

Hand-Written Source Cards and Note Cards

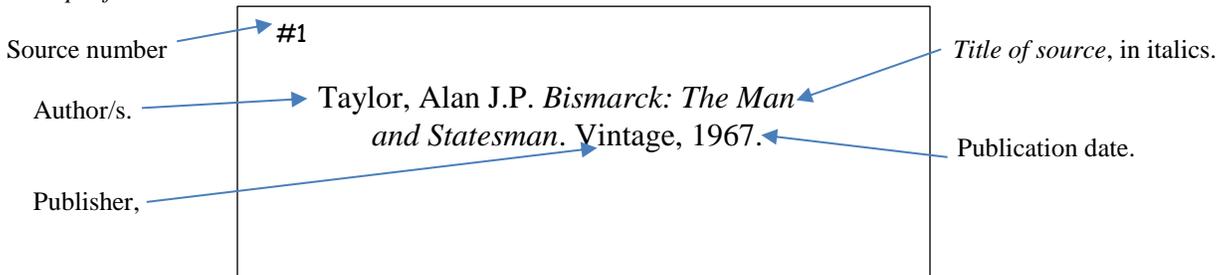
Purpose: To record your research findings, and later to organize your research into a coherent outline in preparation for writing your paper. (If you are creating notecards online via NoodleTools, [see directions here.](#))

For each **source** you use, you will create a **source card**. This will contain all the information you will later need for your **Works Cited** page.

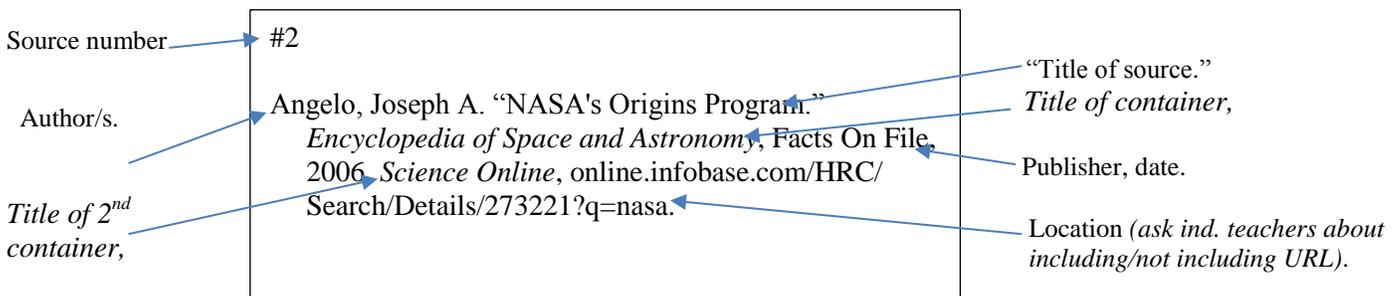
Helpful [link to examples](#) and [website for general how-to.](#)

1) HAND-WRITTEN SOURCE CARDS Use ONE card per source. Number each source in the upper left corner (this number will correspond to the note card that contains notes from this source).

Example for a book:



An online database:



2) HAND-WRITTEN NOTECARDS: it's like taking notes, but more structured

Eventually, you will be able to organize your notecards by topic and fact like pieces to a puzzle, in order to construct the outline for your paper. Taking effective notes requires accuracy, attention to detail, and simplicity.

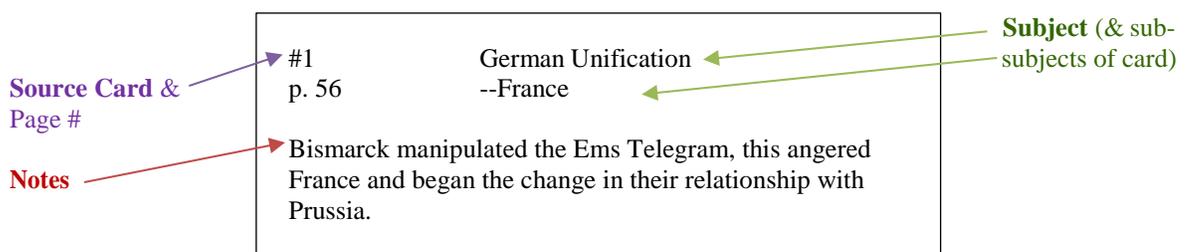
Each note card should contain **a single, distinct fact** with perhaps some brief analysis. You should **paraphrase** or **summarize**. Only use direct quotations if a) you cannot possibly say it any differently, or b) the author's use of language is incredibly brilliant and you cannot resist.

Format:

Upper left corner: **Source card number.** Corresponds with source card; to keep track of where notes are from.
Page number for print sources. This will be critical when you use citations in your paper.

Center top: **Main idea/subject of card:** to help you organize your ideas later and help stay focused on topic.

Body of card: **Your notes.**



Some helpful tips on taking notes from the [Purdue University Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#):

1. *Be succinct in whatever you write, but don't rely too heavily on mental notes because you're afraid of writing too much down. Even if it's just background data, boil it down to a short phrase on paper. Remember, notes are like drafts: you will not end up using everything you write down. It's better to have too much than not enough.*
2. *It's fine to copy down duplicating facts. For major issues, having more than one person who agrees with you strengthens your point. Just make sure to record who said what each time.*
3. *It's also okay to copy down contradictory information. Analytical papers often include opposing views and even for argumentative papers, acknowledging an opposing viewpoint that is easily disproved by its counterpoint is always a good rhetorical tool.*

Specific tips to facilitate comprehension later on

1. *Don't overuse abbreviations or symbols—make sure you'll be able to understand your notes later.*
2. *If you find ideas or reactions coming to you while you're researching, make sure you keep your thoughts and insights separate from your other notes. Using different colored pens or physically shifting from "me" to "others" cards is a great way to maintain the distinction.*

1) **SOURCE EVALUATION**

If you choose to use sources other than library databases (SHS and KCLS) and books, take these steps:

A. BEFORE you create source cards and notes cards, complete the form on the [SHS library page](#) (Skyline Home Page > Library > Resources by Subject > Writing and Research > Source Evaluation Tool); then follow the next steps. You will either:

- 1) use the source,
- 2) use the source and complete the Source Evaluation questions below for EACH non-database/book source, or
- 3) do not use the source as a reference

Source Evaluation: If your source is not definitively valid, you will need to **explain the authority* of the source AND why** you are using the source in at least 150 words (a paragraph or two)**. This will be turned in with your final Sophomore/Junior Project as a separate document titled: Source Evaluation

Format: On a document with a complete MLA heading, add the full MLA citation for the source and then your paragraph or two explaining the authority of the source and why you are using the source. If you have more than one source that you are completing an evaluation for, include them all in one document – just be sure to start each entry with the full citation.

*Some questions you might address in your paragraph: • Type and origin of source (print/internet source? primary/ secondary/ tertiary source?) • Author? Author's qualifications/purpose? •Point of view? •Credibility of information? Is there an editor (has someone/some organization fact-checked the information)? How do other sources confirm or contradict this information? When was the information written and updated?

**Why you are using the source cannot simply be that "it has lots of information" or that "it is useful", but explaining why are you using it instead of other traditional academic sources?