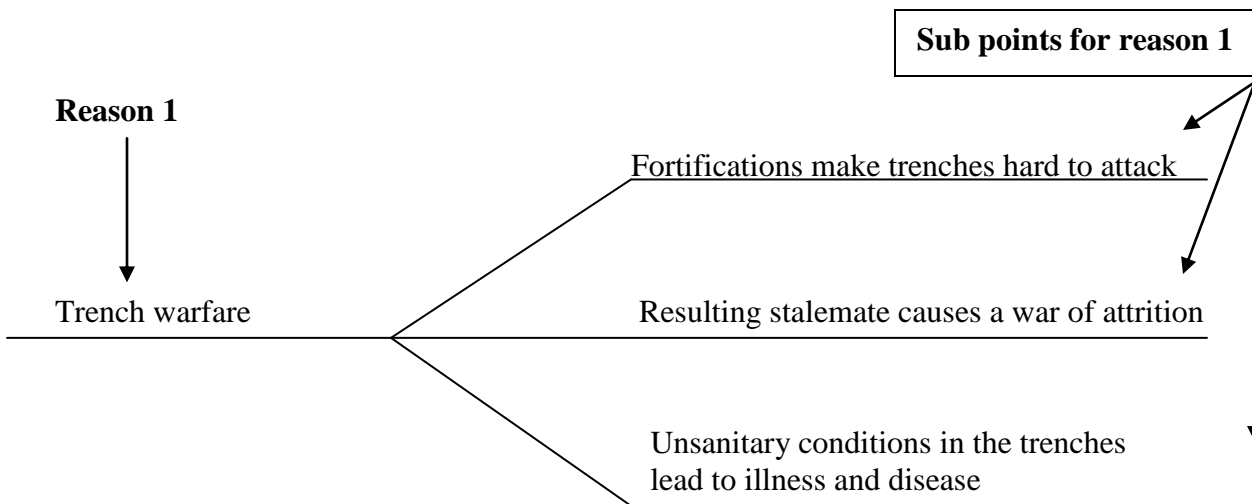
## **5.2 Writing: Putting the ‘together’ down**

Often, even after preliminary research and thesis writing, people still feel overwhelmed staring at a blank page. Many students find writing the first sentence to be the most daunting part of the entire research process. "The best antidote to writer's block is — to write" (Klauser 15).

Like the standard essay, a research paper must contain the following parts:

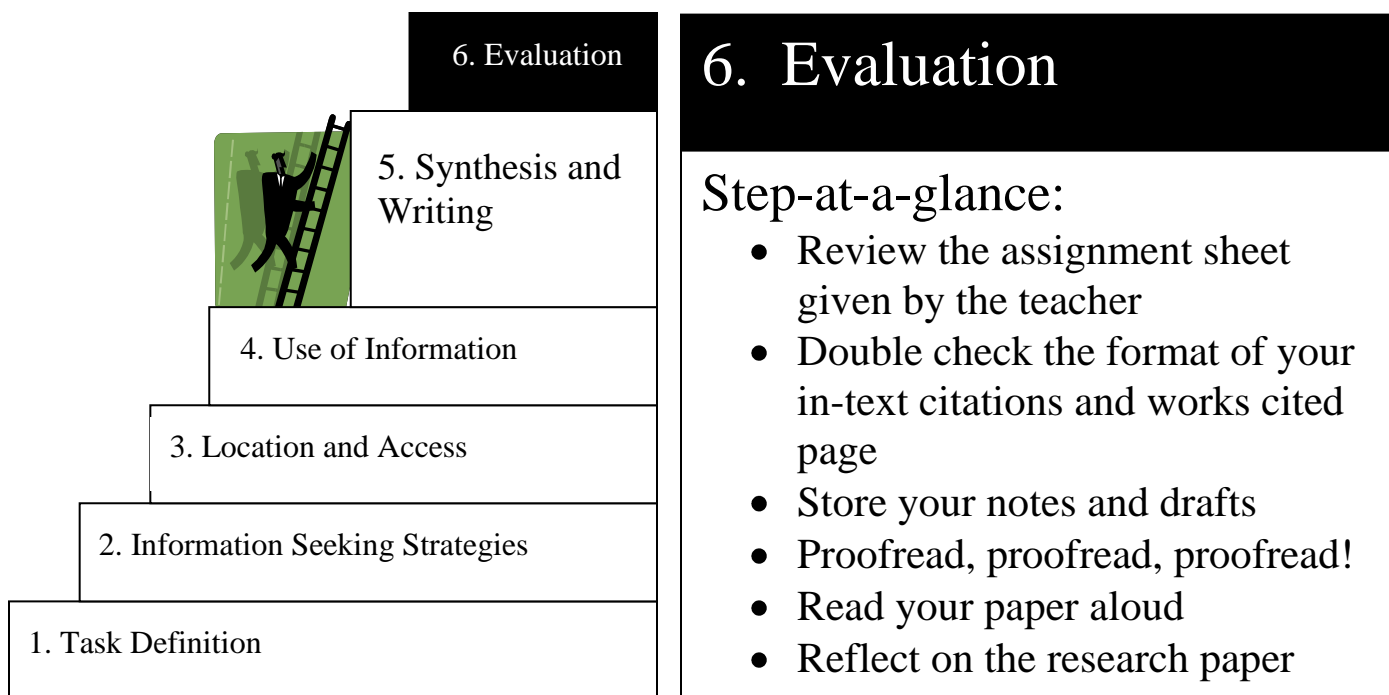
- Introduction
  - The Introduction must get the reader’s attention- consider these strategies-
    - Begin with a quotation. Just make sure you explain its relevance.
    - Begin with a question.
    - Begin with an acknowledgment of an opinion opposite to the one you plan to take.
    - Begin with a very short narrative or anecdote that has a direct bearing on your paper.
    - Begin with an interesting fact.
    - Begin with a definition or explanation of a term relevant to your paper.
    - Begin with irony or paradox.
    - Begin with an analogy- make sure it's original but not too far-fetched.
  - The all-important **thesis comes at the end of the introduction.**
- Body Paragraphs- Your body paragraphs are perhaps the most important part of your paper; without them your thesis is meaningless. The number of paragraphs you have will entirely depend on the length of your paper and the complexity of each subtopic. Your body paragraphs must always achieve a sense of balance between the general and the particular. Other advice for body paragraphs:
  - **Body paragraphs should regularly include cited research.**
  - The biggest mistakes people make in body paragraphs include:
    - Rambling-no organization
    - Inadequate development
    - Inadequate Citations
  - Body paragraphs should be organized according to the order of reasons given in your thesis. These reasons should be ordered logically- some things fit more naturally at the beginning while others make more sense toward the end. Unlike the standard essay, each point from your thesis will have numerous sub points that will warrant a paragraph. Consider the organization depicted on the graphic organizer below:

**WWI Example Thesis: As the first major industrial war, the technology used in World War I created historically high causality rates due to the destructive use of trench warfare, poison gas, and heavy artillery.**



Conclusions:

- Stress the importance of the thesis statement.
- Give the essay a sense of completeness, and leave a final impression on the reader.
- Strategies for writing conclusions:
  - Echoing the introduction
  - Challenging the reader
  - Posing questions
  - Looking to the future



Evaluation, the final step of the research paper, is a two step process. First the student must judge the product (effectiveness) then judge the information problem-solving process (efficiency).

### 6.1 Effectiveness

**Students should not turn in papers until the following checklist is completed.**

- My paper is a thoughtful response to the assignment and meets the teacher's standards.

Review the assignment sheet again to ensure that all parts were completed in the proper order.

- I properly cited all borrowed, paraphrased, and/or summarized materials within the paper (using parenthetical documentation or footnotes).
- My bibliography or works cited page gives credit to all sources that were consulted for the paper.
- My bibliography or works cited page follows the proper MLA or APA format.
- I have stored all of my notes and drafts in a safe place in the event that the teacher requests to see them.
- My paper is word processed using the required format.
- I used a proper heading or title page.
- I proofread for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors.
- I read my paper out loud at least once.
- I would be proud to have anyone read this paper.

### 6.2 Efficiency

**Students should answer each of the following questions as a reflection on the usefulness of the research paper writing process.**

1. What step was most difficult and why?
2. What skill(s) did you learn that you can use again?
3. How would you use these skills in the future?
4. What did you do well in this assignment?
5. What could you do better next time?
6. Which information sources were most useful?
7. Which information sources did you need beyond the library?

## MLA Style Sheet: Parenthetical Citations

**When writing any document, you must give credit to any information that is not your own; if you fail to do this, you are guilty of plagiarism. Any paper that contains any trace of plagiarism will be given a non-negotiable zero.**

You must cite all information that is not your own in two ways:

1. parenthetical citations
2. works cited list

In MLA style, in-text citations, called parenthetical citations, are used to document any external sources used within a document (unless the material cited is considered general knowledge). Parenthetical citations are used when

1. you paraphrase information found in another source
2. you quote another source

In the text of your paper you will use two kinds of citations, those that cite direct quotes as well as citations for paraphrased research. A direct quote uses the exact words from a text and when cited in a paper looks like this:

“I do not like them Sam I am” (Seuss 25). ← **Parenthetical Citation for Quote**

Notice that because it is stated exactly like the text the statement is put in quotes, and is followed by the author’s last name and the page number of the quote. When paraphrasing information, or putting it in your own words, the in text citation has only the parenthetical (parenthesis) citation like the example below:

Sam does not enjoy green eggs and ham (Seuss 25). ← **Parenthetical Citation for Paraphrase**

### What are the differences among quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing?

These three ways of incorporating other writers' work into your own writing differ according to the closeness of your writing to the source writing.

1. **Quotations** must be identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source. They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author.
2. **Paraphrasing** involves putting a passage from source material into your own words. A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source. Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly.
3. **Summarizing** involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

**Notice:  
Regardless  
of the  
format in  
which  
research is  
presented,  
it is always  
imperative  
to include  
citations!**

## MLA Style Sheet: Works Cited

When you are writing a paper and using a source, whether it is a direct quote, paraphrase, or summary of the work, you must give the author credit for it. If you don't you can be convicted of plagiarism.

The Modern Language Association (MLA) Style is widely used for identifying research sources. In MLA style you briefly credit sources with parenthetical citations in the text of your paper, and give the complete description of each source in your Works Cited list. The Works Cited list is a list of all the sources used in your paper, arranged alphabetically by author's last name, or when there is no author, by the first word of the title (except *A*, *An* or *The*).

The following examples are based on the [MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#), 5th ed., by Joseph Gibaldi. (Ref LB2369 .G53 1999b) Additional information has been adapted from:

- [http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/practical\\_guide.shtml](http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/practical_guide.shtml)
- [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx\\_basic.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html)
- <http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/education/hcc/library/mlahcc.html>

### BOOKS

#### Format:

Author. *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year.

- Take the title from the title page, not the cover.
- The author's name should be written Last Name, First Name.

### Examples

Borg, Jim. *Tigers of the Sea: Hawaii's Deadly Sharks*. Honolulu: Mutual, 1993.

Reagan, Michael D. *Curing the Crisis: Options for America's Health Care*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.

### ENCYCLOPEDIAS and REFERENCE BOOKS

#### Format:

Author of Article.(if given) "Article Title." *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year.

- When citing familiar reference books, especially those that often appear in new editions, it is not necessary to include full publication information. Give the edition (if available) and the year of publication.
- If articles are arranged alphabetically, you do not need to give volume and page numbers.

### Example

Faron, Louis C. "Inca." *Encyclopedia Americana*. International Edition. 1999.

**SCHOLARLY JOURNAL ARTICLES****Format:**

Author. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* volume number (Year): Pages.

**Example**

Cooksey, Elizabeth C. "Consequences of Young Mothers' Marital Histories for Children's Cognitive Development." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59 (1997): 245-61.

**INTERNET RESOURCES****WEB SITE -- Professional or Personal <4.9.2c>****Format:**

Creator's name (if given). *Web Page Title*. Institution or organization. Date of access <URL network address>.

**Example:**

*Basic Hula Words*. 8 Nov. 2000 <<http://www.geocities.com/~olelo/o-h-general.html>>.

**Online Service: INFOTRAC <4.9.7>****Format:**

Author's name (if given). "Title of Article." *Name of Magazine* Date of Publication: Pages. Name of Database. InfoTrac. Library Name. Date of Access <[http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/hawaii\\_honolulu](http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/hawaii_honolulu)>.

**Example:**

Milius, Susan. "Science Pokes Loopholes in Cloning Bans." *Science News* 28 Feb. 1998: 137. General Reference Center. InfoTrac. Honolulu Community College Library. 6 Nov. 2000 <[http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/hawaii\\_honolulu](http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/hawaii_honolulu)>.

**INTERVIEWS <4.8.7>****Format:**

Person Interviewed. Type of interview (personal or telephone). Date.

**Examples:**

Mink, Patsy T. Telephone interview. 21 October 2000.

- For a broadcast or published interview, add descriptive and bibliographic information.

Waihee, John. Interview with Leslie Wilcox. Channel 2 News. FOX. KHON, Honolulu. 7 Nov. 2000.

Lee Chau  
Mrs. Galusha  
AP English 11  
14 November 2005

Chau 1

Authorship Controversy

No one can question the impact of William Shakespeare on English literature. His plays and sonnets continue as the standard for artistry in writing. However, this literary genius, renowned for his great contributions to literature, is also one of history's most controversial figures. The credits for at least thirty-six plays, two long poems, and a substantial sequence of sonnets (Bate) have been disputed for nearly four hundred years.

Anti-Stratfordian theories have challenged Shakespeare's authorship. At least three lines of evidence and reasoning serve to support the Pro-Stratfordian arguments. First, is the unlikelihood of the multiplicity of such theories, second, are the incredible exaggerated and distorted claims, and third is the ineluctable evidence of Shakespeare's creative existence.

Solid and clear SD3R Thesis

The authorship dilemma has produced a heated discussion ever since Reverend Wilmot failed to find any books or other belongings of Shakespeare in the early 1800's. This led to a rash conclusion: an uneducated country boy from an illiterate household could not be the greatest writer of all time. The notion was further supported by Shakespeare's profound knowledge that he showed in his works. He used a vocabulary of over 37,000 different English words. He also presented an extensive understanding of Latin (Rubinstein). Ever since the original challenging disbelief of Reverend Wilmot, many theories have developed and branched out to encompass numerous people who could claim authorship of many great Shakespearean works.

Amongst the enormous list of people that have contended for authorship of Shakespeare's works were Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, and Edward de Vere (Fields 1). The numerous elaborations of intricate claims to the authorship of Shakespeare's works reduced the integrity of each candidate and diluted the concentration of supporters. Thus, each candidate's case is unable to provide substantial credibility.

Good, this is Reason #1. Nice job using your thesis to organize your paper.

One of the first to challenge William Shakespeare's authorship was Francis Bacon. His heritage and education were exemplary compared to the Bard. As the son of a classically educated gentleman, Bacon entered Cambridge University at the premature age of twelve. He was fluent in Greek, Latin, as well as many other European languages, and he excelled in all areas of study. Bacon's homosexuality correlated with the sonnets. His life of travels and scholarship in the law were stretched for relations to the plays of Shakespeare (Fields 251-253).

This gentleman also penned similar lines to William Shakespeare, which many Baconists found eligible for evidence towards his authorship; however, the following lines were most likely derived from the same sources, which was a common phenomenon among writers:

Seldom cometh the better (Bacon, *Promus*)  
Seldom cometh the better (Shakespeare, *Richard III*)

All is not gold that glistens. (Bacon, *Promus*)  
All that glistens is not gold. (Shakespeare, *the Merchant of Venice*) (Fields 257)

The qualifications of good lineage, higher education, and homosexuality were so common among all the potential Shakespeares that it became unworthy of any special attention. In particular, Bacon's obscure relations to the plays were meaningless because William Shakespeare intended for people to connect to his plays. Many other candidates began to gather more evidence than Bacon, and he eventually faded out of the spotlight.

Christopher Marlowe was next to seriously advance the authorship question. He was a fellow playwright, born the same year as the Bard. He had a similar background to Shakespeare except for the fact that he attended Cambridge University. Marlowe also knew Latin, which was used throughout much of Shakespeare's compositions. His homosexuality was also easily related to the sonnets (Fields 236).

Contrary to all these similarities, Marlowe had striking differences with William Shakespeare as he did with the other authorship candidates. Therefore, unlike the others, he had already established himself as a playwright and as such, a playwright in the public theater would not have a nobility title to protect. The main argument Marlovians use to necessitate Marlowe's alias was that he faked death in 1593 to escape from his enemies, and then he needed Shakespeare as a front man for his works. (Fields 243-244) However, once again another Anti-Stratfordian theory had holes in it. Robert Greene wrote letters in 1592 alluding to a play of Shakespeare. That letter would disprove Marlowe as a candidate completely because Christopher Marlow would have no reason to use Shakespeare as a front man before his apparent "death" in 1593 (Fields 245).

The writing styles of Shakespeare and Marlowe differed. Shakespeare's style was much more developed; it employed deeper moral concerns, displayed a natural feel for ordinary people and speech, and contained the "enviable common touch" (Woods 139). Shakespeare used multi-faced characters with fatal flaws to make his characters "life-like." This contrasted Marlowe's one-dimensional characters that were "without complexity, depth, or humanity" (Fields 240). Marlow even wrote *Edward II* to compete with Shakespeare's

Excellent  
use of  
supporting  
evidence

histories, but this attempt was fruitless because unlike Marlowe, Shakespeare's plots were superior and carefully selected to appease the audience (Woods 139).

In 1920, a breakthrough occurred when an English schoolmaster, J. Thomas Looney, published a book claiming the real author was Edward de Vere, the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford (Bate). He had a noble heritage. Arthur Golding, who translated Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, tutored him. He grew up with a library of over 3000 books. He was both "old and lame" as noted in the sonnets; and the *First Folio* was dedicated to his daughter's husband. These reasons vigorously fueled speculation for this new prospective author (Rubinstein).

However, the Oxford case started to deteriorate because of its inability to verify any one proposition. Charles Ogburn presented an elaborate scenario in which Oxford fathered the Earl of Southampton with Oxford and Queen Elizabeth. Therefore, the sonnets that were dedicated to a "fair youth" were actually for the natural son of the author. Then the Queen naturally wanted Oxford to write under a pseudonym so he could safely communicate "dangerous" ideas like the deposition of Richard II. Following his death, Oxford's family continued the deception to protect the family from James I (Fields 231-232). However, this elaborate scenario contained too many assumptions with no real evidence to back it while the sonnets contained too many sexual references to be directed towards a son.

The Ogburn scenario was inconsistent with the Sobran scenario that depicted Oxford and Southampton as homosexual lovers, which inspired Oxford's writing of *Venus and Adonis* and the "fair youth" sonnets. After Southampton married, the families of Southampton and Oxford perpetuated the myth that Shakespeare was the author to distract attention from the homosexual scandal (Fields 233).

Nice  
Transition

In addition to the multiple scenarios, there were also direct contradictions to the Oxford theory. During his life, Oxford's plays were performed in front of colleagues, providing no reason to use an alias (Fields 203). The Francis Mere comments on the plays of William Shakespeare and Oxford also ruled out Oxford's cadency because a critic would not comment on the same writer twice (Bate). Oxford also died in 1604, which predated twenty-two of Shakespeare's plays and further discredited him as the author (Niederkorn).

Oxford not only possessed the typical author-like characteristics of all the candidates, but also shared other aspects that placed him ahead of the others. However, Oxfordian failures to assert one cohesive theory for his being Shakespeare lead to their downfall. The many elaborate, but inconsistent theories fell short as reliable

proof. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens even commented that advocates of Oxford lack “a single, coherent theory of the case” (Bate).

Anti-Stratfordians were unable to scrounge enough evidence against William Shakespeare’s authorship. The many theories developed were too flimsy to counter the truth of Shakespeare. Eventually they resorted to exaggerating facts to appropriate their beliefs.

The Oxford theory relied on many “what-ifs” and assumptions to disclaim Shakespeare’s authorship. The fact that Oxford’s subsidiary title, Viscount Bolebed, carried with him arms comprised of a rampant lion shaking a spear would not account for creation of the pseudonym, “Shake-speare” (Fields 202). William Shakespeare was a well-known gentleman during his lifetime and resultantly Oxfordians stretched facts to account for his authorship. This trend perpetuated the notion someone other than Shakespeare must have written the works because historical records of William Shakespeare’s was incompatible with his works. Someone like Oxford vied for authorship because like Hamlet, he was captured by pirates and left naked on the shores of his homeland (Lerner).

The same reasoning of facts as with other candidates laid the foundation for Francis Bacon’s authorship. Several of Shakespeare’s works referred to Bacon’s residence, St. Albans, but never mentioned Stratford, Shakespeare’s hometown. Francis Bacon’s love for cryptology supposedly created a code that hid his authorship within the poems and plays. In addition to that, Droeshout’s engraving of Shakespeare allegedly spelled out the initials of Francis Bacon (Fields 252). With such unreliable reasons, the hypothesis became encrusted with absurdities and ultimately defective.

Although many people have debated the attribution of William Shakespeare, he is still the only one with the hard evidence: proof within his plays and publications to affirm his authorship.

In Sonnet III, the author complained that he had to turn to “public means,” which led to “public manners,” because he was not better provided for by fortune (Fields 277). Shakespeare’s life did not start in riches and nobility. He had to earn his fortune through the public theatre, as described in the sonnet.

The works of fellow writers served as important evidence for Shakespeare. In 1598, Francis Meres, an early literary critic, praised Shakespeare’s writings in the poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*: “The sweet, witty soul of Ovid lived in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare.” He went further on to say:

Good job  
para-  
phrasing  
your  
sources

As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*,..., his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and his *Merchant of Venice*; for tragedy, his *Richard II*,..., and his *Romeo and Juliet*. (Bate)

The acclamation of Shakespeare's works during his lifetime helped affirm his controversial authorship.

"Groatsworth of Wit" by Robert Greene was another piece of writing that dated some of Shakespeare's plays back to 1592. In a letter, Green sent out a warning to beware of "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his tygers hart wrapt in a Players hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; ... is in his owne conceit the onley Shake-scene in a country" (Fields 56). This letter was filled with allusions and indications to Shakespeare's ascription. The "tygers hart wrapt in a Player's hide" was an allusion to *Henry VI, Part 3* in a scene when the angered duke called the Queen a "tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide." "To bombast out a blank verse" and "Shake-scene" alluded to Shakespeare as a writer (Fields 57-58). This proved the play was written no later than 1592, ruling out many Shakespearean contenders.

This paragraph does a great job using well cited quotes

Another publication to affirm Shakespeare was John Davies's tribute to Shakespeare. He praised the Bard with the following line, "To our English Terence, Mr. Will Shake-speare." Shakespeare was compared to Terence, a famous Roman slave that wrote comedies (Fields 71-72). The ode to Shakespeare validated his creative writings.

The will of Shakespeare was a controversial form of evidence. While Anti-Stratfordians assume it opposed his authorship because it did not mention his literary works, Stratfordians claim many playwrights were notorious to turn over the rights of all their plays to their company. Because of the company's ownership, Shakespeare's literary work did not appear in the will. Lord Chamberlain's Men, Shakespeare's company, would have lost their records either in the Globe's fire or during the subsequent period of political turmoil, theatre was outlawed (Fields 167).

The First Folio was another heavy piece of evidence that authenticated Shakespeare's authorship. The book was the first collection of plays and poems of the Bard, which referred to him as the "Sweet Swan of Avon", commented on his "Small Latin and less Greek", and "[his] Stratford monument." The goal of the publishers of the First Folio was to keep as much as possible in the manuscript and exclusive property of the theater company, because once a play was disseminated in print; control of it would be lost (Fields 278).

Another form of evidence for Shakespeare is his monument in Stratford's Holy Trinity Church. The bust portrays William Shakespeare writing on paper with a quill. The original inscription on it was translated from Latin to "A Nestor in judgment, a Socrates in intelligence, a Virgil in art," which compared Shakespeare to ancient philosophers and writers, proving his successful career (Fields 175).

Even though there is no documentation of Shakespeare's schooling, he most likely attended the Stratford grammar school. His father John made a huge social leap to a high civic office position that made William eligible for grammar school. (Bate). According to scholars, early English grammar schools provided an education that would have surpassed many American high schools. Some would even assert that a "university education would add little to the competency in Latin and familiarity with Latin authors." (Fields 81)

The Anti-Stratfordian position is a summary judgment on William's provincial origins and barbarian rusticity. It radically underestimates the rigors of public education and overestimates the scope of aristocratic learning. The Anti-Stratfordians were "essentially conspiracy theorists" (Lerner). None of the candidates has been able to muster one coherent theory to establish one sound case. Despite numerous and far-fetched attempts to prove otherwise, historical evidence, literary continuity, and clear reasoning reaffirm William Shakespeare's rightful authorship.

*This is a strong concluding paragraph*

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