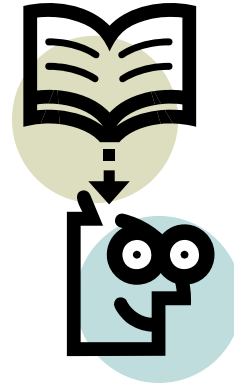


# *Style & Content in Specific Subject Areas*

Here are some helpful tips for writing papers in different subject areas.



## English

1. Two common and effective topics for literary research papers are **character analysis** (focusing on a character's personality traits, motivations, and overall role or significance in a work of literature) and **thematic analysis** (focusing on a specific theme developed in a work of literature through literary elements such as characters and imagery).
2. Literary research papers should not include plot summary. The paper should be written with the understanding that the audience knows the content of the work discussed. As characters are introduced, the student writer can orient the audience by briefly identifying the character with an appositive phrase.
3. Literary analysis papers are traditionally written in present tense ("literary present") as though the action of the work discussed is taking place as the author analyzes it. Students should use present and present perfect tense for their own analysis in the essay. Because most literary criticism is written in present tense, the inclusion of secondary source quotes does not usually pose a problem in composing the paper. Novels are traditionally written in past tense, however, so the blending of primary source quotes into the paper will require special attention.
4. The basic assumption in a literary analysis paper is that the student writer has read and carefully analyzed the literature being discussed. Students' own ideas should dominate the paper, and critics' ideas should add depth and serve as support. The paper should develop the student's thesis and not simply appear as a collection of critical quotes.

## **Science**

1. Scientific research papers traditionally follow the following format: abstract, introduction, materials and methods (in narrative rather than list form), results (including graphic and written forms), and references.
2. Scientific papers traditionally follow APA guidelines instead of the MLA Guidelines. Students should consult their science teachers about the format.

## **Social Studies/History**

1. History research papers are written in past tense.
2. General historical facts need not be documented but historians' opinions must be.
3. Statistics that are disputable should be presented as such and the student's sources must be cited.
4. All directly quoted and paraphrased material must be clearly indicated and documented.
5. The analysis of the role of an historical figure or the significance of an event requires research of different interpretations and the acknowledgement of multiple perspectives.
6. History papers follow MLA format.