

WRITING FOR INQUIRY AND RESEARCH

EDITED BY JEFFREY KESSLER, MARK BENNETT, AND SARAH PRIMEAU



Writing for Inquiry and Research

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*Edited by Jeffrey Kessler, Mark Bennett, and Sarah
Primeau*

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Preface

Writing for Inquiry and Research brings together the expertise of its authors and editors while also compiling a wide range of additional OERs for students and instructors to use in the writing process. While it covers major writing projects for a research paper-based course, it is meant to give as much flexibility as possible to instructors and students, depending on the requirements of a specific course. There are some limits to the topics and writing issues addressed. The text does not offer extensive details about research methods, databases, plagiarism, and emerging writing technologies. New writing technologies, like AI-driven large language models, may have a place in the writing process in the future, but those resources will inevitably evolve with those technologies in the future. The editors and authors maintain that writing is a human-based activity, regardless of the technologies and tools employed. In addition, the editors and authors have decided not to include extensive examples of student writing assignments. We did not want instructors and students to feel beholden to specific iterations of these genres, nor did we want to allow a handful of examples to limit the range of possibilities for writing and teaching them.

Writing for Inquiry and Research is an open electronic resource (OER) designed by First-Year Writing faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago. This project was made possible by a grant from the University of Illinois at Chicago Libraries. Jeffrey Kessler, Mark Bennett, and Sarah Primeau proposed the project and served as editors. Virginia Costello wrote the Annotated Bibliography chapter. Jeffrey Kessler wrote the Proposal and Research Essay chapters. Charitianne Williams wrote the Literature Review chapter. Annie Armstrong wrote each of the Library Referral sections. Mark Schoeknecht and Jennifer Torres served as research assistants on the project and also compiled the appendices. The book was written and edited during the summer and fall of 2022. It was prepared in Pressbooks and benefited from feedback from instructors and students during spring 2023.

Writing for Inquiry and Research was a communal effort among the editors, authors, librarians, research assistants, faculty, and students who contributed and offered feedback. We would like to thank as many of them as possible: Ben Aldred, Amanda Bohne, Mark Brand, Peter Coviello, Paula Dempsey, Lisa Freeman, Jeff Gore, Glenda Insua, Jennifer Jackson, Noah Kaplan, Anna Kornbluh, Anna Kozlowska, Cathy Lantz, Teresa Helena

Moreno, Nasser Mufti, Karen Leick, Amy Liu, Heather O’Leary, Kousuke Sasaki, Doug Sheldon, Janet Swatscheno, Daniel Tracy, Mary Ton, Catherine Vlahos, and Jeff Wheeler.

Introduction

This textbook will help guide you through the process of writing a college-level research paper. While there are many approaches and strategies for doing so, this textbook will divide the process into four different writing projects:

- an annotated bibliography
- a research proposal
- a literature review
- a research essay

Each of these projects is a distinct genre that you will likely encounter in different academic disciplines and professions outside of a composition classroom.

Our goal is to give you a broad sense of these genres as separate but closely connected steps in the research process. Taken together, these projects will give you a strong foundation in research writing, with an eye towards how research writing skills fit within other disciplines and professions.

We hope that this textbook and the resources it gathers will help you feel more confident about your writing as you learn the steps of the research process.

I. Guiding Principles

You will notice some specific choices and themes throughout the chapters of the book. They have informed the authors, editors, librarians, and instructors who helped assemble it. In this section, we lay out those key guiding principles.

Research is a Conversation

When we engage in research, we contribute to an existing topic or discussion. According

to Joseph Moxley and Grace Veach, for centuries, scholars have imagined research and argumentative writing much like a conversation (2021). A conversation is a cooperative activity between two or more people, and each conversation is unique to the people who take part in it. Conversations can go on for hours, days, or even decades among different participants who may come and go, and those conversations develop a unique tone, history, and shared knowledge and assumptions.

An essential part of the research process involves familiarizing yourself with the conversation surrounding your topic: the key voices, facts, ideas, and conventions. As you learn more about whatever topic you research, you will enter into this conversation, refining your own voice as you determine what you will contribute to that conversation.

This is one of the guiding metaphors in composition studies and a guiding principle in this book. When we write, we engage with the ideas of others by listening to what they have said before us. After getting a clear sense of what has been said, we can add something new to the ongoing conversation by placing our ideas in relation to those who have come before us. Our contribution is not the end of the conversation, but rather part of its ongoing engagement with complex ideas and issues.

Here is a short video from the Oklahoma State University Libraries that highlights the importance of thinking about research as a conversation: [Watch the video “Inform Your Thinking Episode 1: Research Is a Conversation.”](#)

Open Access is Collaborative

This book is an Open Electronic Resource, or OER. OERs are free, open access educational materials. Whether this is a text assigned for your class or an additional resource you have sought out on your own, we are committed to keeping this material free and accessible to all. Here is a link to [Creative Commons](#), where you can learn more about open access materials.

Not only do OERs make educational material easier to access, they also encourage collaboration among students and educators. This textbook is the product of several authors, editors, librarians, and research assistants, along with feedback from countless students and instructors.

Throughout, we have included additional OER materials linked throughout the chapters and appendices, including images, infographics, and videos. Just as the research process is joining a conversation, we see the composition classroom as a collaborative space for sharing ideas, educational materials, and writing strategies. We hope you benefit from learning alongside these resources as much as we did from incorporating them into the book.

Genres are Determined by Rhetorical Expectations

This text focuses on the genres you will be writing in your courses and key components in the process of composing them. From a sociolinguistic perspective, a “genre” is defined as a communication activity with a shared goal established prior to the event. This means that the author and audience already understand the rhetorical purpose of the text before they write or read it, even if they do not know the content. In this book, we will discuss genres that inform and document, plan and persuade, review and synthesize, debate and convince.

Each genre has a set of commonly accepted forms and structures that enact its objectives, although these will vary between communities of practice such as workplaces, academic disciplines, and cultural centers. Literature reviews in an engineering journal will look very different than literature reviews in a psychology journal, although they will share a similar purpose for their audiences and the same underlying form.

It is important to note that genres are only relatively set—as different needs arise, genres evolve to fit the new goals. Scholars have described the recognizable characteristics of genres as the “visible effects of human *action*” (Hart-Davidson, 2016, p. 39). This text focuses on the role and purposes of a genre, and discussions of form only point out the fundamental structures needed to enact these goals—always observe your context, ask your instructor, and look at examples of the genre within your chosen discipline for needed specifics.

Language Practices are Shaped by Discourse Communities

Like genre, language and language practices also change over time. Language preferences evolve within all communities, including academic and professional ones. We all know that we change the way we speak and write depending on our audience, and academic disciplines are no exception. Different fields of studies and professions have very different expectations about language practices.

For example, a common piece of advice offered to developing writers is to avoid using the passive voice (“a question *was asked*” or “a mistake *was made*”). Many teachers explain that the passive voice hides who is performing the action (who asked the question or who made the mistake). In the sciences, the passive voice might be needed for that very reason. In a lab experiment, it doesn’t matter who prepared the samples or tests, because it shouldn’t matter as long as it is done properly. You’ll likely see a lot of passive voice, like “the subjects *were given*...” and “the results *were analyzed*...,” in order to make the experiment appear as objective as possible.

For these reasons, understanding and sharing in the rhetorical practices and objectives of a community of practice can lead to mutual understanding more effectively than grammar lessons. Studies of error perception show that the kinds of errors readers notice vary widely and are highly subjective in the degree to which they affect the reader’s opinion of a writer (Boettger & Emory-Moore, 2018; Lunsford & Lunsford, 2008). You will not find prescriptive language or grammar instruction in this text. The authors of this guide uphold all students’ rights to their own choice of language practice and growth.

Writing is Knowledge-Construction and Inquiry

Writing is the tangible demonstration of thought. We don’t just write down things we know—we write to think through problems, to organize our ideas, and to make new connections and discoveries. In other words, writing is a way to create new knowledge for ourselves and others, not just a way to show others what we already understand. This is a result of the recursive nature of the research, reading, and writing process. There is a magic to discovering that a research topic even exists, that other people are interested in the same topics as you—reading the research of others helps to give our own understand-

ing of the world balance and depth. But many people—students, teachers, folks making grocery lists, or people leaving instructions for the dog-sitter—often find that they never understand a topic as much as they do *after* they have written it down.

Do not always think of your writing as a quest to write perfect sentences and paragraphs; striving to make yourself understood is well and good, but don't forget that writing is something you also do for yourself as a learner. Writing something down can inspire new ideas that lead to new research, new reading and information accumulation—and then more writing and rewriting. A part of writing is the desire to know more, to work through the logic of a problem—to *inquire*. When we say “Writing is Inquiry,” we invoke a conception of writing as exploration and discovery, and the writer as explorer and detective.

Library Referral: Research Is an Ongoing Conversation

(by Annie R. Armstrong)

You've already heard that research is a conversation. To be clear, it's not a single, “one and done” type of conversation; it's more ongoing. Maybe you start the conversation with a kernel of previous knowledge on the topic. You've looked at Wikipedia, done a quick Google search, read an article or listened to a podcast. You know just enough to start listening to the conversation. Then you talk to someone who knows a little more than you, and you realize that there are gaps that you need to fill.

So you take your research to the next level. You write down more specific questions. You turn these questions into keywords and search for articles on more specific aspects of your topic (see the link [Choosing keywords](#) for guidance). The new batch of articles leads to new ideas. You're starting to develop your expertise. Now you need to circle back to the conversation and share what you've learned, or maybe even clear up some false assumptions you made earlier on. This might seem like backtracking, but you're doing it right! The research is reforming your knowledge base and fine-tuning your questions. It's all priming you to have a more informed conversation.

II. The Research Process

If you ask anyone what the research process is like, you'll get different answers from each person you ask. This is because after a lot of trial and error, everyone finds a process that works especially well for them. Maybe right now you feel that you write your best work the night before it's due, and after interacting with this book, you'll learn that your first draft probably shouldn't be your last. There's really no perfect way to write other than to practice doing so. As you read through this book, look out for the various strategies and writing tips offered, and try them out to get a sense of what does and doesn't work for you.

One thing most people will agree on is that *research takes time*! For this reason, you'll want to set goals for your writing and keep in mind that you may have to repeat steps multiple times. For example, you may decide to revisit sources throughout your research process. When you reread these sources, keep in mind that your thesis may have altered since you last read it, and your new task is to reread it with an open mind and new goals. Give yourself time to reread sources and to decide whether they're still relevant to your work. And keep in mind that you will always have something to read—whether that be a source or your own paper when you're making revisions.

Also, keep in mind that you're always rereading and revising your own writing. The four writing projects described throughout the book are meant to build off one another, so you may find yourself repeating a lot of information or rephrasing in a new way. Although this can be a bit frustrating at times, think about each project like a conversation with a person who's just not seeing your point. It's crucial and even helpful to repeat yourself so that you can help them see your stance clearly.

Citing throughout your project is also helpful to your reader, so that they can know where your thoughts are coming from and who you're in conversation with. Citing can take some time, so try your best to figure out whether you prefer citing as you work or leaving it as a final step. However, as you'll see throughout this book, citing is a must across all the disciplines. Not only does it show that you know what you're talking about, based on your own research, but it also shows that you know how to join a conversation and acknowledge other people at the table. Keep in mind that citing also helps you avoid plagiarizing someone else's or your own work. At whichever stage of the writing process you decide to cite, leave little reminders for yourself so that you don't forget!

Research Cycle: Ideal

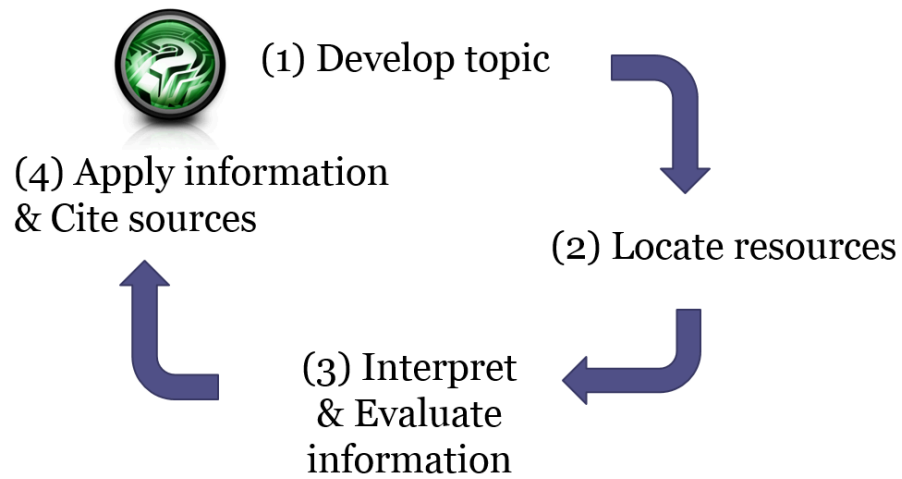


Figure 0.1: What we imagine ideal research to look like.

Research Cycle: Actual

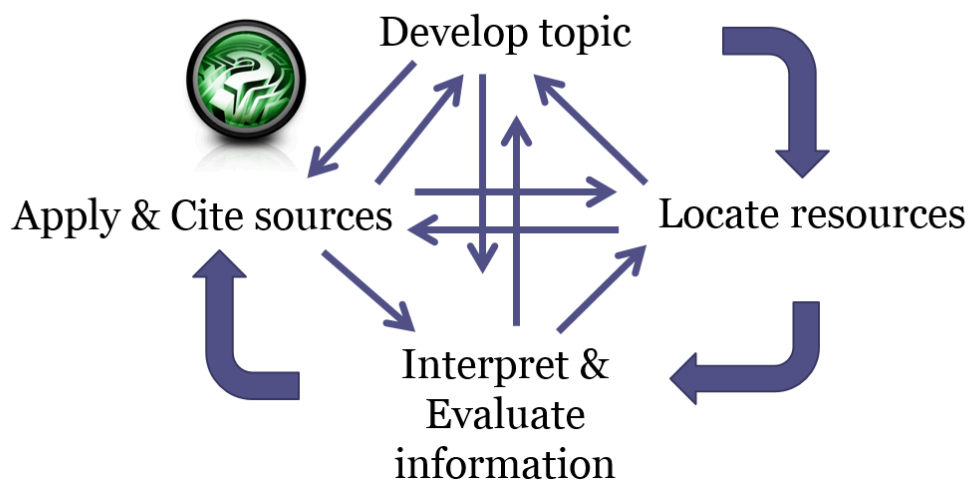


Figure 0.2: What the research cycle actually looks like: a messy and recursive process.

As you'll soon see, research is very messy, redundant, and technical. But it can also be very rewarding and fun to follow your thoughts into research, discover what you have to say, and consider who needs to hear it. Remember not to get lost in the recursiveness of the process, but instead to immerse yourself in it. You'll soon learn that the strategies and moves you make in academic writing can benefit you across all the disciplines.

How to Use Sources

Evaluating the reliability of sources can be a sticky process. In this book, we address and then move beyond the simple “reliable versus unreliable” binary. We encourage you to start by asking yourself *how* you will use the source and for what purpose.

Are you looking for a source you can use to build a logical argument about the need for the COVID-19 vaccination or boosters, for example? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, which contains information written by scientists and physicians, would be an appropriate source for scientific expertise. Or are you looking for examples of how celebrities influence their followers when it comes to understanding the vaccine? Then you might want to look at Nicki Minaj's tweet of Sept. 13th, 2021, and analyze that—not as if Minaj were a scientist who had studied infectious diseases and vaccines, but as a celebrity who has the power to quickly share her ideas with a large audience and who, it turns out, circulated inaccurate information.

This might lead you to ask a larger question about how cults of personality limit critical thinking. In that case, although the tweet itself contains inaccurate information and could be considered unreliable, you might still use it in your paper as a source. You could analyze the tweet (and the flurry of responses by fans, reporters, and government officials) as part of the larger discourse around the circulation of vaccine (dis)information. Throughout the book, we'll ask you to think about your sources like this: not just is it reliable, but in what ways can a source be put to use?

Revision

In this text, we envision research as a conversation because it encourages you to find

sources that speak to you and allow you to develop ideas that will eventually become the basis for your thesis. In other words, your job as a researcher is much more interesting and rigorous than merely gathering and presenting information. Research should not be limited to asserting your opinion and then finding evidence to support it; that's a monologue rather than a conversation. Engaging in research as a conversation means that the sources you find *inform* your views. That is, you allow sources—those you consider reliably written by authorities on the subject—to modify your position.

The recursive nature of drafting and revising your writing works much the same way. Thus, you draft an assignment, participate in peer review in class, and/or take your draft to your local writing center to get feedback. Then you revise your draft because your partner's comments and observations inform your essay. Then, perhaps, your instructor comments on your draft, which once again informs your position, and you revise.

You may repeat any number of these processes from getting peer or instructor feedback, rewriting, and researching. Repeating these steps is more common in advanced academic research and professional writing. Researchers may get feedback from colleagues or at conferences and revise their work before trying to publish it. Writers in all types of professions may need their work reviewed by team members, supervisors, technical editors, or lawyers in order to make sure they are achieving their goal.

Library Referral: Library Help

(by Annie R. Armstrong)

Libraries aren't just buildings that give you access to books and articles. They house a range of employees—including librarians—who are paid to help you with any and every aspect of the research process. As a librarian myself, I spend many more hours meeting with students on Zoom, teaching research classes, and answering questions on chat and online than I do just handling books.

Talking to students about their research is what makes my job fun and interesting. Seek us out at any point of the research process: at the beginning, when you're mulling over your topic; in the middle, when you're starting to find sources; and towards the end, when you're looking for more sources to fill in the gaps in your research or you need help with citations.

We don't expect you to come to us at any particular stage of "readiness"; we're trained to meet you where you are and figure out what might be most relevant for your research needs. We want to help make your research experience as painless and productive as we can. Most libraries offer research help both online and in person.

III. Overview of the Book

The rest of the book is divided into four chapters, one for each genre. In chapter one, you will learn about the annotated bibliography, where you will start your research and record some of your insights about the first sources you read. Chapters two and three are interchangeable: some instructors may have you switch the order of these writing projects. In chapter two, you will write a proposal, where you outline your plan to research your topic, identifying questions to ask and areas to explore. In chapter three, you will write a literature review, where you provide an overview of the main ideas, controversies, and conversations surrounding your topic.

After you have completed these three writing projects, you will have a good sense of your topic and should feel much more confident to add your own voice to the conversation by writing an argument-driven research essay. The final chapter provides strategies for structuring your argument and organizing your research for your essay. Three appendices are included at the end, with additional resources for writing, reading, and research strategies.

Each chapter has a similar structure. It provides sections that help familiarize you with the genre of each writing project:

- **Rhetorical Considerations** spotlight aspects of the genre that may need specific attention.
- **The Genre Across the Disciplines** provides real examples of the genre as you might encounter it later in your academic or professional career.
- **Research Strategies** highlight parts of the research process essential to your writing project.
- **Reading Strategies** help you navigate the often-difficult texts you might encounter

in your research, as well as help you think about how those texts might be put to use in your project.

- **Writing Strategies** offer different ways to help facilitate the writing process, giving advice about issues writers of all levels grapple with.
- **Librarian Referrals** give you practical advice from research librarians to help you find and evaluate sources (you've already seen a couple in this chapter).
- **More Resources** provide additional OER materials within the text to help you throughout the research and writing process. Additional OER materials can also be found in the appendices.

If you've never written a long research paper before, don't worry. We'll help guide you throughout the entire process. By the end of this book, you will be well-versed in your research topic. Whether you are still trying to find a topic to research or have a good idea of what you want to write about, this book will guide you through the research process and build confidence in your ability as a writer.

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I. Annotated Bibliography

VIRGINIA COSTELLO

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the rhetorical basis of the annotated bibliography genre
- Conduct academic research drawing from multiple sources in multiple media
- Write paragraphs that describe, evaluate, and/or summarize sources
- Choose discipline-appropriate citation styles and citation managers

I. Introduction

The annotated bibliography comes in various forms and serves a variety of purposes. Thus, authors might include an annotated bibliography at the end of their text to offer further reading. Advanced students might be required to produce an extended annotated bibliography before they begin their dissertation. Professionals, such as those from the Bureau of International Labor Affairs and the U.S. Department of Labor, for example, might create an annotated bibliography to inform other scholars, policy-makers, and the general public: [Addressing Labor Rights in Colombia](#). Or, more importantly for the purposes of this chapter, students might create an annotated bibliography at the preliminary stage of their research, as it serves as a foundation for a larger project, like a college-level research paper.

Writing an annotated bibliography helps researchers organize their sources and gain perspective on the larger conversation about their topic. It is a list of sources (or a bibliography) divided into two parts: The first part, the citation, contains basic information about the source, such as the author's name, the title of the work, and the date of pub-

lication. The second part contains individual paragraphs that describe, evaluate, or summarize each source.

As you will notice in the examples in this chapter, the number and type of sources (e.g., books, scholarly articles, government websites) required for an annotated bibliography vary, as do the requirements for each paragraph. If your wider goal is to create an annotated bibliography for your dissertation committee, you may need eighty scholarly sources (e.g., peer-reviewed articles, books on theory related to your topic, or recent studies that evaluate data), each followed by an evaluative paragraph. If, however, you are a first-year college student enrolled in an introductory research class, your instructor may require you to find, say, seven specific types of sources: four scholarly articles, two primary sources, and a chapter in a book. Your instructor might ask you to write a simple summary paragraph for each source and then add a sentence about how you plan to use the source in a final research paper.

If you have written a research paper before, then, in all likelihood, you have also created a list of the sources you referenced in the paper. Depending on the style of citation required (e.g., MLA, APA, CMS), that list might have been called Works Cited, References, Endnotes, or, perhaps, Bibliography. Similar to these pages, citations in the annotated bibliography are often listed in alphabetical order according to the author's last name. Although the order of the information about the source varies depending on which citation style you use, most of the basic information required, such as the author's name, the title of work, and the date of publication, does not. Unlike those pages that only list sources, in the annotated bibliography, each citation is followed by a paragraph.

Example 1.1: Selection from a student paper in MLA format (8th Edition)

Prison Reform: Annotated Bibliography

Høidal, Are. "Prisoners' Association as an Alternative to Solitary Confinement—Lessons Learned from a Norwegian High-Security Prison." *Solitary Confinement. Effects, Practices, and Pathways toward Reform*, Eds. Jules Lobel and Peter S. Smith. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2020, pp. 297–309.

In his piece about the effects of solitary confinement, Høidal draws attention to the 17th Section of the Norwegian Penal Code. This section of the code states that all inmates should be allowed to work with others during daytime hours. Norway, the inspiration for many modern-day prison reformations, is globally recognized for taking excellent care of its prisoners, as opposed to other countries, such as the United States. In this chapter, Høidal discusses and evaluates Norway's idea that prisoners should have access to the community both within and outside the prison system during daytime hours. He mentions that Norway offers educational programs for prisoners because it aligns with what Norway views as the purpose of prisons and Section 17 of the Norwegian Penal Code: to rehabilitate. Inmates are nourished both physically and mentally so that upon their release, they can return as functioning members of society. This nourishment, Høidal concludes, also lessens the likelihood of re-conviction.

Tønseth, Christin, and Ragnhild Bergsland. "Prison Education in Norway – the Importance for Work and Life After Release." *Cogent Education*. vol. 6, no. 1, 2019, pp. 1-13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2019.1628408>

Tønseth and Bergsland delve into the complexity of Norway's prison education system. Norwegian prisons have introduced a transformative learning theory, one that argues that providing education can promote change in the learner. After enabling inmates to obtain an education, researchers noticed an increase in self-determination, an increase in self-esteem, and several social benefits. Tønseth and Bergsland show that learning, especially in the prison system, is more than merely obtaining knowledge. A new, mentally stimulating environment is associated with learning in prisons, which promotes self-growth, something that is very important to the people running the Norwegian Prison System. Research on the effects of different methods of rehabilitation on inmates is still being conducted; however, according to the authors, there is already a promising trajectory.

In the example above, the student's paragraphs include each source's main points, some context, and an occasional evaluative adjective or sentence. Before you begin your assignment, *carefully read or reread the assignment prompt from your instructor*. If your assignment calls for descriptive and evaluative paragraphs, that means that you should discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your sources' arguments. You might also complete basic background information on the author and then discuss the author's credibility. Some assignments may ask you to discuss the source's relevance in the larger

conversation of that particular discipline and/or to discuss the types of sources the author references.

If your assignment calls for summary paragraphs, you should identify the main points of each source and write those points in your own words, employing transitions to help create a unified paragraph (rather than a list of ideas). Summary paragraphs do not include your own opinion or quotations from the text. Whether you are writing descriptive, evaluative, or summary paragraphs, the main purpose is to provide enough information about the source so that readers can determine if they want to read the original. After reading and annotating your sources and writing your paragraphs, you will have a clearer understanding of the arguments other scholars are making about your topic. This understanding will help you situate or contextualize your own argument in your research paper. (See section [VI. Writing Strategies](#) in this chapter for detailed examples.)

Many students think that research is a linear process: choose a topic, research the topic, write the research paper. But it can be more helpful and productive to think of the process in a much less linear and restrictive way. The sources you include in your annotated bibliography, the first stage of your research, may not be the same as those you include in your final paper. In fact, as you narrow your focus, read more sources and allow your ideas to change, you will find yourself eliminating sources that are too broad, too narrow, or tangential to your focus. Your search for new sources should continue throughout the writing process. In other words, as mentioned in the introduction, and as you will see in this and other chapters of this text, the research process is complicated (and interesting) and, at some stages, nearly cyclical: the research you do informs the research you are going to do and re-situates the research you have completed.

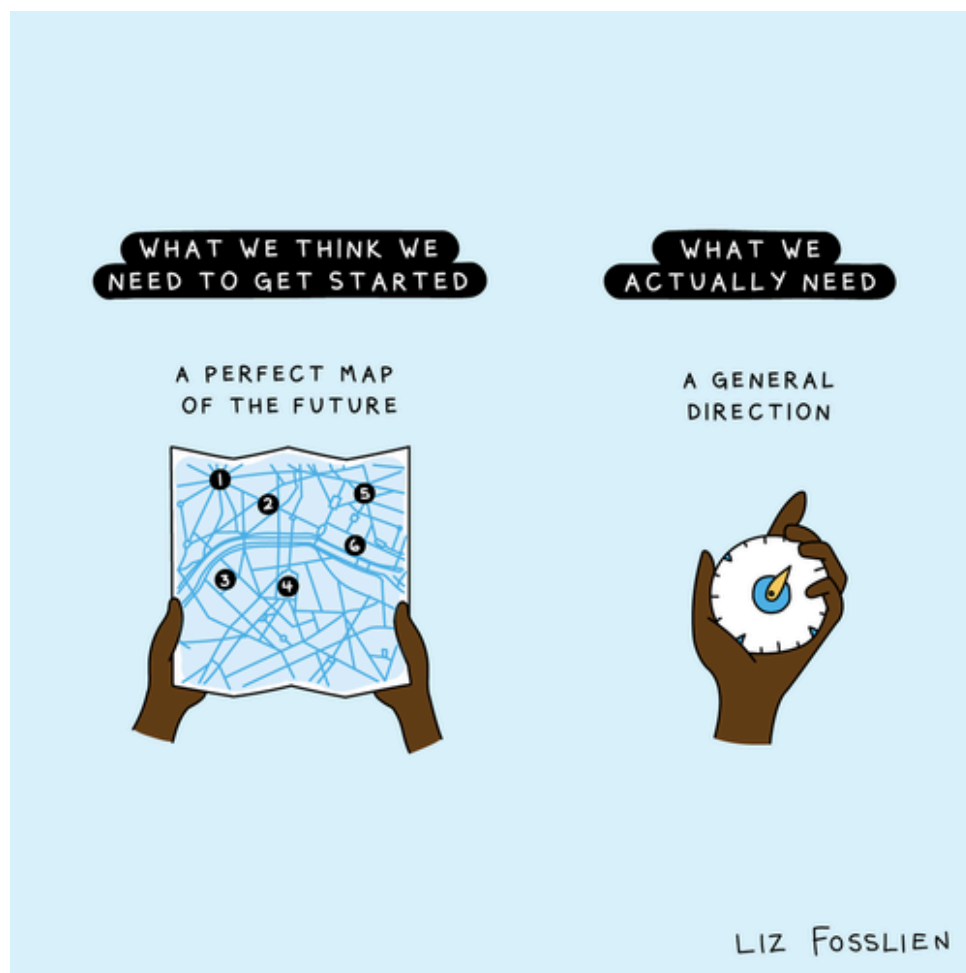


Figure 1.1: What We Think. Image courtesy of [Liz Fosslien](#)

Practical Guidelines and Considerations

Once you have a general understanding of the purpose and format of the final product, the annotated bibliography, you should thoughtfully choose your topic within the parameters of your assignment; choosing your topic is the beginning of your research.

Here is a simplified list of steps for developing your annotated bibliography, with names of sections in this chapter that provide more detail.

- Choose a topic and, if your instructor requires it at this stage, develop a research question. (In this section, below)

- Briefly consider the purpose and style of the assignment ([II. Rhetorical Considerations](#))
- Create keywords and plug them into library databases or other search engines. ([IV. Research Strategies](#))
- Choose appropriate sources from the database/search engine results. Read and annotate those sources. ([IV. Research Strategies](#) and [V. Reading Strategies](#))
- Use your annotations on your sources to write evaluative, descriptive, or summary paragraphs. ([VI. Writing Strategies](#))
- Choose a citation manager, identify an appropriate citation style, and alphabetize citations and paragraphs. ([III. The Annotated Bibliography Genre Across Disciplines](#))

Introductory research classes often offer a theme and require students to narrow their focus by choosing a topic within that theme. If your class offers a theme, you might narrow your focus by thinking about the topic through the lens of your major. Thus, for example, if your class has a theme such as prison reform and your major is architecture, you may wonder what architects consider as they build new prisons, or you might compare prison architecture in different countries, like the U.S. and Norway.

North Carolina State University Libraries offers this video, which might help you choose a topic: [Watch the video “Picking Your Topic Is Research!”](#)

Library Referral: Topic Development and Your Personal Angle

(by Annie R. Armstrong)

It might be tempting to ask someone, “What’s a good research topic?” While discussing possible topics with your classmates is a good idea, in the end, you should be the one providing that answer. Your personal investment in a topic can propel you through the thorniness of the research process. If your course has a set theme (e.g., sustainability, stand-up comedy, censorship, prison reform), consider your personal angle: what passions, interests, or causes excite you, and how might they be related to this theme?

Even if you say “cats,” or “video games,” you’ll be able to make a connection to the course

theme that intrigues both you and your reader. There are always larger questions you can ask about these interests. For example, if you love cats: are you more broadly concerned with animal welfare? If your passion is video games: to what degree do you think they help or hinder the social lives of teens? Think about how you can “zoom in” or “zoom out,” to focus on both broad and narrow aspects of your topic.

Discuss your topic with a librarian to unearth new ideas and connections, and watch the video [One Perfect Source?](#) for an explanation of how to find sources for a topic.

Developing a Research Question

Some instructors may ask you to develop a research question before you begin your annotated bibliography. Others may instruct you to develop it in the proposal stage (see [Chapter 3](#)). In either case, at some point in the early stages of research, you will need to write a question that guides your research. It should be one that is focused, complex, and genuinely interests you. Writing the research question will help you narrow your focus and create keywords. The more time and thought you put into creating this question now, the easier it will be to complete your research and write the paper later.

Example 1.2 Here are a few student examples of research questions.

- In what ways might the U.S. look to the Norwegian prison system as a model for prisoner rehabilitation?
- To what extent can the U.S. incarceration system be reformed to be more cost-effective while at the same time helping prisoners undergo significant rehabilitation?
- How has the reintroduction of wolves into the Yellowstone region affected the livelihood of cattle ranchers in the region?

Notice that these questions avoid a simple either/or binary (e.g., either we look to Nor-

way for answers or we don't). Language such as "in what ways" and "to what extent" open up the possibility of a range of answers.

While the answers to these questions will include factual, verifiable evidence (e.g., the kinds of rehabilitation programs the U.S. offers, the number of prisons in the U.S.), the questions themselves do not for ask for simple, factual answers. A factual question does not make a solid research question because it doesn't present information upon which reasonable people might disagree, and it is easily answered. (Here is an example of a factual question, *not* a research question: How much does it cost to maintain the U.S. prison system? The question asks for a number, not a thoughtful argument.)

One way to begin writing the research question is with a **timed writing exercise** like the one below.

Write or type your topic at the top of a piece of paper or document. Set a timer for exactly six minutes. Once the timer begins, allow yourself to write every question that comes to mind about your topic, even if it might seem somewhat off-topic, mundane or simplistic. In other words, don't censor yourself, and don't worry about spelling or typos. When you think about your topic, what aspect of it makes you curious? You might start with *how* or *why* questions. Turn whatever comes into your head into a question. Continue writing for the entire time, even when your mind wanders and gives you a sentence like, "I don't know what to write." Turn it into a question: "I don't know what to write?" Doing so keeps your mind moving and your handwriting. More importantly, it often helps you move on to a new idea.

When the time is up, read and categorize your questions. First, underline the factual questions. You may want to find the answers to those questions, but they are not research questions. Second, strike through the mind-wandering questions. Examine what you have left. Any question strike you? Can you develop a research question by combining the simple questions and adding, "to what extent," or, "in what ways"? Remember that this is a draft research question and that you may revise it as you find more information about your topic.

In general, your research question should guide your exploration of your topic rather than lead you to a preconceived answer or a belief you already hold. For example, if your

topic is prison reform and you think private prisons are morally or ethically problematic, consider sources that take a variety of positions, not simply ones that point to what you already believe. Leave your *mind open* to finding sources that explain the complexities of the prison system, including reasons that states have relied on private prisons (such as relieving overcrowding issues). In other words, don't avoid sources that seem to contradict or complicate your current position. When you read arguments that you find problematic and consider evidence that might not support your original ideas, you develop a wider understanding of your topic. Grappling with arguments that challenge your own ideas expands your ability to understand, address, and perhaps refute points and shows that you understand the larger conversation about your topic.

In short, let the research inform your position.

Note that this doesn't mean you should suddenly change your position. It does mean that just as you do in a reasonable conversation, you should consider views and values other than your own. Then you reevaluate, modify, and/or fortify your original position.

More Resources 1.1: Research Questions

Here's a link with more tips about [How to Write a Research Question](#).

II. Rhetorical Considerations: Purpose and Style

Whether you are writing an annotated bibliography for a biology or anthropology class, a grant application, or a section at the end of a book, you will want to consider the purpose and style of your work. If you are writing your annotated bibliography for a class, identify the parameters of the assignment and consider a few questions:

- Who is the intended audience?
- How many and what kind of sources do you need? (e.g., scholarly articles, books,

government websites)

- What citation style will you use? (e.g., AMA, APA, CMS, MLA)
- What types of paragraphs should you write? (e.g., evaluative, descriptive, summary, or some combination)

In answering the last question, remember that some instructors will ask you to simply summarize each source. Others may want a summary and a sentence about how you will use each source, or a sentence that explains how each source will help you answer your research question. Still other instructors will ask for descriptive or evaluative information about your sources. You can find examples and further discussion of these types of paragraphs in the [VI. Writing Strategies](#) section of this chapter.

III. The Annotated Bibliography Genre Across Disciplines

Briefly examine the following annotated bibliographies written by academics and other professionals. These examples will provide you with a greater understanding of how your work in the classroom translates to the work in the profession. The first example, written by Professor Sue C. Patrick and published on the American Historical Association website, centers on primary sources and is part of a larger project: [Annotated Bibliography of Primary Sources | AHA](#).

Primary sources, which will be discussed in greater detail in the [IV. Research Strategies](#) section of this chapter, are those from a first-person perspective or a direct piece of evidence (e.g., constitutions, eyewitness accounts, diaries, letters, raw data). After each citation, Patrick provides an explanation of how she used the source as a part of a writing project for her students. If you navigate to the contents page of Patrick's original project, you will see that this annotated bibliography is one small part of her project. The larger project offers a wide range of information for history instructors: [Teaching Difficult Legal or Political Concepts: Using Online Primary Sources in Writing Assignments | AHA](#).

The second example, [Parental Incarceration and Child Wellbeing: An Annotated Bibliography](#), focuses on quantitative research, which means that it centers around secondary sources. The author, Christopher Wildeman, professor of Policy Analysis and Management

(and Sociology) at Cornell University, categorizes and summarizes studies that address the effects of paternal and maternal incarceration on children. In his summary paragraphs, Wildeman includes the data and final results of each study. Notice that he does not evaluate the information. Notice, too, that rather than listing all sources in alphabetical order, as students are generally required to do for their annotated bibliography, this author divides his annotated bibliography into sections, and each of those sections are in alphabetical order.

Example 1.3: Academic and Professional Examples

In order to provide context and to help you make connections between the work you complete in your classes and the work professionals do, examine a few more annotated bibliographies in this [Box Folder](#). You will notice these annotated bibliographies include a wide range of citation styles, sources, and summary, description, or evaluation paragraphs.

These examples are meant to show you how this genre looks in other disciplines and professions. Make sure to follow the requirements for your own class, or seek out specific examples from your instructor in order to address the needs of your own assignment.

Citation Styles

You may have noticed that in the annotated bibliographies linked above, the authors organized their source citations differently. The following video offers an introduction to citation styles. [Watch the video “Citation: A \(Very\) Brief Introduction.”](#)

Academic disciplines use different conventions for the style, placement, and format of their citations. You will find a few examples in the purple box below. It’s a good idea to become familiar with the citation style that professionals in your discipline use. For example, if you are premed, you may want to read the American Medical Association or AMA style guidelines. (Note that in-text citations which appear in the text of a research paper itself—rather than as a list—will be covered in [Chapter 4](#).)

Example 1.4: Examine the following examples of two sources cited in four different styles. What do you notice about the similarities and difference between these styles? What does your comparison tell you about the priorities of those who developed these styles?

AMA (American Medical Association)

Black B. *The character of the self in ancient India : Priests, kings, and women in the early Upanisads*. Ithaca: State University of New York Press; 2007.

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uic/detail.action?docID=3407543>.

Costello JF & Fisher SJ. The Placenta – Fast, Loose, and in Control. *N Engl J Med*. 2021; 385(1):87–89. doi:10.1056/NEJMcibr2106321

APA (American Psychological Association)

Black, B. (2007). *The character of the self in ancient India : Priests, kings, and women in the early Upanisads*. Ithaca: State University of New York Press.

Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uic/detail.action?docID=3407543>

Costello, J. F., & Fisher, S. J. (2021). The placenta — fast, loose, and in control. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 385(1), 87–89. doi:10.1056/NEJMcibr2106321

CMS (Chicago Manual of Style)

Black, Brian. 2007. *The Character of the Self in Ancient India : Priests, Kings, and Women in the Early Upanisads*. Ithaca: State University of New York Press.

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uic/detail.action?docID=3407543>.

Costello, Joseph F., and Susan J. Fisher. 2021. “The Placenta — Fast, Loose, and in Control.” *The New England Journal of Medicine* 385 (1): 87–89. doi:10.1056/NEJMcibr2106321

MLA (Modern Language Association)

Black, Brian. *The Character of the Self in Ancient India : Priests, Kings, and Women in the Early Upanisads*. State University of New York Press, Ithaca, 2007,

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uic/detail.action?docID=3407543>.

Costello, Joseph F., and Susan J. Fisher. “The Placenta — Fast, Loose, and in

Control.” *The New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 385, no. 1, 2021, pp. 87-89, doi:10.1056/NEJMcibr2106321.

Behind each style of citation is a logic that is connected to the discipline. Professional groups from each discipline create these styles that reflect the values of that discipline.

AMA, for example, emphasizes collaboration among researchers, and so articles are often discussed with and written by more than one scholar. The titles of the journals are abbreviated, as readers are expected to know those names. Here are general guidelines for [AMA General Style](#).

APA style citation begins with the author’s last name and first initial, followed by the year of publication in parenthesis. APA professionals are social scientists, and thus emphasize the date of publication because it is more important when something is published than, say, where it was published. When readers skim a list of citations in APA style, they can quickly see how the focus of the research has changed over the years. Here are general guidelines for [APA General Format](#).

CMS incorporates two systems. Purdue OWL describes these as “the Notes-Bibliography System (NB), which is used by those working in literature, history, and the arts. The other documentation style, the Author-Date System, is nearly identical in content but slightly different in form and is preferred by those working in the social sciences.” Here are general guidelines for [CMS General Format](#).

MLA is more often used in the humanities; it emphasizes the full name of the author and thus the creativity or individuality of the writer. The date of publication appears toward the end of the citation. Here are general guidelines for [MLA Format and Style](#).

Although we are only addressing styles of citations for the purpose of creating an annotated bibliography, these styles also require a specific document format. So, for example, if you are writing a research paper in **APA** style, you may use section headings, place page numbers in the upper righthand corner of every page, and title your citations page “References.” **MLA** style requires a header with your last name, a space and the page number on every page (except the first), and the citation page is called “Works Cited.”

Citation Management Tools

Citation management tools help keep your research organized and create individual citations as well as bibliographies in the proper style for your discipline. Your library may offer programs such as RefWorks or EndNote or provide links to open-source programs such as [Zotero](#). If you want help deciding which tool is best for your project, click here: [How to Choose a Citation Manager](#).

These tools are useful, but you will still want to understand the basic conventions of the citation style that you are using so that you can spot errors. Proofread carefully. Stick to one style of citation and do your best not to confuse it with another style—something that is easy to do if, for example, you are reading articles that use APA style, but you are writing in MLA style. Note also that the styles change with each new handbook edition. So for example, the most recent *MLA Handbook* (9th edition) was updated in 2021. Fortunately, Zotero and other citation managers will offer you an option of not only style, but also edition (e.g., MLA 8th or 9th edition).

IV. Research Strategies: Finding, Identifying, and Using Sources

More Resources 1.2: Search Strategies

The following video offers suggestions on how to use keywords in your research question to create more keywords: [Savvy Search Strategy](#)

Here's another short video on searching databases using Boolean logic: [How Should I Search in a Database?](#)

Before you begin your library research, list at least seven keywords or phrases. These are

words that describe your topic. Your list might begin with the most basic nouns (e.g., prison, mental health) and then become more personalized and specific (e.g., mass incarceration, schizophrenia). If you have written a research question, identify the keywords in that question. List the nouns and verbs and then find synonyms.

Types of Sources

Your instructor might require you to find sources from general categories, like primary or secondary sources. Alternatively, she might outline something more specific, such as peer-reviewed articles, ebooks, interviews, or book reviews. A few categories worth recognizing at the onset of your research include primary vs. secondary sources, popular vs. scholarly sources, and peer-reviewed journals and articles. Whatever your requirements, you should be choosy about your sources; do not simply settle for the first ones you find. Skim or read the sources before you count on them to help you develop your argument. Don't be afraid to reject a few. Research is a process, and not every search will yield good results. Furthermore, if you simply accept all the sources you find on your first keyword search, you may have problems tying things together later.

Primary sources are those that offer firsthand accounts, like witness statements from an accident or crime, diaries, personal letters, interviews, photographs like the one of Ida B. Wells-Barnett and her son Charles, or flyers like the one that lists lectures Emma Goldman gave in Portland in 1915 (see Figure 1.2 and Figure 1.3 below).

A **secondary source** analyzes a primary source or other secondary sources. The image of the campaign card in Figure 1.4 is a primary source, but when a scholar writes and publishes an analysis of this source and refers to other sources that, say, describe the Republican Party principles as outlined in 1928 and why Wells-Barnett wanted to be a part of the party, then that analysis (the scholar's work) becomes a secondary source.



Figure 1.2: Photo of Ida B. Wells and her son Charles. Credit: University of Chicago Photographic Archive, apf1-08623, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Modern ideas on War, Labor and the Sex Question are revolutionizing thought. If you believe in learning things yourself, it will pay you to hear

Emma Goldman

Who will deliver a Series of Lectures in Portland on Vital Subjects at
Portland, Subject and Dates:

Sunday, August 1st, 3 P. M.
THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANARCHISM

Sunday, August 1st, 8 P. M.
THE "POWER" OF BILLY SUNDAY

Monday, August 2nd, 8 P. M.
MISCONCEPTIONS OF FREE LOVE

Tuesday, August 3rd, 8 P. M.
FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE—The Intellectual Storm Center of Europe

Wednesday, August 4th, 8 P. M.
JEALOUSY—Its Cause and Possible Cure

Thursday, August 5th, 8 P. M.
ANARCHISM AND LITERATURE

Friday, August 6th, 8 P. M.
THE BIRTH CONTROL (Why and How Small Families Are Desirable)

Saturday, August 7th, 8 P. M.
THE INTERMEDIATE SEX (A Discussion of Homosexuality)

Sunday, August 8th, 3 P. M.
WAR AND THE SACRED RIGHT OF PROPERTY

Sunday, August 8th, 8 P. M.
VARIETY OR MONOGAMY—WHICH?

ADMISSION 25 CENTS
8 Lectures With MOTHER EARTH, Subscription \$2.50 OVER

Scandinavian Socialist Hall, 4th and Yamhill

Figure 1.3: Lecture series (1915) given by Emma Goldman (1869–1940).

VOTE FOR

☒ **Mrs. Ida B. Wells-Barnett**

3624 So. Parkway

CANDIDATE FOR

DELEGATE

To Republican Nat'l Convention

AT KANSAS CITY, MO.

JUNE 1928

PRIMARY TUESDAY, APRIL 10

Figure 1.4: Campaign card of anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett to be a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1928. Credit: University of Chicago Photographic Archive, apf1-08621, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

When you are trying to determine if a source is primary or secondary, pay attention to the author's language. For example, examine [Jessica Dillard-Wright's abstract below](#).

ORIGINAL ARTICLE |  Open Access | 

A radical imagination for nursing: Generative insurrection, creative resistance

Jessica Dillard-Wright PhD, MA, RN, CNM 

First published: 10 October 2021 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/nup.12371> | Citations: 14

 SECTIONS

 PDF

 TOOLS

 SHARE

Abstract

In the crucible of the pandemic, it has never before been clearer that, to ensure the relevance and even the survival of the discipline, nursing must cultivate a radical imagination. In the paper that follows, I trace the imperative for conjuring a radical imagination for nursing. In this fever dream for nursing futures, built on speculative visions of what could be, I draw on anarchist, abolitionist, posthuman, Black feminist, new materialist and other big ideas to plant seeds of generative insurrection and creative resistance. In thinking through a radical imagination, I unpack the significance of reparatory history for nursing, a discipline founded on normative whiteness. From there, I consider what it would take to shift the capitalist frame of healthcare to one of mutual aid, which requires the deep work of abolition. With a radical imagination that breaks down the enclosures that contain us through reparatory history, mutual aid and abolition, kinship becomes urgently possible.

Figure 1.5: Abstract for Dillard-Wright's "A radical imagination for nursing: generative insurrection, creative resistance."

Here's the text for the entire abstract:

In the crucible of the pandemic, it has never before been clearer that, to ensure the relevance and even the survival of the discipline, nursing must cultivate a radical imagination. In the paper that follows, I trace the imperative for conjuring a radical imagination for nursing. In this fever dream for nursing futures, built on speculative visions of what could be, I draw on anarchist, abolitionist, posthuman, Black feminist, new materialist and other big ideas to plant seeds of generative insurrection and creative resistance. In thinking through a radical imagination, I unpack the significance of reparatory history for nursing, a discipline founded on normative whiteness. From there, I consider what it would take to shift the capitalist frame of healthcare to one of mutual aid, which requires the deep work of abolition. With a radical imagination that breaks down the enclosures that contain us through reparatory history, mutual aid and abolition, kinship becomes urgently possible.

In the middle of the paragraph, she states, “I draw on anarchist, abolitionist, posthuman, Black feminist, new materialist and other big ideas to plant seeds of generative insurrection and creative resistance.” In this sentence, the writer points out how she builds her argument and analysis on the work of others, meaning that it is a secondary source. Another clear indication that this is a secondary source lies in the bibliography. Here’s a selection from the first page of Dillard-Wright’s citations.

Ashley, J. A. (1980). Power in structured misogyny: Implications for the politics of care. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 2(3), 2–22.

Benjamin, R. (2018). Black afterlives matter: Cultivating kinfulness as reproductive justice. In A. Clarke, & D. Haraway (Eds.), *Making kin not population* (pp. 41–66).

Prickly

Paradigm Press.

Benjamin, R. (2020). Black skin, white masks: Racism, vulnerability, and refuting black-pathology. Department of African American Studies. <https://aas.princeton.edu/news/black-skin-white-masks-racism-vulnerability-refuting-black-pathology>

Braidotti, R. (2020). “We” are in this together, but we are not one and the same. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 17(4), 465–469. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-020-10017-8>

Butler, J. (2002). Is kinship always already heterosexual? *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 13(1), 14–44.

Chinn, P. (2020, May 21). Nursing in the Anthropocene. *Advances in Nursing Science Blog*. <https://ansjournalblog.com/2020/05/21/nursing-in-the-anthropocene>

Choy, C. (2003). *Empire of care: Nursing and migration in Filipino American history*. Duke University Press.

Connolly, C. A. (2010). “I am a trained nurse”: The nursing identity of anarchist and radical Emma Goldman. *Nursing History Review*, 18, 84–99.

Davis, A. Y. (2020, October 6). Why arguments against abolition inevitably fail. *Medium*. <https://level.medium.com/why-arguments-against-abolition-inevitably-fail-991342b8d042>

Although the difference between primary and secondary sources may seem obvious now, consider this complication. On one hand, a recent article from a newspaper may be considered a secondary source, as the reporter might have talked to witnesses or other people involved. On the other hand, a newspaper article from 1920 might be considered a primary source because it provides a historical perspective.

Popular vs. Scholarly Sources

A scholarly source employs technical or discipline-specific language, is written for a narrow audience (specific scholars), and always includes a bibliography or list of sources. A popular source is one that employs more accessible language, appeals to a wider audience, and often includes photos or images.

Most instructors will require you to use library databases to find sources, but may allow you to use search engines such as Google or Google Scholar later in the course, when you have a clearer understanding of the wider conversation around your topic and how you might use these sources. Academics (and the greater educated world) consider sources found in the library databases or through the library search box as reliable and credible.

They also recognize that rather than a simple line between reliable and unreliable sources, there is a spectrum, which simply means that some sources are more credible than others.

For example, some academics consider **peer-reviewed journals** such as *The Prison Journal* more credible than popular sources such as *Psychology Today*, both of which are available through many academic library databases. Articles published in *The Prison Journal* undergo a rigorous peer review process, which means that a variety of experts in the field read and comment on a draft of the article. Often, the writer has to revise and resubmit the draft before the editor approves it and the final article is published. Articles published in *Psychology Today* are written by authorities on a particular subject but do not go through a peer-review process. Generally, editors are the only ones that read submissions to determine if they are worthy of publication. Although the process of publication is different, both types of articles offer valuable and useful research.

In general, we accept that sources found through library search engines and databases are reliable; they are worthy of thoughtful consideration and analysis. There are many sources found outside the library that are reliable, too, but determining the reliability of the source becomes more of a challenge. Here are questions to consider when evaluating the reliability of a source:

- What's the writer's purpose in creating the source? Is the source meant to entertain, provide news, or both? Is it meant to educate, persuade, scandalize, or sell a product or service, or does it have a different purpose altogether?
- Is the source built on credible sources? (Check the credibility of the sources in the bibliography.)
- Is the author an authority on the subject? Does the author refer to other authorities? (Check the author's background and experience.)
- Does the source provide verifiable evidence and facts to support claims?

More Resources 1.3: Questions for Analyzing Sources

Here's a more extensive list of questions for [Critically Analyzing Information Sources](#)

Library Referral: Searching is Experimental

(by Annie R. Armstrong)

Think of searching library databases and catalogs as an experiment rather than a linear process. It may get messy and lead you in unexpected directions. The databases can't interpret natural language, so you'll need to boil your topic down to a few keywords. See the [Choosing Keywords](#) video for a full illustration of this process.

Your first search won't be your last! Experiment with different keywords and gather more sources than you think you'll actually need. Once you start reading and learning more about your topic, you may discover that some of your sources are only tangentially connected to the direction in which you want to take your topic.

The focus of your research changes as you become more knowledgeable about the topic.

Searching a variety of research databases and catalogs will open the door to a broader range of viewpoints from different academic disciplines and publication types (think books, book chapters, scholarly/peer-reviewed journals, newspapers, and popular/mainstream magazines).

Library Databases

Once you know what kind of sources you need for your assignment (e.g., primary or secondary, popular or scholarly) and you have a list of keywords, examine library databases. Libraries buy subscriptions to two basic types of databases: general or multidisciplinary (e.g., JSTOR, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest) and subject-specific (e.g., Psycinfo, AccessAnesthesiology, Embase, Excerpta Medica). Unlike Web-based searches, library databases offer quality controls. Articles have been reviewed by professional editors and fact-checked before they are published in academic journals. Database companies, like JSTOR, buy subscriptions to these journals, organize, and categorize them.

For introductory research courses, you will want to start with the general and multidisciplinary databases. Plug your keywords into the database search box. Skim the titles for

appropriate sources. As you progress and find more information on your topic, you may want to use the subject-specific databases.

As you are researching your topic, pay attention to the types of sources you find. If your source is from the *New York Times*, for example, is it a news story or an opinion piece? If it's a video, is it a documentary or a TED Talk? What difference does the type of source make? The answer to this question depends, in part, on *how* you will use the source. Will you use a source as background information or evidence to support your argument? Will you use the source to present a claim that opposes your argument and then refute that claim by providing factual or authoritative evidence? You may not know how you will use a source when you first find it, but it's worth thinking about the different ways a source can be put to use. See [Chapter 4](#) for more about how to use sources once you start writing your research essay.

Finding More Keywords

After you type the keywords in library search boxes or databases, you may need to narrow or expand your search, depending on your results. If your topic is prison reform, for example, you will need to choose an angle. Start by asking questions about your topic, and think about choosing a lens through which to view your topic. Even if it seems obvious, start with the basics: What do you know about your topic? Can you use something you already know about or have an intense interest in as a lens through which to view your topic?

For example, if architecture students are interested in this topic, they might ask questions about what the architecture of U.S. prisons tells us about how we understand punishment and rehabilitation. When you find a scholarly article worth reading, examine the list of words under the headings Keywords, Subject, or Author's Key Terms and look for more words to add to your own list.

Ethical Prison Architecture: A Systematic Literature Review of Prison Design Features Related to Wellbeing

Kelsey V. Engstrom, Esther F. J. C. van Ginneken 

First Published June 22, 2022 | Research Article | 

<https://doi-org.proxy.cc.uic.edu/10.1177/12063312221104211>

Article information 



Abstract

The design of prisons can greatly impact the lived experience of imprisonment, yet research on the relationship between the physical prison environment and wellbeing remains underexplored. Following a systematic literature review, 16 environmental domains were identified as part of “ethical architecture” in prison environments. In this context, ethical prison architecture reflects the link between prison design features and the wellbeing of building users. The concept presented here can be used to inform future research on the intersection of prison architecture, prison climate, and experienced wellbeing. Humane treatment, autonomy, and stimuli are identified as latent theoretical constructs that underpin the “ethical prison architecture” concept. The findings include literature originating from 35 countries that spans five continents to offer a thorough framework that can be used to identify potential building adjustments to improve the wellbeing of building users and increase evidence on the influence of prison design features on wellbeing.

Keywords

ethical prison architecture, prison design, carceral geography, environmental psychology, prisoner wellbeing, prison climate

Figure 1.6: Screenshot of the source “Ethical prison architecture: a systematic literature review of prison design features related to well-being.”

In the example above, the list of keywords appears below the abstract: “ethical prison architecture, prison design, carceral geography, environmental psychology, prisoner wellbeing, prison climate.” While architecture students may have searched databases with keywords like “prison architecture” or “prison design,” they may not have thought of “carceral geography,” a phrase worthy of another database search.

Beyond the Library: Sources on the Web

Thus far, we focused on finding sources through academic or public library databases. For a wider search that includes reliable sources which may not be available through the library, such as an organization's website (e.g., [The Marshall Project](#) which collects articles published about the prison system), use common search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, or Bing. These search engines use algorithms based on popularity, previous searches, commercial investment, location, and relevance, rather than on keywords and combinations of keywords, like library databases. This means that you will want to approach these sources with a healthy dose of skepticism: Double-check facts (see links to fact checkers in the last part of this section) and ask questions about the people, organizations, corporations, or businesses behind the sources you find using common search engines.

Generally, .com or commercial sites do not consistently offer information suitable in length, breadth, or reliability to be referenced in a research paper. The major exception to this rule is reliable newspapers like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Guardian*. Reliable news outlets may report on a groundbreaking discovery from NASA and will explain that discovery in terms a non-expert will understand, but they will also provide a link to the study so that an expert (or a researcher like you) can examine the original.

If you want to save yourself the frustration of sifting through many .com sites, try searching domains that end in .edu. In the Google search box, type *Site:edu* and then add a keyword or phrase, like “prison reform.” Thus, you would write, *Site:edu prison reform*. You can also use this formula for sites ending in .gov or .org. These three domains tend to offer more credible information than .com, but, again, you should critically analyze the websites rather than simply accepting the information as accurate. Evaluate the source by asking questions like those listed in the previous section.

If you want to go in a different direction, search for websites that professionals in your discipline use and search the bibliographies posted there. For example, professionals in the life sciences use [bioRxiv](#), a free online archive and distribution service for unpublished manuscripts. It's a place where professionals deposit their papers for comments before they submit them to journals for publication.

Social Media

While you would not want to use information on social media to support an argument you are making in an academic research paper, the effect and use of these outlets might be worthy of note. Thus, for example, you might ask about the patterns of use of social media like Twitter. Tweets offer fragments of ideas, and they are not particularly useful when you are writing a research paper, but if social scientists collect these primary sources, they might notice patterns that tell us something about politics and culture. More generally, they might study tweets and their influence on how and what people think. The Pew Research Center (<https://www.pewresearch.org>), a nonpartisan, non-advocacy group, collects and analyzes tweets.

Checking for Accuracy: Here's the Principle

That Beyoncé tweeted something in particular is easily certifiable by finding the tweet in which she made the claim. However, consider a separate question: Is **what** Beyoncé said true? This is the more difficult question to answer, as you need to find verifiable evidence. You will need to look for evidence that is an authoritative confirmation of a claim. Authoritative confirmation means that someone, or better yet several someones, in authority on the subject support the claim and perhaps offer data, statistics, or facts.

Beyoncé may have millions of followers, and thus what she tweets influences what her followers think, but does that make what she says accurate or factual? No, of course not. She may be an expert in making music, but she is not an expert in all things. She clearly influences people, and that is worthy of note if your research question asks something about how social media influencers gain popularity.

If you come across information that you are not sure is accurate, whether you found it in a scholarly source or on a website, use a reliable fact checker, like the ones listed below, and find out what the experts say.

- [Center for Disease Control](#)
- [Fact Checker – The Washington Post](#)
- [Reuters Fact Check](#)

- [FactCheck.org](https://factcheck.org)

More Resources 1.4: Assessing Sources

Judging an article's strengths or weaknesses can be difficult for a student just learning about the topic or discipline. Here is a link to some additional help on [Critically Appraising Information Sources](#).

V. Reading Strategies: Skim, Annotate, Summarize, and Evaluate

When you find a source that looks interesting, skim, don't read it (yet). Because we are wary of the message it sends to students, some instructors hesitate to admit that skimming is a valid reading and research tool. Skimming allows you to search through many resources in a short amount of time and is a generally acceptable method of determining whether a source is appropriate for your project.

When you are searching for sources on the library databases, skim article abstracts, as they offer a short summary of the argument in the paper. Also skim introductions, headings, conclusions, and citation pages. Skimming is not, of course, a substitute for thoughtfully reading your sources before you begin writing your final paper. Here's a helpful video on how to read a scholarly article: [Watch the video "How to Read a Scholarly Article."](#)

More Resources 1.5: Reading Scholarly Articles

If you found this video helpful, you might also check out: [Anatomy of a Scholarly Article | NC State University Libraries.](#)

Notice that the scholars interviewed in “How to Read a Scholarly Article” all start by skimming the abstract and then, if the source seems appealing and appropriate, they read the abstract but also still skim (or skip altogether) other sections of the article.

Some instructors will expect you to have read and annotated all of your sources before you draft your annotated bibliography assignment. Annotating, in this context, means marking up the text by underlining or paraphrasing important points, commenting on claims the author makes, or asking questions of the text. The word “annotated” that modifies the word “bibliography” refers to the paragraphs that are written based on the comments or annotations you made on each source.

Examine the annotations below. You may want to use the standard pen-and-paper method and write on the text itself (Figure 1.7), or you may want to use programs or apps such as Adobe, Diigo, or Notability to annotate a text electronically (Figure 1.8).

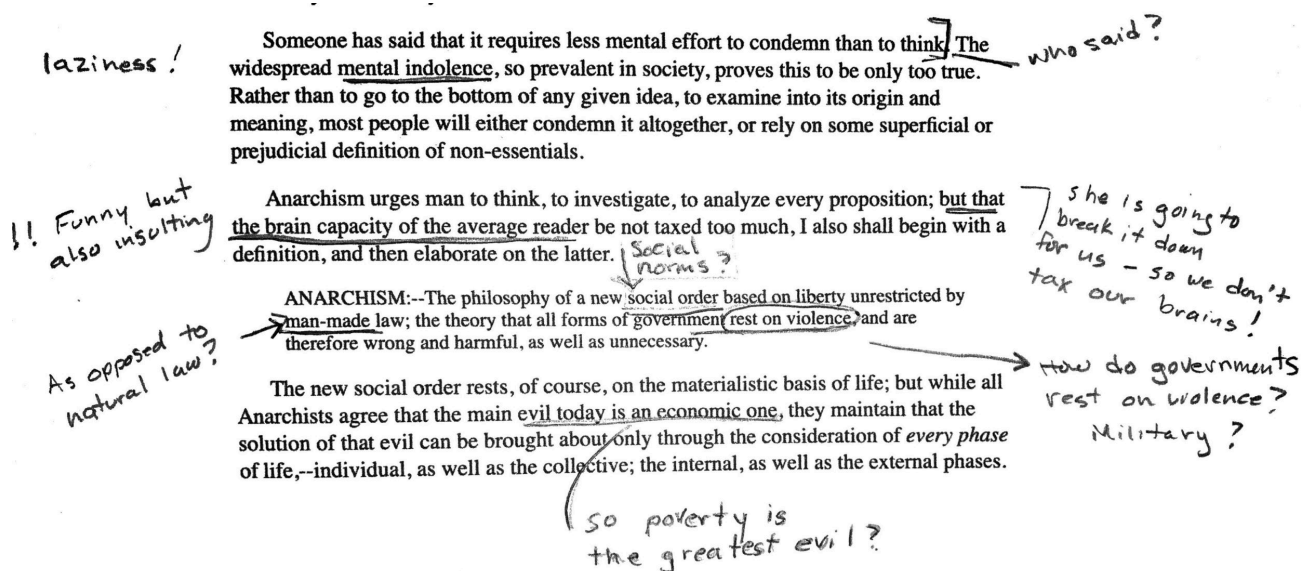


Figure 1.7: A sample annotated text. Goldman, E. (1910) *Anarchism: what does it really stand for. Anarchism and other essays*. New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association.

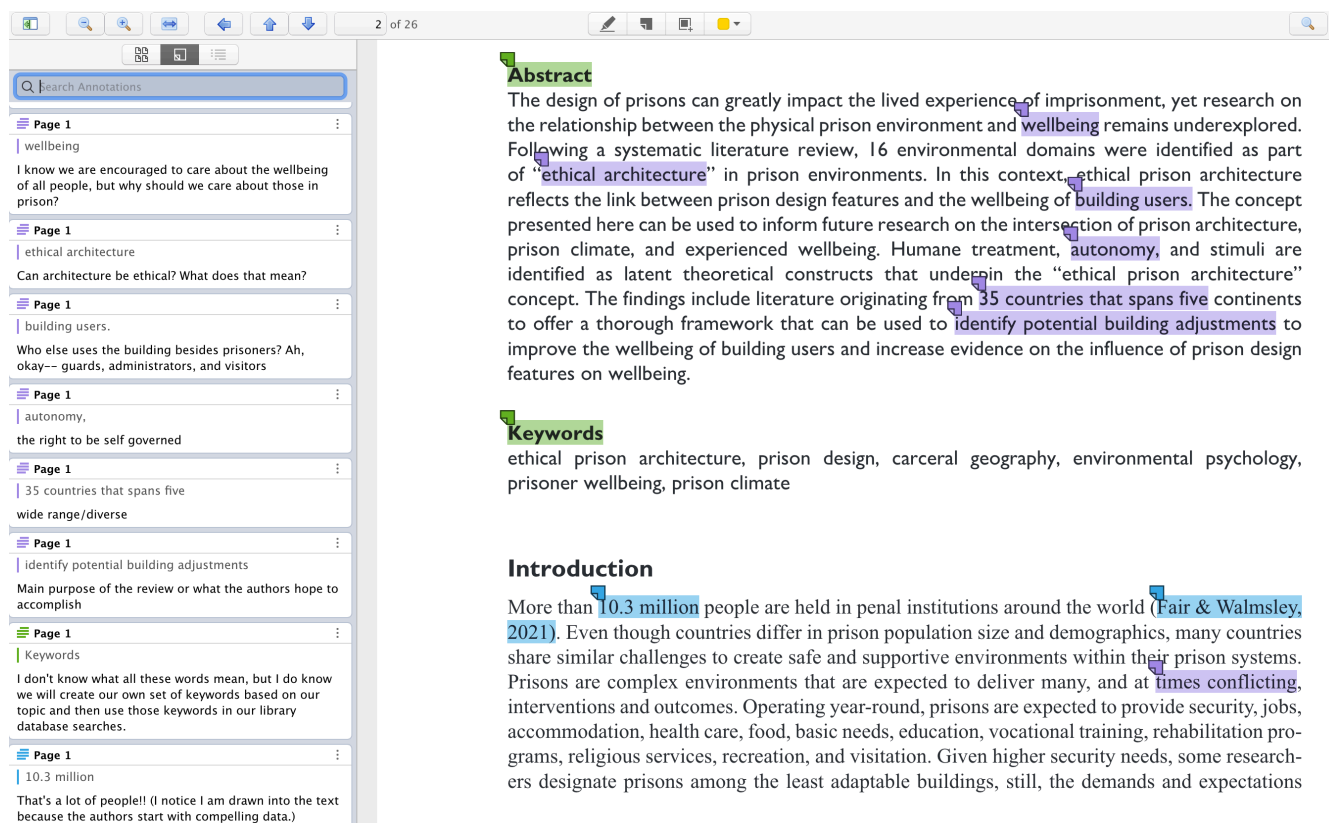


Figure 1.8: Sample digital annotation program Zotero.

Annotating Video and Visual Sources

Traditionally, students annotate documentaries by simply taking notes with pen and paper. They keep track of important points and the times when those points occur. So, for example, in the video [Anatomy of a Scholarly Article | NC State University Libraries](#) mentioned in the previous section, you might pause the video and note the time that the important point occurs. For example, at 1:32 (one minute and thirty-two seconds from the beginning of the video), the speaker defines an abstract of article, so your notes might look like this:

1:32: An abstract is a summary of the article, usually under 150 words

More recent and sophisticated ways of annotating videos include downloading software programs that allow you to take notes directly on a video—a TED Talk video posted on YouTube, for example. Some programs allow you to use a split screen to watch the video,

take notes on a document, and link those notes to specific parts of the video. Others, like YiNote and Transnote, allow you to take time-stamped notes while watching videos.

VI. Writing Strategies: Turning Annotations into an Annotated Bibliography

The annotations you have written on your sources become the fodder for the descriptive, evaluative, or summative paragraphs you need to write after each citation in your annotated bibliography.

Let's look at a few specific examples and explore the style and tone of each. The descriptive and evaluative (also called “annotated”) are probably the most common, so we will start here. This paragraph might provide some background information on the author, place the author's argument in the context of the field or discipline, and evaluate the claims and evidence provided in the source.

Example 1.5: Here's an annotated example with an MLA style citation from The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign library guide.

The first sentence in *italics and yellow highlight summarizes the argument*. The **bolded and blue highlighted phrases offer an evaluation**, and the underlined and orange highlighted phrase identifies the larger conversation in that discipline.

Gilbert, Pam. “From Voice to Text: Reconsidering Writing and Reading in the English Classroom.” *English Education*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1991, pp. 195-211.

Gilbert provides some insight into the concept of “voice” in textual interpretation, and points to a need to move away from the search for voice in reading. Her reasons stem from a growing danger of “social and critical illiteracy,” **which might be better dealt with through a move toward different textual understandings**. Gilbert suggests

that theories of language as a social practice can be more useful in teaching. Her ideas seem to disagree with those who believe in a dominant voice in writing, but she presents an interesting perspective.

Example 1.6: Here's an example of an APA style (7th edition, 2019) citation and a slightly different evaluative paragraph from the Cornell Libraries.

The first sentence offers a little background information on the authors. The bulk of the paragraph is *italicized and highlighted yellow to show where it summarizes the authors' hypothesis and the results of their findings*. The last line in this paragraph is underlined and highlighted orange to show where it makes a comparison to another study. This sentence shows that the writer is aware of the larger conversation happening in this discipline. Other paragraphs might focus more on the author's credentials (degree, employment, experience), author's reliability, and main points of the source.

Waite, L., Goldschneider, F., & Witsberger, C. (1986). Nonfamily living and the erosion of traditional family orientations among young adults. *American Sociological Review*, 51, 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, *use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families.* In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living.

Example 1.7: For comparison, here's the same citation in MLA style, 8th edition.

Waite, Linda J., et al. "Nonfamily Living and the Erosion of Traditional Family Orientations Among Young Adults." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 51, no. 4, 1986, pp. 541-554.

Example 1.8: Finally, here's an example of a paragraph that primarily summarizes and then indicates how the student plans to use the source in the final paper.

The first sentence is underlined and highlighted orange to show the conversation and what the author is arguing against. The middle sentences are *italicized and highlighted yellow to show where the author summarizes the main points of the chapter*, and the final sentence is **bolded and highlighted blue to show how the student will use this source in the final paper**.

Thorp, Thomas. "Thinking Wolves." *The Philosophy of the Midwest*. Eds. Josh Hayes, Gerard Kuperus, and Brian Treanor. Routledge, 2020. pp. 71-89.

Thorp claims that philosophers and scientists, motivated by a desire to increase our care and respect for non-human animals, have begun to question all of the traditional distinctions between humans and other animals. *Beginning with a political analysis of the attitudes of western ranchers toward the return of wolves to the Yellowstone region, Thorp argues that our human reasoning is importantly and essentially different from animal cognition, for example, what wolves do when they hunt. He concludes that only humans have the capacity to be truly responsible for our choices, including our choices about how to care for the natural world.* **This source offers a foundation on which I will build my argument about the cognitive differences between animals and humans.**

Example 1.9: More Samples

You can find more paragraph examples here: [Annotated Bibliography Samples – Purdue OWL](#). This one is from Penn State, College of Arts and Mineral Sciences and contains a complete example with paragraphs that describe, summarize and evaluate sources; it also offers a style guide for those in that field: [Sample Annotated Bibliography | Style for Students Online](#).

Whatever your discipline or particular assignment, remember that the best annotated bibliographies build their own credibility by referring to the credibility of their sources.

Key Takeaways

- Before you dive into the research, identify the parameters of your assignment and examine a model or example.
- Use the lens of your interests or academic discipline to choose a relevant topic.
- Create keywords and plug them into library databases or other search engines.
- Sift through the results and allocate time to read (or skim) and annotate sources.
- Use your annotations to write paragraphs that evaluate, describe, or summarize each source.
- Choose a citation manager and identify an appropriate citation style.
- Alphabetize and/or categorize citations and paragraphs.

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Wells, I. B. *Campaign card of anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett to be a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1928*. Credit: University of Chicago Photographic Archive, apf1-08621, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

2. Proposal

JEFFREY KESSLER

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the rhetorical basis of the proposal genre
- Identify specific ways to appeal to your audience
- Explore a topic in order to plan and propose your research project
- Use metadiscourse in your writing to explain your research plan

I. Introduction

The proposal is perhaps the most common genre you will encounter outside of the composition classroom, and the most varied one. In its simplest definition, a proposal is a suggested plan. Whether you are proposing what to do with a group of friends one night or proposing to build a student center at your college, you need to have a plan. The level of details and specifics may vary, but no matter what, a good proposal will convince your audience that you can follow through and complete your proposed project—even if it needs a few changes along the way.

Proposals vary greatly in their length, scope, and style. On the one hand, an informal proposal might be a short email or conversation that leads to you acting on a plan. There may be no formal review, but just a quick okay from a friend, supervisor, or client. On the other hand, more formal proposals, such as competitions for research grants or construction projects, may ask for very specific information, such as architectural drawings, a timeline for completion, references, or a detailed budget. Some proposals may be highly competi-

tive, with dozens or even hundreds of submissions for a specific grant or project that may be worth millions of dollars.

While proposals may take different forms and require different components, they all have one goal: getting your audience to say “yes.” Think about a marriage proposal. No one proposes marriage to their partner if they don’t want them to say “yes” (unless maybe you’re in a Jane Austen novel or a Shakespeare play, but save that for your literature class). In order to get your audience to say “yes,” you must consider your audience’s needs, whether they are someone you know well or an organization you need to learn more about.

Many large projects and opportunities issue a call for proposals, the CFP. CFPs vary depending on the industry and discipline. They invite people to send proposals that could meet the needs of their project. CFPs will ask for specific details in the proposed plans that will help the organization make an informed decision about which proposal is the best plan for them, or which proposal has the best potential.

Let’s consider an example. Say your university wants to build a new 300-person dorm on campus. Universities don’t have their own construction companies, so they issue a CFP—often called a *request for proposals* (RFP) in construction—and ask local companies to submit proposals or bids. The university would have a number of requirements, like the building’s size and location. For their RFP, they would want to see things like architectural plans and costs, but what else might they require? What else might a construction company provide to convince the university that they have the best proposed plan?



Figure 2.1: A dormitory and classroom at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The best proposals not only follow the specific instructions of a CFP, but also go above and beyond to help convince their audience to say “yes” and approve their plan. A good proposal lays the groundwork for your project and instills confidence that you are capable of completing it, even as you make adjustments to the project along the way.

As you start to work on your own proposal, this chapter will invite you to think widely about this genre and how it is employed in

different disciplines and areas of public and professional life.

II. Rhetorical Considerations: Audience

The proposal requires you to lay out a plan for a larger project. Whether it is a formal proposal for a multi-million-dollar grant or a quick email outlining a project for your boss, you want your proposal to appeal to your audience and convince them to approve your plan. In other words, know your audience.

Knowing your audience can mean a few different things. It can mean knowing the person or organization in charge and what they want to hear—does this person care a lot about specific details, or do they want more of the big picture? Does your audience want a specific and narrow result from your plan, or are they interested in a more ambitious but less predictable outcome? In academic and many professional settings, the requirements for a proposal are laid out in detail in CFPs.

CFPs look a lot like assignment sheets you might have for your class. They identify what an organization is looking for and often include the criteria by which the proposals will be judged. Like a classroom assignment sheet, they can specify length, scope, format, and many other details. Unlike a classroom assignment, though, CFPs may have even more at stake than your GPA. This CFP from the [Department of Energy](#) for training in high-energy physics awards grants from \$200,000 to \$5 million.

In addition, the instructions for grants can require a high degree of special consideration, especially when a lot of money is at stake or a specific goal is identified. For example, these guidelines for proposals from [The National Science Foundation](#) are 193 pages long. They include everything from proposal types to formatting guidelines to monitoring and reporting the use of existing grant money.

In fact, some organizations will have full-time employees responsible solely for writing grant proposals. Grant and proposal writers need to possess strong writing skills and a keen awareness of their audience. Many professionals often have to write proposals even if grant writing is not their full-time job. Research scientists write grants in order to obtain funding for their labs, some teachers earn grants for their classes or schools, and many people who work in sales write proposals to potential clients. It's a good genre to know, regardless of your academic and career path.

The textbook you are reading was made possible by a grant from the University of Illinois at Chicago Libraries for faculty to develop free, open electronic resources for students.

For this textbook, the editors had to explain and justify what benefit an open electronic textbook would have for students in the composition classroom. When the textbook project was proposed, the book was not written. Instead, the editors offered an outline of the project, a plan to write it, and a plan to evaluate its implementation. Most projects, from large buildings to book-length studies, go through similar proposal processes.

No matter the context of your proposal, you still need to know what your audience wants in order for them to approve your plan. You have heard teachers and professors say this over and over again, but it's worth repeating more: **read the instructions**. Even what seem to be the most arbitrary instructions often serve an important purpose. For very competitive proposals, organizations often ask for specific documents in a specific order and even in a specific format. This helps organizations compare different proposals side-by-side with ease.

The easier you make it for your audience to understand what you are proposing, the more receptive they will be to approving it. Think about doing so in all aspects of your proposal:

- Understand what your audience is looking for in an ideal proposal (you might even be able to track down examples of similar proposals that were successful)
- Include all the requested details and components
- Follow the format and order your audience asks for
- Make sure your writing is clear, direct, and proofread

Another important consideration is explaining why your project matters. Some instructors and teachers will call this answering the “so what?” of a project. According to Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein in their book *They Say, I Say* (2017), when you answer the “so what?” and explain why your project matters, you engage your audience in a meaningful way that keeps their attention. They write, “[N]ot everyone can claim to have a cure for cancer or a solution to end poverty. But writers who fail to show that others *should* care or already *do* care about their claims will ultimately lose their audiences’ interest” (p. 93). Keep in mind that part of your job as a writer is to convince your audience that you have something to say.

Remember that your proposal is a plan, and plans can change. You may encounter unforeseen difficulties, or a seemingly easy task may prove more difficult and time-consuming. Some large projects may need to be scaled back. Some research projects need to adjust their inquiry to something more feasible to meet a deadline or due date. This happens

more often than you might expect. The best proposals convince their audiences to approve their plan and assure them that the plan can be adjusted should circumstances change.

More Resources 2.1: Audience

Here's a little more help for [Thinking about Your Audience](#).

You might also check out this lesson about [Understanding the Rhetorical Situation](#).

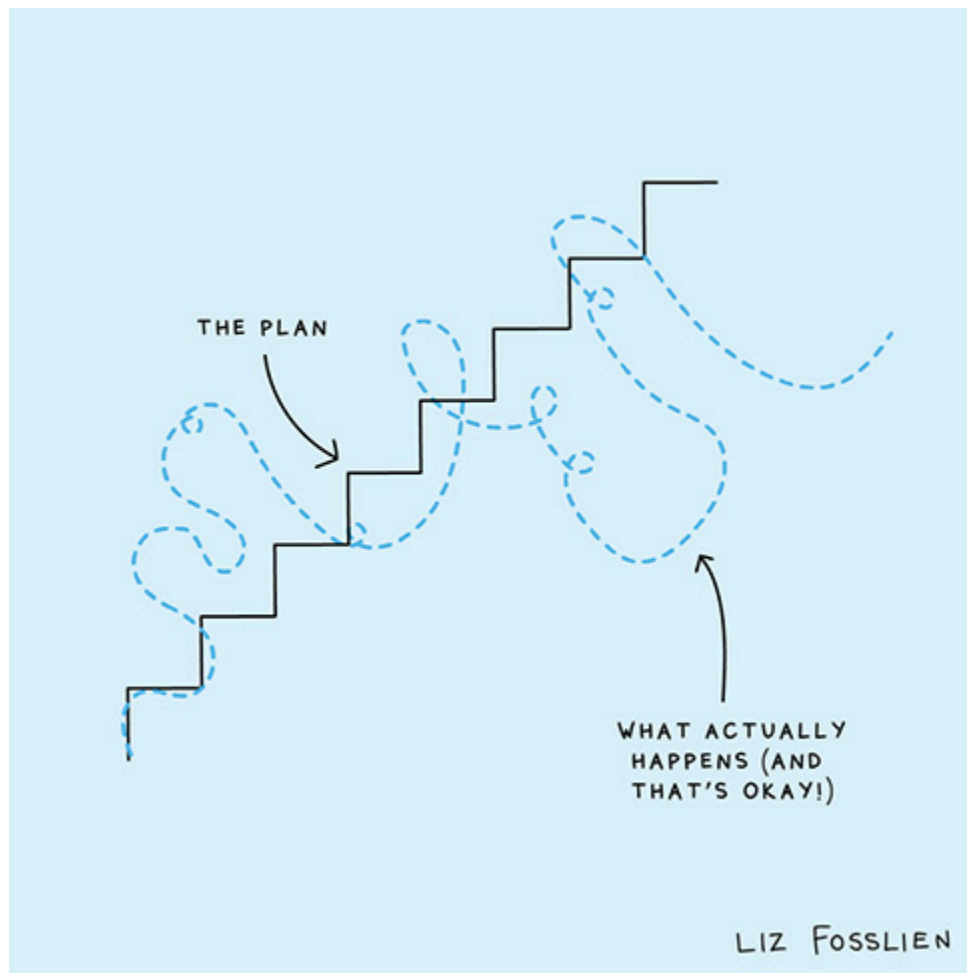


Figure 2.2: The Plan. Image courtesy of [Liz Fosslien](#).

III. The Proposal Genre Across the Disciplines

Example 2.1: Academic and Professional Examples

As you've already seen, the proposal is a widely used and a widely varied genre. Click on this link to a [Box Folder](#) to see a collection of different examples. You'll notice how many different disciplines and professions are represented even in this small collection.

These examples are meant to show you how this genre looks in other disciplines and professions. Make sure to follow the requirements for your own class or seek out specific examples from your instructor in order to address the needs of your own assignment.

The size of a proposal does not always match its impact. In the height of the 2008 financial crisis, U.S. Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson submitted [a two-and-a-half-page proposal](#) to the federal government requesting \$700 billion. According to Paulson, this amount of money was necessary to stabilize the volatile housing market by purchasing home mortgages and other related financial assets. This proposal would become the basis for the Troubled Asset Relief Program, which attempted to steady the unstable economy during the financial crisis.

Want to see what even more of these competitive grants look like? The U.S. federal government runs [a full website to centralize all its available grants](#). You can find different CFPs on topics ranging from national defense contracts to disease research to international aid programs. In addition, you can see how a typical federal grant functions after the proposal stage. People apply for the grants, and if awarded, they then implement their plan. This process can range from a couple of months to several years. After they have completed their plan, they are required to submit additional reporting to help account for how the money was used and what results came from the grant. For grants that are implemented over several years, the government may require updates throughout the grant period to ensure that projects are following their plans.

IV. Research Strategies: Metacognition

In the proposal stage, you are still developing a topic. You haven't completed all of your research yet, and part of your proposal will include your plan to research your topic more. At this point in the process, the three most important parts of research are

- knowing what you know,
- knowing what you don't know, and
- knowing what you need to find out.

All of these are related to thinking or cognition—the things you know and the things you don't know. Whether you are designing a laboratory experiment or writing a historical analysis, you are engaging not only in thinking, but in thinking about the thoughts you have about your topic. In other words, when writing, you spend a lot of time thinking about how to arrange your thoughts—within a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire paper.

This is metacognition. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, metacognition is the “[a]wareness and understanding of one's own thought processes.” The more aware we are of those processes—what we know and what we don't know—the easier it can be to organize our thinking in each step of our research project.

Let's break down the steps from above. First, you need to know what you know. This means understanding the basics of your topic, usually some of the key foundational ideas or facts. They are often the kinds of things that start to spark your interest in the topic. For example, you might be interested in the rise of social media influencers. You might follow a few and know a little bit about them, but likely not enough to write a research paper.

Next, you need to know what you don't know. This means identifying the unknowns. These can be basic facts and figures you haven't discovered yet, possible solutions to the issue you are exploring, or larger concepts that help you interpret data. Following the example above, you might not know the different ways in which social media influencers make money, or what kind of additional work they need to do related to the videos and images they post. Once you have a sense of what you don't know, you can start to think about the last part: knowing what you need to find out.

Knowing what you need to find out is the basis of a good research plan. Based on your

exploration of your topic so far, what do you need to learn more about in order to develop your understanding and eventually develop a thesis? Just like a good laboratory experiment, a proposal should know what it wants to find out without already having the answer. Remember, writing is *inquiry*—the process of writing a proposal will often help you realize all three of these types of knowledge. Just remember to go back and revise your proposal to make your knowledge as clear to your audience as it has become to you!

This is called *scope*. The scope of your project includes its topic and the area of that topic you are looking to explore. Take a look at the image of the funnel. This shows a good way to think about the scope of your topic. You might be interested in climate change, but entire books have been written about that topic. You might need to narrow it down for a research paper, to something like recycling's effect on climate change. This might be too big of a topic, too, so you might repeat the steps to funnel down your topic to a more manageable scope for your assignment.

In fact, it is often easier to research your topic when the scope of your project is very specific. It allows you to identify research directly related to your ideas.

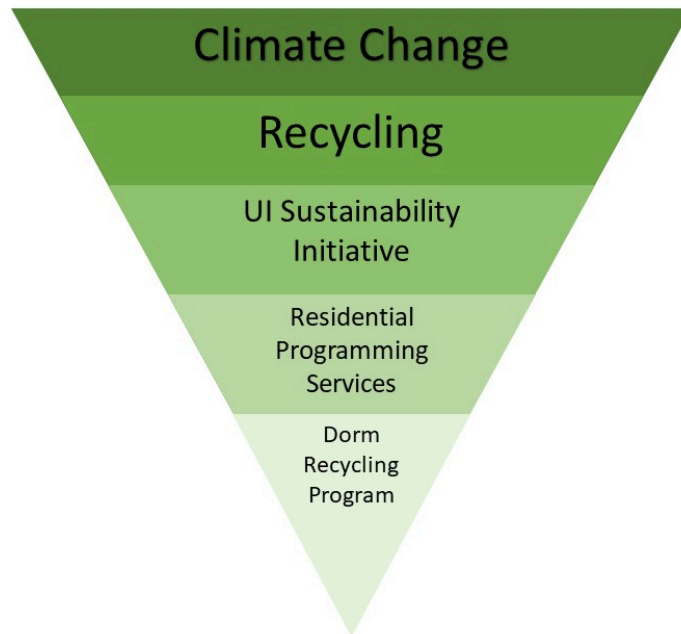


Figure 2.3: A model for funneling down the scope of your project.

V. Reading Strategies: Reading with a Purpose

While you draft your proposal, you will want to read selectively in order to get an understanding of your topic and to start planning your project. You might consider some of the following questions as you read:

- What is the purpose of this text?
- Who is the audience?
- What information does it provide?
- With whom is the text in conversation?
- How might you use this text in your project?
- Does the text point to other sources that might prove useful?

To answer questions like these, we don't always have to read an entire article or chapter. We can read strategically, in this case, reading **with a purpose**. To read with a purpose means thinking about how you could use that source. **As you read, you actively make choices during the reading process to facilitate that purpose without sacrificing understanding.** Scholar of reading strategies Tracy Linderholm (2006) claims that this is a necessary transition for college students: "Unfortunately a sizeable number of students do not effectively alter their cognitive processing to meet specific educational goals. For example, many college students are used to reading in order to memorize the material, so they struggle when they are asked to generalize[...]concepts to new situations" (p. 70). Understanding different approaches to reading will help you process information better and put it to use more quickly.

This means that your reading should focus on finding out if a source is useful to you. In this stage of the research process, you will read the abstract first, and maybe the introduction, and then determine whether it is worth reading the rest. Even if you find the article useful, you might flip to a relevant section first, rather than reading the entire thing from beginning to end. This is especially useful for longer sources like books or lengthy reports where you may only need to read the beginning, and then go directly to the relevant section.

As you continue to develop your knowledge of your topic, you will likely find yourself doing this more often. For example, if you are researching issues about free speech in the United States, you might need to read a historical overview of the First Amendment early

in your project. You might only need to skim a similar section in an article after you've read through several similarly related sources.

Another important part of reading with purpose includes finding sources within a source. An author might cite a study or another article that could be useful to you, even possibly in a way that is different from how the author uses that source. You might see the same source used in multiple articles, and it may be a key part of the conversation around your topic. Look up the citation for the other source and try tracking it down. Sometimes this is as easy as plugging it into Google; other times, you might need to find it through library databases or get some help from a reference librarian.

Library Referral: Staying Organized Means Saving Time

(by Annie R. Armstrong)

Research involves sifting through and managing a lot of information. Ideally, you'll be gathering more sources than you need, since not all of them will pan out in the end. Things can get out of hand if you don't have a system for staying organized and efficient. Consider the following strategies for staying on top of your research workflow:

Citation managers such as Zotero and RefWorks help you gather and organize citations for books and articles. They save tons of time by automatically generating bibliographies in any citation style. Ask a librarian about available tools at your school.

Creating a document to track your sources is a more old-school approach, but useful nevertheless. Use the *cite* button found in library databases and catalogs to copy a citation for each source you're considering for your research. Copy and paste the *permalink* for each source as well. A *permalink* is a permanent, stable link that will help you get back to the source later. You can also take notes on your sources and record where and how you've searched for sources on the same document to avoid unnecessarily repeating your steps.

As you read widely and develop your topic, you will want to continue taking notes and keeping track of your sources. Take some time and consider how you manage your notes, sources, and citations. Many researchers use a citation managing app or a note-taking app that stores and saves everything in a central place. These can be easily accessible

across multiple devices and can sync to the cloud so you won't lose all your information if a device is damaged. Other folks may save files to Google Drive or iCloud. No matter what system you adopt, **make sure to back up your work.**

VI. Writing Strategies: Metadiscourse

We've talked about metacognition, or awareness about your thinking. A similar concept called *metadiscourse* can be applied to writing. Both words have a similar prefix of *meta-*, which comes from ancient Greek and means something like "beyond," "above," or "about." So, if metacognition could mean something like "thinking about thinking," metadiscourse means "writing about writing."

Metadiscourse is writing that tells you about the rest of the piece of writing. Metadiscourse is very effective in proposals. Since you haven't done the research or completed your project, metadiscourse allows you to talk about what you know so far and what your project will do or will find out.

Example 2.2: Here is an example from a student's research proposal:

My current research plan centers on investigating restaurant industry policies about tattoos and the experiences of tattooed people in this industry. My initial research has looked into the rules about the display of tattoos and the inconsistent enforcement of them across the restaurant industry. Some of the articles I have read, though, discuss some legal cases about these policies and I need to find out more about the historical impact of such rulings. Ultimately, this project seeks to reconcile society's changing views about tattoos as a larger part of mainstream culture with the ways the workplace has and hasn't adapted to them.

This example includes some of the research this student has already done and what he is looking to find out. What do you notice about this language? How does it help you as a

reader? While the author might not have a fully formed argument, there is a specific scope and a clear direction. The language of metadiscourse helps bridge what they know with what they are proposing to research further.

Example 2.3: Now take a look at this example of metadiscourse from economist Susan Dynarski's research paper (2014) about student debt:

In this paper, I provide an economic perspective on policy issues related to student debt in the United States. I lay out the economic rationale for government provision of student loans and summarize time trends in student borrowing. I describe the structure of the US loan market, which is a joint venture of the public and private sectors[...]I close with a discussion of the gaps in the data required to fully analyze and steer student-loan policy.

You often find metadiscourse in the introduction of a longer research paper. Like in the example above, metadiscourse helps to forecast what's to come. The example above tells you what to expect in the longer paper and how it is organized. It can effectively provide an overview or roadmap of the rest of the paper, direct your reader's attention, or indicate your stance toward your topic, no matter what genre you are writing. This makes metadiscourse an important tool in all academic writing.

Some students might be hesitant to use metadiscourse. Some feel that they have been told not to use this type of writing in other classes. Some teachers say that students should avoid using the first-person "I" in their writing. Some others suggest that writing should "show and not tell." In many instances, this is useful advice. If you are writing a summary, you likely don't want to use the first-person "I" and want to keep it objective. If you're analyzing a film scene, you want to show your audience significant details, rather than just tell them that the scene is significant without any details.

Check out the following video, which offers additional background on and examples of metadiscourse: [Watch the video "Intro to Metadiscourse."](#)

Writing advice is often specific to a genre or situation, instead of being universal. What

works in some situations doesn't work in others. Metadiscourse, when used in the right situations, helps to signal to your reader where a paper or a project is going. It is often used in the beginning of a paper (in the introduction) or the beginning of a project (in the proposal stage). In a proposal, metadiscourse helps connect to your metacognition. It can spell out to your audience what you know and what you intend to find out in your research.

Consider looking back at the examples from different disciplines. Where do you see them employing metadiscourse? How does this language help an audience envision the proposed plan?

Key Takeaways

- Your proposal is a plan. Have a clear direction, even if you need to change some things along the way.
- Keep your audience in mind as you read your assignment sheet or CFP.
- The goal of every proposal is to get your audience to say “yes” to your plan. Always keep that in mind.

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3. Literature Review

CHARITIANNE WILLIAMS

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the purpose and function of a literature review.
- Structure a literature review according to basic genre expectations.
- Synthesize ideas from multiple sources using a synthesis matrix.
- Choose between narrative or parenthetical citation and direct quoting, or paraphrase with intent and purpose.

I. Introduction

The purpose of a literature review is just that—it *reviews*. This means that literature reviews examine a text after it was produced, with all the benefits that hindsight allows a reader. In popular culture, we commonly review movies, restaurants, vacation spots, products, etc. In those reviews, you look back at the single thing you are reviewing and your experience with it. You focus on the strengths and weaknesses of your experience and judge the experience as positive or negative while recommending or not recommending the place or product and explaining why.

An academic literature review does something different, although some of the skills and strategies you use remain the same. The job of a literature review is to examine a *collection* of research or scholarship (not a single thing or text) on a given topic and show how that scholarship fits together. Literature reviews summarize, describe, evaluate, and **synthesize** the work of other authors and researchers while looking for common trends/

patterns, themes, inconsistencies, and gaps in this previous research. The main strategy writers of a literature review use is synthesis.

SYNTHESIS: the combination of ideas and elements to form a complete system or theory.

A good metaphor for synthesis is cooking! Imagine the ingredients for a loaf of bread laid out on a kitchen cabinet. Each ingredient—eggs, milk, flour, sugar, salt, yeast—have their own purpose and can be combined in different ways to form food other than bread. Knowing all of those individual attributes that make an egg an egg, or the difference between yeast and flour, is what makes you a chef. When you combine all these ingredients according to the recipe, you get something different than all the ingredients on their own: and most of us would rather eat a slice of bread than a spoonful of flour. The product of synthesis is like bread. Synthesis takes a list of ingredients and makes them into something more than the ingredients alone.

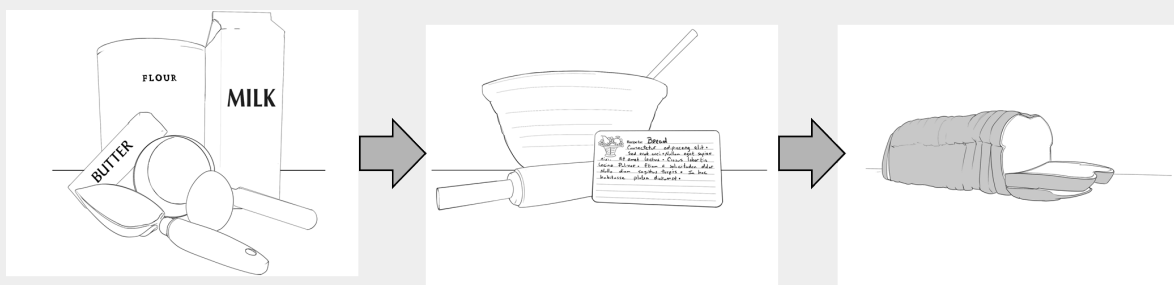


Figure 3.1: A recipe for synthesis

Usually, the writers of a literature review will start with a question that they want to answer through informed and research-based evidence gathered while reading others' work on related topics. The “thesis” or controlling idea of a literature review may be that same question (“*This review seeks to answer...*”) or it may be a statement describing the reviewed research. The thesis reflects the purpose of the literature review as a genre and is different from the thesis you will write for the research paper that argues a claim or asserts a new idea.

Example 3.1: Look at this thesis statement taken from the introduction of a literature review in environmental psychology on the relationship between “nature sounds” and restorative environments:

“Given the emphasis on nature within restorative environments (see Hartig et al., 2014), the present narrative literature review focuses on evidence for positive psychological experiences of nature sounds and soundscapes specifically, and in particular how listening to these can generate perceptions and outcomes of restoration from stress and fatigue” (Ratcliffe, 2021).

From this example, we can learn many things about literature reviews:

- **They are explicit and focused on their topic.** The opening states an observable truth about the current research (*emphasizes nature*), is followed by a general condition (*positive psychological experiences*) within that research, and then finally focuses on describing how a particular outcome is achieved (*listening to nature sounds is restorative*).
- **They seek to prevent or eliminate misunderstanding.** Note the use of specialized key terms, exacting transitional phrases, and meaningful verbs in the thesis such as “*restorative environments*,” “*in particular*,” and “*generate*.”
- **They seek to forward understanding.** In other words, literature reviews examine and link together evidence described and validated in the research of others so a reader can learn how a field is developing. (*Research seems to agree that nature sounds can relieve stress and fatigue—this review will examine that conclusion so readers can understand/ build on how and why.*)

Moving from the beginning to the very end of the literature review, we can also learn many things about literature reviews from the sources used. Think of each text listed in the References section of a literature review as contributing pieces to a gigantic puzzle.

Example 3.2: Look at the first three articles listed in the References for the article excerpted above:

Abbott, L. C., Taff, D., Newman, P., Benfield, J. A., and Mowen, A. J. (2016). The influence of natural sounds on attention restoration. *J. Park Recreation Adm.* 34, 5–15. doi: 10.18666/JPra-2016-V34-I3-6893

Aletta, F., and Kang, J. (2019). Promoting healthy and supportive acoustic environments: going beyond the quietness. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 16:4988. doi: 10.3390/ijerph16244988

Aletta, F., Oberman, T., and Kang, J. (2018). Associations between positive health-related effects and soundscapes perceptual constructs: a systematic review. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 15:2392. doi: 10.3390/ijerph15112392

None of these sources are exactly the same. One focuses on sound and attention, the next two on sound and health, and none of them are quite the same as sound and *restoration*—but they are all pieces of the puzzle that give a full understanding of how sound and restorative environments relate.

As the author of the literature review, it is your job to join the pieces together, giving your reader a complete picture of what researchers know about your topic.

Literature reviews are an indispensable tool for researchers. Instead of having to read dozens of articles on a topic, a researcher could instead read a literature review that synthesizes what is known and puts each piece of scholarship into conversation with the others. This could be not only quicker, but also more valuable.

Have you heard the saying that the whole is more than the sum of its parts? The knowledge constructed by a well-written literature review often outweighs the knowledge constructed by simply reading each article in the References section on its own because the author of a literature review processes and analyzes the information for the reader.

Literature reviews occur in two general forms—as a background section in a scholarly work or as a stand-alone genre in and of itself. In both situations, the basic purpose and

structure of the literature review is similar: it is the length and the scope that varies. For example, consider the previous chapter, the Proposal. In most proposals, you will want to convince your audience that you are informed on the background of your topic—a literature review is how you would do that. Since a proposal is commonly a short text, you do not have the space to summarize every piece of research. You must select an important set and synthesize that information into a small section signaling your expertise.

On the other hand, consider a professional journal intended to keep its readers up to date on new technologies and findings in a specific field or career. New ideas and discoveries are emerging every day, and it can be difficult to stay on top of all of these new findings, understand how they fit together, and also keep track of your own career responsibilities! A magazine might hire an author to read all the new research on a specific topic and synthesize it into a single article, a state-of-the-art review, so that practitioners in a field can read a single 25-page article instead of 100 25-page articles.

More Resources 3.1: Literature Reviews

If you need more insight into a specific issue or piece of the puzzle, a literature review can help you find it. If you'd like to learn more about what makes a literature review different from your average essay, here is a short piece that explains the [purpose of a literature review](#).

II. Rhetorical Considerations: Voice

Using the scholarship of other writers and researchers is one of the things that differentiates academic writing from other types of writing. Using others' scholarship in a meaningful way that creates new knowledge without mischaracterizing the original findings takes effort, attention, and usually several rounds of revision and rewriting. One of the issues is *voice*, which refers to the attitude and tone of a text—think of it as what the text “sounds like” in your head as you read it. Voice is an important element of *cohesion*, or what some people think of as “flow.” Creating a consistent voice in the mind of your reader helps them

fit all the information in a text together in the way the author intends. Check out this advice from APAstyle.org about [academic style and voice](#).

Think back to your annotated bibliography and how you created your summaries. You probably used key terms from the original authors' texts, but because you had to take whole articles and restate the meaning in a short paragraph, there wasn't room to just repeat the words of the original author. So you had to write the summaries in *your voice*. If you used those key terms correctly and in ways similar to original authors, those key terms probably did not interfere with cohesiveness and voice. However, in the literature review, you have many more voices to synthesize than you did to summarize in the annotated bibliography. Maintaining a consistent and cohesive voice will be challenging. An important way to maintain voice is through paraphrasing, discussed later in this chapter.

More Resources 3.2: Transitions

Another important way to maintain cohesion is through the use of metadiscourse (see Chapter 2) and transitional phrases. See this link for [the use and meaning of transitional phrases, sometimes called signposts](#).

III. The Literature Review Across the Disciplines

Example 3.3: Academic and Professional Examples

As you've already seen, the literature review is a useful and versatile genre. Click on the link to this [Box Folder](#) to see a collection of different examples. Read below for more information about the variety of different literature review.

These examples are meant to show you how this genre looks in other disciplines and professions. Make sure to follow the requirements for your own class or seek out specific examples from your instructor in order to address the needs your own assignment.

Structure of Literature Reviews

While the details vary across disciplines, all literature reviews tend to have similar basic structure. The **introduction of a literature review** informs the reader on the topic by defining key terms, citing key researchers or research periods in the field, and introducing the main focus of the review in a descriptive thesis statement. The introduction also explains the organization of the review. In a literature review, you organize your discussion of the research by *topic* or *theme*—not article or author. This is in direct contrast to the annotated bibliography, which is often the first step in the writing process for a literature review.

In the annotated bibliography, you organize your entries in alphabetical order by authors' last names. Each annotation is directly connected to a single text. A literature review is connected to a collection of texts, and therefore must be organized in a way that reflects this.

Example 3.4: Let's examine the full paragraph that the thesis statement we analyzed earlier came from:

A systematic review by [Aletta et al. \(2018\)](#) has identified links between positive urban soundscapes (which may also include nature sounds) and health and well-being, including stress recovery. **Given the emphasis on nature within restorative environments (see [Hartig et al., 2014](#)), the present narrative literature review focuses on evidence for positive psychological experiences of nature sounds and soundscapes specifically, and in particular how listening to these can generate perceptions and**

outcomes of restoration from stress and fatigue. This review has five key objectives, summarized in [Figure 1](#) [in the article]. First, it explores literature regarding the impact of nature sounds on perceptions and experiences of wider natural environments. Second, it examines evidence regarding cognitive and affective appraisals of nature sounds and their contributions to overall perceptions of restorative environments. Third, literature regarding restorative outcomes in response to nature sounds is assessed. Fourth, the relevance of key restoration theories to this topic is examined and areas where these theories are limited are identified. Fifth, a possible new theoretical area of interest—semantic associations with nature—is discussed and exemplified by recent acoustics research (Ratcliffe, 2021, *emphasis added*).

Notice how the thesis statement (in **bold**) is followed by an explicit description of the five key objectives—which correspond to the titles (usually called *headings*) of the five major sections of the body of the literature review. The introduction basically outlines the body of the literature review to make it easier for a researcher to find the specific information they are looking for. What follows each of these headings is an analysis and synthesis of the topic described in the heading—which is what we mean when we say a literature review is organized by topic.

*Example 3.5: See how the **body sections of a literature review** synthesize research and evidence in relation to a focused topic. Read this example taken from a literature review in another discipline, nursing.*

The introduction states that the review’s purpose is to understand the issues facing nurses in situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers found several themes in the research that all contributed to nurses’ experiences. This paragraph describes one of those themes which the authors label “Professional collegiality”:

3.2.2. Professional collegiality

Professional camaraderie amongst nursing colleagues working during a pandemic was high (Ives et al., 2009, Kim, 2018, Liu and Liehr, 2009). Nurses acknowledged the

importance of caring for their co-workers and in sharing the load. Some nurses associated the experience with working on a battlefield, whereby they worked together as a team protecting one another (Chung et al., 2005, Kang et al., 2018, Liu and Liehr, 2009). Appreciation of their nursing colleagues was demonstrated through sharing their experiences, willingness to work together and encouraging a team spirit (Shih et al., 2007, Chung et al., 2005, Chiang et al., 2007). (Ratcliffe, 2021, p.4)

In this single paragraph, there are seven different research articles cited, and some of them are cited twice. There is no way to write a coherent paragraph summarizing seven different research articles at once—instead, the authors of this paragraph reviewed what the researchers said about collegiality, found where their findings pointed in the same direction, and put those connections into their own words. This is the importance of the review’s body section: it is here where you really dig into the content, meaning, and implications of the scholarship you are discussing.

The end of a literature review looks different from the one- or two-paragraph conclusion we are used to in other texts. The end is often made up of multiple sections, each with a slightly different purpose, although all are probably recognizable to you. A “Discussion” section is almost always present, where the author summarizes the most important findings of each section. In most cases, the “Discussion” section does not contain new information, but ties the different body sections together in ways that provide a deeper analysis.

The end of a literature review may also contain an “Implications for Future Research” or “Resolution” after the Discussion—sometimes this final section is even called “Conclusion.” What this last section looks like is often dependent upon the type of review you are writing, and whether the review is standing alone as a complete text or part of a larger project.

In any situation, across all disciplines, it is important to understand how your literature review is meant to inform the reader and what kind of review is appropriate for the context, in order to decide how you should structure the beginning and end of your review.

Types of Literature Reviews

There are different types of literature reviews, although in undergraduate study the Traditional or Narrative Review is most common. Narrative reviews are somewhat exploratory in their content—in a narrative review you are synthesizing the results of specific texts selected for their connection to your topic. Narrative reviews almost always end with a section describing areas for future research if they are a stand-alone text, or a section describing why the author’s research is so needed if part of a larger research article. The chart below outlines the key differences between three major literature review types. Notice that each type has a slightly different purpose. You might think about which type best fits your project as you read.

Table 3.1: Types of Literature Reviews

Type	Purpose	Key Elements	Primary Field	Example
Systematic	Comprehensive coverage of the research on a specific line of inquiry	Methodology is key—systematic reviews detail exactly how the research was found so that a reader can verify that all relevant research is included.	Social Sciences, Medicine	Systematic review about nurses' experiences during pandemics
Scoping	Aims to identify the types of research on a topic and gaps in current research being performed	Often focuses on new and developing, possibly incomplete, research.	General, Medicine	Scoping review of the impacts of agriculture on the determinants of health
Narrative/Traditional	Explores and synthesizes sources focused on answering a research question	Most likely type to be found as a section within a primary research article, as well as a stand-alone text.	Undergraduate/Graduate Studies Embedded as a section in primary research	Narrative review about how sound can be used in restorative environments

More Resources 3.3: Literature Review Structures

If you'd like to learn more about each, check out [literature reviews for students and researchers!](#)

Need a step-by-step guide for the elements of a literature review? Visit [Writing a literature review](#) to learn more. Be sure to take a look at the [Sample literature review](#) that includes annotations for the moves the writer makes.

IV. Research Strategies: Developing a Methodology

Systematic and scoping reviews should always contain a Research Methodology that explains to your reader exactly how you found the research you are reviewing. Often Narrative Reviews will also contain a research methodology, although it will be slightly different since they are not comprehensive reviews, meaning, they do not attempt to find **all** the research on a topic—by design, they cover only a specific portion. Even if you are not required to write up your methodology, you need clear research strategies to find the appropriate scholarship for your literature review.

Example 3.6: Check out this excerpt from the methods sections from [a psychology literature review](#). Note how the authors clearly describe what types of sources they'll be using as well as their steps throughout the research process.

Drawing on individual case studies, archival reports, correlational studies, and laboratory and field experiments, this monograph scrutinizes a sequence of events during

which confessions may be obtained from criminal suspects and used as evidence. First, we examine the pre-interrogation interview, a process by which police...(Kassin and Gudjonsson, 2004, p.33)

Example 3.7: Here is another example from the field of education. In it the authors describe two separate searches they performed to gather the literature—the first search used key terms they decided upon before reading any scholarship, and the second search used the terms that they found were common to that first set of texts (see more about key terms here and in the Annotated Bibliography chapter).

We conducted two rounds of literature searches, utilizing the following databases: World CAT (general search), EBSCO Academic Search Complete, EBSCO Education Source, and Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (ProQuest). In the first round, we searched using every possible combination of the following terms: ‘race,’ ‘language teaching,’ ‘ethnicity,’ ‘language pedagogy,’ ‘Whiteness,’ ‘racialized,’ ‘antiracism,’ and ‘nativeness.’ For the second round of our literature search, we searched using terms that we saw emerging from the literature such as ‘racial identities of language learners,’ ‘racial identities of language teachers,’ ‘language varieties and language teaching,’ ‘race and language teacher education,’ ‘race and educational policy,’ ‘race and language programs,’ and ‘race and language curriculum’ and also repeated our earlier searches in order to keep the literature updated. (Von Esch et al., 2020, p. 392)

No matter the type of research (see [a description of qualitative vs. quantitative research](#)), the specific genres (see [descriptions of academic research genres](#)), or the time frame (see a discussion on [the importance of publication date](#)) you use for your review, it is important to think through the options, make a decision, and incorporate all your research knowl-

edge—use of key terms, use of subject filters, use of specialized databases, etc.—into a coherent and meaningful process that results in the best scholarship for your inquiry and review.

Here's a video to help you get started on using databases for research: [Watch the video "How Should I Search in a Database?"](#)

Library Referral: Connecting the Conversation with Scholarly Sources and Beyond

(by Annie R. Armstrong)

Research involves drawing from numerous voices from a range of source types. The sources you choose to include in your conversation are context-specific and might vary depending on your topic or the parameters of your assignment. Review your assignment description and talk to your instructor about guidelines. While most research papers emphasize scholarly sources, expertise isn't always equated with scholarliness and you might want to branch out. For example, a research paper focusing on exploitation of Native American land and communities by the mining industry should make some attempt to include sources generated by the communities under discussion, especially if their point of view is not represented in the peer-reviewed, scholarly sources you've found. Think about who the stakeholders are as related to various aspects of your topic and how you can tap into their voices through available resources. You may want to consult a librarian about this.

The chart below summarizes the breadth of source types available through library websites versus the open web:

Table 3.2: Scholarly Sources and Beyond

Library websites (databases & catalogs, research guides etc.)	Google/the open web
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Articles:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Scholarly/peer-reviewed◦ Newspaper◦ Magazine• Books and book chapters (online/e-books and physical)• Reference sources (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias)• Archival collections/primary sources• Image databases• Streaming Media (Kanopy, Academic Video Online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Freely available articles (limited views and paywalls may apply)• Websites:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Personal◦ Organizational◦ Corporate• Grey literature: Government information, policy papers, reports, and more• Blogs• TED Talks• Podcasts• Wikipedia• Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Snapchat)• Video (YouTube)

V. Reading Strategies: Intertextuality and Graphic Organizers

Typically we think of reading as something we do to learn the content of a text—and this is absolutely true! But true understanding means knowing the relationships between and impact of separate but related topics, which might mean understanding how different texts—generally focused on one topic—overlap or differ.

Intertextuality refers to the connections that exist between texts. Intertextuality as a reading strategy means looking for the connections between the text you are reading and

others you have already read; anticipating connections with other texts that you have not yet read, but plan to; as well as connections to whole disciplines, fields, and social phenomena. Reading for intertextuality means looking for opportunities to connect texts with each other, and keeping track of those connections in a productive way.

This means note-taking is essential to intertextual reading. Once you have thought carefully about why you are reading a text, what types of information to look for, and what you will do with that information, you can better decide how to keep track of that information. In regards to literature reviews, one type of graphic organizer dominates: the Synthesis Matrix.

The synthesis matrix is a way to keep track of the themes, concepts, and patterns that are emerging from your reading—NOT all the individual content of each article. This is important, yes, and you will need the citations, but literature reviews move one step further into the topic than simply identifying the pieces. You will need to synthesize.

If you have an annotated bibliography of sources already, it is the perfect way to start your synthesis matrix. An annotated bibliography is often the first step in preparing for a literature review, and is quite similar to an ingredient list, if we are using the metaphor from the introduction. (For a detailed description of how to write an annotated bibliography, see [Chapter 1](#)).

In your annotations, you will have selected the most important information that text supplies in relation to your topic. For an example, let's take the Conference on College Composition and Communication's statement "[Students' Right to Their Own Language](#)," which contains two annotated bibliographies. The second uses more recent sources and looks most like the annotated bibliographies you will write as a student, so let's start there.

Example 3.8: Here are three annotations from that bibliography. As you read, take notice of the different highlighted colors. Phrases *italicized and highlighted green* identify ideas related to linguistic identity, phrases **bolded and highlighted in blue** identify concepts related to grammar analysis, and phrases underlined and highlighted orange identify groups and ideas related to educational objectives:

Fought, Carmen. *Chicano English in Context*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Based primarily on data collected from adolescent and young adult native speakers in Los Angeles, this book is a comprehensive sociolinguistic study of language and language change in Latino/a communities. It provides **the basics of Chicano English (CE) structure (phonology, syntax, and semantics)** and its connection to the *social and cultural identity* of its speakers, along with detailed analyses of particular sociolinguistic variables. Emphasis is given to the historical, social, and linguistic contexts of CE. In addition, the differences between native and non-native CE speakers are covered. A final chapter discusses the future of research on CE.

Lippi-Green, Rosina. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

The author examines linguistic facts about **the structure and function of language**, explores commonly held myths about language, and develops a model of “the language subordination process.” Then, using a case-study approach, she applies the model to specific institutional practices (e.g., in education, news media, business) to show how false assumptions about language lead to language subordination. The author analyzes *specific groups and individuals* (speakers of African American English, Southern U.S. English, and the foreign-language accent of Latinos and Asian Americans) and discusses why and how some embrace linguistic assimilation while others resist it.

Nero, Shondel J. *Englishes in Contact: Anglophone Caribbean Students in an Urban College*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2001.

This qualitative study of four anglophone Caribbean students at a New York City col-

lege offers an **in-depth examination of the students' written and spoken language** and the challenges faced by both students and teachers as such students acquire academic literacy. Case studies of the four participants include excerpts from tape-recorded interviews, which reflect their **linguistic self-perception**, and sociolinguistic and educational experiences in their home countries and in New York City. Samples of their college writing over four semesters are represented and analyzed on morphosyntactic and discourse levels to determine the patterns that emerge when Creole English speakers **attempt to write Standard Written English**. Related issues such as **language and identity**, language attitudes, and **educational responses to ethnolinguistic diversity** are also discussed.

Once you have identified a concept like “language and identity” for your literature review, you can start getting “intertextual”! Review your other annotated sources and your new sources for their discussion of language and identity, as well as parallel concepts—what else do researchers address when they discuss language and identity? What do they discuss instead? Go back to the methods you used to come up with key terms for your literature search—the same strategies now apply to your reading. Also look for “umbrella” concepts, patterns in methodologies—anything that emerges while you read intertextually, focusing on the text in front of you while also remembering all the others you read before. Look for the themes in your annotated bibliography and keep track of the page numbers where these themes appear—plan to go back to those pages several times as you write your literature review.

This is a different type of reading than you did for the annotated bibliography, and might mean you go back and reread your sources several times in this new way—don't think of this as just repeating labor you have already performed. This is **new** work, designed to uncover **new** things in the research. Re-reading articles multiple times is something all serious writers do, and something you should do, too. It isn't redundant, it is *recursive*.

Table 3.3: Synthesis Matrix for Individuals' Choices in Linguistic Identity

	Linguistic identity	Grammar analysis	Educational objectives
Fought, Carmen	Discusses the changes in the Chicano English spoken depending upon class, gender, age differences in the speaker, and who the speaker is around. (p.7), (pp.30-61)	Gives a clear and explicit analysis of Chicano English rules. Focuses on spoken language. (Chapters 3-6)	Mostly discussed as parent objectives for their children, some parents didn't teach their kids Spanish so they would "fit in," worry Chicano will hurt that; other parents wanted to preserve Spanish in their family as a sense of heritage, also worry about the influence of Chicano (Chapters 7&8, especially 7!)
Lippi-Green, Rosina	Discusses ways both individuals themselves but also the media around them use language to construct identities real and discriminatory (Chapter 5)	Nope.	Across language communities there are differences between parents' wishes for assimilation and their children—differences seem to have both racial and class interactions
Nero, Shondel J.	Nero Focuses on how the 4 students view their own relationship to their language use, and how they use language (or want to use language) to build others' perceptions of them	In-depth grammar analysis of how an individual's language use changes—shows common errors between all 4 case studies, probably because they share a native language/dialect. Looks at written language, not just spoken.	Students differ in their level of desire to acquire Standard English and "assimilate"—but all see Standard English as a way to achieve in school
My take-aways	All studies link language with identity. Most talk about how individuals feel about their language use, and how they feel others react to their language use.	Most studies look at the grammar of individual Englishes directly, and produce a set of rules about it. All talk about the misperceptions people have about grammar (i.e., all languages have rules, have grammar, most people misunderstand that)	Most of the research shows that people believe Standard English has power, but individuals have different attitudes towards learning it that seems connected to the history of their communities and other social factors.

Put your sources into conversations around your themes, as shown in the table above. Notice that the top row names the themes covered in that column, put into original wording similar, but not identical, to the wording in the annotated bibliographies. Not every source will address every topic—not every article is the same. The last row starts to describe what is happening in each column across the whole collection of texts. In this way, your synthesis matrix takes the ingredient list provided by the annotated bibliography and makes it into a recipe for your final product—the literature review.

More Resources 3.4: Synthesis Matrix

Want to try out the synthesis matrix for your own research project? Here's a [video tutorial on how to get started](#). If you're still a bit stuck, read more on how helpful a tool a [Synthesis Matrix](#) can be.

VI. Writing Strategies: Citation, Quotation, and Paraphrase

Citation is when you use the work of other authors in your writing and mark that portion of your writing so your reader understands what idea is being “borrowed.” Citation also tells your reader where they could find that original idea in the original text, and how your text fits together with the web of other texts related to your topic: in other words, citations help create intertextuality. A citation placed in your sentences should refer directly to the full bibliographic information in your Works Cited or References page.

As you read in Chapter 1, there are different styles of citation including AMA, APA, CMS, and MLA. You can refer back to that chapter for a more detailed explanation of each. In this section, we'll cover the basics that are common to citation practices. Most academic styles use the original author's last name as the central part of the in-text citation, since References pages usually list cited works alphabetically by last name, but some use footnotes or endnotes instead, listing works in the order they were cited. It is important to

know which academic style you are using for your literature review so that you can make the right choice.

In-text citation takes one of two forms: parenthetical or narrative. In a narrative citation the author of the original work is mentioned in the sentence.

Example 3.9: Here's an example taken from the introduction of the same literature review discussed in the Research Strategies: Developing a Methodology section of this chapter.

Several pieces offered a comprehensive review of the historical literature on the formation of Black English as a construct in the context of slavery and Jim Crow, and the historical teaching of Black English within the U.S. context, including **Wheeler (2016) and Alim and Baugh (2007)**. **Wheeler (2016)** equated Standard English with ‘White’ English and challenged its hegemony in dialectically diverse classrooms. She named the “racism inherent in [fostering] bidialectalism [through teaching]” (p. 380), arguing that we are acknowledging that the only way for African-Americans to be upwardly mobile was to learn how to speak ‘White’ English. **Alim (2010)**, explained, “By uncritically presenting language varieties as ‘equal’ but differing in levels of ‘appropriateness,’ language and Dialect Awareness programs run the risk of silently legitimizing ‘Standard English’” (p. 215).... Current work addressing AAVE studies has been shifting focus to translingualism and to promoting such pedagogies as code-meshing (**Young, Barrett, Young Rivera and Lovejoy, 2014**) and translanguaging (**García & Wei, García and Wei, 2014**), embedded in a critical analysis of the racial logics underpinning the denigration of some languages. This work, combined with extensive examinations of the connections between race, language, teaching, and identity (e.g. **Flores & Rosa, 2015; Alim et al., 2016**), has laid a foundation for a raciolinguistics approach to teaching, which we return to later in this article. (Von Esch et al., 2020, p. 399, **emphasis added**.)

In the first sentence, we see two narrative citations just before the period. These citations state the authors’ names as a part of the sentence, and put the publication date of the articles in parenthesis. It makes sense to use a narrative citation in the topic sentence, since most of the paragraph is a synthesis of Wheeler and Alim’s research. The second sentence starts with Wheeler’s name in the subject position, and the fourth sentence starts with

Alim's name in the subject position—both are narrative citations, a form chosen by the author to emphasize the importance and similarities in the two articles.

In the last two sentences, we see parenthetical citations. The citation information is in parenthesis within the sentences, which focuses the reader on the ideas, not the research itself. Imagine you were reading this article out loud—you would most certainly say the narrative citations “Wheeler” and “Alim”; you might choose *not* to say “Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, & Lovejoy, 2014,” though, and no one listening to you would notice the omission. This is the most important difference between narrative and parenthetical citation—narrative draws attention to the researchers, while parenthetical allows a focus on ideas. In academic writing, you often have reason to use both, but it is important to note that using parenthetical citation is less disruptive to your voice—it keeps a reader focused on the ideas you are explaining.

Usually you are citing a type of quotation in your text (although different disciplines have other situations that they cite). Direct quotation and paraphrase are usually what we talk about when we talk about using resources in your writing, although summary is cited as well.

Direct quotation is when you take the original words of one author and place them in your own text. When you quote in your own writing, you mark the copied text—usually with quotation marks “” around the text and a citation afterwards. Quoting is useful when the original author is an important authority on a topic or if you want to define/describe another's point of view in a way that leaves no room for misinterpretation.

In a literature review, a direct quote will almost always be accompanied by a narrative citation. But direct quoting can cause some issues in your own text, such as a sudden shift in voice and a loss of cohesion; the potential for misunderstanding and misrepresentation, since the quote has been separated from its original context; and *wordiness*—quotes can take up too much space both in terms of the quote itself, and of the explanation and context you must provide for the introduced idea. For these reasons, literature reviews do not contain much direct quoting.

Paraphrasing is a way to accomplish similar goals to direct quoting without causing the same problems. Paraphrasing is when you use only the original author's key terms and ideas, but your own words. Paraphrasing still contains a citation afterwards that directs the reader to the full bibliographic information in your Works Cited, but does not require quotation marks since the language is yours. Paraphrase may be longer or shorter than the

original author's text, and uses both narrative and parenthetical citation. Paraphrase also allows you to cite more than one piece of research containing the same idea in a single sentence, such as the last sentence in the example paragraph above. This kind of citation string is important to literature reviews because it clearly identifies patterns and trends in research findings.

Key Takeaways

- Literature reviews are a synthesis of what other researchers have discovered on your topic. Think of reviews as “the big picture.”
- Taking so much information from other sources can get confusing—use section headings to keep your review organized and clear.
- Diverse citation, quotation, and paraphrasing techniques are necessary to help your reader understand where the ideas are coming from, AND to help make the ideas “stick together.”
- Keeping all the new knowledge you are learning from your sources organized is hard! Take notes using citations and use a graphic organizer to keep yourself on track.

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4. Research Essay

JEFFREY KESSLER

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- Construct a thesis based upon your research
- Use critical reading strategies to analyze your research
- Defend a position in relation to the range of ideas surrounding a topic
- Organize your research essay in order to logically support your thesis

I. Introduction

The goal of this book has been to help demystify research and inquiry through a series of genres that are part of the research process. Each of these writing projects—the annotated bibliography, proposal, literature review, and research essay—builds on each other. Research is an ongoing and evolving process, and each of these projects help you build towards the next.

In your annotated bibliography, you started your inquiry into a topic, reading widely to define the breadth of your inquiry. You recorded this by summarizing and/or evaluating the first sources you examined. In your proposal, you organized a plan and developed pointed questions to pursue and ideas to research. This provided a good sense of where you might continue to explore. In your literature review, you developed a sense of the larger conversations around your topic and assessed the state of existing research. During each of these writing projects, your knowledge of your topic grew, and you became much more informed about its key issues.

You've established a topic and assembled sources in conversation with one another. It's now time to contribute to that conversation with your own voice. With so much of your research complete, you can now turn your focus to crafting a strong research essay with a clear thesis. Having the extensive knowledge that you have developed across the first three writing projects will allow you to think more about putting the pieces of your research together, rather than trying to do research at the same time that you are writing.

This doesn't mean that you won't need to do a little more research. Instead, you might need to focus strategically on one or two key pieces of information to advance your argument, rather than trying to learn about the basics of your topic.

But what about a thesis or argument? You may have developed a clear idea early in the process, or you might have slowly come across an important claim you want to defend or a critique you want to make as you read more into your topic. You might still not be sure what you want to argue. No matter where you are, this chapter will help you navigate the genre of the research essay. We'll examine the basics of a good thesis and argument, different ways to use sources, and strategies to organize your essay.

While this chapter will focus on the kind of research essay you would write in the college classroom, the skills are broadly applicable. Research takes many different forms in the academic, professional, and public worlds. Depending on the course or discipline, research can mean a semester-long project for a class or a few years' worth of research for an advanced degree. As you'll see in the examples below, research can consist of a brief, two-page conclusion or a government report that spans hundreds of pages with an overwhelming amount of original data.

Above all else, good research is engaged with its audience to bring new ideas to light based on existing conversations. A good research essay uses the research of others to advance the conversation around the topic based on relevant facts, analysis, and ideas.

II. Rhetorical Considerations: Contributing to the Conversation

The word "essay" comes from the French word *essayer*, or "attempt." In other words, an

essay is an attempt—to prove or know or illustrate something. Through writing an essay, your ideas will evolve as you attempt to explore and think through complicated ideas. Some essays are more exploratory or creative, while some are straightforward reports about the kind of original research that happens in laboratories.

Most research essays attempt to argue a point about the material, information, and data that you have collected. That research can come from fieldwork, laboratories, archives, interviews, data mining, or just a lot of reading. No matter the sources you use, the thesis of a research essay is grounded in evidence that is compelling to the reader.

Where you described the conversation in your literature review, in your research essay you are contributing to that conversation with your own argument. Your argument doesn't have to be an argument in the cable-news-social-media-shouting sense of the word. It doesn't have to be something that immediately polarizes individuals or divides an issue into black or white. Instead, an argument for a research essay should be a claim, or, more specifically, a claim that requires evidence and analysis to support. This can take many different forms.

Example 4.1: Here are some different types of arguments you might see in a research essay:

- Critiquing a specific idea within a field
- Interrogating an assumption many people hold about an issue
- Examining the cause of an existing problem
- Identifying the effects of a proposed program, law, or concept
- Assessing a historical event in a new way
- Using a new method to evaluate a text or phenomenon
- Proposing a new solution to an existing problem
- Evaluating an existing solution and suggesting improvements

These are only a few examples of the kinds of approaches your argument might take. As you look at the research you have gathered throughout your projects, your ideas will have evolved. This is a natural part of the research process. If you had a fully formed argument before you did any research, then you probably didn't have an argument based on strong

evidence. Your research now informs your position and understanding, allowing you to form a stronger evidence-based argument.

Having a good idea about your thesis and your approach is an important step, but getting the general idea into specific words can be a challenge on its own. This is one of the most common challenges in writing: “I know what I want to say; I just don’t know how to say it.”

Example 4.2: Here are some sample thesis statements. Examine them and think about their arguments.

Whether you agree, disagree, or are just plain unsure about them, you can imagine that these statements require their authors to present evidence, offer context, and explain key details in order to argue their point.

- Artificial intelligence (AI) has the ability to greatly expand the methods and content of higher education, and though there are some transient shortcomings, faculty in STEM should embrace AI as a positive change to the system of student learning. In particular, AI can prove to close the achievement gap often found in larger lecture settings by providing more custom student support.
- I argue that while the current situation for undocumented college students remains tumultuous, there are multiple routes—through financial and social support programs like the Fearless Undocumented Alliance—that both universities and colleges can utilize to support students affected by the reality of DACA’s shortcomings.
- While it can be argued that massive reform of the NCAA’s bylaws is needed in the long run, one possible immediate improvement exists in the form of student-athlete name, image, and likeness rights. The NCAA should amend their long-standing definition of amateurism and allow student athletes to pursue financial gains from the use of their names, images, and likenesses, as is the case with amateur Olympic athletes.

Each of these thesis statements identifies a critical conversation around a topic and establishes a position that needs evidence for further support. They each offer a lot to consider, and, as sentences, are constructed in different ways.

[Watch the video “Joining the \(Scholarly\) Conversation.”](#)

Some writing textbooks, like *They Say, I Say* (2017), offer convenient templates in which to fit your thesis. For example, it suggests a list of sentence constructions like “Although some critics argue X, I will argue Y” and “If we are right to assume X, then we must consider the consequences of Y.”

More Resources 4.1: Templates

Templates of this kind help bridge the gap between knowing what you want to say and fitting it within a sentence. Here’s a link if you’re interested in learning more about [writing with templates](#).

Templates can be a productive start for your ideas, but depending on the writing situation (and depending on your audience), you may want to expand your thesis beyond a single sentence (like the examples above) or template. According to Amy Guptill in her book *Writing in College* (2016), a good thesis has four main elements (pp. 21-22). A good thesis:

- Makes a non-obvious claim
- Poses something arguable
- Provides well-specified details
- Includes broader implications

Consider the sample thesis statements above. Each one provides a claim that is both non-obvious and arguable. In other words, they present something that needs further evidence to support—that’s where all your research is going to come in. In addition, each thesis identifies specifics, whether these are teaching methods, support programs, or policies. As you will see, when you include those specifics in a thesis statement, they help project a starting point towards organizing your essay.

Finally, according to Guptill, a good thesis includes broader implications. A good thesis not only engages the specific details of its argument, but also leaves room for further consideration. As we have discussed before, research takes place in an ongoing conversation. Your well-developed essay and hard work won’t be the final word on this topic, but one of many contributions among other scholars and writers. It would be impossible to solve

every single issue surrounding your topic, but a strong thesis helps us think about the larger picture. Here's Guptill:

Putting your claims in their broader context makes them more interesting to your reader and more impressive to your professors who, after all, assign topics that they think have enduring significance. Finding that significance for yourself makes the most of both your paper and your learning. (p. 23)

Thinking about the broader implications will also help you write a conclusion that is better than just repeating your thesis (we'll discuss this more below).

Example 4.3: Let's look at an example from above:

While it can be argued that massive reform of the NCAA's bylaws is needed in the long run, one possible immediate improvement exists in the form of student-athlete name, image, and likeness rights. The NCAA should amend their long-standing definition of amateurism and allow student athletes to pursue financial gains from the use of their names, images, and likenesses, as is the case with amateur Olympic athletes.

This thesis makes a key claim about the rights of student athletes (in fact, shortly after this paper was written, NCAA athletes became eligible to profit from their own name, image, and likeness). It provides specific details, rather than just suggesting that student athletes should be able to make money. Furthermore, it provides broader context, even giving a possible model—Olympic athletes—to build an arguable case.

Remember, that just like your entire research project, your thesis will evolve as you write. Don't be afraid to change some key terms or move some phrases and clauses around to play with the emphasis in your thesis. In fact, doing so implies that you have allowed the research to inform your position.

Example 4.4: Consider these examples about the same topic and general idea. How does playing around with organization shade the argument differently?

- Although William Dowling's amateur college sports model reminds us that the real stakeholders are the student athletes themselves, he highlights that the true power over student athletes comes from the athletic directors, TV networks, and coaches who care more about profits than people.
- While William Dowling's amateur college sports model reminds us that the real stakeholders in college athletics are not the athletic directors, TV networks, and coaches, but the students themselves, his plan does not seem feasible because it eliminates the reason many people care about student athletes in the first place: highly lucrative bowl games and March Madness.
- Although William Dowling's amateur college sports model has student athletes' best interests in mind, his proposal remains unfeasible because financial stakeholders in college athletics, like athletic directors, TV networks, and coaches, refuse to let go of their power.

When you look at the different versions of the thesis statements above, the general ideas remain the same, but you can imagine how they might unfold differently in a paper, and even how those papers might be structured differently. Even after you have a good version of your thesis, consider how it might evolve by moving ideas around or changing emphasis as you outline and draft your paper.

More Resources 4.2: Thesis Statements

Looking for some additional help on thesis statements? Try these resources:

- [How to Write a Thesis Statement](#)
- [Writing Effective Thesis Statements.](#)

Library Referral: Your Voice Matters!

(by Annie R. Armstrong)

If you're embarking on your first major college research paper, you might be concerned about "getting it right." How can you possibly jump into a conversation with the authors of books, articles, and more, who are seasoned experts in their topics and disciplines? The way they write might seem advanced, confusing, academic, irritating, and even alienating. Try not to get discouraged. There are techniques for working with scholarly sources to break them down and make them easier to work with (see [How to Read a Scholarly Article](#)). A librarian can work with you to help you find a variety of source types that address your topic in a meaningful way, or that one specific source you may still be trying to track down. Furthermore, scholarly experts are not the only voices welcome at the research table! This research paper and others to come are an invitation to you to join the conversation; your voice and lived experience give you one-of-a-kind expertise equipping you to make new inquiries and insights into your topic. Sure, you'll need to wrestle how to interpret difficult academic texts and how to piece them together. That said, your voice is an integral and essential part of the puzzle. All of those scholarly experts started closer to where you are than you might think.

III. The Research Essay Across the Disciplines

Example 4.5: Academic and Professional Examples

You are already familiar with research essays, since you have had to read many to conduct your own research. Click on this link to a [Box Folder](#) for examples that show you the different shapes research essays can take.

These examples are meant to show you how this genre looks in other disciplines and professions. Make sure to follow the requirements for your own class or to seek out specific examples from your instructor in order to address the needs of your own assignment.

As you will see, different disciplines use language very differently, including citation practices, use of footnotes and endnotes, and in-text references. (Review Chapter 3 for citation practices as disciplinary conventions.) You may find some STEM research to be almost unreadable, unless you are already an expert in that field and have a highly developed knowledge of the key terms and ideas in that field. STEM fields often rely on highly technical language and assume a high level of knowledge in the field. Similarly, humanities research can be hard to navigate if you don't have a significant background in the topic or material.

As we've discussed, highly specialized research assumes its readers are other highly specialized researchers. Unless you read something like *The Journal of American Medicine* on a regular basis, you usually learn about scientific or medical breakthroughs when they are reported by another news outlet, where a reporter makes the highly technical language of a scientific discovery more accessible for non-specialists.

Even if you are not an expert in multiple disciplines of study, you will find that research essays contain a lot of similarities in their structure and organization. Most research essays have an abstract that summarizes the entire article at the beginning. Introductions provide the necessary setup for the article. Body sections can vary. Some essays include a literature review section that describes the state of research about the topic. Others might provide background or a brief history. Many essays in the sciences will have a methodology section that explains how the research was conducted, including details such as lab procedures, sample sizes, control populations, conditions, and survey questions. Others include long analyses of primary sources, sets of data, or archival documents. Most essays end with conclusions about what further research needs to be completed or what their research further implies.

As you examine some of the different examples, look at the variations in arguments and structures. Just as in reading research about your own topic, you don't need to read each

essay from start to finish. Browse through different sections and see the different uses of language and organization that are possible.

IV. Research Strategies: When is Enough?

At this point, you know a lot about your topic. You've done a lot of research to complete your first three writing projects, but when do you have enough sources and information to start writing? Really, it depends.

If you're writing a dissertation, you may have spent months or years doing research and still feel like you need to do more or to wait a few months until that next new study is published. If you're writing a research essay for a class, you probably have a schedule of due dates for drafts and workshops. Either way, it's better to start drafting sooner rather than later. Part of doing research is trying on ideas and discovering things throughout the drafting process.

That's why you've written the other projects along the way instead of just starting with a research essay. You've built a foundation of strong research to read about your topic in the annotated bibliography, planned your research in the proposal, and understood the conversations around your topic in the literature review. Now that you are working on your research essay, you are far enough along in the research process where you might need a few more sources, but you will most likely discover this as you are drafting your essay. In other words, get writing and trust that you'll discover what you need along the way.

V. Reading Strategies: Forwarding and Countering

Using sources is necessary to a research essay, and it is essential to think about *how* you use them. At this point in your research, you have read, summarized, analyzed, and made connections across many sources. Think back to the literature review. In that genre, you used your sources to illustrate the major issues, topics, and/or concerns among your research. You used those sources to describe and make connections between them.

For your research essay, you are putting those sources to work in a different way: using them in service of supporting your own contribution to the conversation. According to Joseph Harris in his book *Rewriting* (2017), we read texts in order to respond to them: “drawing from, commenting on, adding to [...] the works of others” (p. 2). The act of writing, according to Harris, takes place among the different texts we read and the ways we use them for our own projects. Whether a source provides factual information or complicated concepts, we use sources in different ways. Two key ways to do so for Harris are *forwarding* and *countering*.

Forwarding a text means taking the original concept or idea and applying it to a new context. Harris writes: “In forwarding a text you test the strength of its insights and the range and flexibility of its phrasings. You rewrite it through reusing some of its key concepts and phrasings” (pp. 38-39). This is common in a lot of research essays. In fact, Harris identifies different types of forwarding:

- Illustrating: using a source to explain a larger point
- Authorizing: appealing to another source for credibility
- Borrowing: taking a term or concept from one context or discipline and using it in a new one
- Extending: expanding upon a source or its implications

It’s not enough in a research essay to include just sources with which you agree. Countering a text means more than just disagreeing with it, but it allows you to do more with a text that might not initially support your argument. This can include for Harris:

- Arguing the other side: oftentimes called “including a naysayer” or addressing objections
- Uncovering values: examining assumptions within the text that might prove problematic or reveal interesting insights
- Dissenting: finding the problems in or the limits of an argument (p. 58)

While the categories above are merely suggestions, it is worth taking a moment to think a little more about sources with which you might disagree. The whole point of an argument is to offer a claim that needs to be proved and/or defended. Essential to this is addressing possible objections. What might be some of the doubts your reader may have? What questions might a reasonable person have about your argument? You will never convince every single person, but by addressing and acknowledging possible objections, you help

build the credibility of your argument by showing how your own voice fits into the larger conversation—if other members of that conversation may disagree.

VI. Writing Strategies: Organizing and Outlining

At this point you likely have a draft of a thesis (or the beginnings of one) and a lot of research, notes, and three writing projects about your topic. How do you get from all of this material to a coherent research essay? The following section will offer a few different ideas about organizing your essay. Depending on your topic, discipline, or assignment, you might need to make some necessary adjustments along the way, depending on your audience. Consider these more as suggestions and prompts to help in the writing and drafting of your research essay.

Sometimes, we tend to turn our research essay into an enthusiastic book report: “Here are all the cool things I read about my topic this semester!” When you’ve spent a long time reading and thinking about a topic, you may feel compelled to include every piece of information you’ve found. This can quickly overwhelm your audience. Other times, we as writers may feel so overwhelmed with all of the things we want to say that we don’t know where to start.

Writers don’t all follow the same processes or strategies. What works for one person may not always work for another, and what worked in one writing situation (or class) may not be as successful in another. Regardless, it’s important to have a plan and to follow a few strategies to get writing. The suggestions below can help get you organized and writing quickly. If you’ve never tried some of these strategies before, it’s worth seeing how they will work for you.

Think in Sections, Not Paragraphs

For smaller papers, you might think about what you want to say in each of the five to seven paragraphs that paper might require. Sometimes writing instructors even tell students what each paragraph should include. For longer essays, it’s much easier to think

about a research essay in sections, or as a few connected short papers. In a short essay, you might need a paragraph to provide background information about your topic, but in longer essays—like the ones you have read for your project—you will likely find that you need more than a single paragraph, sometimes a few pages.

You might think about the different types of sections you have encountered in the research you have already gathered. Those types of sections might include: introduction, background, the history of an issue, literature review, causes, effects, solutions, analysis, limits, etc. When you consider possible sections for your paper, ask yourself, “What is the purpose of this section?” Then you can start to think about the best way to organize that information into paragraphs for each section.

Build an Outline

After you have developed what you want to argue with your thesis (or at least a general sense of it), consider how you want to argue it. You know that you need to begin with an introduction (more on that momentarily). Then you’ll likely need a few sections that help lead your reader through your argument.

Your outline can start simple. In what order are you going to divide up your main points? You can slowly build a larger outline to include where you will discuss key sources, as well as what are the main claims or ideas you want to present in each section. It’s much easier to move ideas and sources around when you have a larger structure in place.

Example 4.6: A Sample Outline for a Research Paper

- Introduction
 - College athletics is a central part of American culture
 - Few of its viewers fully understand the extent to which players are mistreated
 - Thesis: *While William Dowling’s amateur college sports model does not seem fea-*

sible to implement in the twenty-first century, his proposal reminds us that the real stakeholders in college athletics are not the athletic directors, TV networks, and coaches, but the students themselves, who deserve the chance to earn a quality education even more than the chance to play ball.

- The “Student-Athlete”: Myths and Facts
 - While many student athletes are strong students, many D-1 sports programs focus more on elite sports recruits than academic achievement
 - Quotes from coaches and athletic directors about revenue and building fan bases (ESPN)
 - Lowered admissions standards and fake classes (Sperber)
 - Scandals in academic dishonesty (Sperber and Dowling)
- The After-Effects of College without a Quality Education
 - Some elite D-1 athletes are left in a worse place than where they began
 - Study about athletes who go pro (Knight Commission, Dowling, Cantral)
 - Few studies on after-effects (Knight Commission)
- An Analysis of Dowling’s Radical Solution
 - Dowling imagines an amateur sports program without recruitment, athletic scholarships, or TV contracts
 - Without the presence of big money contracts and recruitment, athletics programs would have less temptation to cheat in regards to academic dishonesty
 - Knight Commission Report
- Conclusion
 - Is there any incentive for large-scale reform?
 - Is paying student athletes a real possibility?

Some writers don’t think in as linear a fashion as others, and starting with an outline might not be the first strategy to employ. Other writers rely on different organizational strategies, like mind mapping, word clouds, or a reverse outline.

More Resources 4.3: Organizing Strategies

At this point, it's best to get some writing done, even if writing is just taking more notes and then organizing those notes. Here are a few more links to get your thoughts down in some fun and engaging ways:

- [Concept Mapping](#)
- [The Mad Lib from Hell: Three Alternatives to Traditional Outlining](#)
- [Thinking Outside the Formal Outline](#)
- [Mind Mapping in Research](#)
- [Reverse Outlining](#)

Start Drafting in the Middle

This may sound odd to some people, but it's much easier to get started by drafting sections from the middle of your paper instead of starting with the introduction. Sections that provide background or more factual information tend to be more straightforward to write. Sections like these can even be written as you are still finalizing your argument and organizational structure.

If you've completed the three previous writing projects, you will likely also funnel some of your work from those projects into the final essay. **Don't just cut and paste** entire chunks of those other assignments. That's called self-plagiarism, and since those assignments serve different purposes in different genres, they won't fit naturally into your research essay. You'll want to think about how you are using the sources and ideas from those assignments to serve the needs of your argument. For example, you may have found an interesting source for your literature review paper, but that source may not help advance your final paper.

Draft your Introduction and Conclusion towards the End

Your introduction and conclusion are the bookends of your research essay. They prepare your reader for what's to come and help your reader process what they have just read. The introduction leads your reader into your paper's research, and the conclusion helps them look outward towards its implications and significance.

Many students think you should write your introduction at the beginning of the drafting stage because that is where the paper starts. This is not always the best idea. An introduction provides a lot of essential information, including the paper's method, context, organization, and main argument. You might not have all of these details figured out when you first start drafting your paper. If you wait until much later in the drafting stage, the introduction will be much easier to write. In fact, most academic writers and researchers wait until the rest of their project—a paper, dissertation, or book—is completed before they write the introduction.

A good introduction does not need to be long. In fact, short introductions can impressively communicate a lot of information about a paper when the reader is most receptive to new information. You don't need to have a long hook or anecdote to catch the reader's attention, and in many disciplines, big, broad openings are discouraged. Instead, a good introduction to a research essay usually does the following:

- defines the scope of the paper
- indicates its method or approach
- gives some brief context (although more significant background may be saved for a separate section)
- offers a road map

If we think about research as an ongoing conversation, you don't need to think of your conclusion as the end—or just a repetition of your argument. No matter the topic, you won't have the final word, and you're not going to tie up a complicated issue neatly with a bow. As you reach the end of your project, your conclusion can be a good place to reflect about how your research contributes to the larger conversations around your issue.

Think of your conclusion as a place to consider big questions. How does your project address some of the larger issues related to your topic? How might the conversation con-

tinue? How might it have changed? You might also address limits to existing research. What else might your readers want to find out? What do we need to research or explore in the future?

You need not answer every question. You've contributed to the conversation around your topic, and this is your opportunity to reflect a little about that. Still looking for some additional strategies for introductions and conclusions? Try this additional resource:

More Resources 4.4: Introductions and Conclusions

If you're a bit stuck on introductions and conclusions, check out these helpful links:

- [Introductions](#) & [Writing Effective Introductions](#)
- [Guide to Writing Introductions and Conclusions](#)
- [Conclusions](#) & [Writing Effective Conclusions](#)

Putting It All Together

This chapter is meant to help you get all the pieces together. You have a strong foundation with your research and lots of strategies at your disposal. That doesn't mean you might not still feel overwhelmed. Two useful strategies are making a schedule and writing out a checklist.

You likely have a due date for your final draft, and maybe some additional dates for submitting rough drafts or completing peer review workshops. Consider expanding this schedule for yourself. You might have specific days set aside for writing or for drafting a certain number of words or pages. You can also schedule times to visit office hours, the library, or the writing center (especially if your writing center takes appointments—they fill up quickly at the end of the semester!). The more you fill in specific dates and smaller goals, the more likely you will be to complete them. Even if you miss a day that you set

aside to write four hundred words, it's easier to make that up than saying you'll write an entire draft over a weekend and not getting much done.

Another useful strategy is assembling a checklist, as you put together all the pieces from your research, citations, key quotes, data, and different sections. This allows you to track what you have done and what you still need to accomplish. You might review your assignment's requirements and list them out so you know when you've hit the things like required sources or minimum length. It also helps remind you towards the end to review things like your works cited and any other key grammar and style issues you might want to revisit.

You're much closer to completing everything than you think. You have all the research, you have all the pieces, and you have a good foundation. You've developed a level of understanding of the many sources you have gathered, along with the writing projects you have written. Time to put it all together and join the conversation.

Key Takeaways

- Your research essay adds to the conversation surrounding your topic.
- Begin drafting your essay and trust that your ideas will continue to develop and evolve.
- As you assemble your essay, rely on what works for you, whether that is outlining, mindmapping, checklists, or anything else.
- You have come far. The end is in sight.

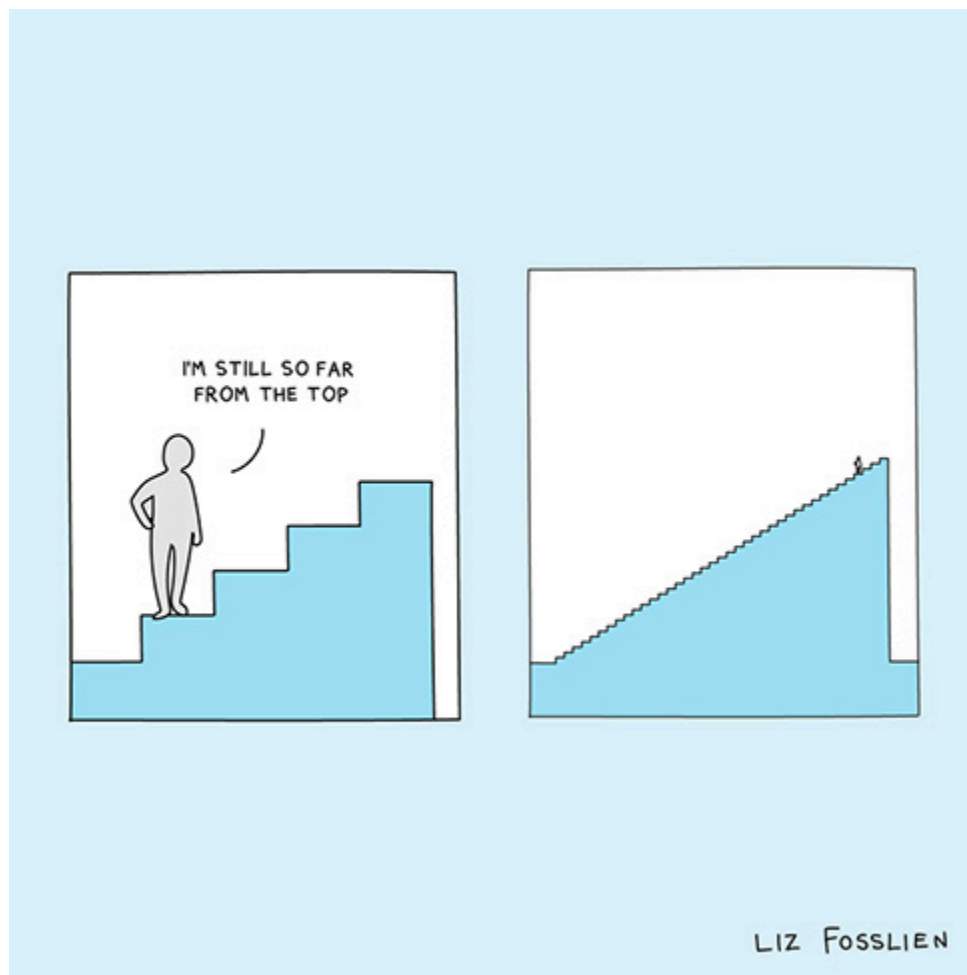


Figure 4.1: “A Matter of Perspective.” Remember How much progress you’ve made. Image courtesy of [Liz Fosslien](#).

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- Guptill, A. (2016). *Constructing the Thesis and Argument—From the Ground Up: Writing in College*. Open SUNY Textbooks.

Harris, Joseph. *Rewriting: How to Do Things with Texts*. Second Edition. Utah State University Press, 2017.

Appendix I: Writing Strategies

The following is a collection of additional resources related to writing strategies.

[The Annotated Bibliography](#) ELAC Library, “The Annotated Bibliography”

- Explanation of the parts of the annotated bibliography: reference/citation and descriptive paragraph
- Creating and formatting an annotated bibliography

[Citing Sources](#) Atkinson, Dawn and Stacey Corbitt (Montana Technological University), “Unit IV: Working with Sources” (from *Intermediate College Writing: Building and Practicing Mindful Writing Skills*)

- Insights into citation practices and how to avoid plagiarism

[The Grant Proposal](#) Tina Cannon (OER Commons), “Writing a Strong Grant Proposal”

- Questions, considerations, and resources for writing effective grant proposals

[Integrating Sources](#) Kennesaw State University Writing Center, “Integrating Sources”

- How and why to transition between sources

[Organization and Style at the Sentence- and Paragraph-Level](#) Atkinson, Dawn and Stacey Corbitt (Montana Technological University), “Unit II: Writing Documents” (from *Intermediate College Writing: Building and Practicing Mindful Writing Skills*)

- Writing effective sentences and paragraphs
- Information about organization, style, and how to improve summaries

[Refining One's Writing](#) Atkinson, Dawn and Stacey Corbitt (Montana Technological University), “Unit IX: Refining Your Writing” (from *Intermediate College Writing: Building and Practicing Mindful Writing Skills*)

- Tips and tricks for writing, revising, and reviewing one's work

[The Research Paper](#) Excelsior Online Writing Lab, “Learn How to Write a Research Paper”

- Highlights the recursive nature and key moves of the research essay

[Thesis Statements](#) Crowther, et al., “2.5: Writing Thesis Statements” (from “Ch. II: Getting Started” of *Informed Arguments: A Guide to Writing and Research*)

- Extended guidance on how to write a thesis statement, including common pitfalls to avoid

[Using Sources](#) Lanning, et al., “6.2: Using Sources in Your Paper” (from “Ch. VI: Joining the Academic Conversation” of *Informed Arguments: A Guide to Writing and Research*)

- Additional support for embedding sources into one’s writing

[Voice and Tone](#) Kyle Stedman, “6.3: Making Sure Your Voice is Present” (from “Ch. VI: Joining the Academic Conversation” of *Informed Arguments: A Guide to Writing and Research*)

- How and why to use one’s own voice in academic writing

Appendix II: Reading Strategies

The following is a collection of additional resources related to reading strategies

[Active Reading Strategies](#) Kennesaw State Writing Center, “Reading Like a Professional”

- Tips and methods for reading actively

[Common Misconceptions About Writing](#) Ball & Loewe, *Bad Ideas About Writing*

- Open-access textbook detailing common misconceptions about writing
- Includes information about
 - “good” writing and writers
 - genres
 - techniques, style, usage, and grammar
 - assessment
 - writing and digital technology

[Evaluating the Important Voices](#) Bernnard, et al., “6.1: Evaluating the Important Voices” (from “Ch. VI: Joining the Academic Conversation” of *Informed Arguments: A Guide to Writing and Research*)

- distinguishing between information sources
- choosing materials
- identifying key points and arguments
- evaluating one’s findings

[Purpose, Audience, Tone and Content \(Intersections of\)](#) Kennesaw State University Writing Center, “Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content”

- Identifying common academic purposes
- Articulating audience, tone, and content
- Applying these concepts to specific assignments

[Reading and Responding Critically](#) Robinson, et al., “Introduction to Ch. 1: Building on What You Already Know to Respond Critically” (from *Writing Guide with Handbook*)

- Using the rhetorical situation as a heuristic to read and respond critically to others’ writing

[Reading and Responding Critically, Sample Student Work](#) Robinson, et al., “Ch. 1.4: Annotated Student Sample: Social Media Post and Responses on Voter Suppression” (from *Writing Guide with Handbook*)

- Student model illustrating fundamental principles of a critical reading response

[Reading Journal Articles](#) Kennesaw State University Writing Center, “Art of Reading a Journal Article: Methodically and Effectively”

- How and why to read journal articles, including a description of some common journal article types

[Working with Source Texts](#) Amy Guptill, “Listening to Sources, Talking to Sources” (from *Writing in College: From Competence to Excellence*)

- Incorporating sources, listening to sources, providing context for sources, and using sources efficiently

Appendix III: Research Strategies

The following is a collection of additional resources related to research strategies.

[Evaluating Digital Sources](#) Kennesaw State University, “Googlepedia: Turning Information Behaviors into Research Skills”

- Introduction to information literacy, with a focus on reading and evaluating sources in a digital context

[Gathering and Analyzing Sources of Information](#) Atkinson, Dawn and Stacey Corbitt (Montana Technological University), “Unit V: Conducting Research” (from *Intermediate College Writing: Building and Practicing Mindful Writing Skills*)

- Identifying, selecting, gathering, and evaluating secondary sources for research writing

[Interpreting Assignment Guidelines](#) Kennesaw State University Writing Center, “Decoding Assignment Guidelines”

- Help with getting started on assignments, including analyzing purpose and audience

[Pre-Writing Activities for Research Papers](#) Bernnard, et al., “7.3: Developing a Research Strategy” (from *Informed Arguments: A Guide to Writing and Research*)

- A variety of prewriting activities for research-based writing, including brainstorming, self-reflection, selecting search tools, asking an expert, determining search concepts and keywords, using Boolean operators, and more

[Pre-Writing Activities..., Cont.: The Reverse Outline](#) Kennesaw State University, “Reverse Outlining”

- Steps and strategies for composing a reverse outline to assist in one’s research writing

[Researching in the Library and Online](#) Kennesaw State University Writing Center, “Understanding and Using the Library and the Internet for Research”

- Differentiating between library and internet research
- Classifying various electronic and print media
- Providing guidance on netiquette

[Secondary Sources](#) Amy Guptill, “Secondary Sources in Their Natural Habitats” (from *Writing in College: From Competence to Excellence*)

- Defining, locating, and selecting secondary sources
- Differentiating between primary and secondary sources

[Writing a Research Paper, A Potential Method for](#) Jerry Rhodes, “The Main Steps of Research Paper Writing”

- An overview of major steps one might take when writing a research paper

Contributors

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