

## Errors to Avoid

### Fatal Errors:

- Parenthetical Citations/documentation (PD) do not match Works Cited (WC). They MUST match. Failure to match = failure on a paper.
- Words or phrases written exactly as they were in the original source MUST be enclosed in quotation marks. Failure to place in “ ” is plagiarism. Plagiarism = failure on a paper.
- Paraphrases and summaries must be an ACCURATE reflection of what the original source said. You can't twist, manipulate, revise, or create your own meanings. This is deceitful. Deceit = failure on a paper.
- You MUST support your opinions and arguments (including the ones from your sources) with facts, statistics, quotes from valid sources, details, specific examples from your RESEARCH. Opinions alone do not PROVE anything. Failure to prove = failure on a paper.
- You can't pass off someone else's opinions or facts as your own. You MUST identify the true source of the information, and a parenthetical citation is not always enough. For example:

Don't do this: Homosexual couples argue less aggressively than heterosexual couples; however, gay men have more trouble making up afterwards than lesbians do (Cloud).

Do this: John Gott, a couples therapist, and Robert Levinson, a UCLA psychology professor, discovered in their 2003 study on how homosexual couples communicate that gay couples argue less aggressively than heterosexual couples; however, gay men have more trouble making up afterwards than lesbians do (Cloud).

Work Cited: Cloud, John. "Are Gay Relationships Different?" Time. 28 January 2008: 79-80.

- The reason I required five (5) sources is so that you will synthesize information from all five sources, bringing together a variety of ideas that will give you an overall picture of the scope of the problem with varying points of view, allowing you to draw your own conclusions (your thesis and your topic sentences). If you use only one source in your paper, you are NOT RESEARCHING; you are REGURGITATING, or merely restating the ideas of one person. Research ≠ regurgitation. Regurgitation only = failure on a paper.

### Format Errors:

- Writing a research paper is like playing Simon Says. You MUST follow the formatting samples I gave you; in other words, do what Simon says. Failure to follow the models exactly = failure on the paper. This applies to 1) outline 2) cover page 3) first page header of essay 4) header on all other essay pages 5) parenthetical citations 6) works cited page and works cited entries.

### Grammar Errors:

- Research papers are formal essays, so you should never use 1st person pronouns (I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours) or 2nd person pronouns (you, your, yours), EXCEPT if these words fall within a passage from a source that you are quoting word for word. Then they must be inside quotation marks.
- Watch capitalization. Capitalize the first word in a sentence. Capitalize proper nouns. The following are NOT proper nouns: global warming, world. Don't scream at your reader (as I have done on this handout by writing in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS).
- Do not use ! in a formal essay unless a ! is really called for, and that's a very rare occurrence.
- Because this is a formal essay, do not use contractions at all, except in direct quotes.

### Coherence and Style

- Each sentence MUST logically follow from the preceding sentence, and each paragraph must develop logically from one to the next. Think about what you are writing. Does it make sense to go from one idea to the next? Have you provided your reader with enough background information to make the connections between the ideas? Are you using transitions and paragraph hooks that show and explain the relationships between and among the ideas?
- Coherence test: Thesis sentence + 1st t.s. [topic sentence] + 2nd t.s + 3rd t.s. = coherent paragraph
- Remember, if you ask a question, you MUST answer it. Better yet, use statements of opinion.