WRITING

MRMHS Common Language Handout

Research Paper versus Report

* **A research** **paper** is not "about" a subject**.**
* **A research paper** should have a clear claim. It is not simply a generalized discussion of an issue.
* **A research paper** is not a summaryof everything you can find.
* **A research paper** must express a point of view, not simply report on the ideas of others.
* **A report** is an account presented (usually in detail).
* **A report** can be a formal account of the proceedings or transactions of a group.

Thesis Statement

* A good thesis will make a claim and provide structure for your argument.

Claim🡪Data/Evidence🡪Commentary/Warrant

* This pattern provides paragraph organization as students support their arguments with evidence.

Transition sentence

* A transition sentence is a sentence that transitions between paragraphs or ideas.

Topic sentence

* A topic sentence provides a focus for the paragraph. The topic sentence is normally the first sentence in the paragraph. In most cases, the topic sentence should relate the paragraph to the thesis statement.

Quotation

* A quotation is the borrowing of three or more words directly from a text and using it as evidence in one’s paper. (Students sometimes mistakenly think we mean they need to look for words surrounded by quotation marks.)

Citations

* When a student quotes evidence from a source or uses ideas from a source, even if the student paraphrases the evidence, he or she needs to cite the source.

Paraphrase

* A paraphrase is a re-statement of a text or passage in one’s own words.

Summary

* A summary is an objective and concise version of the main ideas of a text.

Two-column Notes

* Two-Column Notes is a note-taking strategy that divides a page into two columns. Students write main ideas and concepts in the left column and supporting details and information in the right column. This technique is especially useful for analyzing well-structured, content-rich, sequential reading selections (Sedita*)*.

Graphic Organizers

* The use of graphic organizers is a strategy to improve comprehension. Graphic organizers help students see the big picture and the relationship among ideas. They also help struggling readers access content (Sedita).

Vocabulary Four Square

* Four Square is a specific graphic organizer meant to help students have a more in-depth understanding of a word or a concept.

Main idea and Supporting Details

* The main idea is the “key concept” being expressed. The supporting details indicate the who, what, where, why, when, and how in the text (Sedita).

Persuasive versus Argumentative Writing

* The Common Core State Standards explain that “logical arguments should convince the audience with the perceived merit and reasonableness of the claims and proofs offered” rather than to persuade using “either the emotions the writer evokes in the audience or the character or credentials of the writer.”

Reflection

* Reflective writing is evidence of reflective thinking. Reflective writing is usually more personal than other kinds of academic writing.
* Examples:
	+ Looking back at something (often an event, i.e. something that happened, but it could also be an idea or object).
	+ Analyzing the event or idea (thinking in depth and from different perspectives, and trying to explain, often with reference to a model or theory from your subject).
	+ Thinking carefully about what the event or idea means for you and your ongoing progress as a learner and/or practicing professional (Hampton).

Works Cited

Hampton, Martin. “Reflective Writing: A Basic Introduction.” Department for Curriculum and

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Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers: Washington D.C. 2010.

Sedita, Joan. *The Key Comprehension Routine.* Sedita Learning Strategies: Rowley, MA. 2003.