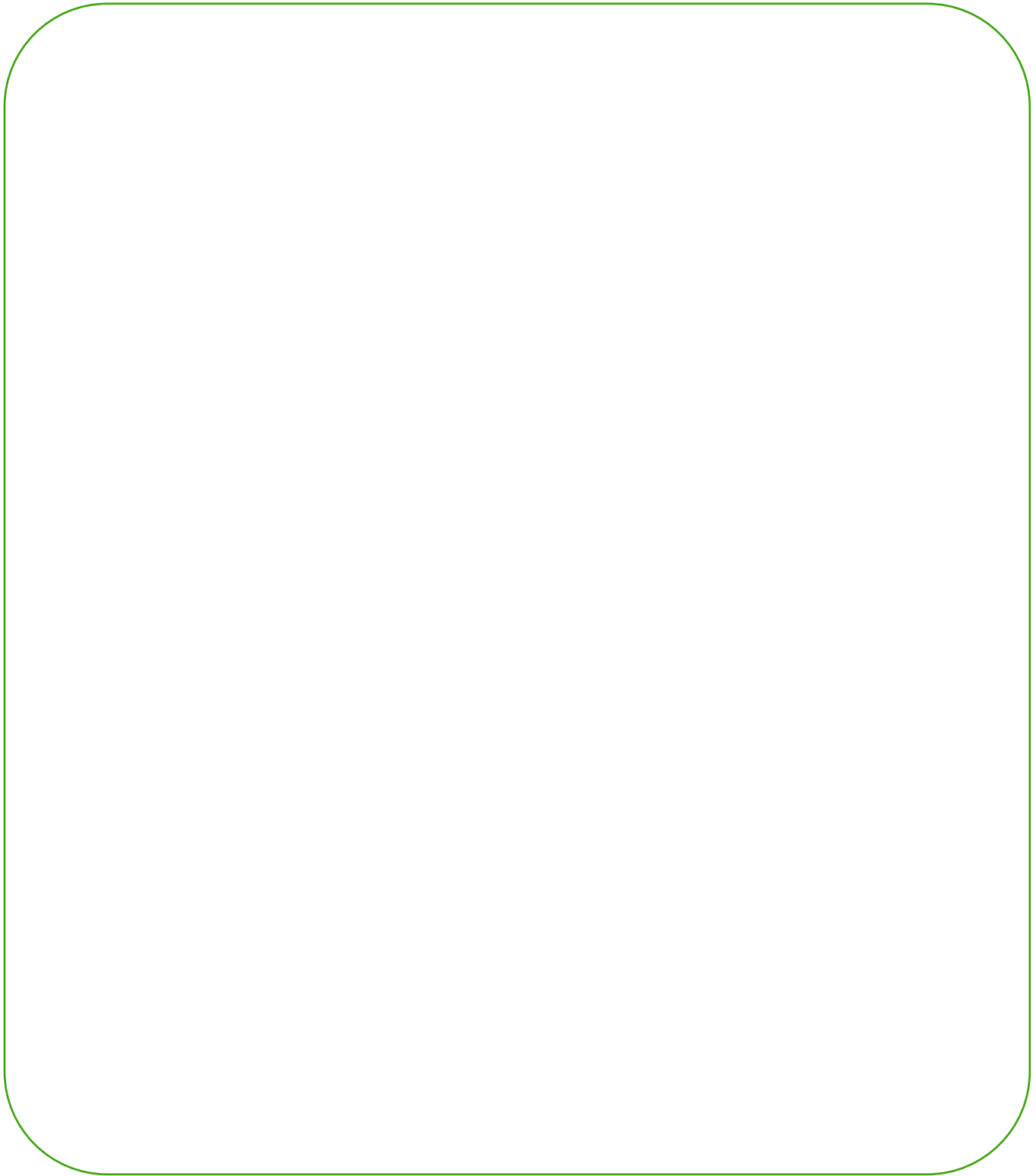Name: _____   Date: _____

Research Plan

Objective

- In this unit, you will learn how to conduct research as you attempt to solve a problem that impacts your community. Think of a community as a group of people living in the same place or a group of people who come together because of shared goals or interests. You can be a part of several communities such as your school community, religious community, or living community (neighborhood).

- Throughout the research process, you will learn about previous attempts at solving your selected problem. You will discover that to have more effective and permanent change, disruption is needed. Typically, when we hear or see the word *disruption*, negative feelings come to mind. However, *disruption* can come from a positive place meaning to significantly alter or change the structure or function of something (that is beneficial to all).

- This project will help you gather, organize, and develop a plan to disrupt the structures that continue to allow your selected problem to negatively impact your community.

Part I. Understanding the Research Task and Selecting the Focus

After your teacher introduces the research task, reflect using these guiding questions below to help narrow your focus.

- What is your best or ideal version of your community?

- What are some problems or issues that would prevent your community from becoming ideal?

- Has anyone tried to change or solve those issues? Were they successful?

- Can you think of someone who was successful in leading similar change in another community?

- Are you aware of how they did it?

Write your reflections in the box below:

Part II. Developing the Research Question

After you have decided what you want to research, the research question is the first step into diving into research. A research question guides the research and leads the researcher to finding sources that can support a thorough response.

As you craft your research question, note that **effective research questions are**:

- **Answerable**
- **Concise**
- **Clear**
- **Complex**
- **Focused**

Consider these examples:

Exemplar	Non-Exemplar	Explanation
How can community gardens in neighborhoods and schools impact the health of residents in Huntington's East District?	*How can community gardens improve health?*	Although **both questions are answerable and focused** on the impact of community gardens on health, the **exemplar question is focused** on gardens in **specific** places and the health of a specific population.

Now draft your research question in the box below:

It is important to note that throughout this process, you will share your work and thinking with a peer to receive feedback and generate new ideas. To become an effective researcher, it is helpful to use the useful feedback provided before continued research.

At this point, seek feedback on your question. Listen for feedback that is supported with details and come with useful suggestions or actionable steps. Reflect and revise your research question in the box below:

Now that you have a research focus and question, what are your next steps? Brainstorm in the box below:

Part III. Gathering Information

When conducting searches, whether using an internet search such as an online library catalogue or an academic database, **you *must* use concise keywords and phrases**. Using your research question will not lead you to a wealth of sources.

Think of keywords and phrases as the big ideas from your research question and focus.

Consider these examples:

Research Question	Possible Keywords and Phrases
How can community gardens in neighborhoods and schools impact the health of residents in Huntington's East District?	"community gardens" "community gardens in neighborhoods" "community gardens in schools" "impact of community gardens on health" "health of residents in Huntington's East District' "community gardens impact on health"

Brainstorm possible keywords and phrases based on your research question in the box below:

Now that you have possible keywords and phrases, think of places you can use to conduct initial research.

- Will you use your school library?

- Does your school have a research database?

- Will you use online search engines?

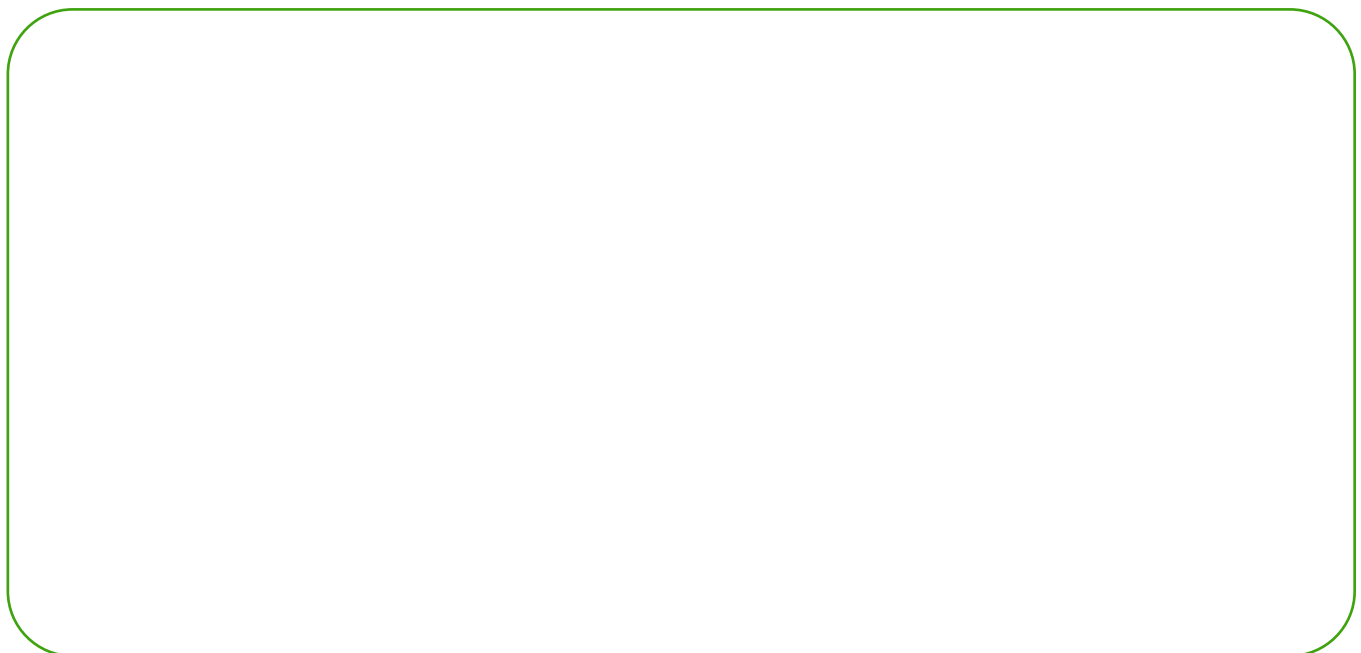- Will you rely on research think tanks?

After your first round of research, partner up with a peer and discuss your findings. Think about how much information was available based on your keywords and phrases.

Reflect on your peer's suggestions and your own thinking. What adjustments are needed before moving on?

Consider:

- Changing your keywords and phrases

- Revising your research question

- Thinking of new places to search for information

Record your changes in the box below:

Part IV. Evaluating and Sorting Sources

Evaluating Sources: Usefulness

The first step is determining the **usefulness** of each source: *how well this source helps me answer my research question*. As you evaluate, determine the **central or main idea** of each source and the **key points or ideas** explored. Consider if the key points are useful to you or how they **connect to your research problem**.

Discard sources that are not useful and record the ones that are connected to your research. Record these sources using a system that is easy to access and maintain. This might be using note cards, a notebook, or an online platform.

Select a method that is easiest for you if one has not been assigned to you by your teacher. Feel free to use the **Source Matrix** at the end of this document in **the appendix**. You may replicate the matrix using an online platform.

After you have evaluated several sources, partner with a peer to discuss your findings:

- Do you have a limited number of useful sources?

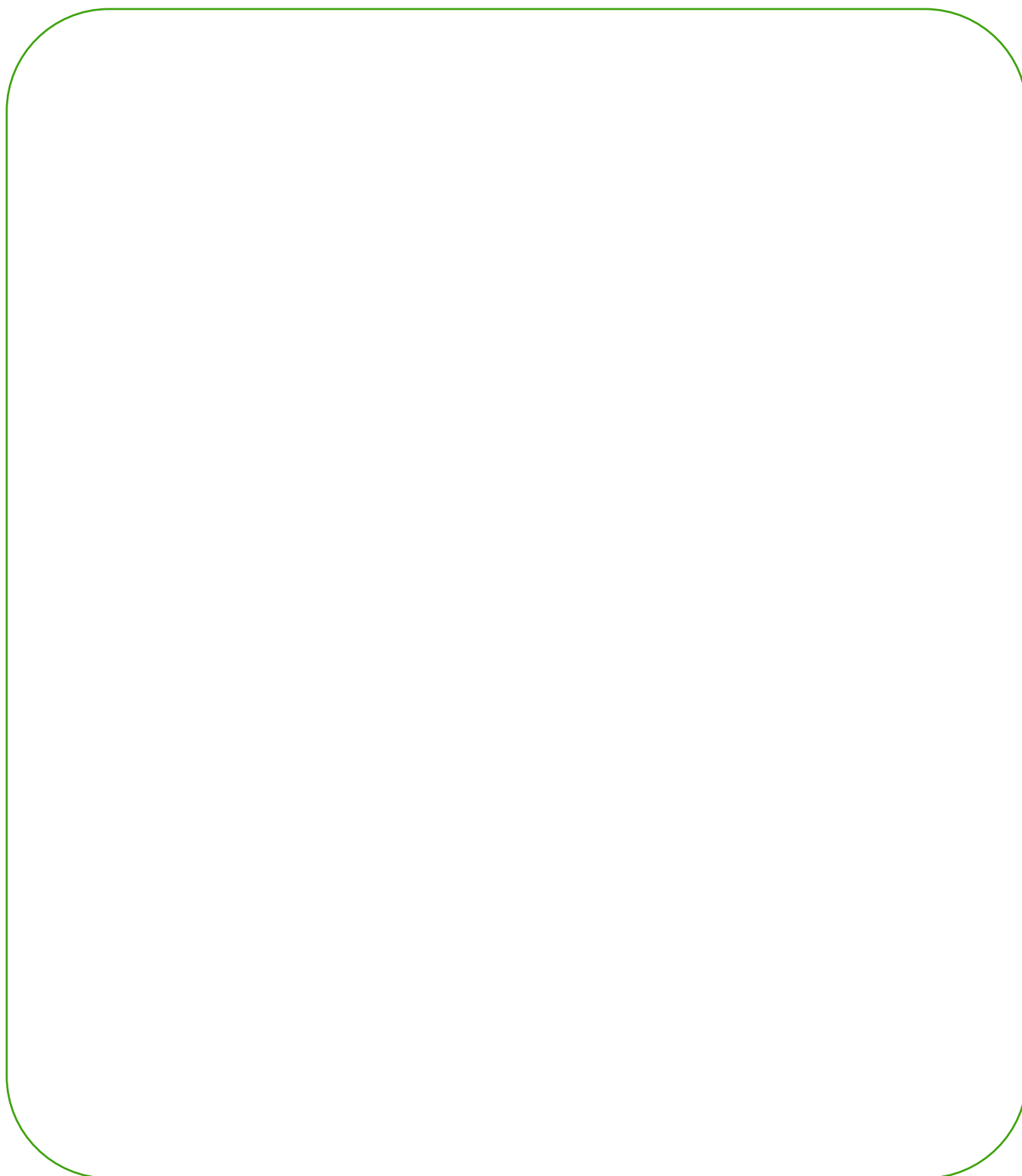- Although useful, are sources all sharing the new information?

Reflect on necessary adjustments to your research plan:

- Will your keywords and phrases need to be revised?

- Is your research question effective or does it need revision?

- Do you need to search in different places?

For this project, you should have a balance of both **primary and secondary sources**. **Primary sources** are first-hand accounts of an event or time period. This could be interviews, autobiographies, studies, and government documents. **Secondary sources** are sources based on analysis or evaluation of primary sources such as textbooks, documentaries, blog posts, and newspaper articles. **Consider maintaining a 60–40 percent ratio (secondary–primary)**.

Revise your plan in the box below:

Part IV. Evaluating and Sorting Sources

Evaluating Sources: Credibility and Reliability

The second step in evaluating sources is determining the **reliability** and **credibility** of each source. The quality of sources impacts the credibility of the research.

Use the following questions as you evaluate each source:

- **Currency:** *Is the information current or recent? When was the edition or website last updated?*

- **Relevance:** *Is the information relevant to your topic or research task? Can your audience relate to the information?*

- **Accuracy:** *Where does the information come from and is it supported by evidence? Are all the links on the website or online text working or linked to current or active information? Are facts presented or biased views?*

- **Authority:** *Where is the information published? Who is the author or publisher? Who are the researchers and their affiliations? Have they been cited or referred to in other works or sources?*

- **Purpose:** *Why was the information published? Was it to educate the audience, sell a service or product, or convince the audience of a certain perspective?*

Sorting Sources

After evaluating sources for usefulness and then credibility and reliability, it is time to sort them. A credible researcher relies on credible, reliable sources. You want the best evidence and information to influence change.

When sorting sources be sure to:

- **Separate the unreliable, biased sources from the credible, reliable sources.**

- **Discard the biased, unreliable sources.**

- **Based on the number and usefulness of the remaining sources, determine if you need to find more sources or if what is left is sufficient.**

Your remaining sources should help you do the following:

- **Describe your chosen issue or problem.**

- **Explain previous attempts at solving this problem.**

- **Discuss effective solutions.**

- **Explain why disruption brings out change.**

(!) **You should aim for <u>a minimum of 3 credible and reliable sources</u>.**

Reflect and update your research plan in the box below:

Part V. Structuring the Research Paper

At this point, you have collected a variety of sources that will help you answer your research question. Before you put all of it into a paper, it is important to outline your ideas. **An outline serves as a blueprint for a paper**. As you plan out the key elements of your research paper, be sure to include the sources you will use as support for your main points.

Introduction:
- Hook (attention grabber)
- Context (introduce research focus and question)
- Claim or thesis (driving statement of the paper)

Body:
- Main points (key ideas that help the reader understand the research problem)
- Evidence (support from research to illustrate main points)
- Analysis (how the evidence supports your ideas)
- Links (connect each idea back to main claim)

Conclusion:
- Summarize main points within the context of the research problem and question.
- Offer insight into what you as a researcher have learned.
- Restate the importance of solving this problem via disruption.

Everyone's outline will vary in structure. Use a template that works best for you. There is an **outline template** provided in the **appendix.** As you add main points and supporting information to your outline, note that **the paper should be a minimum of 2 pages.**

In lesson 5, you drafted your outline with only the main points or key ideas for your research paper. In lesson 6, you are adding synthesized information from your sources. Be sure to reference the **Quick MLA Style Guide** in the **appendix**. Your teacher will provide additional resources. After adding more details to your outline, be sure to receive feedback from your peers.

You want to make sure that your **key ideas and evidence lead your audience** to an **understanding of the research problem**, **the importance and effectiveness of your solutions**, **the overall impact or significance of the research**, and **the need for your role as a disruptor to ensure change happens**.

Based on feedback received, what are some possible adjustments you must make? Reflect in the box below:

Part VI. Writing and Finalizing the Research Paper

At this point, you have crafted a detailed outline with information from reliable sources to support your main points and research topic. You had several opportunities to receive feedback from peers, reflect, and adjust your work. Now it is time to put it all together.

As you write your research paper, consider the following:

- In your introduction, did you describe your chosen issue or problem?
- Is your claim (thesis) clearly stated?
- Have you explained previous attempts at solving the issue? Did you provide evidence from reliable sources?
- Did you discuss effective solutions for addressing the issue?
- Did you support each solution with information from reliable sources?
- Are these solutions well connected and developed over most of the paper (at least 1.5 pages)?
- Did you explain why disruption will bring about the change you seek?
- Have you emphasized how solving the problem or issue will impact you and your community? Did you support this with information from reliable sources?

After drafting your paper, seek feedback from your peers. Using the **Research Paper Rubric** provided by your teacher, tell your peers your areas of concern so you can receive targeted feedback. Using the box below, reflect on the changes you will make to enhance your paper:

After revising and editing your research paper, be sure that you have:

- a strong introduction
- ideas that are organized and well-structured
- ideas that are developed and connected or cohesive
- a strong conclusion
- citations that follow MLA guidelines
- demonstrated a command of grammar and mechanics

Once you have a polished version of your research paper, you will work with your teacher to publish your research paper on a credible internet platform. Consider a platform that:

- supports your cause or research topic
- caters to giving youth exposure and power to amplify things important to them
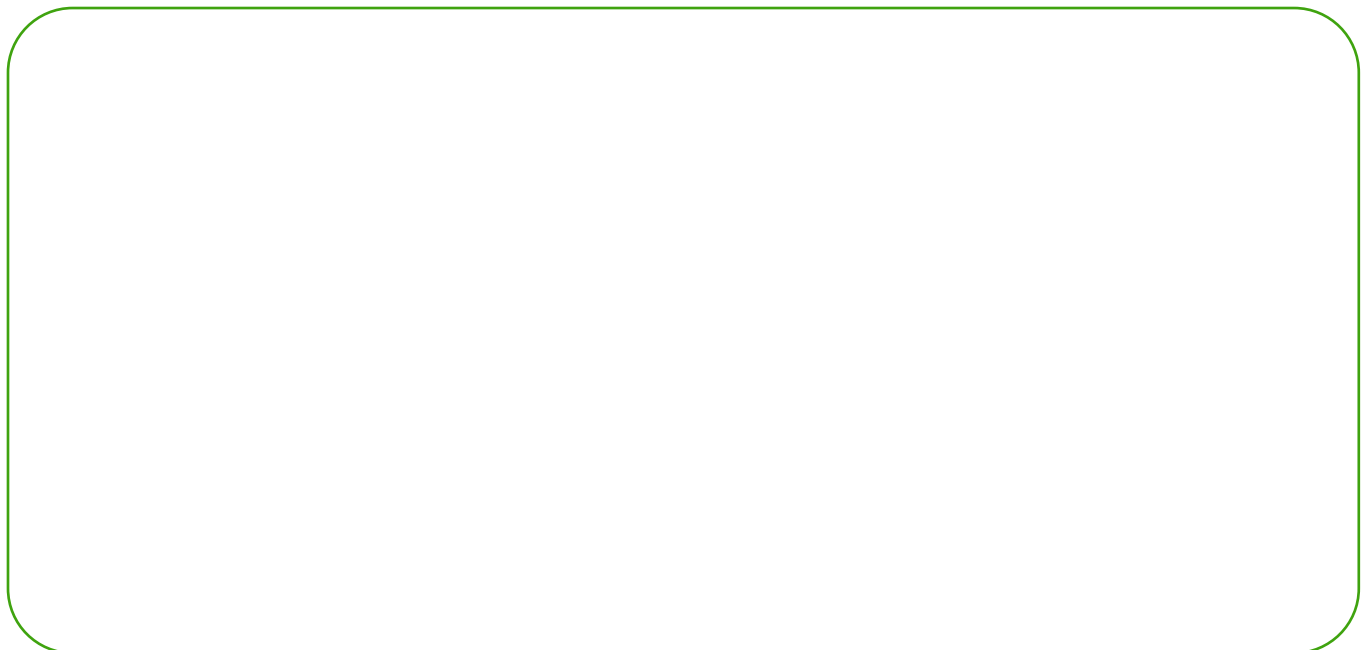- serves as online portfolios

Part VII. Presenting your Research Findings

Your research presentation will not be a reading of your research paper. Your presentation explores the context for your research (problem, question, background) and the major takeaways (solutions, impact on community, need for disruption).

As you plan, keep the following tips in mind:

- Keep content simple and avoid having text or image-heavy slides.
- Aim for one big idea per slide or section.
- Keep background or slide design simple to minimize distractions and ensure visibility.
- Align text to images or graphics to create cohesiveness or make ideas or information more concrete.
- Use graphics such as charts and diagrams, audio, or video to expand ideas presented.
- Avoid excessive use of animations and distracting transitions.
- Choose an easy-to-read font and an appropriate font size.
- Avoid loud or distracting color schemes. Refrain from overly dark color schemes as well. Find an engaging balance.
- Be strategic by italicizing and bolding words or phrases.

Think about possible platforms you will use and the types of multimedia that will engage your audience in the box below:

After drafting your presentation, partner up with some peers to practice and receive feedback. Also, refer to the **Presentation Rubric** provided by your teacher.

Based on their feedback, what are necessary revisions to improve your presentation? Reflect in the box below:

Once you have polished your presentation, consider the following as you prepare to deliver your presentation to the larger group:

- **Eye contact:** Make and maintain eye contact with all sections of the audience.
- **Speaking rate:** Talk at an appropriate pace. Speaking too quickly or slowly can frustrate the audience and make them lose interest.
- **Volume:** Speak at an appropriate volume. Speaking too softly will make the audience miss important information. Speaking too loudly will make the audience uncomfortable.
- **Enunciation:** Speak clearly for the audience to understand each word.
- **Language:** Speak using language that is formal/academic and vocabulary that is clear, concise, and accurate. Use terminology that is familiar to your audience.

Appendix

Source Matrix

Citation	Keywords/ Phrases	Useful Information	Where does the information fit?

Source Matrix

Citation	Keywords/ Phrases	Useful Information	Where does the information fit?

Outline Template

Topic

I.   Introduction

    A. Hook

    B. Context

    C. Thesis

II. Main Point 1

    A. Description of main point

    B. Evidence from sources

    C. Analysis

    D. Link to thesis and next main point

III. Main Point 2

    A. Description of main point

    B. Evidence from sources

    C. Analysis

    D. Link to thesis and next main point

IV. Main Point 3

    A. Description of main point

    B. Evidence from sources

    C. Analysis

    D. Link to thesis and next main point

V.   Conclusion

    A. Summarize main points

    B. Offer insight in research experience

    C. Final thoughts on the research topic

Citing Sources: Quick MLA Style Guide

Most English papers are formatted using the **Modern Language Association (MLA) style** to cite sources. To use this style in your paper correctly, follow these steps and complete the suggested tasks:

- **Create a reference page:** This page is often titled **"Works Cited"** and lists all the sources you have cited or referenced in your research paper.

- **Use in-text citations:** As you **paraphrase, summarize, or directly quote** information from a source, you must insert an in-text citation in parentheses. These citations refer readers to the sources listed on your Works Cited page.

Creating a Works Cited Page

The sources on this reference page are listed alphabetically based on the first word that appears in each entry. Below are some general elements that MLA suggests including for each works cited entry. List those elements in the order shown including the punctuation marks as positioned. Please note that most entries *won't* include every element listed.

1. **Author.**
2. **Title of source.**
3. **Title of container,**
4. **Other contributors,**
5. **Version or Edition,**
6. **Number,**
7. **Publisher,**
8. **Publication data,**
9. **Location.**

> **Works Cited Page**
>
> "Adult Obesity Prevalence Maps." Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 21 Sept. 2020, www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/prevalence-maps.html.
>
> Koruda, Emily. "More Carrot, Less Stick: Workplace Wellness Programs & The Discriminatory Impact Of Financial And Health-Based Incentives." Boston College Journal of Law & Social Justice, vol. 36, no. 1, Boston College School of Law, Jan. 2016, p. 131.

As you create your **Works Cited or References page**, please note that there are different kinds of sources—books, magazines, electronic articles, recordings—and they all have different types of information that need to be included in the entries.

Creating In-Text Citations

Include in-text citations in your research paper when you paraphrase, summarize, or directly quote information from a source to support your main points. **These citations let the reader know that the information is not originally yours and directs them to the full source on the Works Cited page**. Whether you are paraphrasing or directly quoting information, it is important to frame the source. There are different elements to include depending on how the in-text citation is formatted. See examples below:

Source Type	Format
Print source with known author: • Author's last name and page number • Page number only	According to Dr. La Barrie, "access to healthy, affordable foods in Huntington's East District has been a problem for the last 25 years and city leaders have turned a blind eye to the struggle of residents" (14).
Print source without a known author: • Shortened title of the source in quotation marks	Studies have shown that there is a relationship between living in food deserts and the increase in teenage obesity over the last 10 years ("Adult Obesity Prevalence").
Internet source with a known author: • Author's last name	Food gardens not only create access to healthy, fresh produce, but they also "provide opportunities for communities to educate each other on ways to improve their lifestyles and to create intercommunity wealth" (Steinburg).
Internet source without a known author: • Shortened title of the source in quotation marks • Shortened version of source URL	In additional to improving access to healthy food, "food gardens are beneficial to the environment" (nps.gov).