

# Writing a Research Presentation

## 1. Brainstorm

Brainstorm topics you want to know more about. Once your list is complete, eliminate topics until you have found the topic you want to research.

## 2. Focus

Now that you have a topic, narrow it down to something on which you can write a complete essay. The best way to do this is to use three to five focusing questions. These will become the main ideas of your essay's body paragraphs.

Example focus questions might begin with:

- Why ...
- Who ...
- Where ...
- When ...
- How did ...
- Why didn't ...
- What caused ...
- What was the importance of ...

## 3. Research

Now use a variety of sources to find out the answers to your questions. Take notes on what you find. **Make sure you write down where you got your information. You will need it later on.**

One good way to keep up with your research is to use a T-chart. On one side, write down your source, and on the other write down your information and the page number.

Example:

Topic: What causes a black hole?

Adams, Bill. The Story of Black Holes. Farmer Publishing: New York. 2007.

p. 27 "Black Holes are formed when a star becomes so dense that it collapses in on itself."

p. 53 "Smaller stars do not become black holes, but rather white dwarfs or supernova."

When writing your source information, you'll need all the relevant information so that anyone could go back and check your source.

*For books you'll need:* 1. the author's full name(s) 2. the full title 3. the publisher 4. the place of publication 5. the copyright date 6. the page number where you found your information

*For Internet sites you'll need:* 1. the author's full name(s) 2. the full title of the web page 3. the title of the web site 4. the date you accessed the site 5. the URL (web address)

## 4. Learn

Now that you have done your research, you actually need to *understand* what it is you've found. To do this, follow your ABC's:

**A**=Absorb the relevant information.

**B**=Beat it down into its essential parts.

**C**=Craft it into your own words.

When you put other people's knowledge into your own words, it's called **PARAPHRASING**. It's okay to directly quote from a source, but you also need to be able to put it into your own words.

**Example:** *The original source says:* "Smaller stars do not become black holes, but rather white dwarfs or supernova." *Your paraphrase might say:* Some stars are too small to become black holes. They might become white dwarfs or supernova instead.

## 5. Write

Organize your information into essay form. Use your own thoughts and ideas to bridge together the information you have learned.

Remember to have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The last sentence in your introduction will be your **thesis statement**.

Be sure to **cite your sources**.

How do you do this? There are two easy steps:

1. Paraphrase or directly quote from your sources.
2. Following the paraphrase or quote, put the author's last name (or title, if no author's name is available) **AND** the page number in parentheses.

**Example:** Some stars are too small to become black holes. They might become white dwarfs or supernova instead (Smith 85).

## 6. Complete

The last part of your essay or presentation is the **Works Cited Page**. It's a bibliography of the sources you actually used in your essay or presentation. It's the last page in your presentation.

Each book source is arranged like this:

1. author's name (last, first)—period
2. title of the work (underlined or italicized)—period
3. place of publication—colon
4. name of publisher—comma
5. latest copyright date—period

Each web site source is arranged like this:

1. author's name (last, first)—period
2. title of web page (in quotation marks)—period
3. title of web site (underlined or italicized)—period
4. date you accessed the site—period
5. web address or URL (in sideways arrows)—period

Then all of the sources are arranged in alphabetical order.

**Example:**

Works Cited

"Black Holes." *National Geographic Online*. 15 April 2007. <<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/blackholes>>.

Johnson, Alvin. *The Theory of Black Holes*. New York: Random House Publishing, 1999.

Rogers, Bob and Megan Magillicuddy. *National Geographic Online*. "Black Holes."

Simmons, Harvey. "Welcome to the World of the Black Hole." *Science Forever*. 8 Oct. 2007. <<http://www.scienceforever.com/blackholes/4567809/welcome?pd55>>.

## 7. Present

After all is said and done, print it out, and turn it in. If you have to present it to the class, gather a visual aid or two and practice your speech-giving skills.

