

Homework Help for Parents

Academic resources from the Library and the Web



PARENTING 101: HELP YOUR CHILD MASTER STUDY SKILLS

Project-specific help...

Sometimes homework projects become so stressful that it's easy to forget one of the most basic things: **CALL THE LIBRARY**. We can probably help you find what you're looking for. You can reach our Information Desk any time during library hours: 614-807-2626.

And a note for parents and teachers about electronic resources:

Within the past decade, academic and public libraries have increasingly replaced out-of-print journal articles with their digital facsimiles. Sometimes students will receive assignments in which the teacher requires a minimum number of "print" sources. The academic databases accessible to Worthington Libraries patrons (which are often the same databases that your student will consult in college) contain many of these previously published articles. These articles should be considered as legitimate print sources. The database will provide information on how to cite these previously published articles in footnotes and bibliographies.

HOW TO ACCESS WORTHINGTON LIBRARIES ELECTRONIC DATABASES:

1. Go to worthingtonlibraries.org
2. Put your cursor over the "Research" tab. A drop-down menu will appear.
3. Select either one of subject areas for a list of relevant resources, or "All research databases A-Z." If you already know the database you need, go to the "All research databases A-Z" listing.
4. Click on the database you want. You will be prompted to enter your library card number if you are working online outside the library.

When your student is asked to use an "academic journal" or "peer-reviewed" journal as a source:

Articles in academic journals have been assessed by scholarly experts. That means any published article has passed the rigorous review process known as "peer review." Such an article is usually of higher quality than something found randomly on the Internet. The following Worthington Libraries databases can be searched by subject for academic journal articles:

- **Academic Search Premier:** Check the "Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals" box in the "Limit your results" search option.
- **JSTOR:** JSTOR is an online archive of full-text articles for more than 500 scholarly journals in the arts and sciences, especially humanities and social sciences. Coverage starts with journals' first issue, sometimes in the late 1800s; the most recent issues are not included.
- **MasterFILE Premier:** MasterFILE Premier is similar to Academic Search Premier, but it also pulls up articles from the popular press, which can be helpful in researching a topic. Once you have done the initial subject search, you can cull your search by selecting "Peer Reviewed" in the "Refine Your Results" box on the left side of the screen.
- **EBSCOhost Research Databases:** EBSCOhost, which includes MasterFILE Premier, also offers subject-specific scholarly databases for business, technology, the environment, medicine, literature, psychology, sociology, religion and philosophy.
- **Proquest Research Library:** In the basic search, be sure to click the "peer reviewed" box.
- **Serials Solutions:** This database is ideal when your student knows that he or she must find an article in a specific journal issue. For example, Serials Solutions can direct you to a database that offers the full July 2011 issue of *Journal of Ecology*.

When your student needs to refer to literary criticism of a specific novel, play or poem:

Literary criticism is a structured commentary on the quality and character of works of literature. Your student will probably be asked to read and evaluate other scholars' literary criticism of a book, play or poem as part of an in-depth study of a literary work.

- **Bloom's Guides (print):** Aimed at the high school and early college student, these anthologies of commentary and criticism are designed to be accessible, aid the student's understanding of literature and provide useful resources for literature-related research papers. Check the library catalog to see if there is a *Bloom's Guide* for the work of literature your student is reading. (Some of the commentaries published in the *Bloom's Guides* are also included in our online databases.)
- **Greenhaven Press Literary Companion Series (print):** Similar to the *Bloom's Guides*, these collections of essays and criticism are also useful study guides.
- **Literary Reference Center:** This database covers thousands of authors and their works. For example, a search for William Faulkner's novel *Absalom, Absalom!* turns up multiple academic literary criticism reviews, reference books, Faulkner biographies, plot summaries and author interviews.
- **Literature Resource Center:** This database is very similar to Literary Reference Center, and allows you to sort articles into literary criticism, biographies, reviews, work overviews, primary sources and multimedia.
- **Literature Online:** Literature Online offers a large collection of poetry, prose, drama, novels and short stories from English and American literature. For example, the full text of many of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories can be found here. This is a good place to look if you cannot find a poem or short story in a print anthology.

When your student first reads Shakespeare:

Many students struggle at first with Shakespeare's rich language and archaic vocabulary. Worthington Libraries provides an array of books and resources that make it easier to appreciate these classics. Both the plays and the companion guides are found under the Dewey Decimal number **822.33**.

- **Shakespeare Made Easy (print):** This series prints the original text on one page, and the modern English "translation" on the facing page.
- **Standard Deviants Shakespeare Tragedies (DVD):** This series covers multiple plays per disc and provides a humorous, accessible approach to Shakespeare's most challenging works.
- **Bloom's Guides (print):** Aimed at the high school and early college student, these anthologies of commentary and criticism are designed to be accessible, aid the student's understanding of literature and provide useful resources for literature-related research papers.
- **Greenhaven Press Literary Companion Series (print):** Similar to the *Bloom's Guides*, these collections of essays and criticism are also useful study guides.
- The libraries' online databases **Literary Reference Center** and **Literary Resource Center** (see above) include a wealth of material about Shakespeare and the plays, including some of the essays published in *Bloom's Guides* and *Greenhaven Press*.

When your student needs to write an essay or prepare a debate topic that argues a specific point of view:

Sometimes students have difficulty articulating arguments for or against a specific issue. These resources can help students refine their thinking. For assistance in structuring their essay, see the section "When your student needs help with the mechanics of organizing a paper, grammar or punctuation" on the next page.

- **Greenhaven Press (print) editions:** These books offer a range of arguments and opinions on many topics. You can find them in the library catalog with a keyword search: Greenhaven Press plus the topic. (e.g. "Greenhaven Press animal rights" or "Greenhaven Press capital punishment"). Some of the essays found in *Opposing Viewpoints in Context* also appear in these books.

- **Opposing Viewpoints in Context:** Opposing Viewpoints in Context is a vast online resource covering today's social controversies, from offshore drilling to climate change, health care to immigration. The collection of content and curriculum-focused tools that help students explore issues from all perspectives includes: pro/con viewpoint essays from Greenhaven Press, topic overviews, primary source documents, biographies of social activists and reformers, court-case overviews, periodical articles, statistical tables, charts and graphs, images and a link to Google Image Search, and podcasts, including weekly presidential addresses and premier NPR programs.
- **Points of View:** Like Opposing Viewpoints, Points of View Reference Center from EBSCOhost includes more than 1,300 essays, leading political magazines from all sides of the political spectrum, newspapers, radio and TV news transcripts, primary source documents and reference books. Each topic includes an overview (objective background/description), point (argument) and counterpoint (opposing argument). It also offers guides for writing position papers, developing arguments and debating. Containing resources that present multiple sides of an issue, this database helps students develop persuasive arguments and essays, better understand controversial issues and develop analytical thinking skills.

When your student needs to cite a specific book or journal article in a footnote or bibliography:

HINT: Many of articles in the library's electronic databases include formatted citations in a variety of styles (see below). All you need to do is cut and paste from the appropriate citation in the online database. Additionally, the books listed below provide exhaustive instructions for every sort of source.

When your student needs to write a paper according to a specific "style" (APA, MLA, Turabian, Chicago Manual of Style, AP):

At some point your student will be required to format a paper in a specific "style," a set of rules that must be followed regarding grammar, punctuation, citations and layout. Style guides are used in academic writing, journalism and book publishing. You can find and check out style guides from Worthington Libraries by looking in the nonfiction section under the Dewey Decimal number **808.02**. Some of the most common style books include Associated Press (AP) used by journalists, Chicago Manual of Style for book publishing, Modern Language Association (MLA) used primarily in the academic world, American Psychological Association (APA) used in the social sciences and Turabian used in preparation of theses and other research.

- The website for **Purdue University's Online Writing Lab** offers thorough and extensive instructions for MLA and APA styles: owl.english.purdue.edu.

When your student needs help with the mechanics of organizing a paper, grammar or punctuation:

You can find grammar guides on the library shelves in Dewey Decimal sections **428.2-428.24** and in **808.042**. Here are two especially useful guides that combine grammar instruction with helpful directions for how to structure a research paper or essay:

- **Writers INC: A Student Handbook for Writing & Learning (print):** A good introduction to writing effectively. Appropriate for middle grades and high school. Dewey Decimal number **808.02 SEB**.
- **Little, Brown Handbook (print):** Similar to *Writers INC*, but more comprehensive. This book is often used as a text for introductory writing classes in community colleges. A good resource for high school juniors and seniors. Dewey Decimal number **808.042 FOW**.

If you want your student to be exposed to the kind of writing that they may be doing as upper level college students or even in graduate school, have a look at **A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers (print)** by Kate L. Turabian. Don't be intimidated by the title. This book, which is commonly referred to simply as "Turabian," is a model of clarity. Dewey Decimal number **808.06 TUR**.

If you can't make it to the library, **Purdue University's Online Writing Lab** (owl.english.purdue.edu) provides excellent guidance. Select the General Writing tab on the left side of the page for help with the mechanics of writing, grammar and punctuation.

When your student needs a good dictionary:

Worthington Libraries offers English language dictionaries for every age and ability in the Dewey Decimal number **423**. For online dictionaries, go to the "Research" tab on worthingtonlibraries.org, and click on "Dictionaries and Encyclopedias" in the drop-down menu. Here you will find dictionaries for almost every topic. Two of the most notable are:

- **Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary Online:** One of the most popular English language dictionaries in print is available online and completely searchable. Features include sample illustrations, etymologies, quotations and over 250,000 main entries.
- **Oxford English Dictionary (also known as the OED):** The Oxford English Dictionary Online contains the complete text of the 20-volume print set, making it one of the most comprehensive online guides to the meaning, history and pronunciation of English words. Need to know how the meaning of a word has changed since Shakespeare's time? This is the source. If your student hasn't already been asked to look something up in the OED, they almost certainly will in college.

When your student needs a foreign language dictionary:

Foreign language dictionaries can be found on Worthington Libraries' shelves in the Dewey Decimal numbers **433-499.99**.

Bilingual dictionaries for the following languages can be found online through the library's **Credo Reference: Bilingual Dictionaries:** French, German, Spanish, Greek, Irish, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, Welsh and Polish.

The **501 Verbs** books for many languages, published by Barron's Educational Series, are tremendously helpful guides that list the complete conjugations of verbs in all their tenses. No more agonizing over the conjugation of the third person plural past perfect tense in French when you are slogging through a long assignment. These books are found among the foreign dictionaries in the Dewey Decimal numbers **433-499.99**.

NOTE: Worthington Libraries' language resources include audio CDs and online lessons. However, these instructional programs teach rudimentary conversational skills, primarily for travelers, and are not intended for students pursuing a systematic language curriculum.

When your student is looking for a science fair project:

Worthington Libraries owns a wide selection of books designed to help students devise their own science fair projects. These can be found in both the children's and adult's nonfiction sections under the Dewey Decimal number **507.8**. Titles include *100 Award-Winning Science Fair Projects*, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Science Fair Projects*, *Science in the Kitchen*, *Scientific American Great Science Fair Projects* and *46 Science Fair Projects for the Evil Genius*, plus many more. These books are in high demand during science fair time, so reserve your copy early.

When your student needs to convert a measurement from one unit to another:

- **Credo Reference: Conversions:** This nifty online tool converts measurements of area, distance, energy, fuel consumption, power, speed, temperature, volume and weight. You can even specify up to six digits of decimal precision.

Conversion guides can also be found in the library's math section, which is Dewey Decimal number **530.81**.

When your student needs an explanation of a math concept:

When your words fail, try these websites:

- **KhanAcademy.org:** With videos explaining everything from basic math operations to algebra and calculus, this website is for math students of all ages. It also offers practice questions for students to test what they know.
- **AlgebraHelp.com:** This website offers text articles and sample problems that explain algebra concepts. Students can also test what they know by completing online practice questions, checking the answers and viewing a step-by-step example of how the question is correctly answered.
- **MathWorld.wolfram.com:** This website acts as an online math dictionary for higher level math concepts. With thorough articles that include images and formulas or equations, this resource is useful to high school students.
- **mathforum.org/dr.math:** The "Browse the Archive" section is particularly helpful.

When your student needs to find out about a specific job or profession:

Students are sometimes asked to report on a specific job or occupation. One source, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, can usually provide all the necessary information. For hundreds of occupations, the handbook lists the median pay, education level required, on-the-job training requirements, the job outlook and descriptions of the job duties, work environment and similar occupations. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is available in the Dewey Decimal number **331.7 OCC** and online from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: bls.gov/ooh.

When your student needs to quickly confirm a date or other basic information:

Sometimes the best way to find out a little information - without having to sort through a lot of extraneous material - is to look up the subject in a good encyclopedia.

Worthington Libraries owns a large selection of print encyclopedias for all grade levels, including subject-specific encyclopedias in the areas of science, social sciences and the humanities. Many can be checked out.

In addition, the Library offers general and subject-specific encyclopedias through online databases. For online encyclopedias, go to the "Research" tab at worthingtonlibraries.org, and click on "Dictionaries and Encyclopedias" in the drop-down menu.

When your student is studying for an AP (Advanced Placement) exam:

Worthington Libraries has a wide selection of test prep books for AP exams. To search the catalog, do a keyword search with "Advanced Placement" plus the name of the test. For example, "Advanced Placement calculus" will bring up test prep books published by Barron's, Princeton Review and Peterson's.

- **LearningExpress Library:** The online database LearningExpress Library offers practice tests, review materials and scoring for the following AP subjects: Biology, Calculus AB, Chemistry, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, European History, U.S. Government and U.S. History. Click on the "College Preparation" tab in LearningExpress Library to open the Advanced Placement Tests section.

When your student is preparing for the PSAT, SAT or ACT:

Worthington Libraries offers a wide selection of test prep books for the PSAT and college entrance exams by publishers such as Barron's, Princeton Review, Peterson's and Kaplan. Print versions of these test prep courses are located under the Dewey Decimal number **378.1664** on library shelves.

- **LearningExpress Library:** This online database offers practice tests, review materials and scoring for the PSAT, SAT and ACT college entrance exams. Click on the "College Preparation" tab. Be sure to click on the various test headings in order to access the actual practice tests and study guides.

When all else fails and it's 11 p.m. on a school night...

Librarians across Ohio are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help answer your questions through the online **KnowItNow** reference service. Reference questions can include anything from statistics for business presentations to travel and historical information. Students can also ask for help with homework assignments and research projects. When finished, you'll be e-mailed a transcript that includes links to all the resources highlighted during your session. Please be sure to include your email address in your online communication. Access KnowItNow from the "Research" tab, "All research databases A-Z," on Worthington Libraries' website.



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Find help here.
worthingtonlibraries.org

