Research Paper

What is a Research Paper?
A research paper is a source-based essay; it involves both writing and research. You must choose a topic, find information about that topic, and then use that information to help you write about the topic.

- You are NOT summarizing what others have said about the topic.
- You are using what others have said to help you write an informed, thoughtful paper.
  - You must write an original thesis, helped by knowledge gained from research.
  - You must support your thesis with original thoughts, helped by outside sources.

Types of Research Papers

- Argumentative Research Paper
  - Tries to persuade or convince the reader of a position (thesis).
  - Topic must be debatable.
  - The reader must be able to disagree with the position/thesis. Your goal is to make the reader agree with you.
    - Example of an Argumentative Thesis: *Due to its unreliability, the results of lie detector tests should not be used as evidence in court cases.*

- Analytical Research Paper
  - Tries to create new knowledge by asking and answering a research question.
  - Topic may or may not be debatable.
  - The reader may be able to disagree with the answer to the research question, OR the reader may find the answer interesting because of its originality. Your goal is to create new knowledge.
    - Example of an Analytical Thesis: *The novel My Antonia by Willa Cather has a loosely organized plot and many diverse characters because it is a “snapshot” of America.*

An effective research paper will have

- An Introduction that
  - Tells the reader what the topic is
  - Gives necessary background information on the topic
  - States a clear, specific thesis
  - States the specific support for the thesis

- Body paragraphs that
  - Begin with Topic Sentences that relate to your thesis and/or its specific support
  - Develop each specific support for the thesis, using outside research to help
  - Introduce ALL outside sources, whether quoted or paraphrased
  - Explain WHY each outside source is credible for your topic
  - Explain WHY each outside source supports your thesis

- A Conclusion that
  - Restates the thesis
  - Summarizes the main support for the thesis