

# Writer's Guide

## Table of Contents

<b>I. Formatting Basics</b>	<b>1</b>
A. Author/Assignment Information	1
B. Bindings/Covers	1
C. Cover Pages	1
D. Font	2
E. Graphics	2
F. Indenting and Spacing	2
G. Line-Spacing	2
H. Margins	2
I. Paper	2
J. Title	2
K. Type Size	2
<b>II. Quoting Sources / Avoiding Plagiarism</b>	<b>2</b>
A. When You Need to Cite a Source	3
B. Quoting a Source	3
C. Paraphrasing a Source	4
D. How to Put Quotes in a Sentence	5
<b>III. Citations Within the Paper</b>	<b>5</b>
A. Guide to Parenthetical Citations	5
<b>IV. The Works Cited Page</b>	<b>6</b>
A. Formatting the Works Cited Page	6
B. Basic Rules for Works Cited Citations	7
C. Sample Works Cited Page Entries	7
1. Books	7
2. Periodical	8
3. Electronic Source (Internet)	8
4. Miscellaneous Sources	9
<b>V. Sample Essay</b>	<b>11</b>

# Writer's Guide

## I. FORMATTING BASICS

Although you will be asked to complete many different writing tasks at Natomas Charter School, there are certain basic principles of formatting (setting up your paper) that apply to all forms of writing. Unless specifically told otherwise by your instructor, all writing assignments should meet the following basic formatting requirements:

### **A. Author/Assignment Information**

All written assignments should include the following information: your name, subject/period, and date. This information should be at the top of the first page, single-spaced, aligned to the right side. For example:

**William K. Miller  
U.S. History/Period 2  
May 13, 2002**

### **B. Bindings/Covers**

No report binders or covers should be used unless specifically required by the teacher. All papers should be stapled once in the upper left-hand corner.

### **C. Cover Pages**

In general, papers under five pages in length should not have a cover page; instead, they should follow the directions given for Author/Assignment Information given above. If a paper does require a formal cover (i.e., a term paper), it should be completed as follows: Title, author, class, school, teacher, date. All of this information should be centered. For example:

**Confessions from the Dark:  
The Struggles of Kurt Cobain**

**by**

**William K. Miller**

**English 11/Period 2  
Natomas Charter School  
Ms. Bertha Smith  
May 13, 2002**

**D. Font**

Papers should be written in an easily readable font (character style). While it may look “cool” to use fancy fonts (such as *Apple Chancery* or **Impact**), they are hard on the reader’s eyes; therefore, you should use basic fonts such as Times, or Times New Roman. **Furthermore, all papers should be printed in black ink only.**

**E. Graphics**

In general, graphics (such as clip art, scanned images, downloaded images, etc.) should not be included in written assignments unless they are directly referred to in the paper; in other words, graphics should never be included merely to make an assignment “pretty.” If graphics are to be included, they should be placed in an appendix at the end of the paper.

**F. Indenting and Spacing**

The first sentence of all paragraphs should be indented ten spaces. All punctuation (periods, commas, colons, semicolons, etc.) should be followed by a space before the next word begins.

**G. Line-spacing**

All typed papers should be double-spaced. The only exceptions to this rule are blocked quotes (see III, A), works cited page, and author/assignment information.

**H. Margins**

Unless otherwise specified, all papers should have one-inch margins all around (left, right, top and bottom).

**I. Paper**

All assignments should be printed on standard 8.5” x 11” white paper.

**J. Title**

All papers should include a title. This should be centered above the first body paragraph. The title should be no larger than 16-point type size, and should be no more than two lines long. Titles **should not** be underlined, and **should not** be the same as the subject of your paper (for example, if you are writing a paper about *Romeo and Juliet*, you should not entitle your paper “Romeo and Juliet”—obviously, that title has already been used).

**K. Type Size**

All papers should be printed in 10 or 12 point type size. This should be consistent throughout the body of the paper. Titles may be printed in a larger size, but no larger than 16 point.

## II. QUOTING SOURCES/AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Nearly every written assignment you undertake will require (or at least encourage) research of one kind or another (ranging from formal, library-style research, to informal cultural literacy). **Please be aware that research conducted via the Internet falls under the same rules! It is never allowable to simply copy and paste information without proper citation!** Incorporating research into your written work correctly can be a difficult and confusing task; furthermore, using research incorrectly can lead to the serious academic offense of plagiarism, and result in disciplinary action. The NCS-PFAA Student Handbook definition of plagiarism:

Simply stated, plagiarism is the “taking of others’ thoughts or words without due acknowledgment” (*Random House Handbook*). This definition is applied to both published and unpublished material. **When borrowing any idea or phrases of more than three words, appropriate documentation must be offered.**

What follows are the basic guidelines you need to follow in order to use information correctly, and avoid plagiarism.

### A. When you Need to Cite a Source

When you use facts or ideas from the works of other writers (including information found on the Internet), you must cite the sources of your information—if you fail to do this, you will be guilty of plagiarism. Types of information whose sources must be cited generally fall into one of two categories:

1. **Statistics** (i.e., sales of Nirvana’s *Nevermind* compact disc; percentage of handgun owners in California; comparative SAT scores).
2. **Ideas/Interpretations** (i.e., a literary critic’s interpretation of a poem; a social commentator’s ideas on gun control; a historian’s interpretation of the Civil Rights movement).

It is important to understand that **you must cite the source of any idea you use that is not your own, even if you don’t directly quote from that source!** The only exception to this rule is that you do not need to provide citations for information that is common knowledge. A few examples of statistics/ideas/interpretations that would qualify as “common knowledge” are:

Examples of information that DOES NOT NEED TO BE CITED:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Barry Bonds hit 73 homeruns in 2001.</li> <li>2. The Civil War began in 1861 and ended in 1865.</li> <li>3. California was admitted to the Union in 1850.</li> <li>4. The Hundred Years War was between England and France.</li> <li>5. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., fought for Civil Rights.</li> <li>6. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> is one of the most well-known plays in the English language.</li> <li>7. Gravity causes things to fall.</li> </ol>
---	--

In general, if all sources have the exact same information, it is considered common knowledge, and therefore does not need to be cited.

### B. Quoting a Source

To quote means to use the exact words. As a general rule, you should only quote directly from a source if:

1. The words of the original are especially memorable.
2. Paraphrasing would lose the meaning of the words.

For example, you would probably not paraphrase Hamlet’s soliloquy (“To be, or not to be: that is the question...”) for both of the reasons listed above. Similarly, if referring to Lincoln’s Gettysburgh Address (“Four-score and seven years ago...”), it would be appropriate to quote directly from the speech.

On the other hand, it is not necessary to quote statistics directly—instead, statistics should generally be paraphrased. For example, you would not quote the following statistic from the 2000 Census of the United States directly:

**Between 1990 and 2000, 538 households surpassed \$1 billion in net-worth, while 121 households saw their fortunes slip below the \$1 billion threshold.**

Such a statement would best be paraphrased, as in the following example:

**According to statistics released by the United States Census Bureau in 2002, more than 500 American families became billionaires, while less than a quarter of that number fell out of the elite \$1 billion club (2000 Census of the United States, 58).**

### C. Paraphrasing a Source

To paraphrase means to restate something in your own words. The following example of proper and an improper paraphrasing is taken from the Writing Tutorial Services of Indiana University ([www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html)):

Here is the ORIGINAL text, from page 1 of *Lizzie Borden: A Case Book of Family and Crime in the 1890s* by Joyce Williams et al.:

The rise of industry, the growth of cities, and the expansion of the population were the three great developments of late nineteenth century American history. As new, larger, steam-powered factories became a feature of the American landscape in the East, they transformed farm hands into industrial laborers, and provided jobs for a rising tide of immigrants. With industry came urbanization the growth of large cities (like Fall River, Massachusetts, where the Bordens lived) which became the centers of production as well as of commerce and trade.

#### Here is an ACCEPTABLE paraphrase that is not plagiarism:

Fall River, where the Borden family lived, was typical of northeastern industrial cities of the nineteenth century. Steam-powered production had shifted labor from agriculture to manufacturing, and as immigrants arrived in the US, they found work in these new factories. As a result, populations grew, and large urban areas arose. Fall River was one of these manufacturing and commercial centers (Williams 1).

#### Why is this passage acceptable?

This is acceptable paraphrasing because the writer:

1. Accurately relays the information in the original
2. Uses her own words.
3. Lets her reader know the source of her information.

#### Here is an UNACCEPTABLE paraphrase that is plagiarism:

The increase of industry, the growth of cities, and the explosion of the population were three large factors of nineteenth century America. As steam-driven companies became more visible in the eastern part of the country, they changed farm hands into factory workers and provided jobs for the large wave of immigrants. With industry came the growth of large cities like Fall River where the Bordens lived which turned into centers of commerce and trade as well as production.

#### What makes this passage plagiarism?

The preceding passage is considered plagiarism for two reasons:

1. The writer has only changed around a few words and phrases, or changed the order of the original sentences.
2. The writer has failed to cite a source for any of the ideas or facts.

**If you do either of these things, you are plagiarizing!**

**NOTE:** This paragraph is also problematic because it changes the sense of several sentences (for example, “steam-driven companies” in sentence two misses the original’s emphasis on factories).

#### D. Guide for Quotations in the Paper or “How to put quotes into sentences”

Using quotes can be a difficult task; however, there are some simple guidelines to help you with integrating quotes into your own sentences. First, quotes should not stand-alone or just drop out of the sky. Even though you as the writer are presenting someone else’s ideas, you need to integrate a quote into your own sentence. Also, keep in mind that because quotations are someone else’s ideas you should follow a quote with at least a sentence of your own which explains or suggests the importance of the quote. Following are the four main ways to insert quotes into your work:

1. As Kurt Cobain’s mother wrote, “Kurt practiced his screaming and his guitar playing for hours every day” (Smith 9).
2. Kurt Cobain’s mother wrote that, “Kurt practiced his screaming and his guitar playing for hours every day” (Smith 9).
3. As a young boy, Kurt Cobain was very dedicated: “Kurt practiced his screaming and his guitar playing for hours every day” (Smith 9).
4. Kurt Cobain “practiced his screaming and his guitar playing for hours every day” (Smith 9).

Keep in mind that if your quotation is more than four lines of text, it should be single-spaced and indented 15 spaces. If this is the case, you do not need to use quotation marks. Example:

Kurt Cobain’s guitar playing began early in his life. His mother wrote that:

Kurt practiced his screaming and his guitar playing for hours every day. Actually, our neighbors really disliked his playing and his voice. One of them was never quite sure if Kurt’s music was music at all. One day this neighbor called the police and reported an electrical explosion and terrible noise. It turned out that Kurt was just practicing a new song (Smith 9).

### III. CITATIONS WITHIN THE PAPER OR PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS

Whenever you integrate someone else’s ideas into your paper (either through paraphrasing or quoting) you need to provide two types of documentation:

1. **Directly following the quote or paraphrase in the paper**, you need to provide the author’s name (or the title of the work if there is no author) and the page number (or paragraph number) in a **parenthetical citation**. For guidelines on parenthetical citation see below.
2. For each outside source used in your paper you need to provide a complete listing of the source information in a **Works Cited Page**. For guidelines on a works cited page see section four.

#### A. Guide for Parenthetical Citations or “How to put citations in your paper”

Except for rare occasions, you need to provide the citation for a quote within the paper itself. The guidelines that follow are based on **Modern Language Association** or **M.L.A.** format. If you are seeking a guide for a type of source that is not listed here, consult a complete M.L.A. guide available at libraries or bookstores. Or you can seek the assistance of the Writing Tutorial Services of Indiana University at <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/resources.html>, or ask your instructor.

Generally, the citation should include the author’s last name and the page number(s) of the quote. **The citation or reference goes inside parenthesis, after the quotation marks and before the period concluding the sentence. Example:**

As Kurt Cobain’s mother wrote, “Kurt practiced his screaming and his guitar playing for hours every day” (Smith 9).

**When using more than one work by the same author, include a short form of the title (italicized or underlined) along with the author's name. Example:**

As Kurt Cobain's mother wrote, "Kurt practiced his screaming and his guitar playing for hours every day" (Smith, *Cobain's Past* 9).

**Example for a quotation that is more than four lines of text:**

Kurt Cobain's guitar playing began early in his life. His mother wrote that:

Kurt practiced his screaming and his guitar playing for hours every day. Actually, our neighbors really disliked his playing and his voice. One of them was never quite sure if Kurt's music was music at all. One day this neighbor called the police and reported an electrical explosion and terrible noise. It turned out that Kurt was just practicing a new song (Smith 9).

**Most websites have the author listed. If this is the case include the author's name and the page or paragraph number of the quote in your parenthetical reference. Example:**

Ex-Nirvana drummer Dave Grohl claimed on his web page that playing with Cobain "taught him about fame, fortune, and the cost of rock fame" (Grohl, par. 4).

**Many types of works do not have authors or page numbers. These include some films, TV series, advertisements and some electronic sources. For these works simply place an abbreviated version of the title in the parenthesis and include a paragraph number or page number if available. This will indicate to the reader where to find the complete reference in the works cited page. Examples:**

**A website without an author:**

A fan of Cobain's once claimed she saw him, "crying over a burger at Burger King because he was so happy to have it his way" ("Rock Encounters" par. 3).

**A television show:**

Cobain once made a guest appearance on the X-Files and stated, "I wrote 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' after I had been abducted by aliens who tested deodorants on me" ("X-Files").

**If the author's name is identified in your sentence you do not need to repeat it in your citation, instead just include the page number. Example:**

In his autobiography of Cobain, Larry Smith argued that "Cobain's genius existed in his ability to connect his personal struggle with depression to the common teenager's feelings of angst" (90).

## IV. THE WORKS CITED PAGE

In addition to citing your sources inside the text of your paper, **you also need to provide a "works cited" page at the end of your paper.**

### **A. FORMATTING THE WORKS CITED PAGE:**

-Your works cited page should begin on a separate page from your essay or paper text. Title this page Works Cited. The title should have no quotation marks or underlining and should be centered at the top of the page.

- A works cited page is an alphabetical listing (based on the last name of the authors) of all the different works you have used in your paper.
- The first line of a works cited entry is flush against the left margin, and the following lines of that entry are indented one tab (5 spaces).
- Each individual entry should be single spaced; but place a double space between entries.

## **B. BASIC RULES FOR WORKS CITED PAGE CITATIONS:**

- Authors should be listed last name first. If there is more than one author the entry should begin with the name of the first author listed on the title page, last name first. The remaining authors are listed in normal order.
- If no author is given for a work, alphabetize and begin the entry with the title of the work.
- Italicize or underline titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and films.
- Use quotation marks around the titles of articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers. Also use quotation marks for the titles of short stories, book chapters, poems, and songs.
- List page numbers in an efficient manner. If you make reference to pages 250 through 275 in a book, list the page numbers as pages 250-275.

## **C. SAMPLE WORKS CITED PAGE ENTRIES**

What follows is a listing of the proper means to cite common sources of information in a works cited page. Each type of work that you need to provide references to has a different method of citation. The guide that follows is based on **Modern Language Association** or **M.L.A.** format. If you are seeking a guide for a type of source that is not listed here, consult a complete M.L.A. guide available at libraries or bookstores. Or you can seek the assistance of the Writing Tutorial Services of Indiana University at <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/resources.html>. or consult your instructor.

### **1. BOOKS:**

#### **A works cited page for a book contains the following information:**

- The author's full name, last name first, followed by a period and one space;
- The full title of the book, italicized or underlined, followed by a period and one space;
- The city of publication, followed by a colon and one space;
- The name of the publisher, followed by a comma and one space;
- The date of publication, followed by a period.

#### **BOOK BY ONE AUTHOR: Sample:**

Smith, Miles. *Cobain's Past: He Always Smelled Like Teen Spirit*. New York: Newsday Press, 1999.

**BOOK WITH TWO OR MORE AUTHORS:** This entry should begin with the name of the first author listed on the title page, last name first. The remaining authors are listed in normal order. **Sample:**

Love, Courtney, and William Shakespeare. *The Nirvana in Nirvana's Music*. London: Fictional Press, 2000.

**MULTIPLE BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR:** If your works cited page includes more than one book by the same author, you should use three dashes followed by a period and one space(—.) in the place of the author's name in each entry after the first. The books should be listed in alphabetical order arranged the first main word in the work's title. **Sample:**

Smith, Miles. *Cobain's Past: He Always Smelled of Teen Spirit*. New York: Newsday Press, 1999.  
—-. *The Foo-Fighters: Nirvana Light or Grohl's Grunge?* New York: Newsday Press, 2001.

**EDITED BOOK WITHOUT AN AUTHOR:** This entry should begin with the name of the editor listed on the title page, last name first. The remaining information is listed in normal order. **Sample:**

Castro, Fidel, ed. *The United States: A History*. Havana: Socialist Press Books, 2001.

**EDITED BOOK WITH AN AUTHOR:** This entry should begin with the name of the author, last name first. The title of the work is next, followed by the editor's name, with the first name of the editor listed first. The remaining information is listed in normal order. **Sample:**

Helms, Jesse. *The United States Versus Cuba: 40 Years of Tension*. Ed. Strom Thurmond. Washington: Congressional Press, 2000.

## 2. PERIODICALS: JOURNALS, MAGAZINES, AND NEWSPAPERS

**A works cited page citation for a periodical contains the following information:**

- The author's full name, last name first, followed by a period and one space;
- The full title of the article, in quotation marks followed by a period and one space;
- Publication information:
  - The title of the periodical, italicized or underlined, (omit any A, An, or The from the beginning of the title) followed by one space,
  - The volume and/or issue number followed by one space,
  - The date of publication, followed by a colon and one space,
  - The inclusive page numbers of the article followed by a period.

**ARTICLE FROM A MAGAZINE OR JOURNAL: Sample:**

Jackson, Michael. "Unimpressive Impressionism." *Art Critic* November 2000: 849-861.

**DAILY NEWSPAPER: Sample:**

Starr, Kenneth. "Britney Aguilera Should Have Gone Through Music Program at Natomas Charter School." *Sacramento Bee* 24 March 2000: C3.

## 3. ELECTRONIC SOURCES

**A works cited page citation for an internet or electronic source contains the following information:**

- The author's full name, last name first, followed by a period and one space (if the website does not have a clear author, then begin the entry and alphabetize it by its title);
- The full title of the source, in quotation marks followed by a period and one space;
- The date of the work, copyright, or update followed by a period and one space;
- The date you accessed the work followed by a period and one space;
- The web address followed by a period.

**A PROFESSIONAL WEBSITE: Sample:**

Talese, Gay. "Bridging New York." 2002. 22 July 2002. [http://www.pbs.org/greatprojects/interviews/talese\\_1.html](http://www.pbs.org/greatprojects/interviews/talese_1.html).

**A SCHOLARLY WEBSITE: Sample:**

"Key Events in CIA's History." University of North Michigan Political History Department, 1998. 11 November 1998. <http://www.nmi.edu/hist/polhist/cia/>.

**A PERSONAL WEBSITE: Sample:**

Vain, Iamso. Home page. 7 July 2002. 12 August 2002. <http://www.iamsoovain.com/>.

**A PERSONAL EMAIL:** For this entry you need to include the name of the sender of the email, the sender's email address, the title or subject line of the email, the date it was received, and indicate that it was an email. **Sample:**

Presley, Elvis. [hounddog@mysteryserver.com](mailto:hounddog@mysteryserver.com). "I am still alive." 31 October 2001. Personal email.

**CD ROM: Sample:**

Monster, Cookie, ed. *The New Sesame Street Cookie Cookbook*. CD-ROM. New York, Children's Television Press, 2001.

**NEWSPAPER OR PERIODICAL ARTICLE FROM AN ONLINE SOURCE:**

For this entry, provide the citation information you would for a print based newspaper or magazine article, and then indicate that the source was an online source and add the required information for an electronic source. **Sample:**

Wiegand, Steve. "Internet Medicine Trips Up Doctor." *Sacramento Bee* 22 July 2002. 23 July 2002. <http://www.sacbee.com/content/news/story/3677195p-4703018c.html>.

**4. MISCELLANEOUS SOURCES:**

**FILM:** For this entry you need to include the title of the film (italicized or underlined), the director's name, the film's distributor and the date of the initial release. **Sample:**

*Star Wars*. Dir. George Lucas. Universal, 1977.

**SOUND RECORDING:** For this entry you need to begin with the name of the individual whose work you are citing. If you are giving the title of the song, give the title in quotation marks. Then provide the title of the recording (italicized or underlined), the manufacturer of the recording, and the date of release. **Sample:**

U2, "MLK." *The Unforgettable Fire*. Island Records, INC., 1984.

**A WORK OF VISUAL ART:** For this entry begin with the name of the individual who created the work of art. Then give the title of the artwork (italicized or underlined), and the name and the location of the owner. If you viewed the work **personally at the location of its owner** (museum, personal collection, or gallery) then you need not provide any more information.

**Sample:**

Sargent, John Singer. *Venetian Doorway*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

If you are referencing a photograph or duplication of the work **in a text collection** then you need to provide the complete information for that collection. **Sample:**

Sargent, John Singer. *Venetian Doorway*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.  
*Sargent Watercolors*. By Donelson F. Hoopes. New York: Watson Press, 1976. 31.

If you are referencing a photograph or duplication of the work **from an internet source** then you need to provide the complete information for that collection. **Sample:**

De Kooning, William. *Untitled*. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco.  
 “William de Kooning: Tracing the Figure.” 2002. 22 July 2002. [http://www.sfmoma.org/exhibitions/exhib\\_detail.asp?id=76](http://www.sfmoma.org/exhibitions/exhib_detail.asp?id=76).

**INTERVIEWS:** For an interview you conducted personally, begin with the name of the person interviewed, last name first, followed by a period and one space. Then indicate personal interview, telephone interview, or email interview, followed by a comma; then give the date, followed by a period.  
**Sample:**

Silveira, William. Personal Interview, Sacramento, California, 4 January 2001.

For an interview you read, heard, or saw, but did not conduct personally, begin with the name of the person interviewed, last name first, followed by a period and one space. Then provide the title if any or “Interview” if not, along with the complete bibliographic information for the source of the interview and the date. **Sample:**

Garcia, Jerry. Interview. *Rolling Stone* November 1989: 13-17. 1989.

### **Works Cited for this Writer’s Guide:**

Aaron, Jane E. *The Little Brown Compact Handbook*. Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2001.

“Guide for Citing Electronic Sources at the Thacher School.” Thacher School, 1995.  
 22 July 2002. <http://www.thacher.org/sherman/day?vv=acadServ-lib-citing>.

“Online Writing Lab.” Purdue University, 1995-2002. 20 July 2003.  
[http://www.owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r\\_mla.html](http://www.owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r_mla.html).

“Writing Tutorial Services Library.” Indiana University, 1996. 1 August 2002.  
<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/resources.html>.

# SAMPLE ESSAY

Jeffriam Sillard  
Government/Period 5  
July 22, 2003

## **To Tuck or Not to Tuck**

A folk balladeer once observed, “Oh the times, they are a-changin’” (Dylan), a sentiment that resonates as well today as it did in the 1960s. Struggles today, as then, often revolve around questions of propriety: when is it acceptable to change the rules by which people have lived for generations? Nowhere can this argument be seen more clearly than in the debate over shirt-tucking rules at the Performing & Fine Arts Academy. While both sides in the issue provide compelling arguments to support their cases, in the end it is clear that shirt-tucking rules should be enacted and enforced at PFAA in order to meet the greater needs of society as a whole.

Those in favor of shirt-tucking rules argue that school is a de facto workplace for the students, and that they should therefore be required to meet certain standards in dress and appearance, just as they would if they were employed by a bank or a law firm. Furthermore, argue supporters, people who present a neat appearance are more likely to act in a civilized manner. According to social anthropologist Dr. Dean A. Lasher in his book *Clothing and its Affect on Personality*, studies indicate that the way a person dresses affects the way he interacts with those around him. Lasher writes, “A person wearing a red ball on his nose and shoes the size of small boats will almost invariably act like a clown.” Furthermore, Lasher contends, “people who always tuck in their shirts act kindly toward others, and score far higher on standardized tests” (154). Other supporters of shirt-tucking rules cite safety and health considerations. According to

statistics compiled by the World Health Organization, untucked shirts accounted for more than two-thirds of the nearly 40,000 cases of accidental hangings in 1996 (17). Similarly, the American Medical Association has endorsed shirt-tucking rules in the grounds that those who leave their shirts untucked are five times more likely to suffer from pneumonia, flu and other sicknesses due to inadequate protection against the elements (87).

Despite the obvious credentials of those who argue in favor of shirt-tucking rules, many people argue against the need for such requirements. In her landmark study entitled *Is Clothing Really Necessary?*, psychologist Dr. Perky Emilanius argued that adolescents are by nature rebellious, and that they should be given innocuous outlets for rebellious behavior:

Leaving shirts untucked, shoes untied, zippers unzipped, and toenails unclipped is for many young adults the only means by which they can express their individuality. To deny them these simple acts of defiance would only push them toward overt acts of insubordination, such as not doing homework or, in extreme cases, listening to rap music (124).

Other opponents of shirt-tucking rules argue that making people tuck in their shirts infringes upon their basic right to freedom of expression, and claim that people should have the right “to leave their shirts untucked to the point where another person’s belly-button begins” (Holmes 2). Simpler arguments against shirt-tucking rules include the need for ventilation (on hot days it is sometimes necessary to let a little air in); wearing tight pants (having to tuck in a shirt makes them tighter); and covering buttocks (some believe that hanging a shirt over one’s buttocks hides it from view).

After careful consideration and reflection, it is clear that students should be required to tuck in their shirts while at school. Students must play their part--no matter how small--in making the learning environment more productive and conducive to intellectual growth. Tuck-

ing in their shirts makes students sit up straight in class and pay attention more closely to their teachers. Despite Emilanius's statements to the contrary, leaving one's shirt untucked is more a sign of slovenliness than rebellion. As Mr. Hand explained to Jeff Spicolli in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, "To be slovenly in the comfort of one's own home is one thing; to invade the hallowed halls of academia with a slovenly appearance and attitude only detracts from the educational process" (*Fast Times*). Although Holmes makes a compelling argument, his point is moot, since the Performing & Fine Arts Academy is a Charter School, and both parents and students voluntarily sign agreements stating that they will abide by the rules of the school (dress code and all).

While the foregoing opinion may not be popular with many people, it is important to distinguish between legitimate self-expression and the larger needs of society. When Dylan wrote about the changing times, he was referring to much larger issues (such as war and racism) than tucking in shirts. Change is not, in and of itself, necessarily a good thing; sometimes a line needs to be drawn between what is best for society and what is appealing to the individual. In the case of tucking in shirts while at school, it is clear that self-expression should acquiesce to the needs of society as a whole.

## Works Cited

- “Clothing and Death: A Comprehensive Study.” World Health Organization. 2002. 15 July, 2003. <http://www.who.org/clothing/sickness.html>.
- “Clothing and Disease: What You Don’t Wear Can Hurt You.” *Journal of the American Medical Association* Fall 1996: 84-92.
- Dylan, Bob. “The Times They Are A-Changin’.” *The Times They Are A-Changin’*. Columbia Records, 1964
- Emilanius, Dr. Perky. *Is Clothing Really Necessary?* Dover: University of Delaware Press, 1997.
- Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. Dir. Amy Heckerling. Universal Pictures, 1982.
- Holmes, Larry. “Tyson v. Holyfield: Majority Opinion.” *Major Supreme Court Cases of the Twentieth Century*. 1999. 17 July, 2003. <http://www.court.com/social-law/self-expression/tysonv.holyfield/major-op.html>.
- Lasher, Dr. Dean. *Clothing and its Affects on Personality*. Sacramento: Natomas Press, 2001.