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The title of this book is *The Process of Research Writing*, and in the nutshell, that is what the book is about. A lot of times, instructors and students tend to separate "thinking," "researching," and "writing" into different categories that aren't necessarily very well connected. First you think, then you research, and then you write.

The reality is though that the possibilities and process of research writing are more complicated and much richer than that. We *think* about what it is we want to research and write about, but at the same time, we learn *what* to think based on our research and our writing. The goal of this book is to guide you through this process of research writing by emphasizing a series of exercises that touch on different and related parts of the research process.

But before going any further, you need to be aware of two important points about this book:

- **This book is an *introduction* to academic writing and research, and chances are you will keep learning about academic writing and research after this class is over.** You may have to take other writing classes where you will learn different approaches to the writing process, perhaps one where you will learn more about research writing in your discipline. However, even if this is your one and only "writing class" in your college career, you will have to learn more about academic writing for every class and every new academic writing project. Learning how to write well is not something that ends when the class ends. Learning how to write is an on-going, life-long process.

- **Academic writing is not the only kind of writing worth learning about, and it is not the only potential use for this book or this class.** The focus of *The Process of Research Writing* is the important, common, and challenging sort of writing students in a variety of disciplines tend to do, projects that use research to inform an audience and make some sort of point; specifically, academic research writing projects. But clearly, this is not the *only* kind of writing writers do.

Sometimes, students think introductory college writing courses are merely an extension of the writing courses they took in high school. This is true for some, but for the majority of new college students, the sort of writing required in college is different from the sort of writing required in high school. College writing tends to be based more on research than high school writing. Further, college-level instructors generally expect a more sophisticated and thoughtful interpretation of research from student writers. It is not enough to merely use more research in your writing; you also have to be able to think and write about the research you've done.

Besides helping you write different kinds of projects where you use research to support a point, the concepts about research you will learn from this course and *The Process of Research Writing* will help you become better ***consumers*** of information and research. And make no mistake about it: information that is (supposedly) backed up by research is everywhere in our day-to-day lives. News stories we see on television or read in magazines or newspapers are based on research. Legislators use research to argue for or against the passage of the laws that govern our society. Scientists use research to make progress in their work.

Even the most trivial information we all encounter is likely to be based on something that at least looks like research. Consider advertising: we are all familiar with "research-based" claims in advertising like "four out of five dentists agree" that a particular brand of toothpaste is the best, or that "studies show" that a specific type of deodorant keeps its wearers "fresh" longer. Advertisers use research like this in their advertisements for the same reason that scientists, news broadcasters, magazine writers, and just about anyone else trying to make a point uses research: it's persuasive and convinces consumers to buy a particular brand of toothpaste.

This is not to say that every time we buy toothpaste we carefully mull over the research we've heard mentioned in advertisements. However, using research to persuade an audience must work on some level because it is one of the most commonly employed devices in advertising.

One of the best ways to better understand how we are effected by the research we encounter in our lives is to learn more about the process of research by becoming better and more careful critical readers, writers, and researchers. Part of that process will include the research-based writing you do in this course. In other words, this book will be useful in helping you deal with the practical and immediate concern of how to write essays and other writing projects for college classes, particularly ones that use research to support a point. But perhaps more significantly, these same skills can help you write and read research-based texts well beyond college.

Academic Research Writing: What Is It?

Writing That Isn't "Research Writing"

Not all useful and valuable writing automatically involves research or can be called "academic research writing."

- **While poets, playwrights, and novelists frequently do research and base their writings on that research, what they produce doesn't constitute academic research writing.** The film *Shakespeare in Love* incorporated facts about Shakespeare's life and work to tell a touching, entertaining, and interesting story, but it was nonetheless a work of fiction since the writers, director, and actors clearly took liberties with the facts in order to tell their story. If you were writing a research project for a literature class which focuses on Shakespeare, you would not want to use *Shakespeare in Love* as evidence about how Shakespeare wrote his plays.

- **Essay exams are usually not a form of research writing.** When an instructor gives an essay exam, she usually is asking students to write about what they learned from the class readings, discussions, and lecturers. While writing essay exams demand an understanding of the material, this isn't research writing because instructors aren't expecting students to do additional research on the topic.

- **All sorts of other kinds of writing we read and write all the time—letters, emails, journal entries, instructions, etc.—are not research writing.** Some writers include research in these and other forms of personal writing, and practicing some of these types of writing—particularly when you are trying to come up with an idea to write and research about in the first place—can be helpful in thinking through a research project. But when we set about to write a research project, most of us don't have these sorts of personal writing genres in mind.

So, what *is* "research writing"?

Research writing is writing that uses evidence (from journals, books, magazines, the Internet, experts, etc.) to persuade or inform an audience about a particular point.

Research writing exists in a variety of different forms. For example, academics, journalists, or other researchers write articles for journals or magazines; academics, professional writers and almost anyone create web pages that both use research to make some sort of point and that show readers how to find more research on a particular topic. All of these types of writing projects can be done

by a single writer who seeks advice from others, or by a number of writers who collaborate on the project.

***Academic* research writing**—the specific focus of *The Process of Research Writing* and the sort of writing project you will probably need to write in this class—is a form of research writing. How is academic research writing different from other kinds of writing that involve research? The goal of this textbook is to answer that question, and academic research projects come in a variety of shapes and forms. (In fact, you may have noticed that *The Process of Research Writing* purposefully avoids the term "research paper" since this is only one of the many ways in which it is possible to present academic research). But in brief, academic research writing projects are a bit different from other kinds of research writing projects in three significant ways:

- ***Thesis:*** **Academic research projects are organized around a point or a "thesis" that members of the intended audience would not accept as "common sense**." What an audience accepts as "common sense" depends a great deal on the audience, which is one of the many reasons why what "counts" as academic research varies from field to field. But audiences want to learn something new either by being informed about something they knew nothing about before or by reading a unique interpretation on the issue or the evidence.

- ***Evidence:*** **Academic research projects rely almost exclusively on evidence in order to support this point.** Academic research writers use evidence in order to convince their audiences that the point they are making is right. Of course, all writing uses other means of persuasion—appeals to emotion, to logic, to the credibility of the author, and so forth. But the readers of academic research writing projects are likely to be more persuaded by good evidence than by anything else.
"Evidence," the information you use to support your point, includes readings you find in the library (journal and magazine articles, books, newspapers, and many other kinds of documents); materials from the Internet (web pages, information from databases, other Internet-based forums); and information you might be able to gather in other ways (interviews, field research, experiments, and so forth).

- ***Citation:*** **Academic research projects use a detailed citation process in order to demonstrate to their readers where the evidence that supports the writer's point came from.** Unlike most types of "non-academic" research writing, academic research writers provide their readers with a great deal of detail about where they found the evidence they are using to support their point. This processes is called ***citation,*** or "citing" of evidence. It can sometimes seem intimidating and confusing to writers new to the process of academic research writing, but it is really nothing more than explaining to your reader where your evidence came from.

Research Writing with Computers and the Internet

There are good reasons for writing with computers. To name just a few, computers help writers:

- **Revise more easily,** since you don't need to retype an entire draft;
- **Share their writing with others,** either electronically (on disk or via email) or in "hard copy" since the writer only needs to print additional copies;
- **Store and organize files,** since papers that might get lost or take up a lot of room can all fit onto a computer hard drive or a floppy diskette; and
- **Make correct and "nice looking" drafts** with the use of features like spelling and grammar checkers, and with design features that allow you to select different fonts and layouts.

Chances are, you already know these things.

If you are *not* using computers or the Internet in your academic research writing process, you need to try and learn more about the possibilities. It can be intimidating and time consuming to begin effectively using a computer, but there are few things that will be as rewarding for your academic writing career.

The Process of Research Writing: A Guide to Understanding this Book

Writing as a Process: A Brief Explanation and Map

No essay, story, or book (including this one) simply "appeared" one day from the writer's brain; rather, all writings are made after the writer, with the help of others, works through the process of writing.

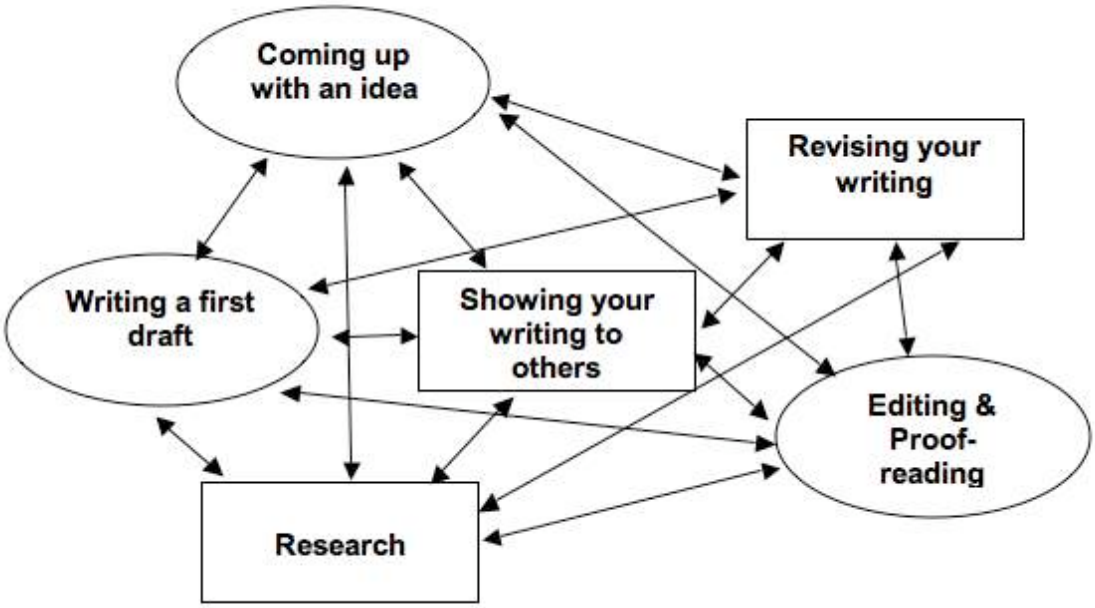
Generally speaking, the process of writing involves:

- **Coming up with an idea** (sometimes called brainstorming, invention or "pre-writing");
- **Writing a rough draft of that idea**;
- **Showing that rough draft to others to get feedback** (peers, instructors, colleagues, etc.);
- **Revising the draft** (sometimes many times); and
- **Proof-reading and editing** to correct minor mistakes and errors.

An added component in the writing process of research projects is, obviously, research. Rarely does research begin before at least some initial writing (even if it is nothing more than brainstorming or pre-writing exercises), and research is usually not completed until after the entire writing project is completed. Rather, research comes in to play at all parts of the process and can have a dramatic effect on the other parts of the process. Chances are you will need to do at least some simple research to develop an idea to write about in the first place. You might do the bulk of your research as you write your rough draft, though you will almost certainly have to do more research based on the revisions that you decide to make to your project.

There are two other things to think about within this simplified version of the process of writing. **First, the process of writing always takes place for some *reason or purpose* and within some *context* that potentially change the way you do these steps.** The process that you will go through in writing for this class will be different from the process you go through in responding to an essay question on a Sociology midterm or from sending an email to a friend. This is true in part because your purposes for writing these different kinds of texts are simply different.

Second, the process of writing isn't quite as linear and straight-forward as my list might suggest. Writers generally have to start by coming up with an idea, but writers often go back to their original idea and make changes in it after they write several drafts, do research, talk with others, and so on. The writing process might be more accurately represented like this:



Seem complicated? It is, or at least it can be.

So, instead of thinking of the writing process as an ordered list, you should think of it more as a "web" where different points can and do connect with each other in many different ways, and a process that changes according to the demands of each writing project. While you might write an essay where you follow the steps in the writing process in order (from coming up with an idea all the way to proofreading), writers also find themselves following the writing process out of order all the time. That's okay. The key thing to remember about the writing process is that it *is* a process made up of many different steps, and writers are rarely successful if they "just write."

Using this book

The Process of Research Writing is organized in a "step-by-step" fashion. Part I of the book, "The Elements of Research," offers advice on getting started with research in the library, about quoting, paraphrasing, and not plagiarizing your research, and about working with others in the research process. Part II, "Exercises in the Process of Research," presents five different writing exercises that will help you explore a research topic. Part III, "The Research Project," offers guidelines for writing a traditional research essay, suggestions for alternative ways to present your research, and guidelines for using Modern Language Association and American Psychological Association citation.

But you should think of *The Process of Research Writing* as being similar to a cookbook or an encyclopedia: you and don't have to read or use this book in this particular order, and you and your teacher don't need to use all of this book in order to write successful research projects. On the other hand, like a cookbook or an encyclopedia, you should feel free to go back to passages you've read before. Remember: thinking through your research process should be systematic, but it isn't necessarily a linear one.

Chapter One
Thinking Critically About Research

- What is "Research" and Why Should I Use It?
- What's Different about Academic Research?
- Primary versus Secondary Research
- Scholarly versus Non-Scholarly Sources
- Sources that are Both Scholarly and Non-Scholarly?
- The Internet: The Researcher's Challenge
- Evaluating the Quality and Credibility of Your Research
- Complicating Factors in Evaluating the Credibility of Internet Research

What is "Research" and Why Should I Use It?

Research always begins with the goal of answering a question. In your quest to answer basic research questions, you turn to a variety of different sources for evidence: reference resources, people, evaluative and opinionated articles, and other sources. All along the way, you continually evaluate and re-evaluate the credibility of your sources.

For example, if you wanted to find out where you could buy the best computer within your budget, your question might be "what kind of computer should I buy and where should I buy it?" To answer your questions about computers, the first research tool you might use is the phone book, where you would look up "Computer retailers" in the yellow pages. You might also ask friends where they got their computers and what they thought were the best (and worst) stores to go to. You would probably also talk to your friends about the kind of computer they bought: a Windows-based PC versus a Macintosh computer, or a desktop versus a laptop computer, for example. You could go to a computer store and ask the salespeople for their advice, though you would perhaps be more critical of what they tell you since they are biased. After all, salespeople are trying to sell you a computer that they sell in their stores, not necessarily the "best" computer for the amount of money you want to spend. To get the opinions of computer experts, you might do research in computer magazines or web sites, looking for reviews and ratings of different models of computers in your price range.

Of course, you could skip this research process entirely. You could simply go to a store and buy the first computer in your budget based on nothing more than a "gut feeling" or based on some criteria that has little to do with the quality of the computer—the color, for example.

Who knows? By just guessing like this, you might actually end up with a computer as good as you would have ended up with after your research. After all, researchers can never be *certain* that the evidence they find to answer their research questions is entirely correct, and the fact that there are different kinds of computers available suggests it is possible for people to look at the research and

reach different conclusions about what is the "best computer." Talk to loyal Macintosh computer owners and you will get a very different answer about "the best" kind of computer than you will from loyal Windows PC owners!

Nonetheless, the likelihood is quite high that the computer you bought after careful research is a better choice than the computer you would have bought after conducting no research at all. Most of us would agree that you have a better chance of being "right" about your choice of computer (and just about anything else) if that choice is informed by research.

Exercise 1.1

Working alone or collaboratively in small groups, answer the following questions:

- **What are some examples of some of the decisions you have made that were based on a research method similar to the one described here? What do you think would have been the result of your decision had you not done any research?**
- **Can you think of any decisions that you have made that were not based on research? Would these decisions have turned out more favorably had you conducted some basic research?**
- **What kinds of decisions do think are potentially best made without research?**

What's Different about Academic Research?

The reasons academics and scholars conduct research are essentially the same as the reasons someone does research on the right computer to buy: to find information and answers to questions with a method that has a greater chance of being accurate than a guess or a "gut feeling." College professors in a history department, physicians at a medical school, graduate students studying physics, college juniors in a literature class, students in an introductory research writing class—all of these people are members of the academic community, and they all use research to find answers to their questions that have a greater chance of being "right" than making guesses or betting on feelings.

Students in an introductory research writing course are "academics," the same as college professors? **Generally speaking, yes.** You might not think of yourself as being a part of the same group as college professors or graduate students, but when you enter a college classroom, you are joining the academic community in the sense that you are expected to use your research to support your ideas and you are agreeing to the conventions of research within your discipline. Another way of looking at it: first-year college students and college professors more or less follow the same "rules" when it comes to making points supported by research and evidence.

A Student Profile:
Daniel Marvins, New to Academic Research

Daniel Marvins is a first year college student at a large public university in the Midwest. While he certainly wrote plenty of essays when he was in high school, Marvins thought that the kind of research writing his teacher was asking him to do for his writing class was different.

"In high school, we wrote more about stories and poems and newspaper articles we read," Marvins said. "We didn't do a lot of research, other than looking things up on the web."

Marvins was ready for the challenge of tackling the thinking and research that would be expected of him in college. But he still wasn't sure about being "an academic." "I never thought of it that way, because I didn't really see how the stuff I had to write for school made me anything like my teachers. But I guess I'm starting to see the connection."

Read Marvins' "Working Thesis Essay" in Chapter 5, "The Working Thesis Exercise."

Primary Research Versus Secondary Research

Before you begin to answer your questions, you'll need to know about two types of research: primary research and secondary research. And, you'll need to learn about the differences between them.

Primary research is usually the "raw stuff" of research—the materials that researchers gather on their own and then analyze in their writing. For example, primary research would include the following:

- The experiments done by chemists, physicists, biologists, and other scientists.
- Researcher-conducted interviews, surveys, polls, or observations.
- The particular documents or texts (novels, speeches, government documents, and so forth) studied by scholars in fields like English, history, or political science.

Secondary research is usually considered research from texts where one researcher is quoting someone else to make a point. For example, secondary research would include the following:

- An article in a scientific journal that reported on the results of someone else's experiment.
- A magazine or newspaper account of an interview, survey, or poll done by another researcher.

- An article in a scholarly journal or a book about a particular novel or speech.

When you quote from another article in your research project, your writing becomes an example of secondary research. When other researchers quote information from your research project in *their* research project, *your* research project is considered a secondary source for them. And if a researcher decides to write about you (a biography, for example) and if that researcher examines and quotes from some of the writings you did in college-- like the research project you are working on right now-- then your project would probably be considered a primary source.

Obviously, the divisions between primary and secondary research are not crystal-clear. But even though these differences between primary and secondary research are somewhat abstract, the differences are good ones to keep in mind as you consider what to research and as you conduct your research. For example, if you were writing a research project on the connection between pharmaceutical advertising and the high cost of prescription drugs, it would be useful and informative to consider the differences between primary research on the subject (an article where the researcher documents statistical connections) and the secondary research (an essay where another researcher summarizes a variety of studies done by others).

Of course, the term "secondary" research has nothing to do with the quality or value of the research; it just means that to answer the questions of your research project and to support your point, you are relying in great part on the observations and opinions of others.

Most research projects completed by students in writing classes are based almost exclusively in secondary research because most students in introductory writing classes don't have the time, resources, or expertise to conduct credible primary research. However, sometimes some modest primary research is a realistic option. For example, if you were writing about the dangers of Internet-based computer crime and someone on your campus was an expert in the subject and was available for an interview, your interview of her would be primary research. If you were writing about the problems of parking on your campus, you might conduct some primary research in the form of observations, surveys of the students that drive and try to park on campus, interviews of the campus officials in charge of parking, and so forth.

Exercise 1.2
Working alone or collaboratively in small groups, answer the following questions:

- **What other sorts of evidence do you think you would find that would count as "primary" research? What other sorts of evidence do you think would count as "secondary" research?**
- **Think about the kind of topics you are interested in researching and writing about. What sorts of "primary" research can you imagine examining that might be useful in your writing? What sorts of "secondary" research can you imagine examining that might be useful in your writing?**

Scholarly versus Non-Scholarly Sources

Before you begin to research you should be aware of the difference between "scholarly" and "non-scholarly" or popular sources.

Scholarly or academic publications are those where academics publish their research and opinions about topics of concern in their discipline. By and large, scholarly publications are highly specialized periodicals, as many of their titles suggest: *College Composition and Communication, Foodservice Research International,* or the *Journal of Analytic Social Work*. Scholarly periodicals tend to be published less frequently than popular sources, perhaps monthly, quarterly, or even less often. For the most part, the readers of scholarly journals are scholars themselves interested in the specific field of the publication—in other words, the articles in these publications are written for academics (both students and teachers) interested in the field, not a "general audience." Because of the audience, the language of academic journals is often specialized and potentially difficult to understand for a reader not familiar with the field.

Scholarly or academic sources tend to be kind of bland in appearance: other than charts, graphs, and illustrations that appear predominantly in scientific publications, most academic journals include few color photos or flashy graphics. Most academic journals are not published in order to make a profit: while they frequently include some advertising, they usually only include a few ads to offset publication costs. Also, most academic journals are associated with academic organizations or institutions that subsidize and support their publication. Unless you are a subscriber, chances are the only place you will find most of these journals in your college or university library.

Usually, the articles that appear in academic journals indicate where the writer's evidence comes from with footnotes, end notes, or information in parentheses. Most academic articles end with a "bibliography" or a "works cited" page, which is a list of the research the writer used in his essay. This practice—generally called "citation"—is particularly important in scholarly writing because the main audience of these articles (other scholars) is keenly interested in knowing where

the writers got their information. As a member of the academic community, you too will have to follow some system of citation in the research project you do for this and other classes.

☛ **Hyperlink:** See "Chapter 12: Citing Your Researching Using MLA or APA Style."

Non-scholarly or popular sources tend to be written by journalists and writers who are not necessarily experts about the subject they are writing about. While there certainly are specialized popular sources, they tend to have names most of us have seen on the magazine racks of grocery and drug stores—*GQ, Cosmopolitan, Better Homes and Gardens, Sports Illustrated,* and so on—and even specialized popular sources tend to be written with a more general audience in mind. Writers of popular sources reach a general and broad audience by keeping the style of the writing in their articles approachable to people from a variety of different educational backgrounds—not necessarily members of the academic community.

Many popular periodicals are published weekly and almost all of them are published at least monthly. They tend to be visually appealing with lots of color photographs, graphics, and advertisements. Almost all popular sources are intended to make a profit, and some of the better known periodicals (*Time* or *Newsweek*, for example) sell millions of copies every week. Finally, popular sources rarely provide citation information about where the writer got her information.

Generally speaking, academic and non-academic books have characteristics that are similar to academic and non-academic periodicals. Academic books tend to be written by and for academics, are usually somewhat bland in appearance, tend to be published by companies that are supported by academic institutions, and tend to be only available at academic libraries or specialized bookstores. Non-academic books tend to be written by journalists or other writers trying to reach a more general audience, they are more eye-catching in appearance, they are published by large and for profit publishing companies, and they are more readily available at public libraries and bookstores.

Scholarly versus Non-Scholarly or Popular Sources

Scholarly Sources	Non-Scholarly or Popular Sources
✓ Usually titled according to their specialization (*College English, Journal of Analytic Social Work,* etc.)	✓ Often titled in ways that have little to do with their focus (*Newsweek, Time, People,* etc.)
✓ Contain articles written by and for academics with language that is highly specialized for academic readers	✓ Contain articles written by journalists and in a language that is for a non-academic reader
✓ Often published less frequently than monthly	✓ Almost always published at least monthly, and often weekly
✓ Usually fairly bland in appearance	✓ Visually appealing and attractive in appearance
✓ Generally not published "for profit" and usually supported by an academic organization or institution	✓ Generally published "for profit," and many well-known popular publications are very profitable; often supported by very large corporations
✓ Almost always available only through subscription or at an academic library	✓ Almost always readily available at bookstores, grocery and convenience stores
✓ Most publish fewer than 5,000 copies of an issue	✓ Many publish tens of thousands of copies each issue
✓ Its articles follow some sort of citation system (MLA or APA, for example) that allow its readers to know where the writer's research comes from	✓ Very rarely contain any sort of citation information that allows readers to know where writers found their information

Sources that are Both Scholarly and Non-Scholarly?

While these differences between scholarly and non-scholarly sources might seem straight-forward, many publications are somewhere in between scholarly and non-scholarly. A journal like *College English* is clearly an academic source and a magazine like *People* is clearly a popular source. But categorizing magazines like *Ms.*, *Harper's,* or *The Atlantic* is more difficult since these publications tend to publish articles that are in many ways similar to the articles published in more academic sources.

Another difficult to categorize source is corporate or "trade" journals. Most professions and industries have highly specialized publications about that particular business. For example, *Human Resource Executive* is targeted to professionals who work in Human Resources departments, *Accounting Today* is for and about the accounting business, and *Advertising Age* focuses on the advertising industry. While most of the writers and editors of trade journals do not have scholarly backgrounds, they tend to be highly focused and knowledgeable about their business. An article about hiring trends in *Human Resource Executive* will probably have more in common with an academic source than it will with a popular source.

A third "in between" type of research resource is newspapers. On the one hand, most newspapers would seem to share the characteristics of non-scholarly or popular sources: they are written for a general audience by writers who are not necessarily experts, they include many photographs and graphics, and so on. However, a number of publications like *The Chronicle of Higher Education* are quite different from most newspapers because they are written for a specialized audience, like college and community college teachers and administrators. Further, newspapers tend to be used by a wide variety of readers and writers--including scholars-- as a source of basic and reliable information about day-to-day events.

In research writing courses, teachers will often insist students use only or mostly scholarly sources in their research projects because, as is discussed in some detail in the next section in this chapter, **scholarly sources tend to be more credible and reliable than non-scholarly sources.** This is not to say that popular sources aren't credible or reliable; clearly, most of them are, and in many cases, specialized popular sources can be very useful in academic research. A research project about computer crime may very well include relevant information from a popular source like *WIRED* or a trade publication written for people who work in the computer industry.

However, scholarly sources are generally considered *more* credible and reliable than popular sources. They tend to publish articles that go into more detail about their subjects, they are written for a more knowledgeable audience, and they are written by experts.

Exercise 1.3
Working alone or collaboratively in small groups, consider the following questions:

- **What sorts of scholarly sources are you and your classmates already familiar with? What sorts of non-scholarly sources of evidence are you already familiar with that might be useful for your research process?**
- **Think about the kind of topics you are interested in researching and writing about. Are you aware of any scholarly sources where you are likely to find research on your topic? What about popular or non-scholarly publications?**
- **If you are not yet familiar with specific titles of scholarly or popular sources that might be relevant for your topic, what kind of research would you conduct to find these sources?**

The Internet: The Researcher's Challenge

Along with the distinction between primary and secondary sources and the distinction between scholarly and non-scholarly publications, you now need to consider a relatively new type of research source as you gather your evidence: the Internet, particularly the World Wide Web. The Internet started up almost 30 years ago, and elements like electronic mail ("email") and bulletin board newsgroup discussions have been around for quite some time.

Widespread use of the Internet really took off in the early 1990s with the development of the World Wide Web and browser software like Mosaic, Netscape, and Internet Explorer. In fact, the Web has become such a powerful research resource that many beginning research writing students wonder why they should go to the library at all.

☛ **Hyperlink:** See the section "What's 'a library?' & 'What's The Internet?'" in Chapter 2, "Understanding and Using the Library and the Internet for Research."

The Web has become such a powerful medium in part because it has such a far reach—literally, anyone anywhere in the world who is connected to the World Wide Web with the right computer and the right software can access almost any of the hundreds of millions of "pages" and other documents on the Web. But it also has grown so quickly because it is relatively easy to put documents on to the Web. In fact, you too might consider exploring some of the options through your school or through a commercial service for joining the World Wide Web community by publishing your research project on the Web.

☛ **Hyperlink:** See the section "The Web-based Research Project" in Chapter 11, "Alternative Ways to Present Your Research."

Nowadays, the Web has become dominated by corporate and "mainstream" sites that are advertised on television and in traditional magazines and newspapers, which means that it is difficult for an individual's Web site to compete with the Web sites of *The New York Times* or amazon.com. But individuals can still publish their own Web sites, and individually published Web sites can still attract a large and international audience.

Indeed, one of the great strengths of the World Wide Web is that just about anyone can put up "professional looking" Web pages that can reach a potential audience of millions. However, this strength of the Web is also its weakness, at least as far as being a good place to look for research because ***anyone*** can publish what appears to be a "professional" Web site, regardless of his or qualifications.

This fact means the Web is significantly different from more traditional sources of research. Most scholarly publications are closely scrutinized by editors and other scholars within a particular field. Further, the articles that appear in even the most non-scholarly of popular sources pass through a variety of different writers and editors before they make it to press.

The problem with many Web pages is that the review process and editors that we assume to be in place with traditional print sources are simply not there. For example, it would be easy for me to fabricate a Web site (complete with charts, graphs, and fake statistics) that argued that students and teachers who used this textbook became more fit, richer, and better-looking. Such inaccurate claims would never pass the review process of a scholarly journal or a popular magazine--with the possible exception of the sort of tabloid we all see at the grocery store check-out that reports on Elvis sightings. But on the Web, it is just another page which, if someone finds it "believable," could be included in someone's research writing.

The Dihydrogen Monoxide Research Division web site, <http://www.dhmo.org>, certainly *looks* like an official and reliable web site. What seems to make it a bit suspect? What exactly is Dihydrogen Monoxide, anyway?

More seriously, many deceptive and "professional" looking Web pages present *very* inaccurate and misleading information and they are not intended to be jokes. Some of these pages are the work of various hate groups—racists or Holocaust deniers, for example—and some of these sites seem to be the work of con artists. But when these sites are read uncritically, they can cause serious problems for academic researchers.

Of course, not *everything* you find on the Web is untrustworthy. Far from it. For one thing, the lines between what counts as an Internet source and a more traditional "print" source are beginning to blur. There are numerous online databases available in many libraries that have complete text versions of articles from academic and popular periodicals, and the articles from these databases are every bit as reliable as the traditional print sources.

☛ **Hyperlink:** See the discussion about electronically available periodicals in the section "Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers" in Chapter 2, "Understanding and Using the Library and the Internet for Research."

Additionally, more and more traditional print sources are creating and maintaining Web sites. Almost all of the most popular news magazines, newspapers, and television networks have Web pages that either reproduce information available in more traditional formats or that publish articles specifically for the Web. More and more scholarly publications are becoming

available on the Web as well, and considering the international reach and low cost of publishing on the Web, it seems inevitable that more (maybe most) academic journals will eventually move from being traditional print journals to ones available only online.

Conversely, not everything you find in traditional print publications—either scholarly or non-scholarly—is always accurate and truthful. Despite the safeguards that most academic and popular publications follow to ensure they publish truthful and accurate articles, there are all sorts of examples of inaccuracies in print.

More common and therefore perhaps more problematic, small errors and misrepresentations appear in both academic and popular sources, evidence that the process of editorial review is not perfect. And what "counts" as true or accurate in many fields is a question of some debate and uncertainty, and this is frequently reflected in published articles of all sorts.

Here's my point: as I will discuss in the next section of this chapter, the best way to ensure that your evidence is reliable, regardless of where you found that evidence, is to seek out a variety of different types of evidence and to think critically about the quality and credibility of your sources. This is particularly true with Web-based research.

Exercise 1.4

Working alone or collaboratively in small groups, consider the following questions:

- **Think of a web site that you visit on a regular basis. What makes this site a useful and credible resource for you?**
- **Are there any Web sites that you have come across that you thought were not believable or credible? Why did you find this site not believable?**

Evaluating the quality and credibility of your research

Finding evidence that answers a question is only the first part of the research process. You also have to evaluate the quality and credibility of your research. Inevitably, as we've already seen in this chapter, you do this as you consider the origins of your research—primary versus secondary research, scholarly versus popular sources, the Internet, and so forth. But evaluating the quality and credibility of your research is more subtle and complicated than just determining the source of the evidence. Consider again the example from the beginning of this chapter about deciding which computer to buy. One of the things you would have to weigh is the credibility of the information you received from your friends compared to the information you received from a salesperson at the computer store. You can probably count on your friends to be trustworthy and

honest, but they might not know much about computers. Conversely, while a salesperson might know a lot about computers, you may be uncertain to what extent you can trust him to give you the best advice. The salesperson wants to sell you a computer, which means that his motivations might be consciously or unconsciously influencing the information he is providing you.

Who should you trust? We have all been in situations like this, and there is no easy way to answer that question. Chances are, you'll make your computer decision based on your interpretation of the evidence and based on what you perceive to be the reliability and credibility of your different sources. If someone else were faced with the same computer decision and the same evidence, they might make a different choice. That is why there are different kinds of computers on the market and that is why different people can do the same sort of research about "the best" computer and why they can arrive at different conclusions.

Academic research is not much different in the sense that different researchers, considering the same or similar evidence, often arrive at different conclusions. Academic research rarely provides clear answers in the sense of definitively knowing the "rights" and "wrongs" about some issue. Not all academics think that computer hacking is wrong (or right), that the solution to commercial over-fishing is strict international control, or that F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* depicts the connection between material goods and the American dream. Rather, there are debates about these issues, differences of interpretation and opinion that result from different researchers looking at the same evidence.

Furthermore, the debates about differences of opinion on how to interpret evidence are good and healthy because these discussions further our understanding of complex issues. If we all agreed that something was true, then there would be no point in conducting research and writing about it. Indeed, if we all agreed about everything and had all of our questions answered as well as we thought possible, there would be no point to education at all!

Ultimately, there is no easy formula for evaluating the credibility and reliability of research. But there are some basic questions you should ask about your all of your evidence to ensure it is reliable and credible:

- Who wrote it?
- What do you think motivated the writer?
- Where was it published?
- When was it written?

Who wrote or said it?

✔ ***Is there an author named with the evidence?***

If your evidence does not name the author, it might still be reliable, especially if you have confidence about where the evidence was published. However, most credible and reliable publications tell readers who wrote the articles they contain.

On Web pages and other Internet-based sources, it can sometimes be tricky to find the name of the Web page's author. Many web sites don't name an author, which, given the nature of the Web, should send up red flags for you as a researcher regarding the credibility of the evidence. But like print publications, more credible Web pages will include the name of the page's writer. Be sure to look for the writer's name throughout the particular page (including the bottom) and related pages within the Web site.

- ✔ ***What are the qualifications of the author?***
- ✔ ***Does he or she seem to be an expert in the field?***
- ✔ ***Have he or she written about this topic before?***
- ✔ ***Are there other experiences that seem to uniquely qualify him or her as a reliable and credible source on this topic?***

Many academic publications will give a lot of detail about their authors, including their degrees and academic training, the institution where they work (if they are a college professor or instructor), and other publications they have had in the past. Popular sources tend to include less information about their writers, though they too will often indicate in a byline (where the writer's name is listed in a magazine or newspaper article) if the writer is a reporter, contributing editor, or editor for a particular subject.

Credible web sources will also describe the qualifications of the source's author or authors. If you can find an author's name on a Web site but you can't find anything about their qualifications on their research subject, you should be suspicious about what that research has to say.

- ✔ ***Have you come across the writer based on some of the other research you have done?***

After you have conducted a bit of research on your topic, you might find yourself coming across the same authors writing similar articles in different publications. You might also find different publications referring to the author or her work, which would suggest that the author is indeed reliable and credible in her field. After all, if other articles and writers refer positively to a particular writer or her articles again and again, then it seems likely that the often-referred-to writer is credible.

Understanding and trusting the expertise of the author of your evidence is probably the most crucial test of credibility and reliability of that evidence.

Simply put, academics find evidence that comes from an author who is a credible expert to be much more persuasive than evidence that does not come from an expert.

For example, while my mom is a reliable source of information regarding many different topics, it would do you little good for me to interview her for an academic research project about the problems of over-fishing. Mind you, I value my mom's thoughts and wisdom, and she might have some things to say about the effects of decreased catches of fish that I find insightful. However, because my mom doesn't have any expertise about commercial fishing and because she doesn't know anything more (or less) about it than most people, most of the readers of my research project won't be persuaded by what she has to say.

On the other hand, my mother was a hopsice work for many years, working with terminally ill patients and their families. If I were conducting research about the advantages and disadvantages of hospice care for terminally ill patients, my mom might be a very interesting and credible source.

What do you think motivated the writer?

✔ ***Is the writer identified with a particular organization or group that might have a specific interest in the subject of the writing?***

This can often be the source of conscious or unconscious bias. An obvious example: a writer who is identified as a member of the National Riflemen's Association, which represents a variety of Americans particularly interested in protecting the right to own guns, will certainly have a different view on gun ownership than a member of The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, an organization working to enact gun control legislation.

You need to be particularly careful with Web-based sources of research when considering the writer's affiliation with different groups or organizations. There have been numerous incidents where Web page writers falsely claimed their Web pages were affiliated with particular groups or causes.

✔ ***Does the writer identify himself or herself with an explicit political group or party?***

Considering a writer's politics is particularly important when thinking about the credibility of a Web site. Besides the ease with which a writer

can misrepresent themselves or others, the low cost and wide reach of the Web has also made it an attractive forum for hate groups, terrorists, and other "fringe" political movements. This doesn't automatically mean the information you find on reactionary or radical Web sites is wrong; however, writers with particularly strong and extreme politics frequently present information that is biased to the point of inaccuracy.

Of course, while it is important to consider why a writer wrote about her subject and to think about how her motivations impact how she wrote about his or her subject, having a particular bias or motivation doesn't automatically lead to a lack of credibility or reliability.

Where was it published?

✔ ***Was the piece of writing published in an academic or non-academic source? A book, a journal, a magazine, etc.?*** I've already discussed this a great deal in this chapter; generally speaking, academic sources are considered more credible than non-academic sources, and print-based sources are generally considered more credible than web-based sources.

But there are some more subtle tests of credibility and reliability concerning where a piece of research was published. For example, single-authored or co-authored scholarly books on a particular subject might be more regarded as more credible than a scholarly journal article because books go into much greater detail on topics than journal articles.

✔ ***Are you familiar with the publication?*** If you are a new researcher to a particular field of study this can be a difficult question to answer since you might not have heard of some of the more well-known and credible publications known in that field. But once you get to know the field better (which will inevitably be the case as you conduct more research on your topic), chances are you will begin to realize certain publications are seen by experts in the field as more credible than others.

When was it written?

Last, but far from least, the date of publication can dramatically effect the credibility of your research. Obviously, this is especially important for date-sensitive research topics. If you were writing a research project about the Internet and the World Wide Web, chances are any research older than about 1990 or so would be of limited use since the Web literally did not exist before 1990.

But other potentially less obvious topics of research have date sensitive components to them. For example, if you were doing research on cigarette smoking or drunk driving, you would have to be careful about evaluating the credibility of research from the 1970s or 1960s or earlier since cultural "norms" in the United States for both smoking and drinking have changed a great deal.

Knowing (or rather, *not* knowing) the date of publication of a piece of research is yet another thing to be worried about when evaluating the credibility of Web-based sources. Many Web sites do not include any information about the date of publication or the date when the page was last updated. This means that you have no way of knowing when the information on that dateless page was published.

The date of publication is a key piece of information, the sort of thing that is always included in more print sources. Again, just because the date of publication or update is missing from a Web site does not automatically discount it as a credible source; however, it should make you suspicious.

Exercise 1.5

Working alone or collaboratively in small groups, consider a variety of different types of research—articles from scholarly and non-scholarly sources, newspaper articles, books, web sites, and other types of evidence. Using the criteria discussed here, how would you rate the quality and credibility of your research? Which of your sources seems the most reliable? Are there any pieces of evidence that, upon closer examination, do not seem credible or reliable?

Evidence Quality and Credibility Checklist

✔ **Who** wrote or said it?
- The writer's name
- Qualifications
- Expertise in the field
- Previous publications on the topic
- Unique experiences of the writer

✔ **Why** did the source write or say it?
- Association with an organization or group
- The writer's stated or implied politics

✔ **Where** (what source) was it published?
- Academic/scholarly source versus non-academic/popular source
- Prior knowledge of publication

✔ **When** was it published or said?

✔ **And when it comes to evidence from the 'net and World Wide Web…**
- It's still important to know **who** wrote it, **why** you think they wrote it, **where** you found it online, and **when** was it published.
- If you **don't know** the answers to the who/why/where/when questions, you should be skeptical of the evidence.
- Don't be fooled by Web sites that "look" real, because…

• **Anybody can publish information on the Web, no matter what that information is.** Unlike most scholarly and many non-scholarly publications, Web writers don't have to have the work reviewed by editors and publishers to reach an audience.

• **The Internet and the World Wide Web are still good places to find research.** You just have to be a bit more careful with them.

Chapter Two
Understanding and Using the Library and the Internet for Research

- Defining "The Library" and "The Internet:" An Introduction
- Researching in the Library
  - Books
  - Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers (Periodicals)
    - Periodical Indexes
    - Accessing an Article
    - Periodicals from Electronic Databases
    - Some Final Tips
  - Other Library Materials (Government documents, Interlibrary loan, Theses and dissertations, rare books and special collections)
- Researching on the Internet
  - Email
  - A Word about "Netiquette"
  - The World Wide Web
    - Search Engines
    - Metasearch Engines
    - Web Directories

Defining "The Library" and "The Internet:" An Introduction

You might think the answers to the questions "what is a library?" and "what is the Internet?" are pretty obvious. But actually, it is easy to get them confused, and there are a number of research resources that are a bit of both: library materials available over the Internet or Internet resources available in the library.

Understanding the differences between the library and the Internet and knowing where your research comes from is crucial in the process of research writing because **research that is available from libraries (either in print of electronic form) is generally considered more reliable and credible than research available only over the Internet.** Most of the publications in libraries (particularly in academic libraries) have gone through some sort of review process. They have been read and examined by editors, other writers, critics, experts in the field, and librarians.

In contrast, anyone with appropriate access to the Internet can put up a Web page about almost anything without anyone else being involved in the process:

no editors, other writers, critics, experts, or anyone else review the credibility or reliability of the evidence.

However, the line between what counts as library research and what counts as Internet research is becoming blurred. Plenty of reliable and credible Internet-based research resources are available: online academic and popular journals, Web-based versions of online newspapers, the homepages of experts in a particular field, and so forth.

Let's begin with the basics of understanding the differences between libraries and the Internet.

Libraries are buildings that house and catalog books, magazines, journals, microfilm, maps, government documents, and other resources. It would be surprising if you attended a community college, college, or university that did not have a library, and it would be equally surprising if your school's library wasn't a prominent and important building on campus.

As you might expect, libraries at community colleges, colleges, and universities tend to specialize in scholarly materials, while public libraries tend to specialize in non-scholarly materials. You are more likely to find *People* magazine or the latest best-selling novels in a public library and a journal like *College English* and scholarly books in a college library.

Many universities have different libraries based on distinctions like who tends to use them ("graduate" or "undergraduate" libraries) or based on specific subject matter collected within that particular library (education, social work, law, or medicine). Almost all college and university libraries also have collections of "special items," which include items like rare books, maps, and government documents.

While we tend to see the library as a "place," most people see the **Internet** as something less physically tangible (though still somehow a "place"). Basically, the Internet is the international network of computers that makes things like email, the World Wide Web, blogs, and online chat possible. In the early 1970s, the beginnings of the Internet (then known as "ARPANET") consisted of about a half-dozen computers located at research universities in the United States. Today, the Internet is made up of tens of millions of computers in almost every part of the world. The World Wide Web appeared in the mid-1990s and has dramatically changed the Internet. The Web and the Web-reading software called "browsers" (Internet Explorer and Netscape, for example) have made it possible for users to view or "surf" a rich mix of Web pages with text, graphics, animations, and video.

Almost all universities, colleges, and community colleges in the United States provide students and faculty with access to the Internet so they can use email and the World Wide Web, or even so they can publish Web pages. Millions of people both in and out of school have access to the Internet through "Internet

Service Providers," which are companies both large and small that provide customers access to the 'net for a monthly fee.

An enormous variety of information, text, and media are available to almost anyone via the Internet: discussion groups, books available for download or for online reading, journal and magazine articles, music and video clips, virtual "rooms" for live "chats."

In the simplest sense, the differences between libraries and the Internet is clear: buildings, books, magazines, and other physical materials, versus computers everywhere connected via networks, the World Wide Web, and other electronic, digitized, or "virtual" materials.

However, in practice, these differences are not always so clear.

First, almost all university, college, and community college libraries provide patrons access to the Internet on their campuses. Being able to access almost anything that is available on the Internet at computers in your library has the effect of blurring the border between library and non-library resources. And just because you happened to find your research on a Web page while you were physically in the library obviously doesn't make your Web-based research as credible as the materials housed within the library.

Second, many libraries use the Internet or the World Wide Web to provide access to electronic databases, some of which even contain "full text" versions of print publications. This will be covered in more detail in the next section of this chapter, "Finding Research in the Library: An Overview;" however, generally speaking, the research from these resources (even though it *looks* a lot like what you might find on a variety of Internet-based Web pages) is considered as reliable and credible as more traditional print sources.

Third, most libraries allow for patrons to search their collections via the Internet. With an adequate Internet connection, you don't have to actually go to the library to use the library.

The point is that while some obvious differences still exist between research you find in the library versus research you find on the Internet, there are many interesting similarities and points where the library and the Internet are actually one in the same.

Libraries, The Internet, and Somewhere In-between

Libraries	Somewhere In-between	The Internet
• Traditional books	• Electronically reproduced books	• Email between friends
• Traditional academic journals and popular magazines	• Digitized articles from journals or magazines found in a library database	• Newsgroups
• Newspapers	• Database search tools	• Personal homepages
• Microfilm and microfiche documents		• Internet Search Engines
• Government documents		• Web versions of printed newspapers
• Rare books and materials		• Web-based academic journals or popular "magazines"
		• Web pages for groups or organizations

Researching in the Library

The best source for information about how to find things in your library will come directly from the librarians who can answer your questions. But here is an overview of the way most academic libraries are organized and some guidelines for finding materials in the library.

On most campuses, the main library is a very prominent building, although some schools have several smaller libraries focused on particular subjects housed within other academic buildings. Almost all libraries have a ***circulation desk***, where patrons can check out items. Most libraries also have an ***information or reference desk*** that is staffed with reference librarians to answer your questions about using reference materials, about the databases available for research, and other questions about finding materials in the library. Libraries usually have a place where you can make photocopies for a small cost and they frequently have computer labs available to patrons for word processing or connecting to the Internet.

Many libraries still have a centralized area with computer terminals that are connected to the library's computerized databases, though increasingly, these terminals are located throughout the building instead of in one specific area. (Very few libraries still actually have card catalogs, and when they do, these catalogs are usually for specialized and small collections of materials.) You will

want to get familiar with your library's database software because it will be your key resource in finding just about anything in the building.

Libraries tend to have particular reading rooms or places where they keep current newspapers and periodicals, and where they keep bound periodicals, which are previous editions of journals and magazines bound together by volume or year and kept on the shelf like books. Many libraries also have specialized areas where they keep government documents, rare books and manuscripts, maps, video tapes, and so forth.

How do you find any of these things in the library? Here are some guidelines for finding books, journals, magazines, and newspapers.

Books

You will need to use the library's computerized catalog to find books the library owns. Most library database systems allow you to conduct similar types of searches for books. Typically, you can search by:

Author or editor. Usually, this is a "last name first" search, as in "Krause, Steven D." If you are looking for the name of a writer who contributed a chapter to a collection of essays, try using a "key word" search instead.

Title. Most library databases will allow you to search by typing in the complete title or part of the title.

Key word. This is different from the other types of searches in that it is a search that will find whatever words or phrases you type in.

Whatever you type into a key word search is what you're going to get back. For example, if you typed in "commercial fishing" into a key word search, you are likely to get results about the commercial fishing industry, but also about "commercials" (perhaps books about advertising) and about "fishing" (perhaps "how to" books on fly fishing, or a reference to the short story collection *Trout Fishing in America*).

Most library computer databases will allow you to do more advanced key word searches that will find phrases, parts of words, entries before or after a certain date, and so forth. You can also increase the quality of your results by doing more keyword searches with synonyms of the word or words you originally have in mind. For example, if you do a keyword search for "commercial fishing," you might also want to try searching for "fish farming," "fisheries," or "fishing industry."

Library of Congress Subject. Chances are, your university, college, or community college library arranges their books according to the same system used by the U.S. Library of Congress. (The other common system, the Dewey Decimal System, is sometimes the organizational system used

at public libraries and high school libraries.) The Library of Congress system has a long but specific list of subjects that is used to categorize every item. For example, here are some Library of Congress subjects that might be of interest to someone doing research on the ethical practices of the pharmaceutical industry:

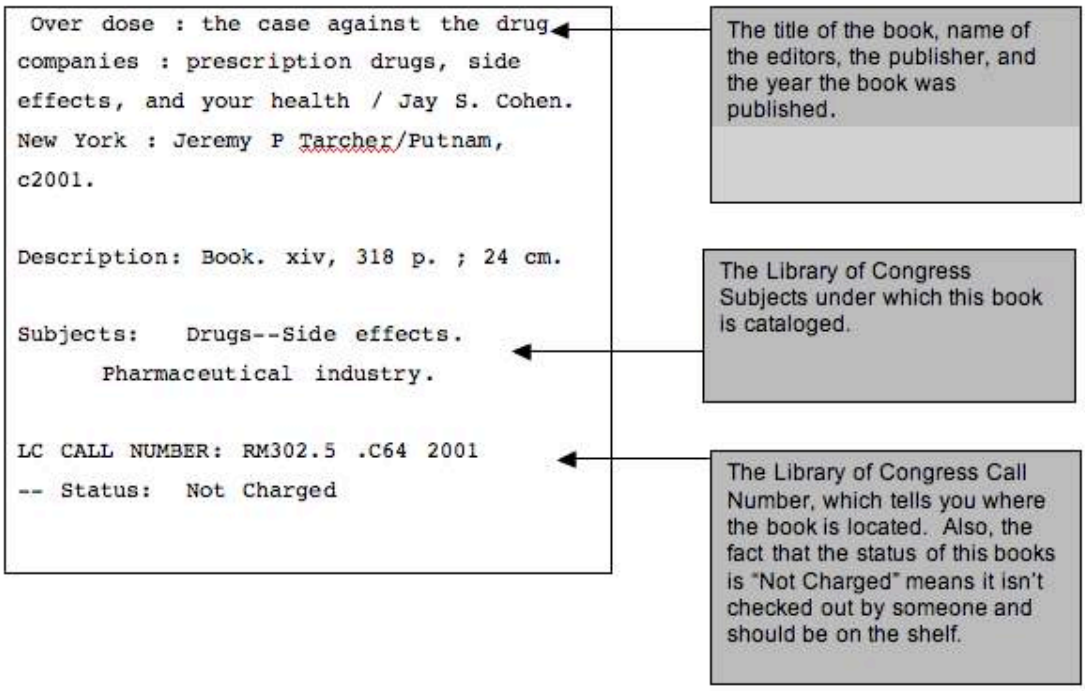
- Pharmaceutical ethics.
- Pharmaceutical ethics, United States.
- Pharmaceutical industry.
- Pharmaceutical industry, Corrupt practices, United States.

Each one of these categories is actually a Library of Congress subject that is used to categorize books and materials. In other words, when a new book on pharmaceuticals comes into the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., a librarian categorizes it according to previously determined subject categories and assigns the book a number based on that category. These "official" categories and the related Library of Congress Call Numbers (more on that in a moment) are the way that libraries that use the Library of Congress system keep track of their books.

Call Number. Most academic library database systems will allow you to search for a book with a particular call number. However, this feature is probably only useful to you if you are trying to find out if your library has a specific book you want for your research.

When you are first searching for books on a research idea or topic at your library, you should begin with key word searches instead of author, title, or subject searches. However, once you find a book that you think will be useful in your research, you will want to note the different authors and subjects the book fits into and search those same categories.

Here's an example of a book entry from a library computer database with the most important parts of the entry labeled:



The "Subjects" information might be particularly helpful for you to find other books and materials on your topic. For example, if you did a subject search for "Drugs- - Side effects," you would find this book plus other related books that might be useful in your research.

In most university libraries, to retrieve this book, you need to find it on one of the book shelves, or, as they are often known, the "stacks." This can be an intimidating process, especially if you aren't used to the large scale of many college and university libraries. But actually, finding a book on a shelf is no more complicated than finding a street address.

The Library of Congress Call Number— in this example, RM 302.5 .C64 2001– is essentially the "address" of that book within the library. To get to it, you will first want to find out where your library keeps the books. This might be very obvious in many libraries, and not at all obvious in others. When in doubt, check with a librarian.

The Library of Congress Call Number system works alphabetically and then numerically, so to find the book in our example, you need to find the shelf (or shelves) where the library keeps books that begin with the call letters "RM." Again, this will be very obvious in many libraries, and less obvious in others. At smaller academic libraries, finding the location of the "RM" books might be quite

easy. But at some large academic libraries, you might need to find out what floor or even what building houses books that begin with the call letters "RM."

If you were looking for the book in our example (or any other with a call number that began with "RM"), you can expect it to be somewhere between where they keep books that begin with the call letters "RL" and "RN." Once you find where the "RM"s are, you'll need to find the next number, 302.5. Again, this will be on the shelf numerically, somewhere between books with a call number that begins with "RM 302.4" and "RM 302.6." By the time you get to this point, you are getting close. Then you'll want to locate the ".C64" part, which will be between ".C63" and ".C65, " then the next ".D7", and then finally the 2001.

If you go to the shelf and are not able to locate the book, there are three possible explanations: either the book is actually checked out, you have made a mistake in looking the book up, or the library has made a mistake in cataloging or shelving the book. It's very easy to make a mistake and to look for a book in the wrong place, so first double-check yourself. However, libraries do make mistakes either by mis-shelving an item or by not recording that it has been checked out. If you are sure you're right and you think the library has made a mistake, ask a librarian for help.

One last tip: when you find the book you are looking for, take a moment to scan the other books on the shelf near it. Under the Library of Congress system, books about similar subjects tend to be shelved near each other. You can often find extremely interesting and useful books by looking around on the shelf like this.

Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers

Libraries group journals, magazines, and newspapers into a category called "periodicals," which, as the name implies, are items in a series that are published "periodically." Periodicals include academic periodicals that are perhaps published only a few times a year, quarterly and monthly journals, or weekly popular magazines. Newspapers are also considered periodicals.

Periodical Indexes

Your key resource for finding articles in periodic materials for your research project will be some combination of the many different indexes that are available. There are hundreds of different indexing tools, so be sure to ask the librarians at your library about what resources are available to you.

Many indexes are quite broad in their scope—*The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and the online resources *ArticleFirst* and *WilsonSelect* are common examples—while others are quite specific, like *The Modern Language Association Bibliography* (which covers fields like English, Composition and Rhetoric, and Culture Studies, not to mention studies in other languages) and *ABI/INFORM* (which indexes materials that have to do with business and management).

It is *crucial* that you examine different indexes as you conduct your research: different indexes will lead you to different articles that are relevant for your research idea or topic.

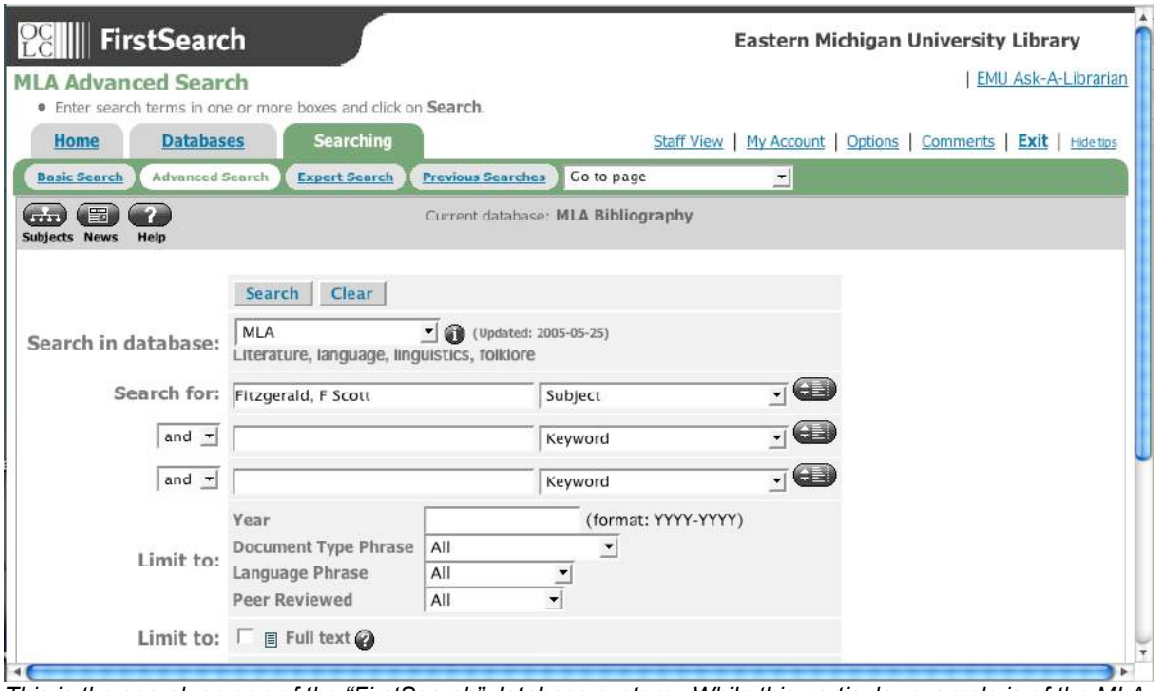
While indexes frequently overlap with each other, using different indexes will give you a wider variety of results. Some library computer systems make this easy to do by allowing you to search multiple indexes at the same time. However, not all libraries have this capability and not all indexes will allow for these kinds of searches.

Most periodical indexes have gone the way of the card catalog and are now available electronically. How these electronic databases work varies, but typically patrons can search by keyword or author, and sometimes by subject (though "subject" in these online databases isn't necessarily as strict as the "subject" used in the Library of Congress system). A few indexes are still only available in "paper" form and these tend to be kept in library reference areas.

Database interfaces: differences and similarities

As I've mentioned previously, there are too many differences between library databases to provide too many details about how to use them in this chapter. You may have already noticed this in your own experiences with databases in your library.

Some of these differences can be rather confusing. For example, a "subject search" for a book in a database that uses the Library of Congress cataloging system is not at all the same as a "subject search" with a periodical database like WilsonSelect.



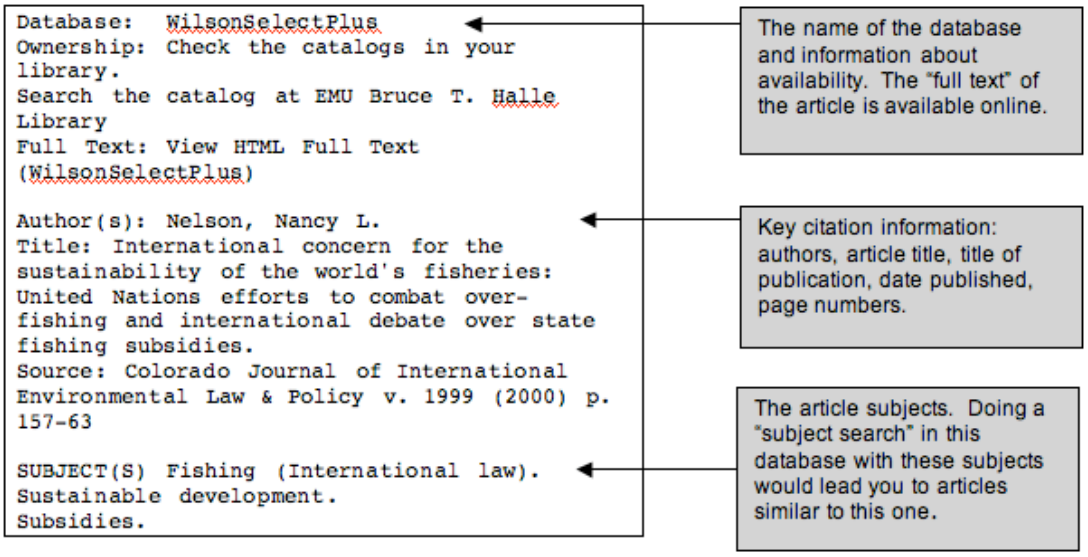
This is the search screen of the "FirstSearch" database system. While this particular example is of the MLA database, all of the databases supported by FirstSearch use a similar search screen. However, different database systems will have different search screens with different options and commands.

Fortunately, there are two common features with just about any library search software tool that will aid you in your research:

- **Author** searches, which almost always works the same in different databases; and
- **Keyword** searches. Keyword searches usually allow for different Boolean search functions. In some databases, you need to indicate that you are searching for a phrase. This is often done with putting quotes around a phrase: "space shuttle" will find just that phrase; without quotes, it will find all occurrences of the keywords space and shuttle. Some keyword searches also allow a "not" function. For example, shuttle NOT space would exclude keyword references to the space shuttle. Boolean searches also usually allow for "and/or" searches: "Hillary and/or Bill Clinton" would return information about Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, and information that was about both Hillary and Bill Clinton.

Indexes typically provide the key information a reader needs to make some judgment about a periodical article and the information about where to actually find the article: the title of the publication, the title of the article, the name of the author, the date of publication, and the page numbers where the article appears. Sometimes, indexes also provide abstracts, which are brief summaries of the article that can also let readers know if it is something they are interested in reading.

Here is an example of a typical entry from a periodical index resource; specifically, this example is a portion of an entry from the online database Wilson Select Plus:



Accessing an Article

To find the article, you first have to determine if your library has the particular periodical. This is a key step because **just because an item is listed in an index you have available to you in your library doesn't mean that your library subscribes to that particular periodical.** If you know it is an article that is critical to your research and it is in a periodical your library doesn't carry, you might want to discuss your options with a librarian. You still might be able to get access to the article, but you will probably have to wait several days or even weeks to get it, and your library might charge you a fee.

The process of how to find out if your library subscribes to a particular periodical varies from library to library. At many libraries, you can learn whether or not a particular periodical is available by doing a "title" search of the library's main electronic catalog. At other libraries, you have to conduct a search with a different electronic database.

You will also want to figure out whether or not the article you are looking for appears in a more current issue of the periodical. Most libraries keep the current

magazines, journals, and newspapers in a reading room of some sort that is separate from where they keep older issues of periodicals. What counts as "current" depends on the periodical and your particular library's practices. For daily newspapers, libraries might only make a few weeks of the current editions available, while they might consider all of a year's worth of a journal that is only published three or four times a year as current.

If your library does carry the particular periodical publication where the article appears, your next step is to figure out *how* the library carries the item. Unlike books, libraries store periodical materials in several different ways. Ask your librarian how you can find out how your library stores particular periodicals, though this information is usually provided to you when you find out if your library carries the periodical in the first place.

Bound periodicals. Most libraries have shelves where they keep bound periodicals, which are groups of individual issues of a periodical that are bound together into book form. Individual issues of a magazine or journal (usually a year's worth) are made into one large book with the title of the periodical and the volume or year of editions of the periodical printed in bold letters on the spine of the book.

Microfilm/microfiche. Libraries also store periodicals by converting them to either microfilm or microfiche because it takes much less room to store these materials. Newspapers are almost always stored in one of these two formats or online. Microfilms are rolls of film where a black-and-white duplicate of the periodical publication appears, page for page as it appeared in the original. Microfiche are small sheets of film with black-and-white duplications of the original. To read these materials, library patrons must use special machinery that projects the images of the periodical pages onto a screen. Check with a librarian in your library about how to read and make copies of articles that are stored on microfilm or microfiche.

Electronic periodicals. Most college and university libraries also make periodicals available electronically through a particular database. These articles are often available as just text, which means any illustrations, charts, or photographs that might have accompanied the article as it was originally published won't be included. However, some online databases are beginning to provide articles in a format called "Portable Document File" (PDF), which electronically reproduces the article as it originally appeared in the periodical.

Periodicals from Electronic Databases

The example of an entry from a periodical database, "International concern for the sustainability of the world's fisheries," is an example of one where the full text of the article is available online through the library's database. This example also demonstrates how the differences between "the library" and "the Internet" can be confusing. Periodical articles available online, but originally published in a more traditional journal, magazine, or newspaper, are considered "library" and not "Internet" evidence.

For example, I was able to read the article, which appeared in *The Colorado Journal of International Environmental Law & Policy*, even though my library doesn't subscribe to the paper version of this journal, because I was able to read it electronically with the WilsonSelect database. But even though I was only able to read an electronic version of this article delivered to me via a library database accessed through the World Wide Web, I still consider this article as a "periodical" or "library" source.

☛ **Hyperlink:** For guidelines for properly citing research materials you find as "complete text" in online databases, see "Citing Your Researching Using MLA or APA Style."

Some Final Tips

Photocopy or print out your articles. Most academic libraries won't let you check out periodicals. This means you either have to read and take your notes on the article while in the library, you have to make a photocopy of the article, or, if it is available electronically, you have to print it out. It might cost you a dollar or two and take a few minutes at a photocopier or a printer, but it will be worth it because you'll be able to return to the article later on when you're actually doing your writing.

Write down all the citation information before you leave the library. When you start using the evidence you find in journals, magazines, and newspapers to support your points in your research writing projects, you will need to give your evidence credit.

The key pieces of information to note about your evidence before you leave the library include:

- the type of periodical (a journal, a magazine, or a newspaper)
- the title of the publication
- the author or authors of the article
- the title of the article
- the date of the publication
- the page numbers of the article

Recording all of this information does take a little time, but it is much easier to record that information when you first find the evidence than it is to try to figure it out later on.

☛ **Hyperlink:** Chapter Six, "The Annotated Bibliography Exercise," describes the process of keeping track of the research materials you find in the library and on the Internet in a writing project.

Other Library Materials

Chances are, the bulk of your library research will involve books and periodicals. But libraries have many other types of materials that you might find useful for

your research projects as well. Here are some examples and brief explanations of these materials.

Government Documents. Most college and university libraries in this country collect materials published by the United States federal government. Given the fact that the U.S. government releases more publications than any other organization in the world, the variety of materials commonly called "government documents" is quite broad. They include transcripts of congressional hearings and committee meetings; reports from almost every government office, agency and bureau; and pamphlets, newsletters, and periodic publications from various government sponsored institutes and associations. If your research project is about any issue involving an existing or proposed federal law, a government reform or policy, a foreign policy, or an issue on which the U.S. Congress held hearings about, chances are the federal government has published something about it.

Check with your librarian about the government documents available and how to search them. Most of the materials published by the U.S. government can be researched using the same databases you use to search for periodicals and books.

Interlibrary Loan. Most college and university libraries provide their patrons ways to borrow materials from other libraries. The nature of this service, usually called *interlibrary loan,* varies considerably. Many community college, college, and university libraries in the U.S. have formed partnerships with other libraries in their geographic areas to make interlibrary loan of books and even periodicals quite easy and convenient. On the other hand, many other libraries treat each interlibrary request as a special case, which means it frequently isn't as easy or as quick.

Theses and dissertations. If your college or university has graduate programs, your library probably has a collection of the theses or dissertations written by these graduate students. These documents are usually shelved in a special place in the library, though at most libraries, you would use the same database you used to find books to find a thesis or a dissertation.

Rare books and other special collections. Many college and university libraries have collections of unusual and often valuable materials that they hold as part of a special collection. Most of these special collections consist of materials that can be loosely classified as rare books: books, manuscripts, and other publications that are valuable because of their age, their uniqueness, the fame of the author, and so forth. Your research project probably won't require you to use these unusual collections, but rare book and other special collection portions of the library can be fun to visit.

Researching on the Internet

The great advantage of the Internet is it is a fast and convenient way to get information on almost anything. It has revolutionized how all academics conduct

research and practice writing. However, while the Internet is a tremendous research resource, **you are still more likely to find detailed, accurate, and more credible information in the library than on the Web.** Books and journals are increasingly becoming available online, but most are still only available in libraries. This is particularly true of academic publications. You also have a much better chance of finding credible and accurate information in the library than on the Internet.

☛ **Hyperlink:** See the sections "The Internet: The Researcher's Wild Card" and "Evaluating the quality and credibility of your research" in Chapter One, "Thinking Critically About Research."

It is easy to imagine a time when most academic journals and even academic books will be available only electronically. But for the time-being, you should view the library and the Internet as tools that work together and that play off of each other in the process of research. Library research will give you ideas for searches to conduct on the Internet, and Internet research will often lead you back to the more traditional print materials housed in your library.

Email

Electronic mail ("email") is the basic tool that allows you to send messages to other people who have access to the Internet, regardless of where they physically might be. Email is extremely popular because it's easy, quick, and cheap—free, as long as you aren't paying for Internet access. Most email programs allow you to attach other documents like word processed documents, photos, or clips of music to your messages as well.

For the purposes of research writing, email can be a useful tool in several different ways.

> **You can use email to communicate with your teacher and classmates about your research projects—asking questions, exchanging drafts of essays, and so forth.** Many teachers use email to provide comments and feedback on student work, to facilitate peer review and collaboration, or to make announcements.

☛ **Hyperlink:** See Chapter Four, "How to Collaborate and Write With Others."

> **Depending on the subject of your research project, you can use email to conduct interviews or surveys.** Of course, the credibility of an email interview (like more traditional phone or "face to face" interviews) is based entirely on the credibility of whom you interview and the extent to which you can trust that the person you think you are communicating with via email really is that person. But since email is a format that has international reach and is convenient to use, you may find experts who would be unlikely to commit to a phone or "face to face" interview who might be willing to answer a few questions via email.

You can join an electronic mailing list, or listserv, to learn more about your topic and to post questions and observations. With the use of various email software, an emailing list works by sending email messages to a group of people known as "subscribers." Email lists are usually organized around a certain topic or issue of interest: movies, writing, biology, politics, or current events. Before posting a question or quoting messages from the mailing list, be sure to review that lists' guidelines for posting.

Many different sorts of groups and organizations maintain mailing lists that you will be able to find most easily by finding Web-based information about that group through a Web search.

A Word about Netiquette

Netiquette is simply the concept of courtesy and politeness when working on the Internet. The common sense "golden rule" of every day life—"do onto others as you would want them to do to you"—is the main rule to keep in mind online as well.

But there are two reasons why practicing good netiquette in discussion forums like email, newsgroups, and chat rooms is more difficult than practicing good etiquette in real life. First, many people new to the Internet and its discussion forums aren't aware that there are differences between how one behaves online versus how to behave in real life. Folks new to the Internet in general or to a specific online community in particular (sometimes referred to as **newbies**) often are inadvertently rude or inconsiderate to others. It is a bit like traveling to a different country: if you are unfamiliar with the language and customs, it is easy to unintentionally do or not do something that is considered wrong or rude in that culture.

Second, the Internet is a volatile and potentially combative discussion space where people can find themselves offending or being offended by others quickly. The main reason for this is the Internet lacks the visual cues of "face to face" communication or the oral cues of a phone conversation. We convey a lot of information with the tone of our voice, our facial expression, or hand gestures. A simple question like "Are you serious?" can take on many different meanings depending on how you emphasize the words, whether or not you are smiling or frowning, whether or not you say it in a laughing tone or a loud and angry tone, or whether or not you are raising your hand or pointing a finger at the speaker.

The lack of visual or oral cues is also a problem with writing, of course, but online writing tends to be much more like speaking than more traditional forms of writing because it is usually briefer and much quicker in transmission. It's difficult to imagine a heated argument that turns into name calling happening between two people writing letters back and forth, but it is not at all difficult to imagine (or experience!) an argument that arose out of some sort of

miscommunication with the use of email messages that travel from writers to readers in mere seconds.

This phenomenon of the Internet making it possible for tempers to rise quickly and for innocent conversations to lead to angry arguments even has a name: **flaming.** An ongoing and particularly angry argument that takes place in a newsgroup or emailing list forum is called a **"flame war."** Flames (like conventional "fighting words") often are the result of intentional rudeness, but they are also the result of simple miscommunications.

Here are some basic guidelines for practicing good netiquette:

Use "common sense courtesy." Always remember that real people are on the other side of the email or newsgroup message you are responding to or asking about. As such, remember to try and treat people as you would want them to treat you.

Don't type in all capital letters. "All caps" is considered shouting on the Internet. Unless you mean to shout something, don't do this.

Look for, ask for, and read discussion group FAQs. Many discussion groups have a "Frequently Asked Questions" document for their members. Before posting to an Internet group, try to read this document to get an idea about what is or isn't discussed in the forum.

Read some of the messages before posting to your electronic group. Make sure you have a sense of the tone and type of conversation that takes place in the forum before posting a message of your own.

Do not send advertisements, chain letters, or personal messages to a discussion group.

Ask permission to quote from others on the list. If someone writes something in a newsgroup or an emailing list discussion forum you think might be useful to quote in your research project, send a private email to the author of the post and ask for permission. Along these lines, do not post copyrighted material to the Internet without getting permission from the holder of the copyright to do so.

- ***Make sure your email messages and other discussion forum posts have subjects.*** Keep the subject line brief and to the point, but be sure to include it. If your message is part of an ongoing conversation, make sure your subject is the same as the other subject lines in the conversation.

Sidebar: Be on the look out for new technologies!

One of the challenges I face in offering advice on how to use the Internet for your research is that the tools available on the Internet keep changing at an extremely rapid rate. New and exciting technologies are emerging all the time, and many of them become popular in an amazingly short period of time. Conversely, older Internet tools (Telnet, Gopher, newsgroups, etc.) are more fitting in a history of the Internet textbook than this one.

Here's just a partial list of emerging technologies you might be using for Internet research in the near future (if you're not using them already):

- **Blogs.** A blog (or "web log") is a web-based publication of articles, usually dated and published with the most current entries first. Many blogs are very similar to a personal journal or diary, though other blogs are maintained collaboratively and by academic or professional writers. Two of the most popular services are Blogger <http://www.blogger.com> and Xanga <http://www.xanga/com>.

- **Podcasting.** A "podcast" is a way of publishing sound files and making them available for others to listen to over the Internet. Despite its name, you don't actually have to have an iPod to listen to a podcast, just a computer that can play MP3 sound files. Similar to blogs, podcasts range from individual broadcasts about virtually anything on their minds to news organizations producing professional shows. See iPodder.org <http://www.ipodder.org> to get started.

- **Instant Messaging.** My experience has been that most of my students are more familiar with IM than most of my fellow faculty members. Instant messaging allows users to chat with each other in real time. Most cell phones support IM-ing, too, called text messaging (?). Two of the most popular IM software tools are America Online's Instant Messenger <http://www.aim.com> and Yahoo! Messenger <http://messenger.yahoo.com>

- **Peer-to-Peer file sharing.** "Peer-to-peer" sharing is a technology that allows users on a network to share files with each other. Usually, this is associated with music sharing, and it has been controversial because of the possibility of illegally copying music files.

- **Scholarly Publishing online.** There are currently significant differences between the materials available on the Internet and in an academic library. Obviously, libraries have books and the Internet doesn't. But that might be changing sooner than you might think. For example, Google is working with several academic libraries around the world to scan their books into their database. (See <http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/print_library.html>). More and more periodicals are making their articles available electronically, both via "full text" databases like WilsonSelect.

The World Wide Web

Chances are, the World Wide Web will be your most valuable Internet research tool. While you can go to literally billions of different "pages" or sites on the Web that might be useful for your research, finding them can be a bit like finding a needle in a haystack. This is one of the major drawbacks of the World Wide Web. Unlike the library, where the materials are strictly organized, cataloged, and cared for, the Web is more of a jumble of files that can be difficult to find or that are missing altogether.

Fortunately, you can turn to several resources to aid in your World Wide Web research: search engines, meta-search engines, and Web directories.

Search engines are software-driven Web sites that allow users to search by entering in a word, a phrase, or even another Web site address. Search engines are "for profit" enterprises which come and go in the fast-paced world of the Internet.

By far, the most popular search engine currently is Google <http://www.google.com>. There are other search engines of course, notably AltaVista <http://www.altavista.com>, and Teoma <http://www.teoma.com>. But Google is so popular it has become synonymous for most users for "search engine" and is even used as a verb, as in "Where was George Washington born? I guess I'd better google that."

Most search engines look deceivingly simple: enter in a few words into the window, hit return, and you're provided thousands of hits. However, it is somewhat more complicated than that. For one thing, search engines make money by advertising and listing those sponsors first-- Google and other search engines note that these are "Sponsored Links." For another, search engine searches are conducted by machines. Unlike a library catalog, which is created by people, search engine databases are created and searched through by powerful software that constantly scans the ever-growing World Wide Web for sites to include in its database. Software can catalog materials faster than people, but it cannot prioritize or sort the material as precisely as people. As a result, a search engine search will frequently return tens of thousands of matches, most of which have little relevance to you.

☛ **Hyperlink:** Search engines are also a great resource when you are first trying to develop a research topic. See the "Brainstorming with Computers" section of Chapter 5, "The Working Thesis Exercise."

But to get the most out of a search engine search, you have to "search smart." Typing in a word or a phrase into any search engine will return results, but you have a much better chance of getting better results if you take the time conduct a good search engine search.

Read through the "advanced search" tips or "help" documents. All of the major search engines provide information about conducting advanced searches, which you should read for at least two reasons. First, the advanced search tips or help documents explain the specific rules for conducting more detailed searches with that particular search engine. Different search engines are similar, but not identical. Some search engines will allow a search for a word root or truncation—in other words, if you type in a word with an asterisk in some search engines ("bank*" for example), you will do a search for other forms of the word (banks, banker, banking, etc.). Some search engines don't allow for this feature.

Second, many search engines have features that you wouldn't know about unless you examined the advanced search or help documents.

If you click on the "Advanced Search" option on the Google homepage, you are taken to this page that offers a variety of ways to refine your search. For example you can search for an exact phrase, for "at least one word" in a phrase, and for pages that do not contain a particular phrase.

Use different search engines. Each search engine compiles its data a bit differently, which means that you won't get identical results from all search engines. Just as you should use different indexing tools when doing library periodical research, using different search engines is a good idea.

Try using as many different synonyms and related terms for your search as possible. For example, instead of using only the term "Drug advertising" in your search, try using "pharmaceutical advertising," "prescription drug promotions," "television and prescription drugs," and so forth.

This is extremely important because there is no systematic way to categorize and catalog information similar to the way it is done in libraries. As a result, there is no such thing as a "subject" search on a search engine, certainly not in the way you can search subjects with the Library of Congress system. Some Web sites might refer to drunk driving as "drunk driving," while other Web sites might refer to drunk driving as "driving while intoxicated."

Take your time and look past the first page of your search results. If you do a search for "drug advertising" with a search engine, you will get thousands of matches. Most search engines organize the results so that the pages that are most likely to be useful in your search will appear first. However, it is definitely worthwhile to page through several pages of results. Search engines like Google support basic Boolean search commands (and, and/or, not, etc.), and a lot of other even more sophisticated commands. For example, Google allows you to search for synonyms for a term by typing "~" in front of it. For example, the search "~corporal punishment" also returns information about web sites that use the synonym "spanking."

Metasearch Engines are similar to search engines, except they are software-driven Web sites that search other search engines. The difference is that when you do a search with a search engine like Google, you are searching only through Google's database; when you use a metasearch engine, you are searching through Google's database along with other search engine databases. Simply put, metasearch engines allow you to search through many different databases at the same time.

Like search engines, metasearch engines are commercial services and they come and go depending on their business successes and failures. Currently, two of the more popular of these services are AlltheWeb.com <http://www.alltheweb.com> and Dogpile <http://dogpile.com>.

Metasearch engines might seem to have an obvious advantage over regular search engines, but in practice, this is not necessarily the case. For one thing, metasearch engines don't account for the different rules of different search engines very well—in other words, they will apply the same "rules" for a search to all of the search engines they are searching, regardless of how those rules might apply. For another thing, different search engines have different rules as to what results they rank as most important. Again, this is something that most metasearch engines don't account for very well in their results.

In other words, right now, metasearch engines don't usually work as well as using several different search engines independently. When I conduct search engine research on the World Wide Web, I prefer to visit several different search engines than one metasearch engine.

If you do decide to use metasearches, keep in mind that the "tips" provided for search engines apply to these devices as well. To do a "smart search" with a metasearch engine, be sure to read the "advanced search," "search tips," or "help" document, be sure to use different synonyms for the key words you are using to search, and be sure to look past the first page of results.

Web Directories

Web Directories look like search engines, and many of them include a search engine component. But Web directories are different from search engines

because they are collections of data about Web sites that are categorized by people and not computer programs.

The most famous web directory is Yahoo! <http://www.yahoo.com>, which was started in 1994 by two graduate students at Stanford, David Filo and Jerry Yang. But there are many other Web directory sites, including the following:

- **About** <http://about.com>
- **The WWW Virtual Library** <http://vlib.org/>
- **Librarian's Index to the Internet** <http://lii.org/>

In a sense, Web directories are more like library databases: they are organized by people into logical categories, and the organizers of Web directories make some choices as to what they will and won't include in their directories and about how they will categorize different items. However, each search engine makes up its own system for categorizing data; there is no "standardized" system of subjects like there is with the Library of Congress system. This means that while Web directories are "more organized" than what you might find with a search engine, they are probably "less organized" than what you might find in the library with a book or periodical database.

Web directory searches will often return higher quality Web sites because what is and isn't included in these directories is decided by people and not computer software. Further, some of these Web directories, like the "Librarian's Index to the Internet," are quite a bit more selective and specialized. Conversely, Web directories don't usually give you the "quantity" of information that you are likely to receive from search engines or metasearch engines.

In general, the best advice for working with Web directories is very similar to the best advice for working with search engines: be sure to read the instructions on conducting advance searches, use more than one Web directory, and use synonyms for your key terms. Use search engines, metasearch engines, and Web directories in conjunction with each other: the "computer software" based searches you do with search and metasearch engines can help you refine the searches you conduct with the help of Web directories.

"Dos" and "Don'ts" of Research on the Web

- **Do** use synonyms in your keyword searches (for example, "drugs" and "pharmaceuticals").
- **Do** use multiple search engines and directories.
- **Do** read the "advanced search" documents.
- **Do** your searches over a period of time.
- **Do** remember that because anyone can create a Web site, you need to evaluate the credibility of web sources very carefully.
- **Don't** stop at just search engines; use directory searches, too
- **Don't** forget there is no organized subject search on the Web that is like the subject search in a library.
- **Don't** stop at the first page of search results; look through more than the first few hits.

Chapter Three
Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Avoiding Plagiarism

- How to Summarize: An Overview
- How to Quote and Paraphrase: An Overview
- When to Quote, When to Paraphrase
- Four Examples of Quotes and Paraphrases
- How to Avoid Plagiarism in the Research Process
- Plagiarism and the Internet

Learning how to effectively quote and paraphrase research can be difficult and it certainly takes practice. Hopefully, your abilities to make good use of your research will improve as you work through the exercises in part two and three of *The Process of Research Writing*, not to mention as you take on other research writing experiences beyond this class. The goal of this chapter is to introduce some basic strategies for summarizing, quoting and paraphrasing research in your writing and to explain how to avoid plagiarizing your research.

How to Summarize: An Overview

A summary is a brief explanation of a longer text. Some summaries, such as the ones that accompany annotated bibliographies, are very short, just a sentence or two. Others are much longer, though summaries are always much shorter than the text being summarized in the first place.

☛ **Hyperlink:** Chapter Six, "The Annotated Bibliography Exercise," also offers advice on writing effective summaries.

Summaries of different lengths are useful in research writing because you often need to provide your readers with an explanation of the text you are discussing. This is especially true when you are going to quote or paraphrase from a source.

Of course, the first step in writing a good summary is to do a thorough reading of the text you are going to summarize in the first place. Beyond that important start, there are a few basic guidelines you should follow when you write summary material:

- **Stay "neutral" in your summarizing.** Summaries provide "just the facts" and are not the place where you offer your opinions about the text you are summarizing. Save your opinions and evaluation of the evidence you are summarizing for other parts of your writing.
- **Don't quote from what you are summarizing.** Summaries will be more useful to you and your colleagues if you write them in your own words.

- **Don't "cut and paste" from database abstracts.** Many of the periodical indexes that are available as part of your library's computer system include abstracts of articles. Do no "cut" this abstract material and then "paste" it into your own annotated bibliography. For one thing, this is plagiarism. Second, "cutting and pasting" from the abstract defeats one of the purposes of writing summaries and creating an annotated bibliography in the first place, which is to help you understand and explain your research.

☛ **Hyperlink:** For more advice on close reading, see the section called "Starting With a Close Reading" in Chapter Seven, "The Critique Writing Exercise."

How to Quote and Paraphrase: An Overview

Writers quote and paraphrase from research in order to support their points and to persuade their readers. A quote or a paraphrase from a piece of evidence in support of a point answers the reader's question, "says who?"

This is especially true in academic writing since scholarly readers are most persuaded by effective research and evidence. For example, readers of an article about a new cancer medication published in a medical journal will be most interested in the scholar's research and statistics that demonstrate the effectiveness of the treatment. Conversely, they will not be as persuaded by emotional stories from individual patients about how a new cancer medication improved the quality of their lives. While this appeal to emotion can be effective and is common in popular sources, these individual anecdotes do not carry the same sort of "scholarly" or scientific value as well-reasoned research and evidence.

Of course, your instructor is not expecting you to be an expert on the topic of your research paper. While you might conduct some primary research, it's a good bet that you'll be relying on secondary sources such as books, articles, and Web sites to inform and persuade your readers. You'll present this research to your readers in the form of quotes and paraphrases.

A "quote" is a direct restatement of the exact words from the original source. The general rule of thumb is any time you use three or more words as they appeared in the original source, you should treat it as a quote. A "paraphrase" is a restatement of the information or point of the original source in your own words.

While quotes and paraphrases are different and should be used in different ways in your research writing (as the examples in this section suggest), they do have a number of things in common. Both quotes and paraphrases should:

- be "introduced" to the reader, particularly the first time you mention a source;

- include an explanation of the evidence which explains to the reader why you think the evidence is important, especially if it is not apparent from the context of the quote or paraphrase; and

- include a proper citation of the source.

The method you should follow to properly quote or paraphrase depends on the style guide you are following in your academic writing. The two most common style guides used in academic writing are the Modern Language Association (MLA), and the American Psychological Association (APA). I discuss both of these different style guides in some detail in the Appendix of this book. Your instructor will probably assign one of these styles before you begin working on your project, however, if he/she doesn't mention this, be sure to ask.

When to Quote, When to Paraphrase

The real "art" to research writing is using quotes and paraphrases from evidence effectively in order to support your point. There are certain "rules," dictated by the rules of style you are following, such as the ones presented by the MLA or the ones presented by the APA. There are certain "guidelines" and suggestions, like the ones I offer in the previous section and the ones you will learn from your teacher and colleagues.

But when all is said and done, the question of when to quote and when to paraphrase depends a great deal on the specific context of the writing and the effect you are trying to achieve. Learning the best times to quote and paraphrase takes practice and experience.

In general, **it is best to use a quote when:**

- **The exact words of your source are important for the point you are trying to make.** This is especially true if you are quoting technical language, terms, or very specific word choices.

- **You want to highlight your *agreement* with the author's words.** If you agree with the point the author of the evidence makes and you like their exact words, use them as a quote.

- **You want to highlight your *disagreement* with the author's words.** In other words, you may sometimes want to use a direct quote to indicate exactly what it is you disagree about. This might be particularly true when you are considering the antithetical positions in your research writing projects.

In general, **it is best to paraphrase when:**

- **There is no good reason to use a quote to refer to your evidence.** If the author's exact words are not especially important to the point you are trying to make, you are usually better off paraphrasing the evidence.

- **You are trying to explain a particular a piece of evidence in order to explain or interpret it in more detail.** This might be particularly true in writing projects like critiques.

- **You need to balance a direct quote in your writing.** You need to be careful about directly quoting your research *too* much because it can sometimes make for awkward and difficult to read prose. So, one of the reasons to use a paraphrase instead of a quote is to create balance within your writing.

Tips for Quoting and Paraphrasing

- **Introduce** your quotes and paraphrases to your reader, especially on first reference.
- **Explain** the significance of the quote or paraphrase to your reader.
- **Cite** your quote or paraphrase properly according to the rules of style you are following in your essay.
- **Quote when** the exact words are important, when you want to highlight your agreement or your disagreement.
- **Paraphrase when** the exact words aren't important, when you want to explain the point of your evidence, or when you need to balance the direct quotes in your writing.

Four Examples of Quotes and Paraphrases

Here are four examples of what I mean about properly quoting and paraphrasing evidence in your research essays. In each case, I begin with a **BAD** example, or the way **NOT** to quote or paraphrase.

Quoting in MLA Style

Here's the first **BAD** example, where the writer is trying to follow the rules of MLA style:

```
There are many positive effects for advertising
prescription drugs on television.  "African-American
physicians regard direct-to-consumer advertising of
prescription medicines as one way to educate minority
patients about needed treatment and healthcare options"
(Wechsler, Internet).
```

This is a potentially good piece of information to support a research writer's claim, but the researcher hasn't done any of the necessary work to explain where this quote comes from or to explain why it is important for supporting her point. Rather, she has simply "dropped in" the quote, leaving the interpretation of its significance up to the reader.

Now consider this revised **GOOD** (or at least **BETTER**) example of how this quote might be better introduced into the essay:

In her Pharmaceutical Executive article available through the Wilson Select Internet database, Jill Wechsler writes about one of the positive effects of advertising prescription drugs on television. "African-American physicians regard direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medicines as one way to educate minority patients about needed treatment and healthcare options."

In this revision, it's much more clear what point the writer is trying to make with this evidence and where this evidence comes from.

In this particular example, the passage is from a traditional print journal called *Pharmaceutical Executive.* However, the writer needs to indicate that she actually found and read this article through Wilson Select, an Internet database which reproduces the "full text" of articles from periodicals without any graphics, charts, or page numbers.

When you use a direct quote in your research, you need to the indicate page number of that direct quote or you need to indicate that the evidence has no specific page numbers. While it can be a bit awkward to indicate within the text how the writer found this information if it's from the Internet, it's important to do so on the first reference of a piece of evidence in your writing. On references to this piece of evidence after the first reference, you can use just the last name of the writer. For example:

Wechsler also reports on the positive effects of advertising prescription drugs on television. She writes...

Paraphrasing in MLA Style

In this example, the writer is using MLA style to write a research essay for a Literature class. Here is a **BAD** example of a paraphrase:

While Gatsby is deeply in love with Daisy in *The Great Gatsby*, his love for her is indistinguishable from his love of his possessions (Callahan).

There are two problems with this paraphrase. First, if this is the first or only reference to this particular piece of evidence in the research essay, the writer should include more information about the source of this paraphrase in order to properly introduce it. Second, this paraphrase is actually not of the *entire* article but rather of a specific passage. The writer has neglected to note the page number within the parenthetical citation.

A **GOOD** or at least **BETTER** revision of this paraphrase might look like this:

John F. Callahan suggests in his article "F. Scott Fitzgerald's Evolving American Dream" that while Gatsby is deeply in love with Daisy in *The Great Gatsby*, his love for her is indistinguishable from his love of his possessions (381).

By incorporating the name of the author of the evidence the research writer is referring to here, the source of this paraphrase is now clear to the reader. Furthermore, because there is a page number at the end of this sentence, the reader understands that this passage is a paraphrase of a particular part of Callahan's essay and *not* a summary of the entire essay. Again, if the research writer had introduced this source to his readers earlier, he could have started with a phrase like "Callahan suggests..." and then continued on with his paraphrase.

If the research writer were offering a brief summary of the entire essay following MLA style, he wouldn't include a page number in parentheses. For example:

John F. Callahan's article "F. Scott Fitzgerald's Evolving American Dream" examines Fitzgerald's fascination with the elusiveness of the American Dream in the novels The Great Gatsby, Tender is the Night, and The Last Tycoon.

Quoting in APA Style

Consider this **BAD** example in APA style, of what **NOT** to do when quoting evidence:

"If the U.S. scallop fishery were a business, its management would surely be fired, because its revenues could readily be increased by at least 50 percent while its costs were being reduced by an equal percentage." (Repetto, 2001, p. 84).

Again, this is a potentially valuable piece of evidence, but it simply isn't clear what point the research writer is trying to make with it. Further, it doesn't follow the preferred method of citation with APA style.

Here is a revision that is a **GOOD** or at least **BETTER** example:

Repetto (2001) concludes that in the case of the scallop industry, those running the industry should be held responsible for not considering methods that would curtail the problems of over-fishing. "If the U.S. scallop fishery were a business, its management would surely be fired, because its revenues could readily be increased by at least 50 percent while its costs were being reduced by an equal percentage" (p. 84).

This revision is improved because the research writer has introduced and explained the point of the evidence with the addition of a clarifying sentence. It also follows the rules of APA style. Generally, APA style prefers that the research writer refer to the author only by last name followed immediately by the year of publication. Whenever possible, you should begin your citation with the author's last name and the year of publication, and, in the case of a direct quote like this passage, the page number (including the "p.") in parentheses at the end.

Paraphrasing in MLA Style

Paraphrasing in APA style is slightly different from MLA style as well. Consider first this **BAD** example of what **NOT** to do in paraphrasing from a source in APA style:

Computer criminals have lots of ways to get away with credit card fraud (Cameron, 2002).

The main problem with this paraphrase is there isn't enough here to adequately explain to the reader what the point of the evidence really is. Remember: your readers have no way of automatically knowing why you as a research writer think that a particular piece of evidence is useful in supporting your point. This is why it is key that you introduce and explain your evidence.

Here is a revision that is **GOOD** or at least **BETTER:**

Cameron (2002) points out that computer criminals intent on committing credit card fraud are able to take advantage of the fact that there aren't enough officials working to enforce computer crimes. Criminals are also able to use the technology to their advantage by communicating via email and chat rooms with other criminals.

Again, this revision is better because the additional information introduces and explains the point of the evidence. In this particular example, the author's name is also incorporated into the explanation of the evidence as well. In APA, it is preferable to weave in the author's name into your essay, usually at the beginning of a sentence. However, it would also have been acceptable to end an improved paraphrase with just the author's last name and the date of publication in parentheses.

How to Avoid Plagiarism in the Research Process

Plagiarism is the unauthorized or uncredited use of the writings or ideas of another in your writing. While it might not be as tangible as auto theft or burglary, plagiarism is still a form of theft.

In the academic world, plagiarism is a serious matter because ideas in the forms of research, creative work, and original thought are highly valued. Chances are, your school has strict rules about what happens when someone is caught plagiarizing. The penalty for plagiarism is severe, everything from a failing grade for the plagiarized work, a failing grade for the class, or expulsion from the institution.

You might not be aware that plagiarism can take several different forms. The most well known, **purposeful plagiarism** , is handing in an essay written by someone else and representing it as your own, copying your essay word for word from a magazine or journal, or downloading an essay from the Internet.

A much more common and less understood phenomenon is what I call **accidental plagiarism.** Accidental plagiarism is the result of improperly paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, or citing your evidence in your academic writing. Generally, writers accidentally plagiarize because they simply don't know or they fail to follow the rules for giving credit to the ideas of others in their writing.

Both purposeful and accidental plagiarism are wrong, against the rules, and can result in harsh punishments. Ignoring or not knowing the rules of how to not plagiarize and properly cite evidence might be an *explanation,* but it is not an *excuse.*

To exemplify what I'm getting at, consider the examples below that use quotations and paraphrases from this brief passage:

> Those who denounce cyberculture today strangely resemble those who criticized rock music during the fifties and sixties. Rock started out as an Anglo-American phenomenon and has become an industry. Nonetheless, it was able to capture the hopes of young people around the world and provided enjoyment to those of us who listened to or played rock. Sixties pop was the conscience of one or two generations that helped bring the war in Vietnam to a close. Obviously, neither rock nor pop has solved global poverty or hunger. But is this a reason to be "against" them? (ix).

And just to make it clear that *I'm* not plagiarizing this passage, here is the citation in MLA style:

Lévy, Pierre. Cyberculture. Trans. Robert Bononno. Minneapolis: U of

Minnesota P, 2001.

Here's an obvious example of plagiarism:

> Those who denounce cyberculture today strangely resemble those who criticized rock music during the fifties and sixties.

In this case, the writer has literally taken one of Lévy's sentences and represented it as her own. That's clearly against the rules.

Here's another example of plagiarism, perhaps less obvious:

> The same kind of people who criticize cyberculture are the same kind of people who criticized rock and roll music back in the fifties and sixties. But both cyberculture and rock music inspire and entertain young people.

While these aren't Lévy's exact words, they are certainly close enough to constitute a form of plagiarism. And again, even though you might think that this is a "lesser" form of plagiarism, it's still plagiarism.

Both of these passages can easily be corrected to make them acceptable quotations or paraphrases.

> **In the introduction of his book Cyberculture, Pierre Lévy observes that** "Those who denounce cyberculture today strangely resemble those who criticized rock music during the fifties and sixties" **(ix).**
>
> **Pierre Lévy suggests** that the same kind of people who criticize cyberculture are the same kind of people who criticized rock and roll music back in the fifties and sixties. But both cyberculture and rock music inspire and entertain young people **(ix).**

Note that changing these passages from examples of plagiarism to acceptable examples of a quotation and a paraphrase is extremely easy: properly cite your sources.

This leads to the "golden rule" of avoiding plagiarism:

Always cite your sources. If you are unsure as to whether you should or should not cite a particular claim or reference, you should probably cite your source.

Often, students are unclear as to whether or not they need to cite a piece of evidence because they believe it to be "common knowledge" or because they are not sure about the source of information. When in doubt about whether or not to cite evidence in order to give credit to a source ("common knowledge" or not), you should cite the evidence.

Plagiarism and the Internet

Sometimes, I think the ease of finding and retrieving information on the World Wide Web makes readers think that this information does not need to be cited. After all, it isn't a traditional source like a book or a journal; it is available for "free." All a research writer needs to do with a web site is "cut and paste" whatever he needs into his essay, right? Wrong!

You need to cite the evidence you find from the Internet or the World Wide Web the same way you cite evidence from other sources. To not do this is plagiarism, or, more bluntly, cheating. Just because the information is "freely" available on the Internet does not mean you can use this information in your academic writing without properly citing it, much in the same way that the information from library journals and books "freely" available to you needs to be cited in order to give credit where credit is due.

It is also not acceptable to simply download graphics from the World Wide Web. Images found on the Internet are protected by copyright laws. Quite literally, taking images from the Web (particularly from commercial sources) is an offense that could lead to legal action. There are places where you can find graphics and clip art that Web publishers have made publicly available for anyone to use, but be sure that the Web site where you find the graphics makes this explicit before you take graphics as your own.

In short, you can use evidence from the Web as long as you don't plagiarize and as long as you properly cite it; don't take graphics from the Web unless you know the images are in the public domain. For more information on citing electronic sources, see Chapter 12, "Citing Your Research with MLA and APA Style."

Chapter Four: How to Collaborate and Write With Others

- Why Collaborate on Writing?
- Considering (and Balancing) the Two Extremes of Collaboration
- Peer Review as Collaboration
  - A "sample recipe" for how peer review can work
  - A few last things to remember about successful peer review
- Collaborative Writing on Larger Projects
- Three Ideas for Collaborative Projects
  - Research Idea Groups
  - Research Writing Partners
  - Collaborative Research Writing Projects
- Collaborating With Computers and the Internet

Why Collaborate on Writing?

In my teaching experience, students have mixed feelings about collaboration. Many of my students initially say they don't want to work with their classmates on their writing. When it comes to in-class peer review sessions or more involved collaborative project such as small group work, they believe there is nothing they can learn about their writing from their classmates; "After all, "they tell me, "the teacher gives the grade."

However, most of my students tell me *after* the course ends that the times in which they collaborated with their classmates were occasions where they felt they learned a lot about writing. While they might enter into collaborative exercises and writing projects reluctantly, it's been my experience that most students end up finding them worthwhile.

Collaborating in different ways on writing projects is a good idea for several reasons. First, composition and rhetoric teachers and scholars have known for a long time now that one of the best ways for students to improve their writing skills is to have them share their writing with other students. If you think about it for a moment, this is common sense. If you never show your writing to other readers, or if you limit your audience to simply the teacher, how will you as a writer learn about the effectiveness of your writing beyond a grade in a class?

Second, almost all "real writing" is the product of collaboration. Of course, you probably don't collaborate on your diary or journal entries, letters to relatives, or emails to your friends. But almost all of the writing you read in academic or popular publications has involved different levels of collaboration, sometimes in surprising and hidden ways. For example, while I am indeed the author of *The Process of Research Writing*, this book has been a collaborative project in the sense

that I received a lot of advice and ideas from my wife, friends, students, colleagues, and editors.

Considering (and Balancing) the Two Extremes of Collaboration

Collaboration always implies people working together toward a goal, but I like to think of the way collaboration actually works as being somewhere between two extremes.

One extreme is what I call ***"very immediate and intimate" collaboration,*** where writers collaborate *extremely* closely, literally sitting together in front of the computer keyboard or the pad of paper and going over each sentence of each paragraph together.

The **advantages** of this very close collaboration include:

- An equal and immediate sense for everyone involved about how the project is going;
- Writing projects that are more seamless: that is, all of the different parts fit together clearly as one complete text; and
- A greater sense by individuals within a group of their roles, since all the group members are working together in the same time and place.

The **disadvantages** of this type of collaboration include:

- "Hard workers" in the group might resent the group members who do not seem to contribute an equal part, or some members of the group might feel they are being silenced and manipulated by more forceful group members;
- It can be difficult to coordinate times and places to meet; and
- It is extremely time consuming, especially if the group is collaborating on creating a more detailed writing project.

The other extreme of collaboration is what I call ***"very distant" collaboration,*** where writers divide up the labor of a particular project into smaller tasks that can be then assigned to members of the group and put together later, assembly-line fashion.

Some of the **advantages** of this type of collaboration include:

- It is easy to set up tasks so each group member has the opportunity to contribute equally without duplicating the work of others;

- It can be done with few (if any) meetings where all of the group members need to be present; and

- Tasks can be accomplished quickly since all group members are simultaneously working on their parts of the project.

The **disadvantages** include:

- Because it is being done in parts, the completed project may seem disjointed and uneven;

- It can be difficult to manage this sort of collaboration since the individual parts of the project have to somehow be put together, usually by a group leader, someone who is named by the others, or someone who takes on the role; and

- There can be resentment within the group, either from leaders who other members of the group feel are doing a poor job, or of those within the group perceived as not doing their share of the work.

Where most collaborative projects end up on the "collaboration spectrum" depend on the nature of the collaborative task. For example, things like in-class peer review of each others' rough drafts, in-class reading and writing assignments, or shorter collaborative writing projects tend to end up closer to "very immediate and intimate" collaboration. Things like collaborative research writing projects, research oriented web sites, or to other longer and more detailed writing projects tend to be closer to the "very distant" collaboration side of the spectrum.

Clearly, one sort of collaboration isn't automatically "better" than another; it depends on your purposes. The best approach to any collaborative project is to be conscious of the strengths and weaknesses of both sides of the collaborative spectrum and strive to emphasize the strengths of the approach within which you are working.

For example, one way to avoid some of the pitfalls of the "very immediate and intimate" types of collaboration is to make sure that each member of the group has a clear sense of their role in the writing project and is allowed to contribute. Conversely, the disadvantages of "very distant" types of collaboration might be avoided if members of the group strive to work on producing writing in a similar style and if there is frequent communication among group members.

Peer Review as Collaboration

One of the most common types of collaboration done in writing classes comes in the form of in-class "group work" or as peer review sessions. Peer review has

become a common practice for contemporary composition and rhetoric classrooms. Basically, it is the process where small groups of students read, comment on, and make suggestions for other student's work.

While successful peer review can be hard and takes practice, it really can work. But first, you have to be willing to accept two premises.

- ***Your fellow students have valid comments to make on your writing projects.*** Students often assume that the only person whose opinion really matters is the teacher because, after all, the teacher is the one who assigns the grade. I understand the logic of the assumption that the "teacher is always right," but I don't think it's true.

The best writing projects are ones that strive to fulfill a purpose and reach an audience that is beyond a particular class and a particular teacher. But beyond that, your classmates represent an audience you should be trying to reach. You should listen to your classmate's suggestions because they are in same writing situation as you. After all, they too are trying to reach an audience that includes their fellow classmates, and they are also writing a project that will have to be read and evaluated by the teacher.

- ***All writing projects can be improved by revision.*** Sometimes we have an overly romantic view of writing and of writers who are able to create "great works" without ever having to make any real changes. Rarely (if ever) has this been the case. Any writing project can be improved with revision.

As straightforward as these premises might be, they can often be difficult to accept. But with practice, patience, and work with your classmates, seeing these premises as valid becomes easier.

How peer review can work, step by step

I offer the following advice on how to get started with peer review sessions as a "recipe" where ingredients and methods can be altered to fit the particulars of the class, the writing project, time limitations, and so forth. After all, you and your teacher probably have ideas on what will or won't work for peer review in your specific contexts.

- **With the help of your teacher, break into groups of three to five students.** Groups of five work well only if the writing project you are considering is short or if you have a lot of class time to go over each project. I would also recommend not working in pairs since that overly limits the size of the audience.

Some students and teachers like to work with the same peer collaborators for the entire semester, while others like to work with different collaborators with each project.

- **Exchange a copy of your writing project with each person in the group.** You should come to the peer review session class with several copies of your writing project to share with others in your peer review group.

- **Select someone to start, and have that person read their essay out loud while the other members of the group read along.** The extent to which you will be able to read your essays out loud will vary according to the particular circumstances of your class and of the assignment, but I would encourage you to try to include this step in the process of in-class peer review. Actually reading your writing out loud to others gives the reader and writer a real sense of the voice of an essay and is a great way for writers and readers to catch small grammar errors.

- **While the writer "up" is reading, the readers should read along, marking comments in the margins of the draft they are reading.** As a reader, you should note points you hope to come back to in group discussion. You can also mark any grammatical errors you might notice as you read.

- **When the writer is done reading, the readers should provide their comments.** This is **not** the time for the writer to explain things that the readers say they didn't understand. Rather, this is the time for the writer to ***listen*** to what the other members of the group have to say.

This is a crucial part of the process because the questions that readers have are ones that point to changes the writer should make in revision rather than being answered in person. After all, you will never be able to be there when other readers (your teacher or other people in your audience) try to understand your writing project. Readers' questions have to be anticipated and answered in the writing itself. So, the role of the person who just finished reading is to try and be as open-minded (and open-eared!) to their classmates' advice as possible.

Giving good advice to classmates in peer review sessions can be a tricky process. Readers often have a hard time expressing their comments to the person who's writing is being discussed. On the one hand, it isn't productive or nice to say things that might hurt the writer's feelings; but on the other hand, it also isn't productive to be *so* nice as to not say anything that can help the writer. So the goal here should be to somehow balance the two: advice that is "nice," but also constructive.

Here are two suggestions to help make this step of readers giving writers constructive advice a bit easier:

- ***Try to keep the focus of the constructive advice on the big issues.*** By "the big issues," I mean things like the clarity of the points the writer is trying to make, the use of evidence, the points where readers are particularly persuaded or particularly confused, and so forth. This is not to say things like grammar and proofreading and such are not important—far from it. But those issues are more about "proofreading" than they are about changing the substance of an essay.
- ***Consider some of the questions I have at the end of each of the chapters in Part Two of the book, "Exercises in the Process of Research*."** Each of the chapters in this part of the book end with sections titled "Questions to Ask While Writing and Researching" and "Review and Revision." The questions you should consider very according to the writing exercise, but the goal is always the same: what changes can you make to your writing project to make it more accessible to your readers?

Making revisions as a result questions like these (and the ones provided by your teacher) will make it much easier for you and your group members to give each other useful advice, and it will also help keep the group on task.

A few final things to remember about successful peer review

- **Peer review takes practice.** If you don't think peer review works that well for you and your classmates the first time you try it, give it another chance with a different writing project. Like most things in writing (or life!) that are rewarding and useful, good peer review takes practice and time. If you stick with it, you'll see that the peer review sessions you have toward the end of term are much more productive than the ones at the beginning of the term.

- **If you don't get good advice about your writing projects in class, seek out advice elsewhere.** Show a draft of your writing project to someone who's opinion you value—friends, family, classmates—and ask them for suggestions in making the project better. If your school has a writing center, writing lab, or other sort of tutoring center, take a copy of the writing project to it and have a staff member look at your work.

- **It is always still up to you to choose what advice you want to follow.** Inevitably, you will receive advice from your reviewers that is conflicting or that is advice you simply don't agree with. That is okay. Remember that you are not under any obligation to incorporate *all* the suggestions you receive, and part of the process of becoming a better writer is learning for yourself when you need to follow advice and when you need to follow your own instincts.

Collaborative Writing on Larger Projects

Collaboration on large and ongoing writing projects can be a rewarding experience for both teachers and students for several reasons.

- ***Collaborative groups provide a "support" mechanism that can often times be very important when working on a research project.*** Writing and researching are hard work, and it can be comforting and encouraging to have the support of classmates to help you successfully complete projects.

- ***Collaborating with others can often make more elaborate and sophisticated research projects possible.*** Simply put, by "putting their heads together," writers working in groups can usually do more research and more analysis of a topic than someone working alone.

Collaborating With Computers and the Internet

Two of the most significant obstacles to collaborative writing, especially collaboration on larger writing projects, are time and place. It can be difficult to set up a meeting outside of class time that fits into the schedule of all the members of the group. This can obviously make for a frustrating and unpleasant collaborative experience.

Computers and the Internet have dramatically extended the possibilities of collaborative writing projects. With tools like e-mail, chat room, and instant messaging, students can collaborate "asynchronously:" that is, they can work with each other without having to meet in a specific place or at a specific time. While "live" communication tools like chat and instant messaging require participants to be interacting at the same time, students can still collaborate with each other without having to be in the same place.

Chances are, you have already used email or instant messaging to do a form of "collaboration" online. Most of my students are familiar with these technologies, and many of my students use things like email or instant messaging to plan meetings or evening plans, even to do homework. Collaborative peer review doesn't need to be any more complicated than this: emailing each other (usually by including a group of email addresses in the "to" line) or chatting with each other with one of the many commercial chat and instant messaging services.

The Internet also has a lot of potential as a collaborative writing tool. For "very immediate and intimate" styles of collaborations, writers can work together on the same web site, but they can do it asynchronously. For projects that tend toward the "very distant" side of the collaboration spectrum, web writers can work on parts of a web site individually and then assemble them later. For more detail on creating collaborative web projects, see chapter 12, "The Web-based Research Project."**This title will change...**

Of course, collaborating with each other with computers and the Internet is slightly different than collaborating "face to face" with each other. Here are some things to be think about and some things to avoid as you try to collaborate asynchronously:

- **Make sure everyone in your collaborative group is included in the discussion.** This can be a problem with some email applications since automatically replying to the sender of a message doesn't necessarily mean it will go to all of the members of your group. To make sure no one is left out, make sure that all members of the group have everyone's correct email address, and make sure all of these addresses appear in the "To:" line of your email software. To include multiple email addresses in the "To:" line, separate each email address with a comma.

- **Make sure everyone in your collaborative group understands how to read and write messages in the format they are being sent.** For example, if you and your group members decide to send attachments of writing projects to each other, make sure that everyone has access to the appropriate software and understands how to use it.

- **All of the group members need to read and respond to each other's messages in a timely fashion.** If some group members are in the habit of checking their email once every other week, that person will have to change their habits for the purposes of this project. Collaboration with email works best when each member of the group checks their email at least once a day.

- **Keep in mind the rules of good "netiquette" when working with your group members.** In chapter two, "Understanding and Using the Library and the Internet for Research," I provided a brief guide to the practice of good online etiquette, or "netiquette." I would encourage you to review those guidelines as you work with your group members online. Remember that simple misunderstandings and miscommunications, the sorts of things that are usually easy to clarify in "face-to-face" interactions, can sometimes become arguments or "flames" online. So be sure to use common sense courtesy, and remember that there are "real people" behind the emails that you are sending.

- **Remember that some things are better done "face-to-face," so be prepared to schedule some more traditional collaboration time.** Computers and the Internet are rarely suitable to serve as a *complete* substitution for more traditional "face-to-face" collaboration experiences. While collaborating via e-mail is extremely convenient, it often isn't very efficient. Writing and reading tasks that would only a few moments to discuss "face-to-face" can take days or longer to discuss online. So while using electronic tools like email can minimize the number of more traditional collaboration meetings you will need to have with your group members, it probably won't eliminate them entirely.

Chapter Five
The Working Thesis Exercise

- Working with Assigned Topics
- Coming Up with Your Own Idea
- Brainstorming for Ideas
- Brainstorming with Computers
- Moving From Ideas to Topics with the Help of the Library and the World Wide Web
- Writing Your Working Thesis
- Assignment: Writing The Working Thesis
    * A Sample Assignment
    * Questions to Consider with a First Draft
    * Review and Revision
    * A Student Example: "Preventing Drunk Driving by Enforcement" by Daniel Marvins

This chapter is about finding something to write about in the first place. As I suggested earlier in the introduction and in Chapter 1, "Thinking Critically About Research," the process of finding something to write about is complicated. In many ways, you need to think critically about the idea of research, you need to go to the library or the internet and conduct research, and you need to formulate a question or thesis to research all at the same time.

Sometimes, the subject of your research is called a "research question" or "problem statement." I've decided to call this process "the working thesis" exercise to emphasize the idea that embarking on a research writing project involves making "a point" that is also a continually revised "work" in progress. A working thesis is tentative in that it will inevitably change as you go through the process of writing and researching. But if you're more comfortable thinking of the starting point of your research project as being about asking the right questions or finding the right problem, that's okay too.

Working With Assigned Topics

Many times, starting an academic writing assignment is easy: you write about the topic as assigned by the instructor. Of course, it is never a good idea to simply repeat what the instructor says about a particular topic. But in many college classes, the topic of your writing projects will be determined by the subject matter of the class and the directions of the instructor. If you are required to write a research paper for your political science class that focuses on the effects of nationalism, chances are an essay on the relaxation benefits of trout fishing would not be welcomed.

So, how do you write about topics assigned by the instructor? The answer to this question depends on the specific assignment and the class, but here are a few questions you should ask yourself and your instructor as you begin to write:

- ***What is the purpose and who is the audience for the essay you are being asked to write?*** In other words, what do you understand to be the instructor's and your goals in writing? Is the instructor's assignment designed to test your understanding and comprehension of class lectures, discussions, and readings? Is the instructor asking you to reflect and argue about some aspect of the class activities? Is the intended audience for the essay only the instructor, or is the assignment more broadly directed to other students or to a "general reader"?

- ***What do you think about the topic?*** What's your opinion about the topic assigned by the instructor? If it is a topic that asks you to pick a particular "side," what side are you on? And along these lines: to what extent would it be appropriate for you to incorporate your own feelings and opinions about the topic into your writing?

- ***How much "room" is there within the assigned topic for more specialized focuses?*** Most assigned topics which at first appear limiting actually allow for a great deal of flexibility. For example, you might think that an assigned topic about the "fuel economy and SUVs" would have little room for a variety of approaches. But the many books and articles about fuel efficient vehicles suggest the topic is actually much larger than it might at first appear.

- ***Does the assignment ask students to do additional research, or does it ask students to focus on the readings assigned in class?*** Assignments that ask students to do additional library and Internet research are potentially much broader than assignments that ask students to focus on class readings.

Coming up with your own idea

At other times, instructors allow students to pick a topic for their research-based writing projects. However, rarely do instructors allow their students to write research-based essays on ***anything*** for a lot of good reasons. For example, your composition and rhetoric course might be structured around a particular theme that you are exploring with your other reading assignments, your discussions, and your writing. Other ideas and topics don't really lend themselves to academic research writing. You probably have a special person in your life worth writing about (a parent, a grandparent, a boyfriend or girlfriend, etc.), but it is usually difficult to write a research-based essay on such a person. Some potential topics are too divisive or complex to write about in a

relatively short academic research-based essay, or some are topics that have become so overly-discussed that they have become clichés.

Besides the general theme of the course and other potential limitations to ideas for research, you also need to carefully consider your *own* interests in the ideas you are thinking about researching.

If you are allowed to choose your own research project topic, ***be sure to chose carefully, especially if it is a topic you will be working with throughout the term***. Don't pick a topic simply because it is the first idea that comes to mind or because you imagine it will be "easy" to research. Focus instead on an idea that meets the goals of the assignment, is researchable, and, most importantly, is a topic that you are interested in learning more about.

Taking the time to develop a good research topic ***at the beginning*** of the research writing process is critical. Planning ahead can be difficult and time-consuming, and it can be tempting to seize on the first idea that seems "easy." But all too often, these "easy" first ideas end up being time-consuming and difficult projects. In other words, the time you spend turning your research idea into a topic and then a working thesis will pay off when it comes time to actually write the research project assignment.

Exercise 5.1

- **What are some ideas that would NOT make good research projects for this class? Working in small groups, try to come up with a list of items that you all agree would be difficult (if not impossible) to write a research project about for this class.**

- **Are there items that you can add to your list of topics that would NOT make good research projects, ones that are "researchable" but that seem too cliched or controversial to do effectively in one semester?**

Brainstorming for Ideas

Whether you are assigned a particular topic or are allowed to choose your own topic within certain guidelines, the next step is to explore the ideas that you might write about in more detail. This process is called "brainstorming," though some instructors and textbooks might refer to similar techniques as "invention" or "pre-writing." Regardless of what it's called, the goal is the same: to lay the foundation for focusing in on a particular topic and the working thesis of a research-writing project.

I recommend you keep three general concepts in mind when trying any approach to brainstorming with your writing:

- ***Not all of these approaches to brainstorming will work equally well for everyone or work equally well for all topics.*** Your results will vary and that's okay. If one of these techniques doesn't work for you, try another and see how that goes.

- ***When trying any of these techniques, you can't censor yourself.*** Allow yourself the freedom to brainstorm about some things that you think are bad or even silly ideas. Getting out the "bad" or "silly" ideas has a way of allowing the good ideas to come through. Besides, you might be surprised about how some topics that initially seem bad or silly turn out to actually be good with a little brainstorming.

- ***Even if you know what topic you want to write about, brainstorm.*** Even if you know you want to write about a particular topic, you should try to consider some other topics in brainstorming because you never know what other things you could have written about if you don't consider the possibilities. Besides, you still should do some brainstorming to shape your idea into a topic and then focus it into a working thesis.

Freewriting

One of the most common and effective brainstorming techniques for writing classes, freewriting, is also easy to master. All you do is write about anything that comes into your head without stopping for a short time—five minutes or so. The key part of this activity though is **you cannot stop for any reason!** Even if you don't know what to write about, write "I don't know what to write about" until something else comes to mind. And don't worry—something else usually does come to mind.

Looping or Targeted Freewriting

Looping is similar to freewriting in that you write without stopping, but the difference is you are trying to be more focused in your writing. You can use a more specific topic to "loop" back to if you would like, or, if you do the more open-ended freewriting first, you can do a more targeted freewriting about one of the things you found to be a potentially workable idea. For example, you might freewrite with something general and abstract in mind, perhaps the question "what would make a good idea for a research project?" For a more targeted freewriting exercise, you would consider a more specific questions, such as "How could I explore and write about the research idea I have on computer crime?"

Group Idea Bouncing

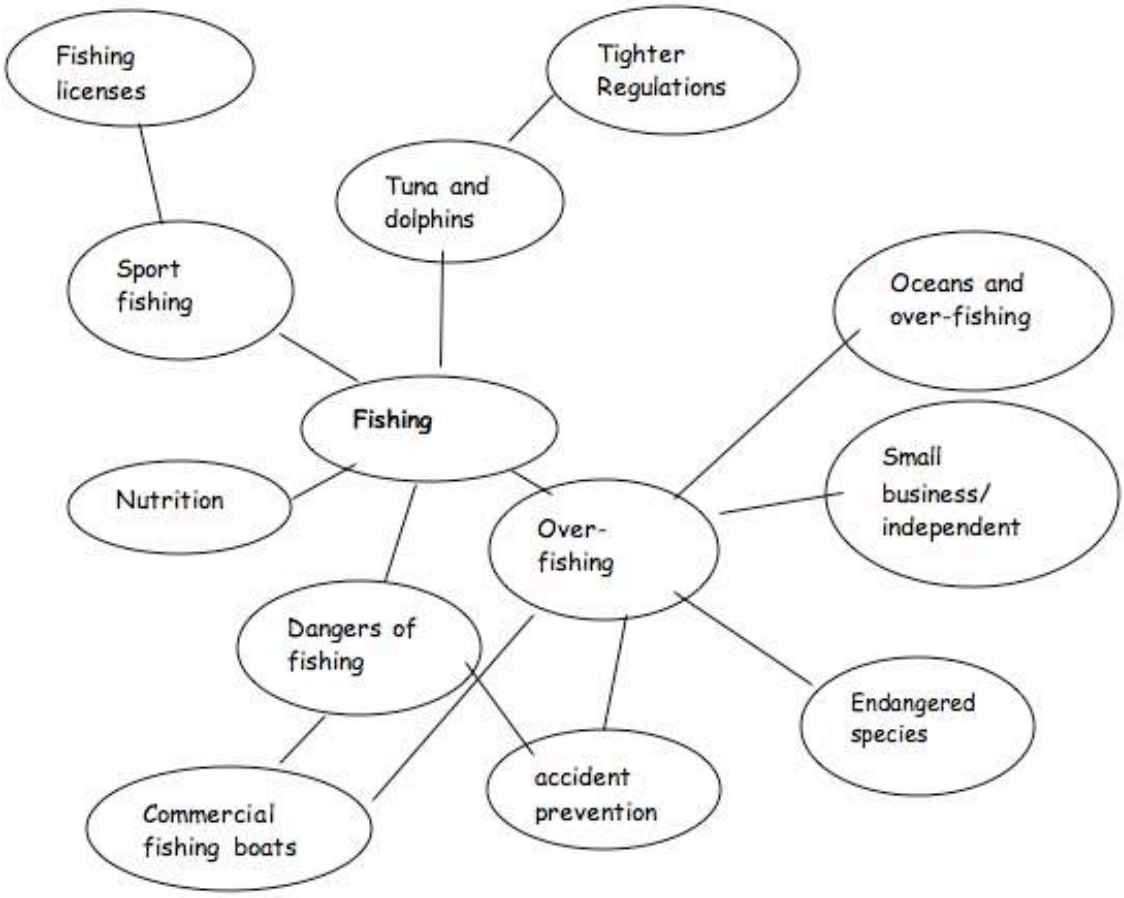
One of the best ways we all get different ideas is to talk with others. The same is true for finding a topic for research: sometimes, "bouncing" ideas off of each other in small groups is a great place to start, and it can be a lot of fun.

Here's one way to do it: name someone in a small group as the recorder. Each person in turn should give an idea for a potential topic, and the recorder should write it down.

Every person should take a turn quickly "bouncing" an idea out for the others—no "I don't know" or "come back to me!" Remember: no ideas are bad or silly or stupid at this point, so do not censor yourself or your group members.

Clustering

Clustering is a visual technique that can often help people see several different angles on their ideas. It can be an especially effective way to explore the details of a topic idea you develop with freewriting or looping. On a blank sheet of paper, write a one or two word description of your idea in the middle and circle it. Around that circle, write down one or two word descriptions of different aspects or characteristics of your main idea. Draw circles around those terms and then connect them to the main idea. Keep building outward, making "clusters" of the main idea as you go. Eventually, you should get a grouping of clusters that looks something like the illustration below.



Journalist Questions

One of the key elements of journalistic style is that journalists answer the basic questions of "What?" "Who?" "Where?" "When?" "How?" and "Why?" These are all good questions to consider in brainstorming for your idea, though clearly, these

questions are not always equally applicable to all ideas. Here are some examples of the sort of journalistic questions you might want to ask yourself about your idea:

- What is my idea? What are the key terms of my idea?
- Who are the people involved in my idea? Who is performing the action of my topic? Who are the people affected by my idea?
- Where does my idea take place? Where did it come from? Is it restricted to a particular time and place?
- When did my idea happen? How does it relate to the other events that might have taken place at a similar time? Are there events that happened before or after my idea that might have effected it?
- How did my idea happen, or how is it still happening?
- Why did my idea happen, or why is it still happening?

Brainstorming with Computers

Computers are a great tool for fostering these and other collaborative brainstorming techniques. For example, group idea bouncing can be used effectively with Internet "chat rooms," with instant messaging software, or with local area network discussion tools.

You can also collaborate on your brainstorming activities with computers with little more than simple word processing or email; Here are three variations on a similar theme:

- **Email exchange:** This exercise is conducted as an exchange over email. Each person in a small group does a looping/targeted freewriting to discover ideas for things she is interested in doing more research about. Then, each person in the group can post his looping/targeted freewriting to all of the other members of the group simultaneously. Email also allows for members of the group to collaborate with each other while not being in the same place--after all, email messages can be sent over great distances--and not at the same time.

- **"Musical computers:"** This approach is similar to the previous two exercises, but instead of exchanging diskettes or email messages, members of a group of students exchange computer stations in a computer lab. Here's how it works: a group (up to an entire class of students) does a looping/targeted freewriting at a computer station for a set period of time. When time is up, everyone needs to find a different computer in the fashion of the children's game "musical chairs." Once at the new computer station, the new writer comments on the original freewriting exercise. The process can be repeated several times until everyone has had a chance to provide feedback on four or five different original freewritings.

Exercise 5.2

- By yourself, work with at least two of the brainstorming techniques described above or other brainstorming techniques described by your instructor.
- Working with others in a small group, work with at least two of the brainstorming techniques described above or other brainstorming techniques described by your instructor. For example, have all the members of the small group each complete their own freewriting or clustering activity on the topic of her choice. Then, compare results. How do each of you react to different exercises? Are some techniques more useful for some?

Moving From Ideas to Topics With the Help of the Library and the World Wide Web

Coming up with an idea, especially using these brainstorming techniques, is not that hard to do. After all, we are surrounded by potential ideas and things that could be researched: teen violence, computer crime, high-fat diets, drugs, copyright laws, Las Vegas, dangerous toys. But it can be a little more tricky to figure out how ideas can be more specific and researchable topics. Ideas are general, broad, and fairly easy for all of us to grasp. Topics, on the other hand, are more specific, narrow, and in need of research. For example:

"Idea"	**"Topics"**
Computer Crime	Terrorism and the 'net, credit card fraud, computer stalking, "helpful" hackers
High-fat diets	Health risks, obesity, cholesterol, heart disease, health benefits of, weight loss from
Pharmaceutical Drugs	Cost of prescriptions, medical advances, advertising, disease prevention

In other words, a topic is a step further in the process of coming up with a researchable project for academic writing.

Chances are, your brainstorming activities have already helped you in the process of developing your idea into a topic. But before you move onto the next step of developing a working thesis, you should consider two more helpful topic developing techniques: a quick library subject search and a Web engine search.

A quick library subject search is just what it sounds like: using the computerized catalog system for your library, you can get a sense about the sort of ways other researchers have already divided up your idea into different topics.

☛ **Hyperlink:** For guidelines and tips for using your library's computer system to conduct subject searches, see Chapter Two, "Understanding and Using the Library and the Internet for Research" and the section called "Finding Research in the Library: An Overview."

For example, imagine your brainstorming has led you to the general idea "fisheries" and the potential problem of over-fishing in some part of the world. While this seems like it might be a potentially good and interesting thing to write about and to research, "fisheries" is an idea that could be narrowed down. If you conduct a subject search on your library's book catalog for "fisheries," you might find the library keeps track of different books in several categories. Some examples of these categories include:

- Fisheries, Atlantic Ocean.
- Fisheries, Canada.
- Fisheries, Environmental Aspects.

You might also want to use your library's periodical databases for some quick keyword searches. For example, a keyword search for "computer crime" in a periodical database returns article titles like "Demands for coverage increase as cyber-terrorism risk is realized" and "Making sense of cyber-exposures" (which are both articles about the concern businesses and insurance companies have about cyber crime), and also articles like "Meet the Hackers," an insider's view of computer hacking that disputes it being a "crime." At this point in the research process, you don't need to look up and read the sources you find, though you will probably want to keep track of them in case you end up needing them later for your research project.

Another great place to go to brainstorm ideas into topics is one of the many search engines on the World Wide Web, and you are probably already familiar with these services such as Google, Yahoo!, or alltheweb.com.

☛ **Hyperlink:** For guidelines and tips for working with Web-based research, see the section "Finding Research on the Internet" in Chapter Two, "Understanding and Using the Library and the Internet for Research."

Like a quick library keyword search, doing a quick keyword search on the Web can give you some good direction about how to turn your idea into a topic. However, keep these issues in mind when conducting your Web searches:

- Search engine searches are done by computer programs, which means that they will not sort out for you what is "relevant" from what is "irrelevant" for your search.

- Most search engines and search directories offer an "advanced search" option that explains how to do a "smarter" search. Read these instructions and you will be on your way to better searches.
- Different search engines index and collect information in different ways. Therefore, you should do keyword searches with the same phrase with a few different search engines. You might be surprised how your results will differ.
- If you aren't having much luck with the keywords of your general idea, try a couple of synonyms. For example, with "computer crime," you might want to try "Internet crime," or a related term such as "computer hacking."

Exercise 5.3
With an idea in mind, try doing a quick keyword search on the library's computer system and on a World Wide Web Search Engine.
- What sort of differences are there in the information you get back from doing a quick keyword search at the library versus doing one on the Web?
- If you are having a hard time getting results with your searches, can you come up with any synonyms for your key words?

Writing a Working Thesis

The next step, developing a "working thesis," can be a difficult and time-consuming process. However, as was the case when considering different ideas for research in the first place, spending the time now on devising a good working thesis will pay off later.

For our purposes here (and for most college classes), **a thesis advocates a specific and debatable issue.** In academic writing (including the writing done by your professors), the thesis is often stated fairly directly in the first third or so of the writing, though not usually at the end of the first paragraph where students are often told to place it. The sentence or two that seems to encapsulate the issue of the essay is called a "thesis statement."

Frequently, theses are implied—that is, while the piece of writing clearly has a point that the reader understands, there may not be a specific sentence or two that can easily be identified as the "thesis statement." For example, theses are often implied in newspapers and magazines, along with a lot of the writing that appears on Web pages.

The point is a thesis is a point.
Theses are not statements of facts, simple questions, or summaries of events. They are positions that you as the writer take on and "defend" with evidence, logic, observations, and the other tools of discourse. Most kinds of writing—and particularly academic writing—have a thesis, directly stated or implied. Even most of the writing we largely think of as "informational" has a directly stated or implied thesis.

Theses also tend to lend a certain organization to written arguments since what you include (or exclude) in a written text is largely controlled by the thesis. The main goal of the thesis (either as a specific statement or as an implied statement) is to answer two key questions that are concerns of all readers: "what's your point?" and "why should I care?"

Now, a **working thesis** is more or less a ***temporary*** thesis you devise in the beginning of the research process in order to set some direction in your research. However, as I wrote in the beginning of this chapter, you should remember:

Your working thesis is temporary and should change as you research, write, and learn more about your topic.

Think of the working thesis as the scaffolding and bracing put up around buildings when they are under construction: these structures are not designed to forever be a part of the building. Just the opposite. But you couldn't build the building in the first place if you didn't have the scaffolding and bracing that you inevitably have to tear away from the finished building.

Here's another way of thinking of it: while the journey of 1000 miles begins with just one step (so the saying goes), you still have to pick some kind of direction in the beginning. That's the purpose of a working thesis. You might change your mind about the direction of your research as you progress through the process, but you've got to start somewhere.

What does a working thesis look like? Before considering some potentially "good" examples of working theses, read through these **BAD** examples of statements, ones that **ARE NOT** theses, at least for the purposes of academic writing:

- Computer crime is bad.
- Fisheries around the world are important.
- *The Great Gatsby* is an American novel.

None of these sentences would make effective theses because each of these is more or less a statement of fact. Of course, we could debate some of the details here. But practically speaking, most people would assume and believe these statements to be true. Because of that, these statements don't have much potential as working theses.

These statements **ARE NOT** really theses either:

- There are many controversial ways of dealing with computer crime.
- There are many things that could be done to preserve fisheries around the world.
- *The Great Gatsby* is a wonderful novel for several different reasons.

These revised working thesis statements are better than the previous examples, but they are not quite working theses yet. The problem with these possible working theses is that they are hopelessly vague and give no idea to the reader where the essay is going. Also, while these statements are a bit more debatable than the previous group of examples, they are still statements that most people would more or less accept as facts.

While this next group of statements is yet another step closer, these statements **ARE NOT** really good working theses either:

- This essay will be about the role computer hackers play in computer crime committed on the Internet.
- This essay will discuss some of the measures the international community should take in order to preserve fisheries around the world.
- My essay is about the relevance today of *The Great Gatsby's* depiction of the connection between material goods and the American dream.

Each of these statements is close to being a working thesis because each is about an idea that has been focused into a specific topic. However, these statements are not quite working thesis statements because they don't offer a position or opinion that will be defended in some way. To turn these topics into working theses, the writer needs to take a side on the issues suggested in the statements.

Now, these revised statements **ARE** examples of possible working theses:

- While some computer hackers are harmless, most of them commit serious computer crimes and represent a serious Internet security problem.
- The international community should enact strict conservation measures to preserve fisheries and save endangered fish species around the world.
- *The Great Gatsby's* depiction of the connection between material goods and the American dream is still relevant today.

If you compare these possible working theses with the statements at the beginning of this section, you will hopefully see the differences between the "bad" and "good" working theses, and hopefully you can see the characteristics of a viable working thesis.

Each of the "good" working thesis statements:

- takes a stand that is generally not considered a "fact;"
- is specific enough to give the writer and potential reader some idea as to the direction the writing will take; and
- offers an initial position on the topic that takes a stand.

Another useful characteristic of a good working thesis is that it can help you as writer to determine what your essay will **NOT** be about. For example, the phrasing of the

working thesis on computer hackers suggests to both the reader and the researcher that the essay will NOT be about the failure of "dot com" business, computer literacy, or computer software. Certainly these issues are *related* to the issue of computer hackers and computer crime, but these other issues will not become the *focus* of the essay.

Exercise 5.4

- Working with the topic you've chosen, create a working thesis similar to the above examples. Try to ensure that your working thesis is focused and to the point by keeping it to only one sentence. Creating a working thesis can be tricky, so be sure to devote some time to try out different possible working thesis statements. And don't forget: a working thesis is the temporary scaffolding that will help you build your essay. It will and should change in the process of writing, so it doesn't need to be "perfect" at this stage.
- After you have individually formed working theses, get together with a small group of classmates to share and revise them.

Assignment: Writing a Working Thesis Essay

The process of writing a working thesis essay can take many forms. Sometimes, topic proposals are formal essays written according to fairly strict guidelines and offering exhaustive detail. At other times, your writing about your topic might be more personal and brief in form. Here is an example of a working thesis essay assignment:

> Write a brief narrative essay where you discuss the topic you have decided to research and write about. Tell your audience, your fellow classmates and your instructor how you arrived at this topic, some of the other ideas you considered in your brainstorming activities, and the working thesis you have settled on for the start of your project. Also, be sure to let us know about some of the initial library research you have conducted.

Questions to consider as you write your first draft

- Is the research topic one assigned by the instructor? Is it focused on a specific group of texts, questions, or ideas that have to do with a specific class?

- Are you expected to come up with your own idea for research? Since it is unlikely you will be able to write about just anything, what are some of the guidelines given to you by your instructor for what you can and can't write about?

- What are some of the ideas for research that you rejected as possibilities? Why did you reject some of these ideas?

- What ideas did you decide to brainstorm about? **Remember!** Be sure to brainstorm about more than one idea! What brainstorming techniques did you use to explore these ideas? Which ones seemed to work the best?

- What are some of the research topics that make up your research idea? In other words, when you begin to narrow your idea into different topics, what are some of the different research topics that interest you?

- What results did you get from a quick library keyword search? Be sure the keyword search you do of your library's databases examines books, periodicals, and newspapers to see a full range of possibilities for research. Also, be sure to consider as many synonyms as possible for the keyword terms you are using for your research topic.

- What results did you get from a keyword search on the World Wide Web? Be sure to conduct a keyword search using more than one search engine since

different services compile their data in different ways. Also, as was also the case with your library keyword search, be sure to consider as many synonyms as possible.

- Given these steps in the process, what is your working thesis? What variations of your working thesis did you consider along the way?

Review and Revision
As you will read again and again in this book, the first draft is only the beginning, the "raw materials" you create in order to really *write* your essay. That's because the most important step in the process of writing is showing your work to others—your instructor, your classmates, readers you trust, your friends, and so forth—and making changes based on your impressions of their feedback.

☛ **Hyperlink:** For guidelines and tips for working with your classmates in peer review sessions, see chapter four "How To Collaborate and Write With Others," particularly the section "Peer Review as Collaboration."

When you have a first draft complete and you are ready to show it to readers, ask them to think about these sorts of questions as they give you feedback on your writing:

- Is the topic of the topic proposal essay clear and reasonable to your readers?

- What's the working thesis? What sort of suggestions does your reader have to make the working thesis clearer? Is it clear to your readers that your working thesis is about a debatable position? Who might disagree with the your position? What do you think are some of the arguments against your position?

- What do your readers think is your main goal as a writer in pursuing this research project? Do your readers think you have made your purposes in writing this topic proposal and research project clear?

- Do your readers understand what library and Internet research you have already done on your topic? Are there particular examples of the library and Internet-based research that your readers think seem particularly useful or important?

Be careful to not limit your ideas for change to the things that are "easy" to fix (spelling, incomplete sentences, awkward phrases, and so forth). If you begin your process of revision by considering the questions suggested here (and similar questions you, your classmates, other readers, and your instructor might have), many of these "easy fix" problems will be fixed along the way. So as you go through the process of revision, think about it as a chance to really "re-see" and "re-imagine" what the whole writing project could look like.

A Student Example: "Preventing Drunk Driving by Enforcement" by Daniel Marvins

The assignment that was the basis for this essay asked students to write a "first person narrative" about the research project they would be working on for the semester. "It was really important to me think about a lot of different ideas and topics because I was worried that I might not be able to find enough research or stick with it," Marvins said. "This project helped me think this through."

Preventing Drunk Driving by Enforcement

Despite the fact that Americans are more aware of the problems of drunk driving than we were in the past, it is still a serious problem in the U.S. While educating everyone about the dangers of drunk driving is certainly important, I am interested in researching and writing about different ways to more strictly enforce drunk driving laws.

My working thesis for my research project is "While stronger enforcement measures to control drunk driving might be controversial and a violation of individual rights, they have to be enacted to stop drunk driving deaths." By "stronger enforcement measures," I mean things like police check points, lower legal levels of blood-alcohol, required breatholizer tests, less control on police searching cars, and stronger jail sentences.

I got the idea to focus on this topic by working on some of the different brainstorming techniques we talked about in class. I tried several different brainstorming techniques including freewriting and clustering. For me, the most useful technique was making a list of ideas and then talking it over with the other students in my group.

We all agreed that drunk driving would be a good topic, but I thought about writing about other topics too. For example, I think it would also be interesting to write about gun control laws, especially how they might effect deaths with kids and guns. I also thought it might be interesting to do research on the tobacco business and the lawsuits different states are conducting against them.

But I am more interested in exploring issues about drunk driving for a couple of different reasons. First, I think drunk driving is an

issue that a lot of people can relate to because most people know that it is dangerous and it is a bad idea. For example, we hear and read messages about not driving drunk in a lot of different advertisements. Still, even though everyone knows it is a bad idea, there are still a lot of deaths and injuries that result from drunk driving.

Second, I'm interested in doing research on stronger enforcement of drunk driving laws because I am not sure I have made my own mind up about it. Like everyone else, I of course think drunk driving is bad and police and society should do everything they can do to prevent people from driving drunk. On the other hand, I also think it's bad for police to pull over everyone they think might be drunk even when they don't know for sure. Strong enforcement might stop a lot of drunk driving, but it also gives police more chances to violate individual liberties and rights.

I have done a little bit of research already and I don't think I'm going to have any problem finding evidence to support my topic. Drunk driving seems to be a pretty common topic with a lot of different things written about it. I did a quick search of the library's databases and the World Wide Web and I found thousands of different articles. I skimmed the titles and it seemed like a lot of them would be very relevant and useful for my subject.

Drunk driving is a serious problem and everyone agrees that we should do something about it. The question is what should "it" be? My hope is that through my research, I will learn more about how stronger enforcement of drunk driving laws can curtail drunk driving, and I hope to be able to convince my readers of this, too.

Chapter Six
The Annotated Bibliography Exercise

- What is an Annotated Bibliography?
- Why Write Annotated Bibliographies?
- "How many sources do I need?"
- Using Computers to Write Annotated Bibliographies
- The Process of Writing the Annotated Bibliography
  - A Sample Assignment
  - The Annotated Bibliography and Collaboration
  - Questions to Ask while Writing and Researching
  - Review and Revision

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

As you develop a working thesis for your research project and begin to collect different pieces of evidence, you will soon find yourself needing some sort of system for keeping track of everything. The system discussed in this chapter is an **annotated bibliography,** which is a list of sources on a particular topic that includes a brief summary of what each source is about. This writing exercise is a bit different from the others in this part of *The Process of Research Writing* in that isn't an "essay" per se; rather it is an ongoing writing project that you will be "building" as you discover new pieces of evidence for your research project.

Here is an example of an entry from an annotated bibliography in MLA style:

Parsons, Matt. "Protecting Children on the Electronic Frontier: A Law Enforcement Challenge." FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin 69.10 (2000): 22-26.

This article is about an educational program used by the U.S. Navy to educate people in the Navy and their families about some of the things that are potentially dangerous to children about the Internet. Parsons says that the educational program has been effective.

Annotated bibliography entries have two parts. The top of the entry is the **citation**. It is the part that starts "Parsons, Matt'" and that lists information like the name of the writer, where the evidence appeared, the date of publication, and other publishing information.

☛ **Hyperlink:** For guidelines on how to properly write citations for your Annotated bibliographies, see Chapter 12, "Citing Your Research Using MLA or APA Style."

The second part of the entry is the **summary** of the evidence being cited. A good annotated bibliography summary provides enough information in a sentence or two to help you and others understand what the research is about in a neutral and non-opinionated way.

The first two sentences of this annotation are an example of this sort of very brief, "just the facts" sort of summary. In the brief summaries of entries in an annotated bibliography, stay away from making evaluations about the source—"I didn't like this article very much" or "I thought this article was great." The most important goal of your brief summary is to help you, colleagues, and other potential readers get an idea about the subject of the particular piece of evidence.

Summaries can be challenging to write, especially when you are trying to write them about longer and more complicated sources of research. Keep these guidelines in mind as you write your own summaries.

- **Keep your summary short.** Good summaries for annotated bibliographies are not "complete" summaries; rather, they provide the highlights of the evidence in as brief and concise a manner as possible, no more than a sentence or two.

- **Don't quote from what you are summarizing.** Summaries will be more useful to you and your colleagues if you write them in your own words. Instead of quoting directly what you think is the point of the piece of evidence, try to paraphrase it. (For more information on paraphrasing your evidence, see Chapter 3, "Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Avoiding Plagiarism").

- **Don't "cut and paste" from database abstracts.** Many of the periodical indexes that are available as part of your library's computer system include abstracts of articles. Do no "cut" this abstract material and then "paste" it into your own annotated bibliography. For one thing, this is plagiarism. Second, "cutting and pasting" from the abstract defeats one of the purposes of writing summaries and creating an annotated bibliography in the first place, which is to help you understand and explain your research.

Different writers will inevitably write slightly different summaries of the same evidence. Some differences between different writers' summaries of the same piece of evidence result from different interpretations of what it important in the research; there's nothing wrong with that.

However, two summaries from different writers should both provide a similar summary. In other words, its not acceptable when the difference of interpretation is the result of a lack of understanding of the evidence.

Why Write Annotated Bibliographies?

An annotated bibliography is an excellent way to keep track of the research you gather for your project. Make no mistake about it— **it is extremely important that you keep track of all of your evidence for your research project, and that you keep track of it from the beginning of the process of research writing.**

There's nothing more frustrating than finding an excellent article or book chapter you are excited about incorporating into your research project, only to realize you have forgotten where you found the article or book chapter in the first place. This is extremely frustrating, and it's easily avoided by doing something like writing an annotated bibliography.

You could use other methods for keeping track of your research. For example, you could use note cards and write down the source information as a proper citation, then write down the information about the source that is important. If the material you know you want to use from a certain source is short enough, you might even write a direct quote, which is where you write down word for word what the source says exactly as it is written. At other times, you can write a paraphrase, which is where you write down what the source means using your own words.

While note cards and other methods have their advantages, annotated bibliographies are an extremely useful tool for keeping track of your research. An annotated bibliography:

- Centralizes your research into one document that you can keep track of both as a print-out of a word-processed file and as a file you save electronically.

- Allows you to "copy and paste" citation information into the works cited part of your research project.

An annotated bibliography also gives you the space to start writing and thinking a bit about how some of your research might fit into your project. Consider these two sample entries from an annotated bibliography from a research project on pharmaceutical advertising:

Siegel, Marc. "Fighting the Drug (ad) Wars." The Nation 17 June 2002: 21.

Siegel, who is a doctor himself, writes about how drug advertising has undermined the communication between

doctors and patients. He says that drug ads have driven up the costs of prescription drugs, particularly big selling drugs like those for cholesterol.

Wechsler, Jill. "Minority Docs See DTC Ads as Way to Address 'Race Gap.'" Pharmaceutical Executive May 2002: 32, 34. WilsonSelect Database. Eastern Michigan University Halle Library. 20 October 2002. <http://www.emich.edu/halle>.

This article is about a study that said that African-American doctors saw advertising of prescription drugs as a way of educating their patients. The ads are useful because they talk about diseases that affect African-Americans.

Even from the limited amount of information available in these entries, it's clear that a relationship between these articles exists. Both are similar articles about how the doctor/patient relationship is affected by drug advertising. But both are also different. The first article is from the newspaper *The Nation,* which is in many ways similar to an academic journal and which is also known for its liberal views. The second article is from a trade journal (also similar to academic journals in many ways) that obviously is an advocate for the pharmaceutical industry.

In other words, in the process of compiling an annotated bibliography, you are doing more than keeping track of your research. You are starting to make some comparisons and beginning to see some relationships between your evidence, a process that will become increasingly important as you gather more research and work your way through the different exercises that lead to the research project.

But remember: However you decide to keep track of your research as you progress through your project—annotated bibliography, note cards, or another method—**the important thing is that you need to keep track of your research as you progress through your project!**

How many sources do I need?

Inevitably, students in research writing classes always ask how many sources they need to include in their research projects. In one sense, "how many sources do I need?" is a utilitarian question, one usually attached to a student's exploration of what it will take to get a particular grade. Considered more abstractly, this question is also an effort to explore the scope of a research project.

Like a certain page or word count requirement, the question "how many sources do I need?" is an effort to get a handle on the scope of the research project assignment. In that sense, asking about the number of sources is probably a good idea, a little like asking how much something weighs before you attempt to pick it up.

But ultimately, there is no right or wrong answer to this question. Longer research projects tend to have evidence from more different sources than shorter projects, but there is no cut-and-dry formula where "X" number of pages will equal "X" number of sources.

However, an annotated bibliography should contain significantly more entries than you intend or expect to include in your research project. For example, if you think you will need or if your instructor requires you to have research from about seven different sources, you should probably have about 15 different entries on your annotated bibliography.

The reasons you need to find twice as many sources as you are likely to use is that you want to find and use the *best* research you can reasonably find, not the *first* pieces of research you can find. Usually, researchers have to look at a lot more information than they would ever include in a research writing project to begin making judgements about their research. And by far the worst thing you can do in your research is to stop right after you have found the number of sources required by the instructor for your project.

Using Computers to Write Annotated Bibliographies

Personal computers, word-processing software, and the Internet can make putting together an annotated bibliography more useful and a lot easier. If you use word-processing software to create your annotated bibliography, you can dramatically simplify the process of creating a "works cited" or "references" page, which is a list of the sources you quote in your research project. All you will have to do is "copy and paste" the citation from the annotated bibliography into your research project—that is, using the functions of your computer and word processing software, "copy" the full citation that you have completed on your annotated bibliography page and "paste" it into the works cited page of your research project.

This same sort of "copy and paste" function also comes in handy when doing research on the web. For example, you can usually copy and paste the citation information from your library's online database for pieces of evidence you are interested in reading. In most cases, you should be able to "copy and paste" information you find in your library's online database into a word processing file. Many library databases—both for books and for periodicals—also have a feature that will allow you to email yourself results from a search.

Keep two things in mind about using computers for your annotated bibliographies:

- You will have to reformat whatever information you get from the Internet or your library's databases in order to meet MLA or APA style.

- **Don't use the copy and paste feature to plagiarize!** Simply copying things like abstracts defeats one of the important purposes for writing an annotated bibliography in the first place, and it's cheating.

Assignment: Writing an Annotated Bibliography

> *As you conduct your research for your research writing project, compile an annotated bibliography with 15-20 entries. Each entry in your annotated bibliography should contain a citation, a brief summary of the cited material. You will be completing the project in phases and a complete and revised version of it will be due when you have completed your research.*

You should think of your annotated bibliography as having roughly twice as many sources as the number of sources you will need to include for the research project, but your instructor might have a different requirement regarding the number of sources required.

Also, you should work on this assignment in parts. Going to the library and trying to complete this assignment in one sitting could turn this into a dreadful writing experience. However, if you complete it in stages, you will have a much better understanding of how your resources relate to each other.

You will probably need to discuss with your instructor the style of citation you need to follow for your research project and your annotated bibliography. Following a citation style isn't difficult to do, but you will want to be consistent and aware of the "rules" from the beginning. In other words, if you start off using MLA style, don't switch to APA style halfway through your annotated bibliography or your research project.

☛ **Hyperlink:** For an explanation of the differences of and the guidelines for using both MLA and APA style, see "Chapter 12, "Citing Your Researching Using MLA or APA Style."

Last, but not least, you will need to discuss with your instructor the sorts of materials you need to include in your research and your annotated bibliography. You may be required to include a balance of research from scholarly and non-scholarly sources, and from "traditional" print resources (books, magazines, journals, newspapers, and so forth) and the Internet.

Questions to ask while writing and researching

- Would you classify the material as a primary or a secondary source? Does the research seem to be difficult to categorize this way? (For more information on primary and secondary sources, see Chapter 1, "Thinking

Critically About Research" and the section "Primary versus Secondary Research").

- Is the research from a scholarly or a non-scholarly publication? Does the research seem difficult to categorize this way?

- Is the research from the Internet—a web page, a newsgroup, an email message, etc.? **Remember: while Internet research is not necessarily "bad" research, you do need to be more careful in evaluating the credibility of Internet-based sources.** (For more information on evaluating Internet research, see Chapter 1, "Thinking Critically About Research," and the sections "The Internet: The Researcher's Challenge" and "Evaluating the Quality and Credibility of Your Research."

- Do you know who wrote the material you are including in your annotated bibliography? What qualifications does your source say the writer has?

- Why do you think the writer wrote it? Do they have a self-interest or a political viewpoint that might make them overly biased?

- Besides the differences between scholarly, non-scholarly, and Internet sources, what else do you know about where your research was published? Is it an academic book? An article in a respected journal? An article in a news magazine or newspaper?

- When was it published? Given your research topic, how important do you think the date of publication is?

- Are you keeping your summaries brief and to the point, focusing on the point your research source is trying to make?

- If it's part of the assignment, are you including a sentence or two about how you see this piece of research fitting into your overall research project?

Revision and Review

Because of its ongoing nature, revising an annotated bibliography is a bit different than the typical revision process. Take opportunities as you compile your annotated bibliography to show your work in progress to your classmates, your instructor, and other readers you trust. If you are working collaboratively on your research projects, you will certainly want to share your annotated bibliography with classmates who are working on a similar topic. Working together like this can be a very useful way to get more ideas about where your research is going.

It is best to approach the annotated bibliography in smaller steps—five or six entries at a time. If that's how you're approaching this project, then you will always be in a process of revision and review with your classmates and your

instructor. You and your readers (your instructor and your classmates) should think about these questions as you revise, review, and add entries:

- Are the summaries you are including brief and to the point? Do your readers understand what the cited articles are about?
- Are you following a particular style guide consistently?
- If you are including a sentence or two about each of your resources, how do these sentences fit with your working thesis? Are they clarifying parts of your working thesis that were previously unclear? Are they suggesting changes to the approach you took when you began the research process?
- Based on the research you have so far, what other types of research do you think you need to find?

Chapter Seven
The Critique Exercise

- What's a Critique and Why Does it Matter?
- Selecting a Text to Critique
- Starting With a "Close Reading"
- Criteria: Your Reasons for Evaluation
- Assignment: Writing a Critique Essay
* Questions to consider as you write your first draft
    * Review and Revision
    * A Student Example: "A Critique of 'Self-Report of ADHD Symptoms in University Students" by Ashley Nelson

What's a Critique and Why Does it Matter?

Critiques evaluate and analyze a wide variety of things (texts, images, performances, etc.) based on reasons or criteria. Sometimes, people equate the notion of "critique" to "criticism," which usually suggests a negative interpretation. These terms are easy to confuse, but I want to be clear that critique and criticize don't mean the same thing. A negative critique might be said to be "criticism" in the way we often understand the term "to criticize," but critiques can be positive too.

We're all familiar with one of the most basic forms of critique: reviews (film reviews, music reviews, art reviews, book reviews, etc.). Critiques in the form of reviews tend to have a fairly simple and particular point: whether or not something is "good" or "bad."

Academic critiques are similar to the reviews we see in popular sources in that critique writers are trying to make a particular point about whatever it is that they are critiquing. But there are some differences between the sorts of critiques we read in academic sources versus the ones we read in popular sources.

- **The subjects of academic critiques tend to be other academic writings and they frequently appear in scholarly journals.**

- **Academic critiques frequently go further in making an argument beyond a simple assessment of the quality of a particular book, film, performance, or work of art.** Academic critique writers will often compare and discuss several works that are similar to each other to make some larger point. In other words, instead of simply commenting on whether something was good or bad, academic critiques tend to explore issues and ideas in ways that are more complicated than merely "good" or "bad."

The main focus of this chapter is the value of *writing* critiques as a part of the research writing process. Critiquing writing is important because in order to write a good critique you need to *critically read*: that is, you need to closely read and understand whatever it is you are critiquing, you need to apply appropriate criteria in order evaluate it, you need to summarize it, and to ultimately make some sort of point about the text you are critiquing.

These skills-- critically and closely reading, summarizing, creating and applying criteria, and then making an evaluation-- are key to The Process of Research Writing, and they should help you as you work through the process of research writing.

In this chapter, I've provided a "step-by-step" process for making a critique. I would encourage you to quickly read or skim through this chapter first, and then go back and work through the steps and exercises describe.

Selecting the right text to critique

The first step in writing a critique is selecting a text to critique. For the purposes of this writing exercise, you should check with your teacher for guidelines on what text to pick. If you are doing an annotated bibliography as part of your research project (see chapter 6, "The Annotated Bibliography Exercise"), then you are might find more materials that will work well for this project as you continuously research.

Short and simple newspaper articles, while useful as part of the research process, can be difficult to critique since they don't have the sort of detail that easily allows for a critical reading. On the other hand, critiquing an entire book is probably a more ambitious task than you are likely to have time or energy for with this exercise. Instead, consider critiquing one of the more fully developed texts you've come across in your research: an in-depth examination from a news magazine, a chapter from a scholarly book, a report on a research study or experiment, or an analysis published in an academic journal. These more complex essays usually present more opportunities for issues to critique.

Depending on your teacher's assignment, the "text" you critique might include something that isn't in writing: a movie, a music CD, a multimedia presentation, a computer game, a painting, etc. As is the case with more traditional writings, you want to select a text that has enough substance to it so that it stands up to a critical reading.

Exercise 7.1
Pick out at least three different possibilities for texts that you could critique for this exercise. If you've already started work on your research and an annotated bibliography for your research topic, you should consider those pieces of research as possibilities. Working alone or in small groups, consider the potential of each text. Here are some questions to think about:

- Does the text provide in-depth information? How long is it? Does it include a "works cited" or bibliography section?
- What is the source of the text? Does it come from an academic, professional, or scholarly publication?
- Does the text advocate a particular position? What is it, and do you agree or disagree with the text?

Starting with a "Close Reading"

The next and most important step in the process of critique writing is reading very carefully whatever it is you are going to critique. The type of "close reading" that is essential to the process of writing a good critique should not be confused with the sort of casual reading we do when reading the newspaper in the morning over coffee or surfing the Internet (?)or browsing through a magazine.

Close reading is a type of reading where the reader *critically* engages with the text in order to understand it, question it, evaluate it, and form an opinion about it. This is a method of reading where the reader has to slow down and think along each step of the way. The reader furthers her understanding of the text by writing as she reads and by stopping to look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary. Ultimately, once done with a close reading of a text, the reader has begun to form an opinion about the text and is ready to make an evaluation of it.

Close reading is not difficult to do, but it is an academic skill that can be challenging, time-consuming, and even *exhausting* to those who aren't used to doing it. Learning to closely read is challenging at first, similar in many ways to the experience many of us have when we first start an exercise program. If you have not previously trained as a runner and are not in good physical condition from some other sort of athletic training, you would find it challenging if not impossible to run five miles. But if you start small, keep training, and learn and practice good habits, chances are that what once was impossible (running five miles) is now within your grasp.

The same is true with close reading: it can be a difficult and frustrating process, but with practice and patience, anyone can become a good close reader.

Here are some basic steps to help you in your close reading:

- **Write while you read.** This is the most essential part of closely reading.

Writing and reading are closely related activities, and when you write about your reading *as* you are reading (even *in* what you are reading), you inevitably understand what you are reading better than you do if you read without writing.

Close reading includes taking notes: writing down the most important points of the text, paraphrasing, summarizing, and so forth. Note taking is also an important part of the process of creating and maintaining an annotated bibliography and as part of the overall process of writing research.

But mostly, what I mean when I suggest you write as you read is much messier and less systematic than note taking. I'm thinking of activities where you write ***in*** what you are reading by writing in the margins, underlining key sentences and phrases, starring and circling text, and so forth.

What sort of things should you underline as you read and what sorts of things should you write "in" your reading? Generally speaking, you should underline key sentences and phrases and write comments in the margins that clarify the passage for you, that raise questions, that remind you that a passage contains a particularly important quote or idea, or that points out where you might agree or disagree with the text.

- **Explain the main points of the text in your own words.** When you put something in your own words, what you are essentially doing is "translating" the text you are critiquing into your own language and your own way of understanding something. This is an especially useful technique when you are closely reading complex and long texts—books or more complicated academic articles that you are having a hard time understanding. You might want to put the main points in your own words on a separate sheet of paper. Using a separate sheet of paper makes it easier to note questions or other points about the text as you read.

As well as helping you better understand a complex text, explaining the main points in your own words can create a sort of outline of the text you are critiquing, which is another way of understanding the text. I'm not suggesting you create what I would call a "formal" outline, complete with Roman numerals and appropriate letters underneath each heading. But if you put down on a separate sheet of paper a few sentences for the main points of the text, you will automatically have an outline of sorts, with each sentence describing the subject of a particular part of the reading.

- **Use a dictionary.** Chances are, you have had teachers tell you to do this all throughout your schooling. And if you are anything like me, you resisted using a dictionary while you read something for years because it slowed you down, because you couldn't take a dictionary wherever you wanted to go, and because it just seemed like tedious busy work. But trust me: using a dictionary (even a small, paperback one) can be really useful in close reading because it can help you understand key words and phrases, especially words you can't get from context.

Sometimes, I look up complex or abstract words (ideology, justice, democracy, etc.) in the dictionary, even if I know what they mean, because dictionary definitions will often expand or even change the way that I understand the term. If it's a particularly important or puzzling word, I will even go so far as to look it up in different dictionaries. The slight differences in definitions can often help create a more full understanding of a term.

- **Form an opinion as you read.** The two main goals of a close reading are to fully understand what the text means and to form an opinion about whatever it is you are closely reading. If you follow the steps for close reading I outline here, you will inevitably end up with a more informed opinion about the text that can be a starting point toward writing critically about the text.

Certainly you don't need to have a completely and neatly formed and complete opinion after you finish closely reading. But if you find yourself completing a close reading but still having *no* opinion about what it is you are closely reading, or if you have a vague and somewhat weak opinion about what it is you are closely reading ("it's okay," "there were some good points," "I liked his main idea," and so forth), then you probably have not read closely enough.

- **Keep questioning the text.** As you go along in your close reading, keep asking questions about the text: what is the point? do I agree or disagree with the text? why? what parts of the text are you confused about? how can you find answers to the questions you have? and how do you see it fitting into your research project? Keep asking these kinds of questions as you read and you will soon understand the text you are critiquing a lot better.

Exercise 7.2

- Following the guidelines I offer here, do a close reading of one of the pieces of research you have found. Be sure to write "in" the text as you read (either in the margins or with post-it notes), explain the main points in your own words, look up key words or words you don't understand in the dictionary, and closely read toward an opinion. Be sure to bring the work of your close reading to class to share and discuss with your classmates and your teacher.
- If you are working collaboratively with classmates on a research project, you can individually do close readings of a common text and compare your reactions. Once an agreed upon text is selected, each member of the collaborative group should individually closely read the same text. Bring to class in the work of your close reading to compare and discuss each of your group members' readings.

Criteria: Your Reasons for Your Evaluation

If you do a thorough close reading of your text (taking notes, writing things in the margins, highlighting key points, looking up things in the dictionary, etc.), then you will start to develop opinions about the text, and you will obviously have reasons for these opinions. In the most basic sense, the reasons you have for forming your opinion is the **criteria** you are using to form your evaluation.

Criteria are systems or standards for evaluation, rules or tests we use to make a judgment. We use criteria all the time. Take the Motion Picture Association of America's (MPAA) rating system, for example: films are assigned ratings of G, PG, PG-13, etc., by an MPAA board based on specific criteria (violence, language, adult themes, sexual content, etc.).

In many college courses, students are asked to evaluate texts based on more or less predetermined criteria. For an example, an essay test question that asks you to critique a novel based on its depiction of women and children within the given historical contexts more or less has created criteria for you. If you decided instead to evaluate this novel based on some other criteria, your teacher might be interested in your reading, but he might also be disappointed in your response, especially given that it was a question on a test.

More often than not though (and probably for your purposes here), writers choose their own criteria to the extent that they are appropriate for the text being critiqued. Suggesting that an article in an academic source is "bad" because it goes into too much detail, is written for a specialized audience, and doesn't include any glossy pictures would be unfair, because, as I discussed in some detail in chapter one, "Thinking Critically About Research," these criteria are not usually part of the goals or purposes of academic articles. The same could be

true of an article you found in a popular magazine. Suggesting it was "bad" because it seemed directed at too general of an audience and it simplified certain details about the topic would be unfair as well.

So, if there are no definite standard criteria to consider in a critique, how do you come up with criteria? Well, most of the questions suggested in chapter one on testing the credibility and reliability of your evidence might be used as criteria for your critique:

- **Who wrote the text and what are their qualifications?**
- **What do you think motivated the writer to write the text?**
- **Is the information in the text accurate and specific?**
- **Has the author interpreted the material fairly?**
- **Has the author defined terms clearly?**
- **Does the writer seem to support her point with good research and reasoning?**
- **Where was the text published?**
- **When was it published?**

Exercise 7.3

Take a look at a text you will potentially critique. If you've already done a close reading of a text for your critique, be sure to use the text you used for that exercise. Either individually or collaboratively, come up with a list of possible criteria for critiquing the text. List as many criteria as you can, keeping in mind that you will certainly not be considering all of the criteria you come up with in your critique essay. On a sheet of paper or in a word processing file, create two columns. List the possible criteria in one column. In the other column, note the parts of the text that you think of as support for your criteria. Here's a sample of a few entries:

Criteria	**Support**
Written by an expert	Speer in Marquette Poli/Sci department.
Supports ideas logically	Throughout, in the reference section, etc.
From a respected, credible and current source	Crime, Law, and Social Change academic source; article published in 2000.

Working individually or collaboratively, come up with a list of criteria that you think would **NOT** apply to the text you are considering for your critique. What sorts of possible criteria seem not fitting with the piece your are considering for your critique?

Summarizing Your Research

Critiques usually include one other important component: a summary of the text being critiqued. As I discussed in chapters two and six, the most obvious reason to summarize the text you are critiquing is your readers are probably not familiar with it. After all, one of the main reasons why potential readers (your classmates, your teacher, and other readers interested in your topic) might read your critique is to find out what it is you (the writer) think about the text being critiqued so the reader can decide whether or not to read it themselves.

When writing your summary, keep in mind:

- **Summaries don't contain your opinion or feelings about whatever it is you are summarizing.** Explain the key points and ideas of whatever it is you are summarizing, but save your opinions and reactions to your subject for the other parts of your critique.

- **Generally, summaries don't include quotes from the original source.** The goal of the summary is to explain the key points in your own words. However, you will want to use the quotes from the original in your critique to support your own opinion of whatever it is you are critiquing.

- **Summaries are short.** Like this item.

Figuring out how much summary to provide in a critique can be tricky because it depends on factors like the text you are critiquing, your purposes in your critique, how much you can expect your readers to know about whatever it is you are summarizing, and so forth.

But keep in mind that the goal of almost any summary (in a critique or in other types of writing) is to **get your reader familiar enough with whatever it is you are talking about so that you can go on to make your point**.

Exercise 7.4

- Write a brief summary of the text you intend to write your critique about, preferably one which you have already examined with a close reading and for which you have developed a list of possible criteria. For the purposes of this exercise, keep the summary brief—no more than 100 words or so—and be sure to strive for a summary that focuses as much as possible on "just the facts." Show your summary to readers who haven't read the text that you are summarizing and ask them if they understand what the text is generally about and if they have any questions about the text.
- With a group of collaborators and your teacher, decide on a text that you will all summarize. Individually, write a brief summary for readers you assume haven't read the article. Keep the summaries short—less than 100 words or so—and be sure to strive for a summary that focuses as much as possible on "just the facts." Come together in small groups to discuss each group members' individually written summary. What similarities are there between each person's summary? What are some of the notable differences between summaries?

Assignment: Writing a Critique Essay

If you have been doing the exercises and following through the process I've outlined in this chapter then you should be well on your way in the process of writing an effective critique. As you work on the writing assignment for this chapter, put to work your new knowledge of the process of critiquing.

> Critique a selection of writing you have found in your research as part of the ongoing research project. The main goal of this critique is to provide a detailed review of the particular selection of writing that will help your audience learn about your position on the writing selection and also to help your audience decide for themselves whether or not the writing selection is something they might be interested in reading.

Questions to consider as you write your first draft

- If you are asked to choose your own text to critique, did you spend some time carefully considering possibilities? Why did you select the text that you did? Why did you rule out others?

- As part of your close reading, did you write both about and "in" the text that you are critiquing? What sort of marginal notes did you make? What are some of the key phrases or ideas that seemed important to you as you read that you underlined or noted with post-it notes in the margins? What kinds of questions about your reading did you write down as you read?

- How did you explain the main points of the text you closely read? What do you see as the main points of the text?

- Did you use a dictionary to look up words that you didn't understand and couldn't understand in context? Did you look up any complex or abstract terms? Did the dictionary definition of those terms help further your understanding of the word and the context where they occurred? Did you look up any terms that you saw as particularly important in different dictionaries? Did you learn anything from the different definitions?

- When you finished your close reading, what was your opinion of the text you closely read? Beyond a simple "good" or "bad" take on the reading, what are some of the reasons for your initial opinion about your reading?

- What criteria seem most appropriate for the text you are critiquing? Why? What would be an example of a criteria that would probably be *inappropriate* for this text? Did you consider some of the criteria that are similar to the tests for evidence I suggest in chapter one?

- Have you explained for the reader somewhere in the first part of the essay what your main point is? In other words, do you introduce the criteria you will be using to critique your text early on in your essay?

- Have you noted key quotes and passages that would serve as evidence in order to support your criteria? What passages are you considering quoting instead of parphrasing? Are there other reasons you are turning to as support for your criteria?

- Have you written a summary of your text? How familiar do you think your audience is with whatever it is you are critiquing? How has that effected your summary?

Review and Revision

Considering the recommendations of classmates in a peer review group and of other readers is especially important for this project. After all, if the goal of a critique essay is to give readers an idea about what it is you think of a particular reading, their direct feedback can help ensure that you are actually accomplishing these goals.

Here are some questions you and your classmates want to consider as you revise your critique essays (of course, you and your teachers might have other ideas and questions to ask in review too!):

- Do your readers understand (generally speaking) the text that you are critiquing? Of course, how much your readers understand the essay you are critiquing will depend on how familiar they are with it, and as the writer of the critique, you will probably know and understand the text

better than your readers. But do they understand enough about the text to make heads or tails of the critique?

- Is there too much summary and not enough critique? That is, do the comments you are receiving from your readers suggest that they do fully understand the article you are critiquing, but they are not clear on the point you are trying to make with your critique? Have you considered where you are including summary information in different parts of your essay?

- Do your readers understand the main point you are trying to make in your criteria? Have you provided some information and explanation about your criteria in the beginning part of your essay?

- Do your readers seem to agree with you that your criteria are appropriate for whatever it is you are critiquing? Do they have suggestions that might help clarify your criteria? Do your readers have suggestions about different or additional criteria?

- Are you quoting and paraphrasing the text you are critiquing effectively? Are there places where your readers have indicated they need more information from the critiqued text? Are there places where your readers think you might be relying too heavily on quotes or paraphrases from the critiqued text and wish they could read more about your opinion?

- As your readers understand the article you are critiquing and the points you are making about it, do you think you have created any interest in your readers in actually reading the article themselves?

A Student Example: "A Critique of 'Self-Report of ADHD Symptoms in University Students" by Ashley Nelson

The assignment for this student was similar to the one described earlier in this chapter, to write a brief critique essay about an important piece of research. Ashley's topic was on the use (and misuse) of drugs to treat attention deficit disorders in adult-aged patients. Ashley's essay begins with an introduction that explains how this exercise fits into her overall research project and a brief summary of the article she is critiquing. But most of her essay focuses on her critique of the article.

A Critique of "Self-Report of ADHD Symptoms in University Students: Cross-Gender and Cross-National Prevalence," by George J. DuPaul, Elizabeth A. Schaughency, Lisa L. Weyandt, Gail Tripp, Jeff Kiesner, Kenji Ota, and Heidy Stanish

While researching my topic, I came across many article that were interesting and that I thought could be useful for me with my research topic. When I read "Self-Report of ADHD Symptoms in University Students: Cross-Gender and Cross-National Prevalence," by George J. DuPaul et al, I knew it would be a good article to critique, too.

The article explains the symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and describes an experiment with university students in the United States, New Zealand, and Italy. 1,209 students took two different self-reported surveys. The goal of the survey was to examine the percentage of students who have ADHD symptoms, if symptoms vary between gender and country, and also to find out if symptom patterns agree with the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). The DSM creates the criteria to diagnose ADHD in young children. Most of the research on ADHD has been conducted with young children; therefore understanding the symptoms in college students has not been widely studied (370).

The results showed that gender was not a big factor in the United States. However, in Italy and New Zealand women had about a ten percent increase in the hyperactive-impulsive category. The results also proved that using the age adjusted diagnostic criteria, compared to the DSM, more college students reported having either one symptom or both.

I think this article is good for several reasons. DuPaul and his colleagues explain what ADHD is and why it is important for college

students to be diagnosed with the right criteria. The authors are also clearly experts in their fields. I also liked this article because the authors provide very good details about the results of their study.

DuPaul et al explain that ADHD "is characterized by developmentally inappropriate levels of inattention and impulsivity, and motor activity" (370). ADHD begins usually in early childhood. If a child is not treated for the disease, the symptoms will still appear in adulthood. These factors lead to "university students being at a higher risk for academic impairment and underachievement relative to their counterparts without ADHD" (370). Despite the risks to college students, according to DuPaul et al, most of the research on ADHD has focused on children, which is one of the motivations for this study in the first place.

The authors of this article were clearly qualified to conduct this study, too. Most of the researchers are college professors in psychology departments around the country and around the world. Further, most of the researchers specialize in issues having to do with ADHD (370). I think the authors' qualifications show that they are all motivated and dedicated to help people with this disease. This experience and dedication makes me believe that these writers conducted a credible study.

I also like this article because the authors do a good job of explaining their research and the results. They provide lots of information about the results throughout the article, and they also provide a number of useful tables, too. The authors believe that the DSM's standards of criteria for what counts as ADHD are wrong for young adults because it was created for children. So the researchers constructed a 24 item survey called the Young Adult Rating Scale that was based on traditional ADHD symptoms and on symptoms that would appear in college-aged young people (372).

The researchers point out that there were a variety of limitations with their study. For example, the students who participated in the survey were only from five different universities. In addition, the students were not asked any personal questions that could have effected the outcome of the survey (378). However, DuPaul and his colleagues believe that this study helps to pave the way for future students which "would provide a better understanding of the age-related changes associated with ADHD symptoms and the relevance of

these changes to diagnostic criteria for ADHD in university students and other adults" (378).

I think that "Self-Report of ADHD Symptoms in University Students" is an informative and interesting article, one I would certainly recommend to anyone interested in learning more about ADHD in young adults. DuPaul and his colleagues explained and interpreted the results of their survey very effectively.

Work Cited:

DuPaul, George; Elizabeth A. Schaughency, Lisa L. Weyandt, Gail Tripp, Jeff Kiesner, Kenji Ota, and Heidy Stanish. "Self-Report of ADHD Symptoms in University Students: Cross-Gender and Cross-National Prevalence." Journal of Learning Disabilities. 34.4 (July/August 2001). 370-379.

Chapter Eight
The Antithesis Exercise

- Revisiting the Working (and inevitably changing) Thesis
- Why Write an Antithesis Essay?
- Generating Antithetical Points in Five Easy Steps
- Finding Antithetical Points on the Internet
- Strategies for Answering Antithetical Arguments
- But You Still Can't Convince Everyone...
- Assignment: Writing the Antithesis Essay
    * Questions to consider as you write your first draft
    * Revision and Review
    * "A Student Example: "Are Casinos Good for Las Vegas? Defending Legalized Gambling," by Kerry Oaks

If you are coming to this chapter after working through some of the earlier exercises in this part of the book, you might find yourself quite attached to your topic and your working thesis. Perhaps you are so attached and focused on your topic that you have a hard time imagining why anyone would disagree with you.

This attachment is certainly understandable. After you have done so much hunting in the library and on the Internet and thinking about your working thesis, you might have a hard time imaging how anyone could possibly disagree with your position, or why they would want to.

But it is important to remember that not all of your potential readers are going to automatically agree with you. If your topic or take on an issue is particularly controversial, you might have to work hard at convincing almost all of your readers about the validity of your argument.

The process of considering opposing viewpoints is the goal of this exercise, the Antithesis essay. Think about this exercise as a way of exploring the variety of different and opposing views to the main argument you are trying to make with your research project.

Revisiting the working (and inevitably changing) thesis

Chapter Five, "The Working Thesis Exercise," describes the process of developing a working thesis. Here is a quick review of the characteristics of a good thesis:

- **A thesis advocates a specific and debatable issue.**

- **A thesis can either be directly stated (as is often the case in academic writing) or implied.**

- **A thesis is NOT a statement of fact, a series of questions, or a summary of events.**

- **A thesis answers the two most basic reader questions "What's your point?" and "Why should I care?"**

While it is important that you start your research project with a working thesis that is as clear as you can possibly make it, it is also important to remember that **your working thesis is temporary and it will inevitably change as you learn more about your topic and as you conduct more research.**

Here are examples of some working theses:

- While some computer hackers are harmless, most of them commit serious computer crimes and represent a serious Internet security problem.

- The international community should enact strict conservation measures to preserve fisheries and save endangered fish species around the world.

- *The Great Gatsby's* depiction of the connection between material goods and the American dream is still relevant today.

Chances are, if you started off with a working thesis similar to one of these, your current working thesis has changed a bit. For example, let's consider the working thesis "While some computer hackers are harmless, most of them commit serious computer crimes and represent a serious Internet security problem." While the researcher may have begun with this thesis in mind, perhaps she changed it slightly, based on interactions with other students, her instructor, and her research.

Suppose she discovered journal articles and Web sites that suggested that, while many computer hackers are dangerous, many are also helpful in preventing computer crimes. She might be inclined then to shift her emphasis slightly, perhaps to a working thesis like, "While many hackers commit serious computer crimes and represent a serious Internet security problem, they can also help law enforcement officials to solve and prevent crime." This change is the same topic as the original working thesis (both are still about hackers and computer crime, after all), but it does suggest a different emphasis, from "hackers as threat and problem" to "hackers as potentially helpful."

Of course, these changes in the working thesis are not the only changes that were possible. The original working thesis could have just as easily stayed the same as it was at the beginning of the process or research. Further, just because the emphasis of the working thesis may be in the process of changing doesn't mean that other related points won't find their way into the research project when it is

put together. While this research writer might change her emphasis to write about "good" hackers as crime solvers, she still would probably need to discuss the fact that there are "bad" hackers who commit crimes.

The point here is simple: **your working thesis is likely to change in small and even large ways based on the research you do, and that's good.** Changing the way you think about your research topic and your working thesis is one of the main ways the process of research writing becomes educational, interesting, and even kind of fun.

Exercise 8.1

- Either as a short writing exercise or with a group of your peers, consider the evolution of your working thesis. Where did it start out and how has it changed to what it is now? What sparked these changes in your working thesis and your point of view on your topic? If your working thesis has not changed (yet), why do you think this is the case?

Why Write an Antithesis Essay?

One of the key tests of a working thesis is the presence of logical points of disagreement. There's not much point in researching and writing about how "computer crime is bad" or "fisheries are important" or similar broad arguments because everyone more or less would agree with these assertions. Generating an antithesis essay will help you:

- **test how "debatable" your working thesis actually is.** If you are able to arrive at and write about the ways in which readers might disagree with your working thesis, then chances are, your working thesis is one that readers need to be persuaded about and need evidence to prove.

- **consider ways of addressing the anticipated objections to your thesis**. There's nothing wrong with reasonable readers disagreeing with your point of view on a topic, but if you hope to persuade at least some of them with your research, you will also need to satisfy the objections some of these readers might have.

- **revise your working thesis into a stronger position**. If you're having a hard time coming up with any opposition to your working thesis, you probably have to do more work on shaping and forming your working thesis into a more arguable position.

Generating Antithetical Points in Five Easy Steps

Generating potential objections to your working thesis—the points you can use to develop your antithesis essay—is a simple process. In fact, if your working

thesis is on a controversial topic and you've already done a fair amount of research, you might need very little help generating antithetical points. If you are doing research on gun control, you have undoubtedly found credible research on both sides of the issue, evidence that probably supports or rejects your working thesis.

In addition to those points that seem straight-forward and obvious to you already, consider these five basic steps for generating ideas to consider your antithesis: have a working thesis, think about opposing viewpoints, think about the alternatives, and imagine hostile audiences. Once you have generated some plausible antithetical arguments, you can consider different ways to counter these positions. I offer some ideas on how to do that in the section "Strategies for Answering Antithetical Arguments."

- **Step 1: Have a working thesis you have begun researching and thinking about.**

If you are coming to this chapter before working through the working thesis essay exercises in chapter five, you might want to take a look at that chapter now.

You also need to have at least some preliminary research and thinking about your working thesis done before you consider the antithesis. This research is likely to turn up evidence that will suggest more clearly what the arguments against your working thesis might actually be.

- **Step 2: Consider the direct opposite of your working thesis.** Assuming you do have a working thesis that you've begun to research and think about, the next step in generating ideas for a working thesis is to consider the opposite point of view. Sometimes, this can be as simple as changing the verb or modifying term from positive to negative (or vice-versa). Consider these working theses and their opposites:

Working Thesis	**The Opposite**
Drug companies ***should*** be allowed to advertise prescription drugs on TV.	Drug companies ***should not*** be allowed to advertise prescription drugs on TV.
The international community ***should not*** enact strict conservation measures to preserve fisheries.	The international community ***should*** enact strict conservation measures to preserve fisheries.

This sort of simple change of qualifiers can also be useful in exposing weak working theses because, generally speaking, the opposite of positions that everyone simply accepts as true are ones that everyone accepts as false. If you were to change the qualifying terms in the weak working theses "Drunk driving is bad" or "Teen violence is bad" to their opposites, you end up with theses for positions that are difficult to hold. After all, just as most people in modern

America need little convincing that drunk driving or teen violence are "bad" things, few credible people could argue that drunk driving or teen violence are "good" things.

Usually, considering the opposite of a working thesis is more complex than simply changing the verb or modifying term from positive to negative (or vice-versa). For example:

Working Thesis	**The Opposite(s)**
While many hackers commit serious computer crimes and represent a serious Internet security problem, they can also help law enforcement officials to solve and prevent crime.	Computer hackers do not represent a serious threat or Internet security problem. There is little hackers can do to help law enforcement officials solve and prevent computer crime.

Both opposites are examples that counter the working thesis, but each takes a slightly different emphasis. The first one questions the first premise of the working thesis about the "threat" of computer hackers in the first place. The second takes the opposite view of the second premise.

- **Step 3: Ask "why" about possible antithetical arguments.** Of course, these examples of creating oppositions with simple changes demand more explanation than the simple opposite. You need to dig further than that by asking and then answering-- the question of *why*. For example:

> *Why* should drug companies not be allowed to advertise prescription drugs? Because…
>
> - The high cost of television advertising needlessly drives up the costs of prescriptions.
> - Television commercials too frequently provide confusing or misleading information about the drugs.
> - The advertisements too frequently contradict and confuse the advice that doctors give to their patients.
>
> *Why* should the international community enact strict conservation measures to preserve fisheries? Because…
>
> - Without international cooperation, many different kinds of fish will become instinct in the coming decades.
> - Preventing over-fishing now will preserve fish populations for the future.

- Unchecked commercial fishing causes pollution and other damage to the oceans' ecosystems.

- **Step 4: Examine alternatives to your working thesis.** For example, consider the working thesis "Drug companies should not be allowed to advertise prescription drugs on television because the commercials too often contradict and confuse the advice that doctors give their patients." This working thesis assumes that drug ads are an important cause of problems between doctors and patients. However, someone could logically argue that there are other more important causes of bad communication between doctors and patients. For example, the number of patients doctors see each day and the shortness of each visit certainly causes communication problems. The billing and bureaucracy of insurance companies also often complicates doctor/patient communication.

Now, unlike the direct opposite of your working thesis, the alternatives do not necessarily completely invalidate your working thesis. There's no reason why a reader couldn't believe that *both* drug advertisements on television *and* the bureaucracy of the insurance companies are the cause of bad doctor/patient communication. But it is important to consider the alternatives within your research project in order to convince your readers that the position that you are advocating in your working thesis is more accurate (see especially the "Weighing Your Position Against the Opposition" strategy on page xx for answering these sorts of antithetical arguments.

- **Step 5: Imagine hostile audiences.** Whenever you are trying to develop a clearer understanding of the antithesis of your working thesis, you need to think about the kinds of audiences who would disagree with you. By thinking about the opposites and alternatives to your working thesis, you are already starting to do this because the opposites and the alternatives are what a hostile audience might think.

Sometimes, potential readers are hostile to a particular working thesis because of ideals, values, or affiliations they hold that are at odds with the point being advocated by the working thesis. For example, people who identify themselves as being "pro-choice" on the issue of abortion would certainly be hostile to an argument for laws that restrict access to abortion; people who identify themselves as being "pro-life" on the issue of abortion would certainly be hostile to an argument for laws that provide access to abortion.

At other times, audiences are hostile to the arguments of a working thesis because of more crass and transparent reasons. For example, the pharmaceutical industry disagrees with the premise of the working thesis "Drug companies should not be allowed to advertise prescription drugs on TV" because they stand to lose billions of dollars in lost sales. Advertising companies and television broadcasters would also be against this working thesis because they too would lose money. You can probably easily imagine some potential hostile audience members who have similarly selfish reasons to oppose your point of view.

Of course, some audiences will oppose your working thesis based on a different interpretation of the evidence and research. This sort of difference of opinion is probably most common with research projects that are focused on more abstract and less definitive subjects. A reader might disagree with a thesis like "*The Great Gatsby's* depiction of the connection between material goods and the American dream is still relevant today" based on differences about how the book depicts "the American dream," or about whether or not the novel is still relevant, and so forth.

But there are also different opinions about evidence for topics that you might think would have potentially more concrete "right" and "wrong" interpretations. Different researchers and scholars can look at the same evidence about a subject like conservation of fisheries and arrive at very different conclusions. Some might believe that the evidence indicates that conservation is not necessary and would not be effective, while other researchers and scholars might believe the completely opposite position.

Regardless of the reasons why your audience might be hostile to the argument you are making with your working thesis, it is helpful to try to imagine your audience as clearly as you can. What sort of people are they? What other interests or biases might they have? Are there other political or social factors that you think are influencing their point of view? If you want to persuade at least some members of this hostile audience that your point of view and your interpretation of the research is correct, you need to know as much about your hostile audience as you possibly can. Of course, you'll never be able to know *everything* about your hostile audience, and you certainly won't be able to persuade all of them about your point. But the more you know, the better chance you have of convincing at least some of them.

Exercise 8.2

- Working through these steps, try to sketch out in more detail the antithetical points to your working thesis. Consider the opposites and the alternatives to your working thesis.
- Try to imagine as clearly as you can potentially hostile readers. Make a list of readers that might be hostile to your thesis and note the reasons for their hostility.

Finding Antithetical Points on the Internet

The best (and worst!) thing about the Internet is that almost anyone can say almost anything. This makes the Internet fertile territory for finding out what the opposition thinks about the position you are taking in your working thesis.

A search of the Web on almost any topic will point you to web sites that take a wide variety of stances on that topic. When you do a search for "computer hackers" or "computer crime" on the Web, you are just as likely to find links to law enforcement agencies and articles on Internet security as you are to find links to sites that argue computer hackers are good, or even instructions on how to commit various computer crimes.

Usenet newsgroups are also excellent places to find antithetical positions. To search newsgroups, you can browse through the list of the newsgroups that you have access to at your university and read through the ones that have titles related to your topic. You can also search newsgroups using the commercial service "Google Groups," which is at <http://groups.google.com>.

☛ **Hyperlink:** For advice on conducting effective Internet searches and using newsgroups, see Chapter Two, "Understanding and Using the Library and the Internet for Research" and the section called "Finding Research on the Internet: An Overview."

Keep in mind that information you find on the Internet always has to be carefully considered. This is particularly true with newsgroups, which have much more in common with forums like talk radio or "letters to the editor" in the newspaper than they do with academic research. This doesn't mean this information is automatically unreliable, but you should be cautious about the extent to which you can or should trust the validity of anything you find on the Internet.

Strategies for Answering Antithetical Arguments

It might not seem logical, but directly acknowledging and addressing positions that are different from the one you are holding in your research project can actually make your position stronger. When you take on the antithesis in your research project, it shows you have thought carefully about the issue at hand and you acknowledge that there is no clear and easy "right" answer.

There are many different ways you might incorporate the antithesis into your research project to make your own thesis stronger and to address the concerns of those readers who might oppose your point of view. For now, focus on three basic strategies: directly refuting your opposition, weighing your position against the opposition, and making concessions.

- **Directly Refuting Your Opposition.** Perhaps the most obvious approach, one way to address those potential readers who might raise objections to your arguments is to simply refute their objections with better evidence and reasoning. To answer the argument that the international community should not enact measures to preserve fisheries, demonstrate with your evidence that it has indeed been effective. Of course, this is an example of yet another reason why it is so important to have good research that supports your position: when the

body of evidence and research is on your side, it is usually a lot easier to make a strong point.

Answering antithetical arguments with the research that supports your point of view is also an example of where you as a researcher might need to provide a more detailed evaluation of your evidence. The sort of questions you should answer about your own research— who wrote it, where was it published, when was it published, etc.— are important to raise in countering antithetical arguments that you think come from suspicious sources. For example, chances are that an article about the problems of more strict drunk driving laws that appears in a trade journal for the restaurant industry is going to betray a self-interested bias.

☛ **Hyperlink:** To review the process for evaluating the quality of your research, see Chapter One, "Thinking Critically About Research," particularly the section called "Evaluating the quality and credibility of your research."

- **Weighing Your Position Against the Opposition.** Readers who oppose the argument you are trying to support with your research might do so because they value or "weigh" the implications of your working thesis differently than you do. Those opposed to a working thesis like "Drug companies should not be allowed to advertise prescription drugs on TV" might think this because they think the advantages of advertising drugs on television—increased sales for pharmaceutical companies, revenue for advertising agencies and television stations, and so forth—are more significant than the disadvantages of advertising drugs on television. Those who would argue against the working thesis "Tougher gun control laws would be of little help in the fight against teen violence" probably think that the advantage of having fewer guns available to teenagers to use for violence is less important than the disadvantageous effects stronger gun control laws might have on lawful gun owners.

Besides recognizing and acknowledging the different ways of comparing the advantages and disadvantages suggested by your working thesis, the best way of answering these antithetical arguments in your own writing is to clearly explain how you weigh and compare the evidence. In other words, even if the readers who oppose your point of view are in some ways correct, the advantages you advocate in your working thesis are much more significant than the disadvantages.

For example, a writer might argue that any of the loss of profit to pharmaceutical companies, advertising agencies, and television stations would be a small price to pay for the advantages of banning prescription drug TV ads. A writer with a working thesis like "Tougher gun control laws would be of little help in the fight against teen violence" might have to defend his arguments against a hostile audience by suggesting that in the long-run, the costs of infringing the right to bear arms and our other liberties would far outweigh the few instances of teen violence that might be stopped with stronger gun control laws.

- **Making Concessions.** In the course of researching and thinking about the antithesis to your working thesis and its potentially hostile audiences, it may become clear to you that these opposing views have a point. When this is the case, you may want to consider revising your working thesis or your approach to your research to make some concessions to these antithetical arguments.

Sometimes, student researchers "make concessions" to the point of changing sides on their working thesis—that is, in the process of researching, writing, and thinking about their topic, a research moves from arguing a working thesis like "Most computer hackers are criminals and represent a great risk to Internet security" to one like "Most computer hackers are merely curious computer enthusiasts and can help solve problems with Internet security."

This sort of shift in thought about an issue might seem surprising, but it makes perfect sense when you remember the purpose of research in the first place. When we study the evidence on a particular issue, we often realize that our initial and uninformed impression or feelings on an issue were simply wrong. That's the role of research: we put more trust in opinions based on research than in things based on "gut instinct" or feelings.

Usually, most concessions to antithetical perspectives on your working thesis are less dramatic and can be accomplished in a variety of ways. You might want to employ some qualifying terms to "hedge" a bit. For example, the working thesis "Drug companies should **not be allowed** to advertise prescription drugs on TV" might be qualified to "Drug companies should **be closely regulated** about what they are allowed to advertise in TV." The working thesis "The international community should enact **strict** conservation measures to preserve fisheries and **save** endangered fish species around the world" might be changed to "The international community should enact **stronger** conservation measures to preserve fisheries and **help** endangered fish species around the world." Both of these are still strong working theses, but they also acknowledge the sort of objections the opposition might have to the original working thesis.

But be careful in using qualifying terms! An over-qualified working thesis can be just as bad as a working thesis about something that everyone accepts as true: it can become so watered-down as to not have any real significance anymore. For example, theses like "Drug company television advertising is sometimes bad and sometimes good for patients" and "While there are good reasons for enacting stronger conversation measures for protecting endangered fish species, there are also good reasons to not make new conservation laws" are both over-qualified to the point of taking no real position at all.

Exercise 8.3

• Once you understand the antithetical arguments to your working thesis, how might you answer them? On a sheet of paper or in a word processing program, create two columns. In the left column, write a brief summary of as many antithetical arguments as you can, arguments you came up with on your own or from Exercise 6.2. In the right column, answer each of the antithetical arguments listed in the left, referring to the strategies noted in this section or other fitting approaches.

But You Still Can't Convince Everyone…

If you are using research to convince an audience about something, then you must understand the opposite side of the argument you are trying to make. That means you need to include antithetical positions in your on-going research, you should think about the opposites and alternatives to the point you are making with your working thesis, you have to imagine your hostile audience as clearly as possible, and you should employ different strategies to answer your hostile audiences' objections.

But even after all this, you still can't convince everyone that you're "right." You probably already know this. We have all been in conversations with friends or family members where, as certain as we were that we were right about something and as hard as we tried to prove we were right, our friends or family were simply unwilling to budge from their positions. When we find ourselves in these sorts of deadlocks, we often try to smooth over the dispute with phrases like "You're entitled to your opinion" or "We will have to agree to disagree" and then we change the subject. In polite conversation, this is a good strategy to avoid a fight. But in academic contexts, these deadlocks can be frustrating and difficult to negotiate.

A couple of thousand years ago, the Greek philosopher and rhetorician Aristotle said that all of us respond to arguments based on three basic characteristics or appeals: *logos* or logic, *pathos* or emotional character, and *ethos,* the writer's or speaker's perceived character. Academic writing tends to rely most heavily on *logos* and *ethos* because academics tend to highly value arguments based on logical research and arguments that come from writers with strong "character-building" qualifications—things like education, experience, previous publications, and the like. But it's important to remember that *pathos* is always there, and particularly strong emotions or feelings on a subject can obscure the best research.

Most academic readers have respect for writers when they successfully argue for positions that they might not necessarily agree with. Along these lines, most college writing instructors can certainly respect and give a positive evaluation to

a piece of writing they don't completely agree with as long as it uses sound logic and evidence to support its points. However, all readers—students, instructors, and everyone else—come to your research project with various preconceptions about the point you are trying to make. Some of them will already agree with you and won't need much convincing. Some of them will never *completely* agree with you, but will be open to your argument to a point. And some of your readers, because of the nature of the point you are trying to make and their own feelings and thoughts on the matter, will never agree with you, no matter what research evidence you present or what arguments you make. So, while you need to consider the antithetical arguments to your thesis in your research project to convince as many members of your audience as possible that the point you are trying to make is correct, you should remember that you will likely not convince all of your readers all of the time.

Assignment: Writing the Antithesis Essay

Based on the most current and most recently revised version of your working thesis, write a brief essay where you identify, explain, and answer the antithesis to your position. Keep in mind that the main goal of this essay is to think about an audience of readers who might not agree with you and to answer at least some of the questions and complaints they might have about your research project. Be sure to include evidence about both the antithesis and your working thesis, and be sure to answer the objections hostile readers might have.

Questions to consider as you write your first draft

- Have you revisited your working thesis? Based on the research and writing you have done up to this point, how has your working thesis changed?

- Have you done enough research on the antithetical position to have a clear understanding of the objections? (You might want to review the work you've done with your annotated bibliography at this point). What does this research suggest about the opposition's points and your points?

- What sort of brainstorming have you done in considering the antithesis? Have you thought about the "opposite" of your thesis and the reasons why someone might hold that point of view? Have you considered the "alternatives" to your working thesis and why someone might find one or more of these alternative viewpoints more persuasive than your points?

- Have you clearly imagined and considered what your "hostile audience" is like? What sorts of people do you think would object to your working thesis? What kind of motivations would hostile audiences have to disagree with you?

- In considering the objections to your working thesis, do you believe that the evidence is on your side and you can refute hostile audiences' objections directly with the research you have done?

- When you compare the points raised by the antithesis to the points of your working thesis, do you think that the advantages and values of your working thesis outweigh those of the antithesis?

- Are there some concessions that you've made to your working thesis based on the points raised by the antithetical point of view? How have you incorporated these concessions into your revised working thesis?

Revision and Review
During the peer review process, you should encourage your readers to review your rough draft with the same sort of skeptical view that a hostile audience is likely to take toward your points. If your readers already disagree with you, this won't be difficult. But if they more or less agree with the argument you are trying to make with your research, ask them to imagine for a moment what a hostile reader might think as they examine your essay. You might even want to help them with this a bit by describing for your reviewers the hostile audience you are imagining.

☛ **Hyperlink:** For guidelines and tips for working with your classmates in peer review sessions, see chapter four "How To Collaborate and Write With Others," particularly the section "Peer Review as Collaboration."

- Do your readers clearly understand the antithetical positions you are focusing on in your essay? Do they think that the antithetical positions you are focusing on in your essay are the most important ones? Do they believe you have done enough research on the antithetical positions to adequately discuss them in your essay?

- What other objections to the argument you are trying to make with your working thesis do your readers have? In other words, have they thought of antithetical arguments that you haven't considered in your essay?

- Do your readers think that you have clearly answered the antithetical arguments to your working thesis? Do they accept the logic of your arguments? Do they believe incorporating more evidence into the essay would make your answer to the antithetical arguments better?

- Imagining themselves as members of the "hostile audience," do your readers find themselves at least partially persuaded by the answers you have to the antithetical arguments in your essay? Why or why not?

A Student Example: "Are Casinos Good For Las Vegas? Defending Legalized Gambling," by Kerry Oaks

For this assignment, the instructor asked students to write a short essay that addressed a few of the main antithetical arguments to each student's working thesis. Kerry Oaks' research up to this point had focused almost exclusively on the positive aspects of gambling in Las Vegas. "Researching the other side of this argument was an important step for me," Oaks said. "I still think that gambling—particularly in a place like Las Vegas—is good for the economy and everything else. But my research for the antithesis assignment also made me think that maybe casinos should spend more money on trying to prevent some of the problems they're causing."

Are Casinos Good For Las Vegas? Defending Legalized Gambling
Antithesis Essay Assignment

Few places in this country are as exciting as Las Vegas, Nevada, a city known for its "party" atmosphere and legalized gambling. My working thesis, which is "Casinos and legalized gambling have had a positive economic effect on Las Vegas," has explored how and why Las Vegas became such a popular tourist destination. Needless to say, there are a lot critics who disagree with my working thesis. While these antithetical positions are important, I believe that they can be answered.

Some critics say that the economic and employment gains offered by legalized gambling are exaggerated. In an excerpt published on the PBS documentary show *Frontline* web site, John Warren Kindt says the economic benefits of legalized gambling have been exaggerated. While gambling initially leads to more jobs, it ultimately is a bad business investment.

However, the same sort of economic problems that Kindt describes happening in other parts of the country haven't happened in Las Vegas. In fact, Las Vegas remains one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. For example, as Barbara Worcester wrote in her article, "People Flock to Las Vegas for Relocation, Employment," the unemployment rate in Las Vegas in December 1999 was 3.1 percent, which is the lowest

unemployment rate since August 1957, when it was 2 percent. (44).

Another argument is that casinos in the Las Vegas area cause crime, suicide, and murder. According to Jay Tolson's article "Face of the Future?" "Clark County has almost 70 percent of the population of a state that leads the nation in its rates of suicide, high school dropouts, death by firearms, teenage pregnancies, and death from smoking." (52).

Clearly, this is a real problem for the area and for the state, but it cannot all be blamed on the casinos. Frank Fahrenkopf, President of the American Gambling Association, said in an interview with the PBS documentary show *Frontline* that there's nothing about gambling in itself that creates crime and these problems. As Fahrenkopf was quoted on the *Frontline* web site, "Any enterprise that attracts large numbers of people. The crime rate at Orlando went up. It wasn't anything that Mickey and Minnie were doing that caused it, it was just that it was a draw of people to a community."

Even with these negative effects of crime and such, legalized gambling has still greatly improved the lives of people in Las Vegas. As Tolson writes, "there is still a sense that Las Vegas is a place where working people can realize the American Dream" (50) made possible in part by taxes on gambling instead of property or income.

Certainly, Las Vegas has all kinds of problems, but they are the same ones as those associated with any major and rapidly growing city in the United States. But on the whole, I think the benefits of casinos in Las Vegas outweigh the disadvantages of gambling. After all, there wouldn't be much of anything in Las Vegas if it weren't for the casinos that thrive there.

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Chapter Nine
The Categorization and Evaluation Exercise

- Revisiting your Working Thesis
- Why Categorize and Evaluate Evidence?
- Dividing, Conquering, Categorizing: A Few Rules to Follow
- Some Sample Categories
- Charting Your Categories
- Assignment: Writing the Categorization and Evaluation Exercise
  - Questions to consider as you write your first draft
  - Review and Revision
  - A Student Example: "Categorizing My Research on Drug Advertising" by Jeremy Stephens

Revisiting your Working Thesis Again

Before you start working on the categorization and evaluation exercises, you should revisit the progress of your working thesis. In chapter eight, I began the discussion of the antithesis essay by encouraging you to first take a moment to take stock of the current version of your working thesis. It's important to embark on research projects with some sense of where you're going, and the main advantage and goal of a working thesis is it establishes a direction for you to pursue your research.

As I've also said before, **your working thesis will almost inevitably change a bit as you work your way through the process of research writing and the exercises in this book.** You begin in one place with some sense of direction about what you want to research, but when you start gathering and examining your evidence and as you work through the exercises, it's important to be willing and able to change directions. In other words, a working thesis is where you start your research project, but it isn't necessarily where you end your research project.

Exercise 9.1
Either as a short writing exercise or with a group of your peers, consider once again the evolution of your working thesis. Where did it start out and how has it changed to what it is now? What sparked these changes in your working thesis and your point of view on your topic? If your working thesis has not changed yet, why do you think this is the case? If you did revisit your working thesis at the beginning of chapter 8, did the antithesis essay project (also in Chapter 8) make you reconsider your working thesis again? Why or why not?

Why Categorize and Evaluate Evidence?

We divide things into categories in order to make some sense of and interpret all sorts of different things. Stores are arranged according to categories that tend to make sense of what's in them for shoppers—for example, department stores divide their merchandise up into categories like women's clothing, hardware, sporting goods, housewares, and so forth.

We also expect things to be categorized in a descriptive and sensible way. Department stores tend to arrange things by what you might use them for and who might use them: kitchen things are in one part of the store, sheets in another, women's clothing in one part, and men's clothing in still another part. These categories aren't the only way the department store owners could arrange things. They could arrange things by color—all of the blue things in one part of the store (blue cookware, blue sheets, blue shirts, etc.), all of the white things in another part of the store, and so forth. While that might make for a visually interesting store, it would be very difficult for customers to find anything in such an arrangement.

Categorizing your research will:

- Help you (and eventually your readers) make better sense of what sort of evidence you have.

- Enable you to compare and contrast different pieces of evidence and to evaluate your research, which is an essential step in the process of research writing.

- Give you get a clearer sense of the evidence that you have and the evidence you are lacking.

Dividing, Conquering, Categorizing: A Few Rules to Follow

While there are no formal rules for categorizing your research, there are a few guidelines that you need to consider as you begin to categorize your research for the purposes of writing about and evaluating it.

- **You have to have a significant body of research to categorize in the first place.** Hopefully, you have started compiling an annotated bibliography (see chapter six) and you have been working on adding to your annotated bibliography as you have progressed through the other exercises and projects in *The Process of Research Writing* by gathering materials from the library, the Internet, interviews, and so forth. If you haven't done these things yet, you probably aren't ready for the categorization and evaluation essay exercise.

- **Each piece of research has to fit into a category.** No matter how you decide to categorize your research, be sure that all of it can be put into at least one category.

As you try to meet this guideline, be careful to follow the next one as well:

- **As much as possible, each category should have at least two pieces of research.** Avoid having categories with just one item. One item categories don't allow you to make comparisons or generalizations about how things might be similar; they only demonstrate how things are different, which is only one of the functions of categorizing your research. Also, if you allow yourself one item categories, it can often be a little too tempting to make too many one item categories.

If you get completely stuck with what categories to put some of your evidence in, you can create a "miscellaneous" category, though I would encourage you to avoid it if you can. Having categories that are more specific than "miscellaneous" will help you in writing about these categories and what they mean for your research.

- **Categories should be as distinct and different from each other as possible.** If there is no difference between the items that you put in the category "from newspapers" and those from the category "from nonacademic sources," then put all of the sources from both categories into only one category.

- **Last but not least, categories should make sense and tell you and potential readers about what your think of your evidence.** It probably wouldn't make much sense and wouldn't be very meaningful to have a category consisting of articles that appeared on page four of newspapers, or a category consisting of articles that were published in journals with titles that begin with the letter "R."

Sometimes, categories that might seem to be illogical actually make sense once they are explained. It might not seem to make much sense for a writer to

categorize his evidence according to the gender of the authors. But if the writer is trying to make a point about how men and women hold different attitudes about the topic of the research, it might make quite a bit of sense to have at least one category that examines the gender of the source.

Some Sample Categories

Beyond the few general rules I just described, categorizing things can be a very idiosyncratic and specific activity. But to get you started in coming up with categories of your own, I'd like to suggest a few ways to categorize your research that should be applicable for most research projects:

Categories of the Author

- "Academic" or scholarly writer
- Non-expert writer (a magazine writer or writers with no stated credentials, for example)
- "Non-writers" (that is, pieces of evidence where no author is named)

Categories of Source

- Primary Sources
- Secondary Sources
  (See the discussion in chapter one on the differences between primary and secondary sources)
- Academic journal or book
- Non-academic or popular press magazine or book
- Newspapers
- Internet-based resources
- Interviews (or other primary research you may have conducted)

Other Potentially Useful Categories

- Date of publication—either a particular year, before or after a particular event, etc. For example, if your working thesis was about gun control and teen violence, it might be significant to compare the research you have that was published before the 1999 Columbine High School shootings to the research that was published after the shootings.
- Research that generally supports your working thesis
- Research that generally supports antithetical arguments to your working thesis (see chapter eight)

Of course, not all of these sample categories will work equally well for all research projects, and it is possible that the categories you will find most useful for this exercise are ones that are very specific to your own research project.

Exercise 7.2
Which of the previous sample categories seem to be most potentially useful for your research project? What other ideas do you have for other categories on your research? Working alone or in small groups, consider as many categories for your evidence as possible.

Charting Your Categories

Once you have some ideas about what categories you think will be useful for dividing your evidence, you have to figure out how you want to do it. I recommend you create a table or chart, either by taking advantage of the table function of your word processor, using a spreadsheet software, or just good old-fashioned paper and pen or pencil. Write your categories across the top and some basic citation information-- author, title, publication, etc.-- about each piece of your evidence along the left side of the table. In each "cell" of the table or chart created by this arrangement, indicate if the article falls into that category and make any other notation that you think will help explain how the article fits into that category.

The example below is part of a categorization chart that explores the topic of computer crime and computer hacking. The writer's current working thesis at this stage of the project was "While many hackers commit serious computer crimes and represent a serious Internet security problem, they can also help law enforcement officials to solve and prevent crime." The left-hand column lists the title of the articles that the writer is categorizing, while the categories themselves are listed across the top row.

There are other possibilities for categories not included here of course, and I would encourage you to come up with as many categories as you can for this step in the process of writing a categorization essay. There are ten different pieces of evidence being categorized here. You could do more or less, though again, though for this exercise to be effective, you should chart at least five or six pieces of evidence.

As you can also see here, most of the entries include at least a few extra notes to explain why they are in different categories. That's okay, and these notes might be helpful to the writer later on when he puts together his categorization and evaluation essay.

A Categorization Chart Example

Evidence:	**Web-based Sources**	**Academic /Trade Sources**	**Gov. Doc Sources**	**Popular Sources**	**Hackers always bad**	**Hackers sometimes good**	**Enforce-ment/ fighting crime**
Brenner, Susan cybercrimes.net, 01	XX	XX (Law school)			XX (Legal issues/laws against)		XX (courts, laws, etc.)
Cameron, Al "Fighting Internet Freud" *Business Credit,* 02		XX (Trade Pub)			XX (Money & business)		XX (cops, company software)
"Cybercrime.gov" US. Gov., 02	XX		XX (Dept. of Justice)		XX (terrorism, fraud)		XX (FBI, etc.)
"Cybercrime soars" *Info Management Jrnl,* 02		XX (Trade pub)			XX		
Markoff, John. "New Center..." *NYT,* 10/99				XX	XX (business)		XX (private business)
Neighly, Patrick "Meet the hackers" *America's Network,* 00		XX (??)				XX ("hanging out" with hackers)	
Palmer, CC. "Ethical Hacking" *IBM Sys. J,* 01		XX (Trade pub)				XX (can help with business)	XX (hackers fighting crime)
Sauer, Geoffrey "Hackers, Order, Control" *Bad Subjects* 2/96		XX (Culture studies)				XX (the "culture" of hacking)	
Speer, David "Redefining Borders:" *C, L & S C,* 00		XX (Crimin-ology)			XX (business but individuals, too)		XX (abstract ideas)
"World Cybercrime..." *CNN,* 10/02	XX (CNN web site)			XX	XX (business, terrorism)		XX (inter-national effort)

Presumably, you are not familiar with the specifics about these pieces of evidence; but for the purposes of this example, it's more important that you understand the categories and the process the writer must have gone through to come up with this chart. The number of observations that can be made from a chart like this could be explored in more detail in a categorization and evaluation essay. You'll use your own chart to complete such an essay later in this chapter.

- While the reasons for the articles for being put into the category "Hackers always bad" are similar (fear of damage to business and the potential for terrorism), the reasons why the articles were put into the category "Hackers sometimes good" vary. The Palmer essay suggests that hackers might be beneficial (when they work "ethically," as the title says) in order to help protect business from the attacks of "bad" hackers. While both the Neighly and Sauer articles make distinctions between "good" and "bad" hackers, these essays are more focused on hackers as people than as criminals.

All of this suggests that if the writer wanted to continue exploring this idea of "hacking," it might be wise for the researcher to carefully consider how hacking is discussed. For example, how does each article define "hacking?" How does each article assess the potential threat or potential benefit of computer hacking?

- With the possible exception of the Neighly essay, the three essays that describe computer hacking as something that is sometimes good are from academic or "trade" publications. The writer put question marks in his chart in the "Academic/Trade Sources" category next to the Neighly essay because it was a difficult to categorize source that seemed to fit best here. . Interestingly enough, one of the "hackers sometimes good" publication was produced by the computer company IBM. The professional and trade publications that suggest computer hacking is always bad focus on the issues of the law, law enforcement, or criminology.

- Almost all of the evidence included here is concerned with enforcing the laws and fighting against cybercrime, but there seems to be little consensus as to how to do it. Some of the resources are advocating for tougher U.S. federal laws; one is advocating international action; and some are suggesting that enforcement must come mainly from the Internet business community.

- There is only one government publication listed on this categorization chart, which suggests that either the U.S. government has not published many documents on computer crime and hacking, or the researcher ought to consider conducting some more research that focuses on government documents.

The same can be said in some ways about Web-based resources: all of the Web-based research portrays computer hacking as an unlawful and criminal act. Considering the fact that the World Wide Web is a space with many divergent views (especially about topics like computer crime and computer hacking), it seems logical that there may be worthwhile to see what other evidence is available on the Web.

This process of charting your categories is one that can go much further than suggested here. For example, perhaps your initial categories have prompted you to consider new ways to categorize your evidence, which might lead to additional relationships between your sources. You might also include more evidence, which again might lead to different observations about your evidence.

Ultimately, you have to write about the results of your categorization in the form of an essay. I will describe this in more detail in the next section of this chapter, but you might want to consider two strategies as you move from the "charting" phase of this exercise to the "drafting" phase:

- **You will have to explain the significance of your different categories and groupings of evidence in your essay for this exercise, perhaps more than you might think.** As the writer, the division of the evidence might make perfect sense to you, but that "sense" often is not as accessible to your readers. This potential of missing your audience is possible with any writing project, but it is something to be especially mindful about with this exercise.

- **Charting of evidence will probably yield many different and interesting points of comparison and evaluation, but you should focus on the points of comparison you think are the *most significant.*** In other words, you probably shouldn't talk about each and every category you chart.

Exercise 9.3

Try creating a categorization chart of your own. Working alone or in small collaborative groups, group your sources according to categories that make sense to you, perhaps the ones you developed in the previous exercise. On a piece of paper or on a computer using a spreadsheet or table-making software, create a chart that looks similar to the one in this section. Do you notice similarities or differences between your evidence you didn't notice before? Are there any short-comings or other imbalances between your categories that might help you better target what you need in any additional research? What other sorts of observations can you make about your research?

Assignment: Writing the Categorization and Evaluation Essay

> Write an essay that categorizes the evidence you have up to this point in order to assess the strengths and weakness of various types of evidence, to draw some conclusions about your evidence and topic, and to take inventory of your research. Be sure to explain the categories you establish for comparing and contrasting your evidence and to make some sort of conclusion based on your criteria.

In this writing exercise you need to be especially careful about understanding your audience. If your main audience for this project is a group of readers who are already familiar with the evidence you will be comparing (because they are classmates that you've been collaborating with all semester, for example) and the purposes of your comparison, then you may not have to provide much summary of the research you are categorizing and evaluating.

On the other hand, if your main audience for this project is not already familiar with your research or the process you've gone through to categorize your evidence, you might have to provide both a detailed explanation of the process you went through to categorize your evidence and a summary of the evidence you are categorizing. When in doubt, you should assume that your readers are not familiar with the process of categorization or the evidence being categorized and evaluated.

Another important part of this writing exercise is focusing in on just a few categories in order to make an overall evaluation of the evidence. **Remember: the goal of categorizing your evidence the way you have here is to make evaluations of your evidence that are interesting to you and potential readers.** In the example discussed in the previous section of this chapter, there are five different "observations" or points that could be the focus of evaluation. While some of these observations could be combined for the purposes of an essay for this project, it would be very difficult for the writer to talk about *all* of these points and still have a focused and clear essay.

Questions to consider as you write your first draft

- Have you revisited your working thesis yet again? Based on the research and the writing that you have done, has it changed since the beginning of your project? Has it changed since chapter four? How?

- Have you gathered enough research to effectively categorize and evaluate it, at least five or six different pieces of evidence (and ideally more)?

- What sorts of categories are you using to "divide and conquer" your evidence? Which of your categories seem unique to your research project? Have you considered some of the categories suggested in the "Some Sample Categories" section of this chapter?

- Have you followed the guidelines discussed in the "Dividing, Conquering, and Categorizing: A Few Rules to Follow" section of this chapter? Can you fit all of your research into at least one of your categories? Have you avoided single item categories or "miscellaneous" categories? Is there a clear difference between your categories? Do your categories help you and your potential readers make sense of the evidence you are comparing?

- Did you chart your categories using a word processor's table function, a spread sheet, or paper and pen/pencil as suggested in the "Charting Your Categories" section? Would additional evidence or categories make your comparisons more useful? If you didn't create a chart similar to the example in this chapter, how did you decide to categorize your research in order to evaluate it?

- What observations did you make about your categorization chart? Were there relationships, comparisons, contrasts, or other connections between evidence and categories that you were expecting? Were there ones you weren't? Did your categorization chart give you a better sense of the kinds of evidence you have? Did you get a sense of the kinds of evidence that you don't have and perhaps need to research further?

- What sort of evaluations can you make about your evidence based on these categorizations? Do you notice any patterns within categories or between different categories? Did you find yourself making evaluative statements similar to the examples at the end of the "Charting Your Categories" section of this chapter?

- What do you think your audience will see as the one or two most important points of evaluation that you've learned from categorizing your evidence?

Revision and Review

If you made a chart to categorize your evidence as you wrote a draft of your essay, you might want to share that with your peers in the revision process. They might see something about the relationship between your pieces of evidence that you haven't noted in your essay.

Here are some questions you and your classmates want to consider as you revise your critique essays (of course, you and your teachers might have other ideas and questions to ask in review too!):

- Is the writer's evaluation and comparison of the research clear to readers? Do readers understand the point the writer is trying to make with this categorization and evaluation essay project? What would make this evaluation clearer?

- Is the writer providing sufficient summary and explanation of the research being categorized and evaluated for this group of readers? What

additional information might some readers need to understand the writer's point? Is there too much summary for the writer's intended audience?

- Does the writer explain the categorization process they went through in evaluating their research? Do the categories make sense in understanding the research? As a reader, do you have any other suggestions for ways the writer could categorize their research?

A Student Example: "Categorizing My Research on Drug Advertising" by Jeremy Stephens

For this assignment, Jeremy was required to write an essay similar to the assignment outlined above, to categorize his research and to draw some conclusions about his evidence based on these categories. "This was a hard assignment, and I'm not sure if I did it right," Jeremy wrote in a memo that introduced this project. "It did help me to see more clearly what evidence I had and what I needed."

Categorizing My Research on Drug Advertising

When I started to take a closer look at the different sorts of evidence I had gathered for my research project on the problems of drug advertising on television, I noticed several different trends. To get a better understanding of the evidence, I began by categorizing all of my evidence by the type of media-- books, web sites, articles from academic and professional sources, and articles from more popular sources. From there, I divided the evidence into two additional categories: those that supported my working thesis on limiting drug advertisements and those that did not support my working thesis.

One of the things I noticed is that I had not realized how much evidence I had from trade and professional sources, things that weren't really academic but that weren't from popular sources either. I've decided to focus on these sources and some web site sources too because they have made me think more carefully about my topic.

My working thesis is that drug commercials on television ought to be severely limited because they are misleading and make false or exaggerated claims about the benefits of the drugs. Some of the articles in professional and trade publications disagreed with this thesis. For example, Carol Rados wrote an article called "RX Ads Come of Age," published in *FDA Consumer*, which is a publication of the Food and Drug Administration. Rados wrote "There seems to be little doubt that DTC advertising can help advance the public health by encouraging more people to talk with health care professionals about health problems, particularly undertreated conditions such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol" (22). While Rados does note that there has been a lot of criticism of drug ads on TV, she makes it clear that the benefits actually outweigh the harms of these ads.

However, many of the professional sources agreed with my thesis. For example, Emma Dorrey's brief article in *Chemical and Industry* titled "FDA sends 23 warning letters to drug companies" supported my thesis because it points out that there have been a number of problems with the ads. Dorrey reports that the drug industry claims to work hard at self-regulating and that the companies say the ads educate consumers. However, despite the laws and the efforts of the FDA, there are still a lot of misleading ads:

> One of the problems, according to Barbara Mintzes of the Center for Health Services and Policy Research at the University of British Columbia in Canada, is that the FDA can only regulate after the fact. And "companies do not face any sanctions other than

needing to withdraw the ad if the information is inaccurate or misleading"(6).

I also noted that I had two articles from trade publications that focused on media, publishing, and advertising, both of which supported my working thesis. The first came from the publication *Broadcasting and Cable*, which I accessed via the WilsonSelect database. In the article titled "Relaxed Rules on Drug Ads Find Allies," Bill McConnell reports on a move by the FDA to relax the rules for drug companies to list the side effects of their medications, a move that would help the drug companies.

The second was an editorial by Allan Wolper in *Editor and Publisher* titled "Accepting Drug Ads a Risky Proposition." Wolper tells the story of a controversial cholesterol medication that was being simultaneously criticized and advertised in *The New York Times* in November 2004. As Wolper points out, "pharmaceutical ads present an ethical problem for newspaper sales acceptability departments, which love the revenue the ads bring in but worry that the claims associated with them will hurt the credibility of their news organization" (22). Both of these articles were published in trade journals for the media, which benefits by the money drug companies pay them to advertise their products. However, both of these articles express how these ads can ultimately hurt their credibility, too.

Almost all of the web sites I came across supported my working thesis too. I looked at a lot of different sites, but I rejected any site that did not name the author or who had an author that wasn't familiar to me because I just wasn't sure if they were credible. I also rejected web

sites created by drug companies because of the obvious bias of these sites.

Instead, I focused on web sites maintained by news organizations or other organizations I had heard of and that seemed credible. For example, I came across an article on the Consumer Reports web site called "Free rein for drug ads?" The article, published in February 2003, says that there has been a decrease in the number of drug ads being reviewed by the FDA, and this drop-off of the number of letters sent from the FDA to drug companies about their ads "has raised concerns among some legislators and policy researchers because it leaves potentially false or misleading drug information in the public eye for longer periods."

I also read a transcript of an internet chat with Dr. Jeffery Kahn, who was CNN.com's bioethics columnist. Kahn chatted over the internet with all kinds of different people about drug advertising. Kahn said that he thought drug companies were "overzealous in how they market, leading to misunderstanding and confusion for patients." Judging from the rest of the transcript, it appears that most of the participants agreed with Kahn. One of the things that I thought was interesting about this piece of evidence was how the source made it more credible. If it had just been a chat session somewhere out on the internet, it wouldn't have been as good of a source.

Categorizing my evidence was a helpful exercise for me. I knew that I had evidence from a variety of different kinds of sources, but by focusing on trade publications and credible internet sources, I feel like I am in a good place to start my research project. Looking again at these

professional publications and web sites has made me think about my working thesis more carefully.

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Chapter Ten
The Research Essay

- A "Research Essay" Instead of A "Research Paper"
- Getting Ready: Questions to Ask Yourself About Your Research Essay
- Creating and Revising a Formal Outline
- The Introduction
- Giving Your Readers Background Information
- Weaving in Evidence to Support Your Points
- Accounting for the Opposition: Antithetical Arguments
- Conclusions
- Works Cited/Bibliography

A "Research Essay" or a "Research Project" instead of a "Research Paper"

Throughout this book, I've purposefully avoided the term "research paper" for three reasons. First, while teachers assign and students write essays in college classes that are commonly called "research papers," there is no clear consensus on the definition of a research paper. This is because the definition of "research" differs from field to field, and even between instructors within the same discipline teaching the same course.

Second, while the papers we tend to call "research papers" do indeed include research, most other kinds of college writing require at least some research as well. All of the exercises outlined in Part Two of the book, " Exercises in the Process of Research" are examples of this: while none of these assignments are "research papers," all of them involve research in order to make a point.

A third reason has to do with the connotations of the word "paper" versus the word "essay." For me, "paper" suggests something static, concrete, routine, and uninteresting—think of the negative connotations of the term bureaucratic "paperwork," or the policing mechanism of "showing your papers" to the authorities. On the other hand, the word "essay" has more positive connotations: dynamic, flexible, unique, and creative. The definitions of essay in dictionaries I have examined include terms like "attempt," "endeavor," and "a try." As a writer, I would much rather work on something that was a dynamic and creative endeavor rather than a static and routine document. My hope is that you, as a student and a writer, feel the same way.

This chapter is about writing a research essay. While I cannot offer you *exact* guidelines of how to do this for each and every situation where you will be asked to write such a paper or essay, I can provide you with the general guidelines and advice you'll need to successfully complete these sorts of writing assignments. In the next chapter, I'll describe a few alternatives to presenting your research in a conventional essay.

Getting Ready: Questions to Ask Yourself About Your Research Essay

If you are coming to this chapter after working through some of the writing exercises in Part Two, "Exercises in the Process of Research," then you are ready to dive into your research essay. By this point, you probably have done some combination of the following things:

- Thought about different kinds of evidence to support your research;
- Been to the library and the internet to gather evidence;
- Developed an annotated bibliography for your evidence;
- Written and revised a working thesis for your research;
- Critically analyzed and written about key pieces of your evidence;
- Considered the reasons for disagreeing and questioning the premise of your working thesis; and
- Categorized and evaluated your evidence.

In other words, you already have been working on your research essay through the process of research writing.

But before diving into writing a research essay, you need to take a moment to ask yourself, your colleagues, and your teacher some important questions about the nature of your project.

- **What is the specific assignment?**

It is crucial to consider the teacher's directions and assignment for your research essay. The teacher's specific directions will in large part determine what you are required to do to successfully complete your essay, just as they did with the exercises you completed in part two of this book.

If you have been given the option to choose your own research topic, the assignment for the research essay itself might be open-ended. For example:

> Write a research essay about the working thesis that you have been working on with the previous writing assignments. Your essay should be about ten pages long, it should include ample evidence to support your point, and it should follow MLA style.

Some research writing assignments are more specific than this, of course. For example, here is a research writing assignment for a poetry class:

> Write a seven to ten page research essay about one of the poets discussed in the last five chapters of our textbook and his or her poems. Besides your analysis and interpretation of the poems, be sure to cite scholarly research that supports your points. You should also include research on the cultural and historic contexts the poet was working within. Be sure to use MLA documentation style throughout your essay.

Obviously, you probably wouldn't be able to write a research project about the problems of advertising prescription drugs on television in a History class that focused on the American Revolution.

- **What is the main purpose of your research essay?**

Has the goal of your essay been to answer specific questions based on assigned reading material and your research? Or has the purpose of your research been more open-ended and abstract, perhaps to learn more about issues and topics to share with a wider audience? In other words, is your research essay supposed to answer questions that indicate that you have learned about a set and defined subject matter (usually a subject matter which your teacher already more or less understands), or is your essay supposed to discover and discuss an issue that is potentially unknown to your audience, including your teacher.

The "demonstrating knowledge about a defined subject matter" purpose for research is quite common in academic writing. For example, a political science professor might ask students to write a research project about the Bill of Rights in order to help her students learn about the Bill of Rights and to demonstrate an understanding of these important amendments to the U.S. Constitution. But presumably, the professor already knows a fair amount the Bill of Rights, which means she is probably more concerned with finding out if you can demonstrate that you have learned and have formed an opinion about the Bill of Rights based on your research and study.

"Discovering and discussing an issue that is potentially unknown to your audience" is also a very common assignment, particularly in composition courses. As the examples included throughout *The Process of Research Writing* suggest, the subject matter for research essays that are designed to inform your audience about something new is almost unlimited.

☛ **Hyperlink:** See "Chapter 5: The Working Thesis Exercise" and the guidelines for "Working With Assigned Topics" and "Coming Up With a Topic of Your Own Idea."

Even if all of your classmates have been researching a similar research idea, chances are your particular take on that idea has gone in a different direction. For example, you and some of your classmates might have begun your research by studying the effect on children of violence on television, either because that was a topic assigned by the teacher or because you simply shared an interest in the general topic. But as you have focused and refined this initially broad topic, you and your classmates will inevitably go into different directions, perhaps focusing on different genres (violence in cartoons versus live-action shows), on different age groups (the effect of violent television on pre-schoolers versus the effect on teen-agers), or on different conclusions about the effect of television violence in the first place (it is harmful versus there is no real effect).

- **Who is the main audience for your research writing project?**

Besides your teacher and your classmates, who are you trying to reach with your research? Who are you trying to convince as a result of the research you have done?

What do you think is fair to assume that this audience knows or doesn't know about the topic of your research project? Purpose and audience are obviously closely related because the reason for writing something has a lot to do with who you are writing it for, and who you are writing something for certainly has a lot to do with your purposes in writing in the first place.

In composition classes, it is usually presumed that your audience includes your teacher and your classmates. After all, one of the most important reasons you are working on this research project in the first place is to meet the requirements of this class, and your teacher and your classmates have been with you as an audience every step of the way.

Contemplating an audience beyond your peers and teachers can sometimes be difficult, but if you have worked through the exercises in Part Two of *The Process of Research Writing,* you probably have at least some sense of an audience beyond the confines of your class. For example, one of the purposes "Critique Exercise" in Chapter 7 is to explain to your readers why they might be interested in reading the text that you are critiquing. The goal of the "Antithesis Exercise" in Chapter 8 is to consider the position of those who would disagree with the position you are taking. So directly and indirectly, you've probably been thinking about your readers for a while now.

Still, it might be useful for you to try to be even more specific about your audience as you begin your research essay. Do you know any "real people" (friends, neighbors, relatives, etc.) who might be an ideal reader for your research essay? Can you at least imagine what an ideal reader might want to get out of reading your research essay?

I'm not trying to suggest that you ought to ignore your teacher and your classmates as your primary audience. But research essays, like most forms of writing, are strongest when they are intended for a more specific audience, either someone the writer knows or someone the writer can imagine. Teachers and classmates are certainly part of this audience, but trying to reach an audience of potential readers beyond the classroom and the assignment will make for a stronger essay.

- **What sort of "voice" or "authority" do you think is appropriate for your research project?**

Do you want to take on a personal and more casual tone in your writing, or do you want to present a less personal and less casual tone? Do you want to use first person, the "I" pronoun, or do you want to avoid it?

My students are often surprised to learn that it is perfectly acceptable in many types of research and academic writing for writers to use the first person pronoun, "I." It is the tone I've taken with this textbook, and it is an approach that is very common in many fields, particularly those that tend to be grouped under the term "the humanities.

For example, consider this paragraph from Kelly Ritter's essay "The Economics of Authorship: Online Paper Mills, Student Writers, and First-Year Composition," which appeared in June 2005 issue of one of the leading journals in the field of composition and rhetoric, *College Composition and Communication*:

> When considering whether, when, and how often to purchase an academic paper from an online paper-mill site, first-year composition students therefore work with two factors that **I** wish to investigate here in pursuit of answering the questions posed above: the negligible desire to do one's own writing, or to be an author, with all that entails in this era of faceless authorship vis-á-vis the Internet; and the ever-shifting concept of "integrity," or responsibility when purchasing work, particularly in the anonymous arena of online consumerism. (603, emphasis added)

Throughout her thoughtful and well-researched essay, Ritter uses first person pronouns ("I" and "my," for example) when it is appropriate: "I think," "I believe," "my experiences," etc.

This sort of use of the personal pronoun is not limited to publications in English studies. This example comes from the journal *Law and Society Review* (Volume 39, Issue 2, 2005), which is an interdisciplinary journal concerned with the connections between society and the law. The article is titled "Preparing to Be Colonized: Land Tenure and Legal Strategy in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii" and it was written by law professor Stuart Banner:

> The story of Hawaii complicates the conventional account of colonial land tenure reform. Why did the land tenure reform movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries receive its earliest implementation in, of all places, Hawaii? Why did the Hawaiians do this to themselves? What did they hope to gain from it? This article attempts to answer these questions. At the end, **I** briefly suggest why the answers may shed some light on the process of colonization in other times and places, and thus why the answers may be of interest to people who are not historians of Hawaii. (275, emphasis added)

Banner uses both "I" and "my" throughout the article, again when it's appropriate.

Even this cursory examination of the sort of writing academic writers publish in scholarly journals will demonstrate my point: academic journals *routinely* publish articles that make use of the first person pronoun. Writers in academic fields that tend to be called "the sciences" (chemistry, biology, physics, and so forth, but also more "soft" sciences like sociology or psychology) are more likely to avoid the personal pronoun or to refer to themselves as "the researcher," "the author," or something similar. But even in these fields, "I" does frequently appear.

The point is this: using "I" is not inherently *wrong* for your research essay or for any other type of academic essay. However, you need to be aware of your choice of first person versus third person and your role as a writer in your research project.

Generally speaking, the use of the first person "I" pronoun creates a greater closeness and informality in your text, which can create a greater sense of intimacy between the writer and the reader. This is the main reason I've used "I" in *The Process of Research Writing:* using the first person pronoun in a textbook like this lessens the distance

between us (you as student/reader and me as writer), and I think it makes for easier reading of this material.

If you do decide to use a first person voice in your essay, make sure that the focus stays on your research and does not shift to you the writer. When teachers say "don't use I," what they are really cautioning against is the *overuse* of the word "I" such that the focus of the essay shifts from the research to "you" the writer. While mixing autobiography and research writing can be interesting (as I will touch on in the next chapter on alternatives to the research essay), it is not the approach you want to take in a traditional academic research essay.

The third person pronoun (and avoidance of the use of "I") tends to have the opposite effect of the first person pronoun: it creates a sense of distance between writer and reader, and it lends a greater formality to the text. This can be useful in research writing because it tends to emphasize research and evidence in order to persuade an audience.

(I should note that much of this textbook is presented in what is called second person voice, using the "you" pronoun. Second person is very effective for writing instructions, but generally speaking, I would discourage you from taking this approach in your research project.)

In other words, "first person" and "third person" are both potentially acceptable choices, depending on the assignment, the main purpose of your assignment, and the audience you are trying to reach. Just be sure to consistent—don't switch between third person and first person in the same essay.

- **What is your working thesis and how has it changed and evolved up to this point?**

If you've worked through some of the exercises in part two of *The Process of Research Writing,* you already know how important it is to have an evolving working thesis. If you haven't read this part of the textbook, you might want to do so before getting too far along with your research project. Chapter Five, "The Working Thesis Exercise," is an especially important chapter to read and review.

Remember: a ***working*** thesis is one that changes and evolves as you write and research. It is perfectly acceptable to change your thesis in the writing process based on your research.

Exercise 10.1

Working alone or in small groups, answer these questions about your research essay before you begin writing it:

- What is the specific research writing assignment? Do you have written instructions from the teacher for this assignment? Are there any details regarding page length, arrangement, or the amount of support evidence that you need to address? In your own words, restate the assignment for the research essay.
- What is the purpose of the research writing assignment? Is the main purpose of your research essay to address specific questions, to provide new information to your audience, or some combination of the two?
- Who is the audience for your research writing assignment? Besides your teacher and classmates, who else might be interested in reading your research essay?
- What sort of voice are you going to use in your research essay? What do you think would be more appropriate for your project, first person or third person?
- What is your working thesis? Think back to the ways you began developing your working thesis in the exercises in part two of *The Process of Research Writing.* In what ways has your working thesis changed?

If you are working with a small group of classmates, do each of you agree with the basic answers to these questions? Do the answers to these questions spark other questions that you have and need to have answered by your classmates and your teacher before you begin your research writing project?

Once you have some working answers to these basic questions, it's time to start thinking about actually writing the research essay itself. For most research essay projects, you will have to consider at least most of these components in the process:

- The Formal Outline
- The Introduction
- Background Information
- Evidence to Support Your Points
- Antithetical Arguments and Answers
- The Conclusion
- Works Cited or Reference Information

The rest of this chapter explains these parts of the research essay and it concludes with an example that brings these elements together.

Creating and Revising a Formal Outline

Frequently, research essay assignments will also require you to include a formal outline, usually before the essay begins following the cover page. Formal outlines are sort of table of contents for your essay: they give the reader a summary of the main points and sub-points of what they are about to read.

The standard format for an outline looks something like this:

```
I.   First Major Point

     A.   First sub-point of the first major point

          1.   First sub-point of the first sub-point

          2.   Second sub-point of the first sub-point

     B.   Second sub-point of the first major point

II.  Second Major point
```

And so on. Alternatively, you may also be able to use a decimal outline to note the different points. For example:

```
1.   First Major point

     1.1. First sub-point of the first major point

          1.1.1     First sub-point of the first sub-point

          1.1.2     Second sub-point of the first sub-point

     1.2. Second sub-point of the first major point

2.   Second Major point
```

Sometimes, teachers ask student writers to include a "thesis statement" for their essay at the beginning of the outline.

Generally speaking, if you have one "point," be it a major point or a sub-point, or sub-point of a sub-point (perhaps a sub-sub-point!), you need to have at least a second similar point. In other words, if you have a sub-point you are labeling "A.," you should have one labeled "B." The best rule of thumb I can offer in terms of the grammar and syntax of your various points is to keep them short and consistent.

Now, while the formal outline is generally the first thing in your research essay after the title page, writing one is usually the **last** step in the writing process. Don't start writing your research essay by writing a formal outline first because it might limit the changes you can make to your essay during the writing process.

Of course, a ***formal*** outline is quite different from a ***working*** outline, one where you are more informally writing down ideas and "sketching" out plans for your research essay before or as you write. There are no specific rules or methods for making a working outline-- it could be a simple list of points, it could include details and reminders for the writer, or anything in-between.

Making a working outline is a good idea, particularly if your research essay will be a relatively long and complex one. Just be sure to not confuse these two very different outlining tools.

If you're having trouble starting to write your research essay, revisit some of the tips I suggest in the "Brainstorming for Ideas" section of Chapter Five, "The Working Thesis Exercise."

Exercise 10.2

- Working alone or in small groups, make a formal outline of an already completed essay. You can work with any of the sample essays in previous chapters in *The Process of Research Writing* or any other brief sample. **Don't** work with the sample research essay at the end of this chapter, though-- there is a sample formal outline included with it.

- If you and your classmates made a formal outline of the same essay, compare your outlines. Were there any significant differences in your approaches to making an outline? What were they?

The Introduction

Research essays have to begin somewhere, and this somewhere is called the "introduction." By "beginning," I don't necessarily mean *only* the first paragraph—introductions in traditional research essays are frequently several paragraphs long. Generally speaking though, the introduction is about 25 percent or less of the total essay; in other words, in a ten-page, traditional research essay, the introduction would rarely be longer than two and a half pages.
Introductions have two basic jobs to perform:

- To get the reader's attention; and
- To briefly explain what the rest of the essay will be about.

What is appropriate or what works to get the reader's attention depends on the audience you have in mind for your research essay and the sort of voice or authority you want to have with your essay. Frequently, it is a good idea to include some background material on the issue being discussed or a brief summary of the different sides of an argument. If you have an anecdote from either your own experience or your research that you think is relevant to the rest of your project or will be interesting to your readers, you might want to consider beginning with that story. Generally speaking, you should avoid mundane or clichéd beginnings like "This research essay is about…" or "In society today…"

The second job of an introduction in a traditional research essay is to explain to the reader what the rest of the essay is going to be about. This is frequently done by stating your "thesis statement," which is more or less where your working thesis has ended up after its inevitable changes and revisions.

A thesis statement can work in a lot of different places in the introduction, not only as the last sentence at the end of the first paragraph. It is also possible to let your readers know what your thesis is without ever directly stating it in a single sentence. This approach is common in a variety of different types of writing that use research, though traditionally, most academic research essays have a specific and identifiable thesis statement.

Let's take a look at this example of a **WEAK** introductory paragraph:

In our world today, there are many health problems, such as heart disease and cancer. Another serious problem that affects many people in this country is diabetes, particularly Type II diabetes. Diabetes is a disease where the body does not produce enough insulin, and the body needs insulin to process sugars and starches. It is a serious disease that effects millions of people, many of whom don't even know they have the disease. In this essay, I will discuss how eating sensibly and getting plenty of exercise are the most important factors in preventing Type 2 Diabetes.

The first two sentences of this introduction don't have much to do with the topic of diabetes, and the following sentences are rather vague. Also, this introduction doesn't offer much information about what the rest of the essay will be about, and it certainly doesn't capture the reader's attention.

Now, consider this revised and **BETTER** introductory paragraph:

> Diabetes is a disease where the body does not produce enough of insulin to process starches and sugars

> effectively. According to the American Diabetes Association web site, over 18 million Americans have diabetes, and as many as 5.2 million of these people are unaware that they have it. Perhaps even more striking is that the most common form of diabetes, Type 2 Diabetes, is largely preventable with a sensible diet and exercise.

This introduction is much more specific and to the point, and because of that, it does a better job of getting the reader's attention. Also, because it is very specific, this introduction gives a better sense to the reader where the rest of the essay will be leading.

While the introduction is of course the first thing your readers will see, **make sure it is one of the last things you decide to revise in the process of writing your research essay.** You will probably start writing your essay by writing an introduction—after all, you've got to start somewhere. But it is nearly impossible to write a very effective introduction if the rest of the essay hasn't been written yet, which is why you will certainly want to return to the introduction to do some revision work after you've written your essay.

Exercise 10.3

• Working alone or in small groups, revise one of the following "bad" introductions, being sure to get the reader's attention, to make clear what the essay being introduced would be about, and to eliminate unneeded words and clichés. Of course, since you don't have the entire essay, so you may have to take certain liberties with these passages. But the goal is to improve these "bad beginnings" without changing their meaning.

Example #1:

In society today, there are many problems with television shows. A lot of them are not very entertaining at all. Others are completely inappropriate for children. It's hard to believe that these things are on TV at all. In fact, because of a lot of the bad things that have been on television in recent years, broadcasters have had to censor more and more shows. They have done some of this voluntarily, but they have also been required to do this by irate advertisers and viewers as well. For example, consider Janet Jackson's famous "wardrobe malfunction" at the 2004 Super Bowl. I contend that Jackson's performance in the 2004 Super Bowl, accident or not, has lead to more censorship on television.

Example #2:

There are a lot of challenges to being a college student. We all know that studying and working hard will pay off in the end. A lot of college students also enjoy to cheer for their college teams. A lot of colleges and universities will do whatever it takes to have winning teams. In fact, some colleges and universities are even willing to allow in students with bad test scores and very low high school grades as long as they are great athletes and can make the team better. All of this leads to a difficult to deny observation: college sports, especially Division I football, is full of corruption and it is damaging the academic integrity of some of our best universities.

Background Information (or Helping Your Reader Find a Context)

It is always important to explain, contextualize, and orientate your readers within any piece of writing. Your research essay is no different in that you need to include background information on your topic in order to create the right context for the project.

In one sense, you're giving your reader important background information every time you fully introduce and explain a piece of evidence or an argument you are making. But often times, research essays include some background information about the overall topic near the beginning of the essay. Sometimes, this is done briefly as part of the introduction section of the essay; at other times, this is best accomplished with a more detailed section after the introduction and near the beginning of the essay.

How much background information you need to provide and how much context you need to establish depends a great deal on how you answer the "Getting Ready" questions at the beginning of this chapter, particularly the questions in which you are asked to consider you ***purpose*** and your ***audience.*** If one of the purposes of your essay is to convince a primary audience of readers who know little about your topic or your argument, you will have to provide more background information than you would if the main purpose of your essay was to convince a primary audience that knows a lot about your topic. **But even if you can assume your audience is as familiar with the topic of your essay as you, it's still important to provide at least some background on your specific approach to the issue in your essay.**

It's almost always better to give your readers "too much" background information than "too little." In my experience, students too often assume too much about what their readers (the teacher included!) knows about their research essay. There are several reasons why this is the case; perhaps it is because students so involved in their research forget that their readers haven't been doing the same kind of research. The result is that sometimes students "cut corners" in terms of helping their audience through their essay. I think that the best way to avoid these kinds of misunderstandings is for you to always remember that your readers don't know as much about your specific essay as you do, and part of your job as a writer is to guide your reader through the text.

In Casey Copeman's research essay at the end of this chapter, the context and background information for the subject matter after the introduction; for example:

> The problems surrounding corruption in university athletics have been around ever since sports have been considered important in American culture. People have emphasized the importance of sports and the significance of winning for a long time. According to Jerome Cramer in a special report published in Phi Delta Kappan, "Sports are a powerful experience, and America somehow took this belief of the ennobling nature of sports and transformed it into a quasi-religion" (Cramer K1).

Casey's subject matter, college athletics, was one that she assumed most of her primary audience of fellow college students and classmates were familiar with. Nonetheless, she does provide some basic information about the importance of sports team in society and in universities in particular.

Weaving in Evidence to Support Your Point

Throughout your research essay, you need to include evidence that supports your points. There is no firm rule as to "how much" research you will want or need to include in your research essay. Like so many other things with research writing, it depends on your purpose, the audience, the assignment, and so forth. **But generally speaking, you need to have a piece of evidence in the form of a direct quote or paraphrase every time you make a claim that you cannot assume your audience "just knows."**

☛ **Hyperlink:** See "Chapter 3: "Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Avoiding Plagiarism" for more details on how to effectively introduce quotes and paraphrases into your research writing.

Stringing together a series of quotes and paraphrases from different sources might show that you have done a lot of research on a particular topic, but your audience wants to know your ***interpretation*** of these quotes and paraphrases, and your reader wants and needs to be guided through your research. To do this, you need to work at explaining the significance of your evidence throughout your essay.

For example, this passage does a **BAD** job of introducing and weaving in evidence to support a point.

> In America today, the desire to have a winning team drives universities to admit academically unqualified students. "At many universities, the tradition of athletic success requires coaches to produce not only competitive by championship-winning teams" (Duderstadt 191).

The connection between the sentence and the evidence is not as clear as it could be. Further, the quotation is simply "dropped in" with no explanation. Now, compare it with this revised and **BETTER** example:

> The desire to always have a winning team has driven many universities to admit academically unqualified student athletes to their school just to improve their sports teams. According to James Duderstadt, former president of the University of Michigan, the corruption of university athletics usually begins with the process of recruiting and admitting student athletes. He states that, "At many universities, the tradition of athletic success requires coaches to produce not only competitive but championship-winning teams" (Duderstadt 191).

Remember: the point of using research in writing (be it a traditional research essay or any other form of research writing) is not merely to offer your audience a bunch of evidence on a topic. Rather, the point of research writing is to interpret your research in order to persuade an audience.

Antithetical Arguments and Answers

Most research essays anticipate and answer antithetical arguments, the ways in which a reader might disagree with your point. Besides demonstrating your knowledge of the different sides of the issue, acknowledging and answering the antithetical arguments in your research essay will go a long way toward convincing some of your readers that the point you are making is correct.

☛ **Hyperlink:** See "Chapter 8: "The Antithesis Exercise," which offers strategies for researching, developing, and answering antithetical arguments in your research writing.

Antithetical arguments can be placed almost anywhere within a research essay, including the introduction or the conclusion. However, you want to be sure that the antithetical arguments are accompanied by "answering" evidence and arguments. After all, the point of presenting antithetical arguments is to explain why the point you are supporting with research is the correct one.

In the essay at the end of this chapter, Casey brings up antithetical points at several points in her essay. For example:

> To be fair, being a student-athlete isn't easy. They are faced with difficult situations when having to juggle their athletic life and their academic life at school. As Duderstadt said, "Excelling in academics is challenging enough without the additional pressures of participating in highly competitive athletic programs" (Duderstadt 190). So I can see why some athletes might experience trouble fitting all of the studying and coursework into their busy schedules.

The Conclusion

As research essays have a beginning, so do they have an ending, generally called a conclusion. While the main purpose of an introduction is to get the reader's attention and to explain what the essay will be about, the goal of a conclusion is to bring the reader to a satisfying point of closure. In other words, a good conclusion does not merely "end" an essay; it wraps things up.

It is usually a good idea to make a connection in the conclusion of your essay with the introduction, particularly if you began your essay with something like a relevant anecdote or a rhetorical question. You may want to restate your thesis, though you don't necessarily have to restate your thesis in exactly the same words you used in your introduction. It is also usually not a good idea to end your essay with obvious concluding cues or clichéd phrases like "in conclusion."

Conclusions are similar to introductions on a number of different levels. First, like introductions, they are important since they leave definite "impressions" on the reader—in this case, the important "last" impression. Second, conclusions are almost as difficult to write and revise as introductions. Because of this, be sure to take extra time and care to revise your conclusion.

Here's the conclusion of Casey Copeman's essay, which is included at the end of this chapter:

> As James Moore and Sherry Watt say in their essay "Who Are Student Athletes?", the "marriage between higher education and intercollegiate athletics has been turbulent, and always will be" (7). The NCAA has tried to make scholarly success at least as important as athletic success with requirements like Proposition 48 and Proposition 16. But there are still too many cases where under-prepared students are admitted to college because they can play a sport, and there are too still too many instances where universities let their athletes get away with being poor students because they are a sport superstar. I like cheering for my college team as much as anyone else, but I would rather cheer for college players who were students who worried about learning and success in the classroom, too.

Exercise 10.4

- If you worked with the examples in Exercise 10.3 on page xxx, take another look at the revised introductions your wrote. Based on the work you did in that exercise, write a fitting conclusion. Once again, since you don't have the entire essay, you'll have to take some liberties with what you decide to include in your conclusion.

"Works Cited" or "Reference" Information

If I were to give you one and only one "firm and definite" rule about research essay writing, it would be that you **must** have a section following the conclusion of your essay that explains to the reader where the evidence you cite comes from. This information is especially important in academic essays since academic readers are keenly interested in the evidence that supports your point.

If you're following the Modern Language Association rules for citing evidence, this last section is called "Works Cited." If you're following the American Psychological Association rules, it's called "References." In either case, this is the place where you list the full citation of all the evidence you quote or paraphrase in your research essay. **Note that for both MLA and APA style, research you read but didn't actually use in your research essay is not included.** Your teacher might want you to provide a "bibliography" with your research essay that does include this information, but this is not the same thing.

☛ **Hyperlink:** For guidelines for properly citing your evidence and compiling "Works Cited" or "Reference" pages, see "Chapter 12: Citing Your Research Using MLA or APA Style."

Frankly, one of the most difficult aspects of this part of the research essay is the formatting—alphabetizing, getting the spacing right, underlining titles or putting them in quotes, periods here, commas there, and so forth. Again, see the appendix for information on how to do this. But if you have been keeping and adding to an annotated bibliography as you have progressed through the process of research (as discussed in chapter six), this part of the essay can actually be merely a matter of checking your sources and "copying" the citation information from the word processing file where you have saved your annotated bibliography and "pasting" it into the word processing file where you are saving your research essay.

☛ **Hyperlink:** See the assignment for constructing an annotated bibliography in "Chapter 6: The Annotated Bibliography Exercise."

A Student Example: "The Corruption Surrounding University Athletics" by Casey K. Copeman

The assignment that Casey Copeman followed to write this research essay is similar to the assignment described earlier in this chapter:

> Write a research essay about the working thesis that you have been working on with the previous writing assignments. Your essay should be about ten pages long, it should include ample evidence to support your point, and it should follow MLA style.

Of course, it's also important to remember that Casey's work on this project began long before she wrote this essay with the exercises she worked through to develop her working thesis, to gather evidence, and to evaluate and categorize it.

The Corruption Surrounding University Athletics

By Casey Copeman

Outline

I. Introduction

II. Origins and description of the problem

    A. The significance of sports in our society

    B. The drive and pressure for universities to win leads to admitting academically unqualified student athletes

III. The Eligibility Rules Proposition 48 and Proposition 16

    A. Proposition 48 explained

    B. Proposition 16 explained

    C. Proposition 16 challenged but upheld in the courts

    D. Academic eligibility rules still broken

IV. Rules Broken At School

    A. The pressures faced by athletes and universities
        1. The pressures of being a student athlete

        2. The pressures put on universities to recruit "good players"

    B. "Athletics" emphasized over studies indirectly and directly
        1. The indirect message is about sports above academics

        2. Occasionally, the message to emphasize sports is direct

        3. Student-athletes often steered into "easy" classes

    C. Good student athletes, mostly in sports other than football and men's basketball, get a bad name

V. Conclusion

Most young people who are trying to get into college have to spend a lot of time studying and worrying. They study to get good grades in high school and to get good test scores, and they worry about whether or not all of the studying will be enough to get them into the college of their choice. But there is one group of college students who don't have to study and worry as much, as long as they are outstanding football or basketball players: student athletes.

Issues involving student athletes with unsatisfactory test scores, extremely low grade point averages, special privileges given to them by the schools, and issues concerning their coaches' influence on them academically, have all been causes of concern with university athletics. The result is a pattern where athletics at the university level are full of corruption surrounding the academic standards and admittance policy that are placed upon some university athletes. In this essay, I will explain what I see as the source of this corruption and the ways in which academic standards are compromised in the name of winning.

The problems surrounding corruption in university athletics have been around ever since sports have been considered important in American culture. People have emphasized the importance of sports and the significance of winning for a long time. According to Jerome Cramer in a special report published in Phi Delta Kappan, "Sports are a powerful experience, and America somehow took this belief of the ennobling nature of sports and transformed it into a quasi-religion" (Cramer K1). Cramer also says,

> "The original sin of sports in United States society seems to have been committed when we allowed our games to assume too much of our lives. It was as if we could measure our

> moral fiber by the won/lost record of our local team. Once schools began to organize sports, winning became a serious institutional consideration. Our innocence vanished when we refused to accept losing" (Cramer K1).

This importance of sports and winning in the United States today is what has led to this corruption that we now see in our top universities when it comes to athletes and how they are treated by their schools.

The desire to always have a winning team has driven many universities to admit academically unqualified student athletes to their school just to improve their sports teams. According to James Duderstadt, former president of the University of Michigan, the corruption of university athletics usually begins with the process of recruiting and admitting student athletes. He states that, "At many universities, the tradition of athletic success requires coaches to produce not only competitive but championship-winning teams" (Duderstadt 191). This, in turn, "puts enormous pressure to recruit the most outstanding high school athletes each year, since this has become the key determinant of competitive success in major college sports"(Duderstadt 192).

According to Duderstadt, "Coaches and admissions officers have long known that the pool of students who excel at academics and athletics is simply too small to fill their rosters with players who meet the usual admissions criteria" (Duderstadt 193). This pressure put on coaches to recruit the best athletes "leads them to recruit athletes who are clearly unprepared for college work or who have little interest in a college education" (Duderstadt 193). This obviously leads to a problem because although most universities have standards that must be met for students to be admitted, "in all too many cases, recruited

athletes fail to meet even these minimum standards" (Duderstadt 193).

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) set some minimum standards for admission in January of 1986. They had decided that "the time had come to make sure that college athletes were not only athletically qualified, but that they also were academically competent to represent schools of higher learning" (Cramer K4). Proposition 48 required that "all entering athletes score a minimum of 700 on their Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and achieve a minimum high school grade point average in core academic courses of 2.0, or sit out their first year" (Duderstadt 194). This seemed like a fairly reasonable rule to most universities around the country, and some even thought, "a kid who can not score a combined 700 and keep a C average in high school should not be in college in the first place" (Cramer K4).

In 1992, the NCAA changed these requirements slightly with the introduction of proposition 16. According to the document "Who Can Play? An Examination of NCAA's Proposition 16," which was published on the National Center for Educational Statistics in August 1995, Proposition 16 requirements are "more strict than the current Proposition 48 requirements. The new criteria are based on a combination of high school grade point average (GPA) in 13 core courses and specified SAT (or ACT) scores."

Some coaches and college athletes have argued against proposition 48 and proposition 16 because they claim that they unfairly discriminate against African-American students. According to Robert Fullinwider's web-based article "Academic Standards and the NCAA," some "black coaches were so incensed that they toyed with the idea of boycotting NCAA events." Fullinwider goes on:

> John Thompson, then-coach of Georgetown University's basketball team, complained that poor minority kids were at a disadvantage taking the "mainstream-oriented" SAT. "Certain kids," he noted just after the federal court's decision, "require individual assessment. Some urban schools cater to poor kids, low-income kids, black and white. To put everybody on the same playing field [i.e., to treat them the same in testing] is just crazy."

Fullinwider writes that the legality of Proposition 16 was challenged in March 1999 on the basis that it was discriminatory to African-American student athletes. However, in its summary of the case Cureton v. NCAA, the Marquette University Law School You Make the Call web site explains that the federal courts ultimately decided that Proposition 16 was not a violation of students' civil rights and could be enforced by the NCAA.

With rules like Proposition 48 and Proposition 16, "the old practice of recruiting athletes who are clearly unqualified for admission with the hope that their contributions on the field will be sufficient before their inadequacy in the classroom, slowed somewhat" (Duderstadt 195). However, as facts show today, it seems as if these rules are harder to enforce in some universities than the NCAA originally thought.

There have been many documented instances of athletes being admitted to a university without even coming close to meeting the minimum requirements for academic eligibility set by the NCAA. One such instance happened just one year after Proposition 48 was enacted. North Carolina State University signed Chris Washburn, "one of the most highly recruited high school seniors in the nation" (Cramer K4). Although Washburn proved to be valuable to the team, it was later found out that "his combined score on the SAT was a whopping 470," and that he had "an abysmal academic record in high school" (Cramer K4). Both his

SAT score and his poor grades in high school all fell much lower than the standards set by the NCAA.

According to Art Padilla, former vice president for academic affairs at the University of North Carolina System, student athletes like Chris Washburn are not uncommon at most universities (Cramer K5). He states, "Every major college sports institution has kids with that kind of academic record, and if they deny it, they are lying" (Cramer K5).

The admitting of unqualified students is not the only place where colleges seem to step out of bounds though. Once the athlete has been admitted and signed with the university, for some, a long list of corruption from the university is still to follow when it comes to dealing with their academics.

Furthermore, many universities face a lot of pressure to recruit good players to their schools regardless of their academic skills. Debra Blum reported in 1996 about the case of a star basketball player who wanted to attend Vanderbilt University. As Blum writes, “Vanderbilt denied him (basketball player Ron Mercer) admission, describing his academic record as not up to snuff. So he enrolled at Kentucky, where he helped his team to a national championship last season” (A51). The case of Vanderbilt losing Mercer caused a lot of “soul searching” at Vanderbilt, in part because there was a lot of pressure from “other university constituents, particularly many alumni ... to do what it takes to field more-competitive teams, especially in football and men’s basketball” (A51).

But these pressures are also the point where school officials are tempted to break the rules. As John Gerdy wrote in his article "A Suggestion For College Coaches: Teach By Example,” in universities where the purpose of recruiting a great athlete is to improve the team, they often claim, "intercollegiate athletics are about education, but it is

obvious that they are increasingly about entertainment, money, and winning" (28).

Mixed messages are sent when some student-athletes "are referred to as "players" and "athletes" rather than "students" and "student-athletes" (Gerdy 28). It is clear that these student-athletes are sometimes only wanted for their athletic ability, and it is also clear that there are sometimes many pressures to recruit such students. As Austin C. Wherwein said, many student athletes "are given little incentive to be scholars and few persons care how the student athlete performs academically, including some of the athletes themselves" (Quoted in Thelin 183).

In some cases, coaches directly encourage students to emphasize their athletic career instead of their studies. One such instance, reported in Sports Illustrated by Austin Murphy, involves an Ohio State tailback, Robert Smith, who quit the football team "saying that coaches had told him he was spending too much time on academics" (Murphy 9). Smith claims that offensive coordinator Elliot Uzelac "encouraged him to skip a summer-school chemistry class because it was causing Smith, who was a pre-med student, to miss football practice" (Murphy 9). Smith did not think this was right so he walked off the team (Murphy 9). Supposedly, "the university expressed support for Uzelac, who denied Smith's allegations" (Murphy 9).

Another way some universities sometimes manage the academic success of their student-athletes is to enroll them in easier classes, particularly those set up specifically for student-athletes. The curriculum for some of these courses is said to be "less than intellectually demanding"(Cramer K2). Jan Kemp, a remedial English professor at the University of Georgia who taught a class with just football players for students, was "troubled by the fact that many of her students seemed incapable

of graduating from college" (Cramer K2). This seems surprising, but in fact some athletes from the University of Georgia "were described as being given more than four chances to pass developmental studies classes" without ever being successful (Cramer K2). Also, "school records show that in an effort to keep athletes playing, several were placed in the regular academic curriculum without having passed even the watered-down classes" (Cramer K2). Although this particular story comes from the University of Georgia, it is not just unique to that school. Many universities have been guilty of doing such things for their athletes just so they could continue to play on the team.

Of course, not all student-athletes are bad students. Many student-athletes actually do well in school and excel both athletically and academically. But although these true "student-athletes" do exist, they are often overshadowed by those negative images of athletes who do not do as well in school. And while all sorts of different sports have had academic problems with their athletes, the majority of corruption at the university level exists in football and basketball teams (Cramer K3). According to Duderstadt, "football and basketball are not holding their own when it comes to student academic honors" (Duderstadt 190). He says "Football and basketball have developed cultures with low expectations for academic performance. For many student-athletes in these sports, athletics are clearly regarded as a higher priority than their academic goals" (Duderstadt 191). So although this label of the bad student-athlete does not even come close to applying to all athletes, some universities are still considered, as John Thelin wrote in his book Games Colleges Play, "academically corrupt and athletically sound" (199).

As James Moore and Sherry Watt say in their essay “Who Are Student Athletes?”, the “marriage between higher education and

intercollegiate athletics has been turbulent, and always will be" (7). The NCAA has tried to make scholarly success at least as important as athletic success with requirements like Proposition 48 and Proposition 16. But there are still too many cases where under-prepared students are admitted to college because they can play a sport, and there are too still too many instances where universities let their athletes get away with being poor students because they are a sport superstar. I like cheering for my college team as much as anyone else, but I would rather cheer for college players who were students who worried about learning and success in the classroom, too.

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Chapter Eleven
Alternative Ways to Present Your Research

- Not all Research Comes in "Papers" or "Essays"
- The Research Portfolio/Narrative Essay
  - The Assignment
  - A Student Example: "The Story of My Working Thesis Malfunction" by Amanda Kenger.
- The Web-based Research Project
  - The Advantages of the Web-based Research Project
    * Graphics, Multimedia, Hypertext
    * A Broad, Diverse, and International Audience
    * Facilitates Collaboration
  - The Disadvantages of the Web-based Research Project
    * Hardware and Software Access
    * Learning HTML and Other "Computer Things"
    * Time, Time, Time
  - Web Publishing versus "hypertext"
  - A Web Writing Recipe: What You Need to Get Started, and Where You Can Go To Get Help
  - The Assignment
  - A Student Example: "The Corruption Surrounding University Athletics Web Site," By Casey K. Copeman
- The Poster Session Project
  - The Assignment
  - A Program-wide Poster Session: The Eastern Michigan University "Celebration of Student Writing"

Not All Research Comes in "Papers" or Essays"

In Chapter Ten, "The Research Essay," I describe the process for writing a conventional research essay. While research essay writing tasks vary quite a bit, there are some general guidelines that you will want to consider when you are asked by a college professor to write a "research paper" or "research essay."

Of course, the traditional essay form (typed, double-spaced, thesis-driven, written in a linear "from beginning to end" style) is still the most common writing assignment in college classrooms, and this will probably remain the case for some time to come. Increasingly however, college teachers are considering alternatives to this form. Some of these alternatives have actually been common in composition classes for a while now-- for example, the "I-Search" research essay (which was pioneered by Ken Macrorie in the late 1980s) and portfolio-based writing projects and assessments.

Others alternatives are more recent. The increased power and availability of computer technology has played a significant role in presenting research in a way that is different from the conventional essay. For example, the World Wide Web allows (some might even say *requires*) writers to publish documents that include graphics and photographs, and even audio and video files.

In some ways, these alternatives to the research essay still have the same basic requirements that I've discussed in all the previous chapters in *The Process of Research Writing*. After all, you are still trying to convince and inform an audience about a particular point, and you do this with your use and interpretation of evidence.

In other ways, presenting your research in an alternative fashion and with alternative sorts of evidence change in interesting ways the role and place in research in both academic and non-academic settings. Besides that, writing about your research in a "non-traditional" way might shed a different and informative light on your topic, and it might even be fun.

Obviously, there is no limit to the number of alternatives and variations to the traditional research essay. In this chapter, I will describe three ways of approaching research writing differently: The research portfolio/narrative essay, the Web-based research project, and the poster session project. These projects could be completed either along with or instead of a more traditional research essay, and I would also encourage you to experiment and explore other alternatives and combinations of projects.

The Research Portfolio/Narrative Essay

A "research portfolio" is a collection of writing you've done in the process of completing your research. Of course, the details about what is included in this portfolio will vary based on the class assignments. However, if you've been following through the exercises in Part Two of this textbook, chances are your portfolio will consist of some combination of these projects:

- The topic proposal exercise
- The critique exercise
- The antithesis exercise
- The categorization and evaluation exercise
- The annotated bibliography exercise

A research portfolio might also include your work on some of the various exercises in *The Process of Research Writing* and other assignments given to you from your teacher.

The goal of the exercises in Part II of this book is to help you work through the process of research writing, and to help you write an essay along the lines of what I describe in Chapter Ten, "The Research Essay." However, as an

alternative to using this previous work to write a research essay, you could write an essay about these exercises to tell the story of researching your topic.

This project, "The Research Portfolio/Narrative Essay" is similar to a more conventional research essay in that the writer uses cited evidence to support the point exemplified in a working thesis. However, it is different in that the writer focuses on the *process* of researching his topic, a narrative about how he developed and explored the working thesis.

The Assignment

> Write a seven to ten page narrative essay about the process of working through the previously assigned exercises in the class. Be sure to explain to your audience-- your teacher, classmates, and other readers interested in your topic-- the steps you took to first develop and then work through your research project.

A Student Example: "The Story of My Working Thesis Malfunction" by Amanda Kenger

In the course where Amanda wrote this essay, students were given the option to either follow the Chapter Ten assignment for writing a more "conventional" research essay, or to write a research portfolio/narrative essay following the assignment described in this chapter. Amanda said that she originally chose to write a portfolio/narrative essay because "I thought it would be a piece of cake. I was wrong." She soon realized that this assignment required her to think carefully about how to present her research to her readers, and it required her to follow an approach that was different from her previous academic writing experiences. Overall, Amanda was glad she chose this writing option "because it gave me an opportunity to do something out of the ordinary."

The Story of My Working Thesis Malfunction

When we were fist given the assignment for the final research project, I was sure that I was going to write a traditional research paper. I have done all of the research, written out the annotated bibliography, and have created a fairly decisive working thesis. However, I finally decided to work through the research portfolio essay option after looking at the work I created during the semester and realizing how much things have changed from start to finish.

I wrote four essays that examine my thesis and my sources and my working thesis changed with each essay. It transformed from my original idea that three events in history changed television censorship to my final working thesis, "Janet Jackson's 2004 Super Bowl wardrobe malfunction has changed the way that Americans view television."

Each of the essays I wrote has had an effect on my final working thesis. This is especially surprising for me because previously, when I came up with an idea or a thesis, my mind is usually made up. But I think that story of working through the different exercises this semester shows how much my original working thesis changed.

I first decided on the idea for my original working thesis through writing my topic proposal essay. This essay got me thinking about the evolution of television censorship from shows like I Love Lucy to Desperate Housewives. I began to think of events in television history that would have caused a domino effect in censorship. So in my topic proposal essay, I said that there were three events in TV history that drastically changed the way that television was censored. The first of

these three events was Elvis on The Ed Sullivan Show. His sexual dance moves sent shockwaves through conservative America. For the second event, I chose George Carlin's classic comedy skit "Filthy Words." The skit included "seven words you can never say on television" and was played over the radio by a small town DJ. The controversy surrounding the skit eventually snowballed into a lawsuit, and finally a Supreme Court case. For the third event I chose Janet Jackson's 2004 Super Bowl halftime show performance. Her "wardrobe malfunction" on live television became grounds for the institution of a delay on all live broadcasts.

One of the reasons that I decided to choose three events was because I wanted to trace some longer trends in television, and also because I was worried about not having enough evidence to support my thesis in a research essay. I can see now though that I had too much going on in my original thesis. I was going to have far too much information and my paper would probably lose its focus. Also, when I look back at my topic proposal essay now, I see that I only cited one reference each for Presley and Carlin, and I wrote that I found, "hundreds of articles on several databases and on the World Wide Web" about Jackson. That should have been my first red flag that the bulk of the information available to me was going to be on Jackson.

Regardless, when I completed my topic proposal essay, my working thesis was, "Three main events in history have changed censorship: Elvis on The Ed Sullivan Show, George Carlin's Supreme Court case, and Janet Jackson on the 2004 Super Bowl."

My evaluation of my own working thesis continued throughout my critique essay. For this essay, I chose to

critique an article called "The New Puritanism" by Eric Gillin and Greg Lindsay, published in Advertising Age and accessed electronically through the Wilson Select database. This article investigated the consequences of Jackson's Super Bowl stunt and, to my surprise, these consequences were not only felt in television. The wave of conservatism that Jackson created was felt strongly in the world of advertising and big business. The article poses the seemingly unanswerable question of how to make everyone content with mass media content.

Gillin and Lindsay lean towards the idea that the conflict that lies in censorship is a generational one. They write "74% of consumers ages 12 to 20 said CBS overreacted in its response". They also describe some of the possible solutions that have been proposed to solve the censorship conflict. Some of these suggestions include running parallel ad campaigns with designated ratings.

This article finally caused me to realize the seriousness of Jackson's actions. "The New Puritanism" pointed out several ways in which advertising companies and big businesses like Wal-Mart altered their campaigns and content after the incident. For example, Wal-Mart pulled Maxim magazine off of their shelves and Budweiser pulled some of their commercials off ofthe air. Gillin and Lindsay describe an impossible situation in both television and advertising, and warn, "sex or violence... may be off the mainstream for good" (6).

Gillin's and Lindsay's article first got me thinking about the fusion of academic culture and popular culture. Going into this project, I assumed that every academic article was going to take the side of the FCC. Much to my

surprise, almost all the academic articles I found carried warnings of the FCC's over-involvement in the media. This article also made me look once again at my working thesis. When I was searching for an article to critique, I could not find any on Carlin or Elvis. The sources that I had for the Carlin and Elvis consisted mostly of web sites or page long narratives. I found it very difficult to locate any article that I would be able to use in my critique essay. Another red flag. However, after my critique essay I felt more confident in stating that Jackson's halftime show changed media censorship.

When it came time for me to write my antithesis essay, I was really worried. Almost all of the articles I found warned about the dangers of the FCC's power. I was concerned that I would not be able to find any evidence that supported my antithetical arguments. I finally found my answer on a website created by United States Senator Sam Brownback. Senator Brownback served as one of the sponsors for the Broadcast Decency Act of 2004. He wants stronger regulations from the FCC and other parts of the government. On his web site, Brownback stated that Jackson's halftime show "is just the most memorable example of the growing volume of inappropriate material that is broadcast..." He argues that Jackson's halftime show did not serve as an important event in censorship history, only the most recognizable. Brownback goes on:

> We live in a nation where we hold the First Amendment in high regard. In an effort to maintain the free exchange of information, thoughts, and opinions, we strive to avoid government involvement in communications content. At the same time, we are nation raising children. With the turning of a tuning

> knob, or a click of the remote, Americans are presented with the content of the public airwaves and the culture it generates. Broadcasters can express any viewpoint and idea they want, but they have a legal and moral duty to ensure that viewers, especially minors, are not presented with explicit material.

In response to this, I found an article on the web site "Intellectual Conservative Politics and Philosophy" by Wendy McElroy titled "Censorship is Not a Solution for Trashy TV." She directly challenges Brownback and says that the consequences of the Broadcast Decency Act "may be far worse than a bit of trashy exhibitionism on TV." McElroy's article defended my idea that Jackson's halftime show changed censorship in that it propelled the Broadcast Decency Act into the public interest.

Critic Tom Shales, writing for Television Week, agrees. In an article I found via the Wilson Select database titled "The Real Indecency Is The Show In Washington," Shales said:

> Clearly the saddest and most infuriating irony of the whole mess is that Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell is demagoguing this "issue" into a national frenzy, or at least a federal frenzy, about indecency in the media, thus distracting attention from his attempt to impose a radical relaxation of media ownership rules on the country.

When I wrote my antithesis paper I was still thinking of using Carlin's Supreme Court case in my thesis. I included a paragraph arguing that Carlin's "filthy words" are still filthy by today's standards. I still believe this to be true, and I think I made a solid argument defending my thesis. The problem was that I did not include any

citations to back up my argument. My main reason for holding onto Carlin in my thesis was to make sure that I had enough research in my essay. However, the antithesis paper reaffirmed for me that Jackson "wardrobe malfunction" incident was a good subject for my essay. The antithesis essay put my doubts to rest by showing me that there were people that disagreed with my thesis and also that I could argue my position.

It was because of the categorization essay that I was finally able to decide on my thesis. After I put all of my sources into credible and non-credible categories, I discovered that most of the non-credible sources were on Elvis or Carlin. I simply did not have credible sources on either of the two and made the final decision to cut them completely out of my working thesis. I also divided my citations into sources that were for the FCC and sources that were against the FCC. Again I saw the reoccurring theme that most of my sources were against the FCC and its involvement in mass media. In "The Darker Reaches of the Government," Anthony Mathews warns that if the FCC and the United States government continue to control our television media, "no constitutional guarantee of basic freedoms will exist"(243). It seemed that most of my research made a similar point about the importance of keeping our First Amendment rights in tact.

Even though the categorization exercise was by far the most difficult for me to complete, I learned the most about my working thesis by doing it. The essay made me think more seriously about my sources. In a way, it only makes sense that most of my articles were against the FCC's involvement in media because the articles are part of the media. Why would a journalist, author or any writer suggest that the

FCC should censor mass media when their articles, journals and books could be just as easily censored?

Our First Amendment rights are not limited to television and other technologies, a point that I neglected to consider at the beginning of the semester. Also it proved challenging to put my sources into credible and non-credible categories. I would not cite People as a credible source if I was writing about pharmaceuticals, but I felt that I had to consider the magazine an expert on my subject of Janet Jackson. In other words, it seems to me that credible and non-credible sources can differ depending on the subject matter.

I wish that I could have done the categorization and evaluation exercise earlier in the semester. After taking one look at my notes and prewriting for that exercise, I realized that I had more than enough information on Jackson to write an essay. If I had categorized my sources sooner I would have revised my working thesis much earlier in the semester. And beyond that, I think that this was the exercise where I learned the most about research writing. I plan on working through some of the categorizing exercises the next time I have to write a research essay, especially making a chart to help me sort through my evidence. Perhaps by doing so I will be able to see more clearly what sources will work in my essay and what points I can include in my working thesis.

Even though my working thesis has changed drastically throughout the duration of the semester, I feel that I am now finally happy with my thesis: "Janet Jackson's 2004 Super Bowl wardrobe malfunction has changed the way that Americans view television." I have good evidence supporting my thesis, I can defend my thesis against an antithetical

argument and I know where my own opinion lies. I don't know if I will ever use my knowledge of Jackson's wardrobe malfunction in my everyday life, though if it does come up in conversation, I'll have my answer. But I do think that the skills I learned through revising my working thesis and writing these essays will prove useful in many future essays to come.

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The Web-Based Research Project

Most academics—students and teachers alike—have become comfortable with using the Internet for at least a part of their research. As I have said in many other places in *The Process of Research Writing,* you have to be cautious when using many web-based sources because they aren't necessarily as credible as other popular and academic sources. Nonetheless, the Web still represents a great place to find information on a wide variety of topics, and it is a great place for you to *publish* research on almost any topic.

The Advantages of the Web-Based Research Project

There are many advantages to creating Web sites that have nothing to do with writing research projects. Making Web pages is fun—the Internet is a great place to post pictures of your friends and pets, and it's a good way to share your writing with others through blogging or posting your poetry or short stories. But for the purposes of publishing academic research, I believe the Web has three main advantages over more traditional "paper" outlets.

- **The Web allows you to present your research with graphics, with multimedia, and/or as a "hypertext."**

While paper-based research projects limit you to black-and-white typed text on a page (with perhaps a few graphic elements here and there), Web-based research projects will almost certainly include colors and graphics to enhance the effectiveness of the site. It's also possible to include some simple multimedia elements into your research project—sound clips, short video clips, or animation, for example.

The Web also makes it possible to present your research project not as a linear "beginning to end" essay but as a "hypertext," a type of text that allows for—even encourages—different approaches and readings. I discuss this in a bit more detail later on in this chapter.

- **Your research project can become available to a broad, diverse, and international audience.**

Traditional paper-based research projects usually only reach a small audience—your classmates, your teacher, and perhaps other friends and colleagues. Web-based research projects are available to any of the tens of millions of people all over the world who spend at least some time surfing the Web.

Now, let's be realistic: your Web site is not going to have as many readers as popular sites like Yahoo! or the CNN web site. Just as is the case with traditional publishing, simply making your writing available is no guarantee that you will attract a large audience of readers.

However, the *potential* reach of your Web-based research project is enormous, certainly much larger than the potential audience of a more traditional research project. Further, if you register your site with various search engines and search directories (and most of them provide information on how to do this), your site will eventually show up on the searches that other researchers conduct.

- **The Web Facilitates Collaboration**

Chances are, you are already familiar with one of the Web's most powerful features, the "link:" the highlighted element of text that a Web reader clicks on in order to go to another Web page. The ability to link your Web page to just about any other Web page out there allows you to make a lot of very literal connections to other writers and publications, which is in itself a form of collaboration.

But in a more concrete sense, the Web facilitates collaboration with your colleagues since you can build links to each others' Web sites. This allows writers to work simultaneously on different parts of the same document, and to link to each other when it comes time to put the research project together. In my experiences as writer and a teacher, this approach is an excellent balance between the two extremes of collaboration I describe in Chapter Four ("How to Collaborate and Write With Others").

The Disadvantages of the Web-Based Research Project

While the advantages of creating Web sites for your research are significant, the disadvantages are significant as well. So before you commit yourself and your colleagues to Web-based research project, you need to take a moment to consider some of the challenges you'll face in making your Web site and your abilities to cope with these potential problems.

- **Computer hardware and software access**

To make a Web page, you obviously need to have easy access to a personal computer connected to the Internet, either one you own, one where you live, or one at your school that you can use on a fairly regular basis. You will also need to have at least some basic software to create and edit your Web site and to manipulate graphics. Last, and far from least, you need to have access to a server, which is a computer on a network that delivers (or *serves)* Web pages to users. I discuss all of these issues in more detail later in this chapter.

For some students and teachers, these access issues are very difficult to overcome. For example, at the university where I teach, students don't have "easy access" to a server where they can publish their Web sites. While this is a state of affairs that is changing, it means that it is quite challenging for my students to publish their Web sites, even though most of them have access to a personal computer.

- **Learning about HTML and other computer literacy skills**

Making web pages using Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and HTML editing software is actually surprisingly easy. Making a *basic* Web site—made up of individual Web pages that are just text, links, and simple graphics— is not "computer programming" in the sense that it requires special computer skills or training.

However, making a Web site does require a degree of computer skill and literacy that many of my students and fellow English teachers have not quite achieved. In other words, while you don't have to be a "computer geek" to make a simple Web site, you do need to be relatively "computer literate" to learn how to make a Web site.

- **Time, time, and time!**

Creating, uploading, trouble-shooting, and editing Web sites simply takes time, certainly more time than simply typing an essay with a word processor. You are already probably spending a lot of time researching and writing about your research project; given the time it takes to learn how to make Web pages and then to actually make them, it might be logistically impossible for you and your classmates to put together Web-based research projects in an academic term.

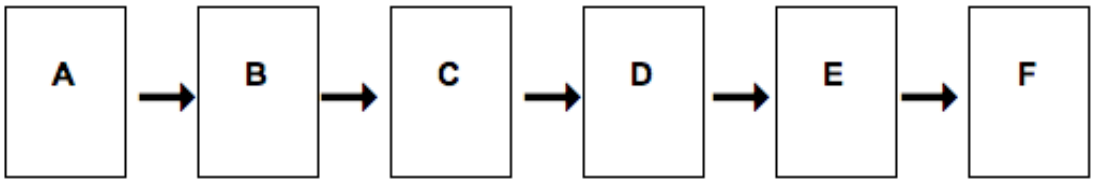
But it is also more time consuming because when you create a web site—even a simple one as a class project—you are moving from the role of "academic writer" to "Web *publisher*." And as a Web publisher, you need to concern yourself with things like layout, colors, links, and graphics. So if you and your classmates decide to present your research on the Web, you should probably budget more time for completing the final version of your web site than you would if you were writing an essay or creating a research portfolio.

Web Publishing versus Hypertext

After considering the advantages and disadvantages of creating a research-based Web site in the first place, the next step is to decide if you want to merely ***publish*** your research essay on the Web, or if you want to develop a ***hypertext*** version of your research project.

By merely "publish," I mean the process where you take your research essay as it exists on paper, convert it into an "HTML file" or as a "PDF file" (Portable Document Format) and then upload it to the Web. By hypertext, I mean the process where you create a series of HTML files that contain the text to your research project and that contain highlighted words, phrases, or images that allow potential readers to explore and read your research in nonsequential ways.

A Web published research essay is really no different than the sort of traditional research essay project I discussed in chapter ten, except that it is available on the World Wide Web. If we were to map this essay, it might look something like this:



With Web published research essay projects, you are expecting your readers to read in a particular order, from beginning to end, from "A" to "F." In fact, each of these different parts of your research essay project could be part of one text file, available to your reader to scroll through or print and read later. And of course, if you decide to publish your research essay as a PDF, then readers will have to either print your essay or use software like Adobe Acrobat Reader to read your essay.

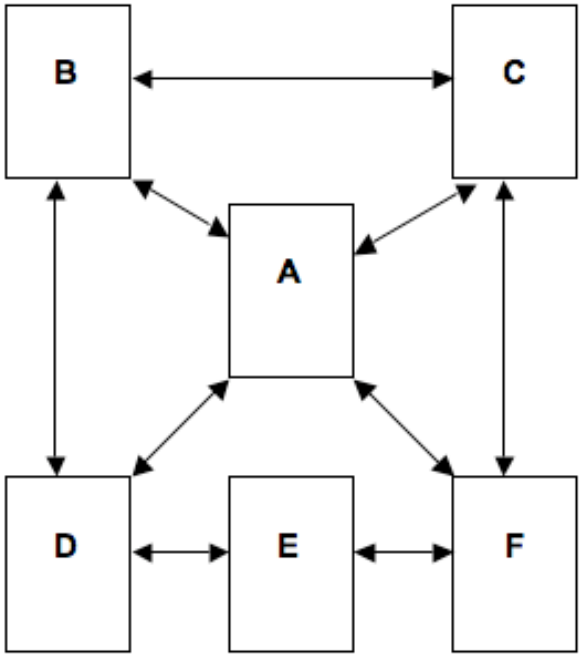
There are two advantages to web publishing your essays like this:

- **It is easy to do.** Since most word processing software allows users to convert files into HTML or PDFs, publishing a paper-based research project is simply a matter of saving in a different format and uploading to a server.

- **Web publishing preserves the order and "feel" of a paper-based research project.** This is especially true of PDFs.

The main disadvantage of Web publishing like this is it isn't as dynamic or as flexible as a hypertextual research project. This depends on the audience of course, but often times, web readers are more likely to read and use your web site if it is presented as hypertext intended to be read on the screen.

A "hypertextual" research project might be mapped like this:



In this example, each of the boxes represents a different part of the Web site, and thus a different file—instead of scrolling from one part of the Web site to the next, readers have to follow links to other parts of the site. While most hypertext Web sites begin with some starting point (often a sort of "table of contents" page), they are written and designed in a way that allows for multiple ways of reading. Readers could as easily read from point "D" to point "F" as they can read from point "A" to point "B," and, if the hypertext is effectively presented, both readings will be informative to the reader.

The main advantage of presenting a research project as a hypertext is basically the opposite of simply "Web publishing" a research essay: hypertexts are dynamic and more interactive than traditional essays presented on the Web, and readers they give readers more and different opportunities to interact with them.

Think of your own reading habits when it comes to the World Wide Web: chances are, you are more likely to read through a site that presents text in small chunks and that allows you to select links to the part of the site that interests you. Further, if you are a typical Web reader, you are less likely to read through a site if you have to scroll down the page or print out the site to read it.

Along these lines, the main disadvantages of research projects presented as hypertexts are the opposite of Web published research essays:

- **They aren't as easy to make.** For one thing, it might take a considerable amount of work to divide up the parts of your research project into different

parts of a hypertext. For another, each separate part or "page" of your Web site (represented here by the different lettered boxes) is a separate HTML document that you need to create and maintain. While this isn't difficult to do, it does take some time and effort, certainly more so than if you were to simply convert a word-processed file into a Web page.

- **Hypertextual research projects can't preserve the order of presentation.** After all, one of the points of a hypertext is to give your reader options in how they want to read it. While you can create hypertexts that give readers the option of reading the project straight through, your readers might not choose to read that way, which can cause some confusion.

A Web Writing Recipe: What You Need to Get Started, and Where You Can Go To Get Help

If you want to publish your research writing on the web, you will need to learn a few basic computer skills, you'll need some modest computer hardware and software, and you'll need to have access to computer server space that can host your web sites. Here is a basic "Web Writing recipe" to get you started.

A little knowledge of HTML. Hypertext Markup Language is the basic coding system that makes the Web work. *Technically*, you don't have to use HTML to make your web sites, but not knowing anything about HTML can be very confusing.

Fortunately, HTML is fairly easy to learn. There are many guides to HTML available for free on the Web (and the *The Process of Research Writing* Catalyst Web site links to some of them), and there are also many books available that provide basic instruction in working with HTML.

Some basic computer hardware and software. Most personal computers connected to the Internet can be used to make Web pages. However, not all personal computers have the basic software needed to make Web pages.

You can make a Web page with just about any text editing program, even something as simple as "Note Pad," which comes on all Windows-based personal computers. However, you will probably want to use a software application specifically designed for making Web pages. There are a variety of free applications that can help you, and there are links to some of these programs at the *The Process of Research Writing* Catalyst Web site, though the best programs are commercial products. Currently, the two best known products for making Web sites are Microsoft's FrontPage and Macromedia's Dreamweaver. You may want to ask the Information Technology specialists at school about the availability of this software on your campus.

Finally, since you will probably want to include some graphics and photographic images with your Web site, you will also need software that handles graphics and photographs. Again, some of these products are free (though the best ones

are not), and you may want to ask the Information Technology specialists at school about the availability of this software.

Access to a web server. In order to make your Web site available to other readers, you need to upload your Web site (the HTML files and any of the graphics accompany your site) to a *Web server*. A server "serves" files to Web readers (usually known as "clients" or "users") when they request a particular Web site by entering in a specific web address.

Increasingly, many colleges and universities are providing web server space to the academic community so that they can publish their work on the World Wide Web. Ask your local Information Technology specialist for information. There are also numerous other ways to make your Web site available on a server, both for a modest cost or for free.

The Assignment

> Create a web site to present your research project. Keep in mind that you will need to decide early in the process if you want to present your research as a "web published" version of a linear essay or if you want to present your research in a "hypertextual" format. You should keep in mind an audience of your classmates and your teacher, but remember that your web site will be accessible by anyone on the Internet interested in your topic. Your web site should have as much content as a more conventional essay, and you will need to cite evidence as appropriate as well.

There are many possible variations to this assignment. For example, since web site projects are excellent opportunities for collaboration, this might be a good project to work on with your classmates.

The Poster Session Project

At many academic conferences in a variety of different disciplines, faculty and student participants often have the option to present their research to other conference participants in a "Poster Session." It's similar in some ways to a science fair of the sort you might remember from junior high school: participants literally make a poster or some other sort of multi-media presentation (photographs, charts, sound recordings, video) that represent the presenter's research.

The poster session project is different from the other alternatives to the traditional research paper I've discussed in this chapter because it is a *supplement* rather than a *replacement* for other research writing projects. But poster sessions are important supplements to other writing projects because they provide a different way for researchers to interact with each other and their projects, and they can work well for students in composition courses, too.

The Assignment

> Based on the work you have completed with your research project, create a presentation for poster session. Your presentation could be a poster, but it does not have to be limited to just a poster. You might include other sorts of models or representations, audio files, video, etc.-- use your imagination! During our poster session, you will be expected to answer questions from others about your presentation.

Poster sessions can be small, limited to a single class, or, as the example of the Eastern Michigan University "Celebration of Student Writing" demonstrates, they can be very large. You might also supplement their poster with a short essay that explains what choices you made in putting together your presentation and why.

Sidebar
A Program-wide Poster Session: The Eastern Michigan University "Celebration of Student Writing"

Students visit and browse classmate's projects at the Celebration of Student Writing.

Eastern Michigan University's First Year Composition program has an innovative program-wide Poster Session presentation called the "Celebration of Student Writing." Every semester, hundreds of students enrolled in first year composition courses and their instructors gather for the afternoon-long celebration. They share posters and presentations of their own and they browse and visit the posters and presentations of their classmates.

What kinds of posters and presentations do students put together? "Sometimes, whole classes work on a single project, or a single-themed project," said Linda Adler-Kassner, the director of the first year composition program at EMU. "Others do individual projects related to a single theme. For example, one student made life-sized cardboard people representing the communities they studied, then made speech balloons coming from them to give some details about their findings and wrote

Cardboard cut-outs represent the members of a student's research community.

explanations about the process."

Other projects have included the use of video, interactive games where audiences try to answer questions about a research project, models that represent some aspect of the research project, and almost every imaginable sort of poster. "We've even had students who dress up in costume to represent their research," Adler-Kassner said.

The celebration is the culmination of the first year writing experience where student research focuses on issues of language and community. Students write a variety of research writing projects throughout the semester and then share their work during the celebration. And students take their posters and presentations for the celebration quite seriously. "It's one thing to come up with a catchy project-- and that takes some thinking, too-- and another to figure out how to let visitors know how much work, and what kind of work, has gone into coming to that point."

The main audience for the celebration is other students and instructors involved in the first year composition program at EMU. But other members of the EMU community attend the celebration as well-- other students, faculty, and university administrators. And the large and diverse audience bring an added significance to the students' research. "Students feel like people actually do care about what they write, and that the writing of others is actually interesting to them," Adler-Kassner said. "They feel more a part of the institution because this event is attended by so many folks. They feel like they have something to say, and that people are interested."

For more information on the Eastern Michigan University First Year Composition program's "Celebration of Student Writing," visit the program's web site at http://www.emich.edu/english/fycomp

Chapter 12
Citing Your Research Using MLA or APA Style

- What is Citation For, Anyway?
- Finding Out More About MLA and APA Citation
- An Abbreviated Guide to MLA Style
  - Parenthetical Citation
  - Formatting Works Cited Pages, Annotated Bibliographies, and Works Consulted Pages
- Working with APA
  - Parenthetical Citation
  - Formatting Reference Pages and Annotated Bibliographies

What is Citation For, Anyway?

As I've discussed throughout *The Process of Research Writing Writing,* citation is one of the key elements that distinguishes academic research writing from other kinds of writing. Academic readers are keenly interested in knowing where the writer found her evidence, in many cases so the reader can retrieve that evidence and read it themselves if they want.

Second, academic writers are also very interested in giving credit to other writers' ideas. As I discussed in chapter three, "Quoting and Paraphrasing Your Research," to *not* give proper credit to another writer's words or ideas is plagiarism. To not use citation in academic writing is simply against the rules.

So, in the most general sense, the goal of citation in academic writing is pretty straight-forward: properly citing your research in your writing explains to your readers where you found the evidence to support your points.

Finding Out More About MLA and APA Citation

There are several different sets of "rules" that academics use for citing research. The two most commonly used in writing classes and used by academics working in the humanities (things like English, history, philosophy, Women's studies, and education) and the "soft sciences" (psychology, sociology, political science, and so forth) are the guidelines of the Modern Language Association and those of the American Psychological Association.

While academic journals that focus on scholarship having to do with literature and language tend to follow the MLA guidelines, there are other English studies journals that use the style rules of the APA.

This chapter includes an ***abbreviated version*** of the basic rules of both MLA and APA style you will need to cite most types of materials you include in your research project. But for materials and details about citation that you don't find included here, you may want to consult the official style guides, their Web sites, or other documentation sources.

The definitive guide for the rules of MLA is:

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* Sixth Edition. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

For APA style, the definitive guide is:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.* Fifth Edition. Washington: APA, 2001.

Both the MLA and APA style guides are very complete. However, as you work on citing your research and review the guidelines I offer here, keep in mind two things:

- **No style guide accounts for everything.** While there are rules of citation for *almost* all of the different types of evidence you might use in your research projects, you might come across some type of evidence that doesn't seem to be covered. Talk with your teacher when this happens, but you may need to approximate what you think is the proper citation style.

- **Style guides are evolving, changing, and open to interpretation.** While it may seem that the rules for citation in MLA, APA, and other style guides have always and forever been the same and are completely beyond any interpretation, this is not the case. The most obvious recent example as to how style guides change is the internet. Up until a few years ago, there were no good rules with any of the common style guides as to how to cite information from a web site because there *were* no web sites.

An Abbreviated Guide to MLA Style

Parenthetical Citation

MLA style uses "parenthetical citation" instead of footnotes or endnotes to indicate within the text the source of a quote or a paraphrase. There should be enough information within the parenthetical citation to help your reader locate the complete bibliographic information on your "works cited" page.

In MLA style, it's best to weave parenthetical citations into the flow of the sentence—avoid merely "dropping" citations into the text that disrupt it. Also, be sure that the parenthetical citation information clearly refers to the material you are citing. See Chapter Three, "Quoting and Paraphrasing Your Research," for suggestions on how to do this effectively.

Author in a phrase

Whenever possible, incorporate the name of the author into the sentence and note the page number in the parentheses. Use the author's full name on the first reference, and the author's last name on each subsequent reference.

Sara Baase writes in A Gift of Fire "The desire for the advantages of small community life ... is prompting many professionals and knowledge workers to move to small towns" (296).

Author in the citation

When you don't name the author in the sentence, you need to include it in the parenthetical citation.

Still, many people "prefer city life for its vibrancy and career and social opportunities" (Baase 296).

Two or three authors

Name all of the authors, preferably in the sentence, but if not, in the parenthetical citation. Use the authors' full names on the first reference, and the authors' last names on each subsequent reference.

As David D. McKenny, Werner M. Newhausser, and David Julius explain, while we know a lot about how people detect heat, "little is known about how we detect cold" (52).

Group or corporate author

If the text is the product of a group, a committee, a corporation, etc., use the group or corporate author as you would an author name.

According to the National Research Council's report Inland Navigation System Planning, the U.S. Army Corps

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of Engineers finds itself between those advocating for
commerce and those wanting to protect the environment
(ix).
```

Unknown author
Use the title of the work or a shortened version of it instead of the author's name. Generally speaking, you should avoid using phrases like "anonymous" or "unknown author."

```
As reported in the article "TV Dropped from Medicare
Bill," ...
```

Author of two or more pieces of evidence in your project
It's not uncommon to cite different works from the same author in an essay. When this happens, you need to make it clear in your citation which work you are quoting.

```
The Financial Services Information Sharing and
Analysis Center was designed to combat cybercrime
(Markoff, "New Center," C-2).
```

Work in an anthology
When you quote a work that is reprinted in an anthology, use the name of the author of the work (not the name of the editor) and the page numbers from the anthology. In your Works Cited page, you will note the name of the editor and the anthology.

```
Lehan connects the character Gatsby with other myths
of man-god figures, both as seen through his eyes and
the eyes of other characters (80-1).
```

Indirect source
An indirect quote is when you quote from a piece of evidence where that writer is quoting someone else. To properly cite indirect quotes, use the abbreviation "qtd." in the parenthetical citation to explain the source of the indirect quote.

```
Steve Miller said "I have no financial incentive to
kid you about anything" (qtd. in Naughton 24).
```

A work without a page number (including Web sites)
This would include quotations and paraphrases from a Web site or other Internet source, from a television show, a radio program, and so forth. On the first reference to this sort of evidence, try to work an explanation of the source within the sentence itself to make it clear why you aren't noting a page number.

"The Term Hacker," according to Susan Brenner's web site Cybercrimes.net, "also tends to connote membership in the global community defined by the net."

The CNN web site reported about a recent international conference about Internet crime in the article "World cybercrime experts see need for laws, ties."

You should also use this approach when you are citing newspaper, journal, or other types of articles that originally appeared in a "traditional" print source but that you discovered through a Web site or a database that did not note page numbers. This can make for some awkward phrasing, but it is important to indicate that the version of the text you are using is not paper-based but is Web-based.

According to Robert Pear in his 1999 article "Drug Companies Getting F.D.A. Reprimands for False or Misleading Advertising," available through the New York Times Web Site, "The Federal Government has repeatedly reprimanded drug companies" for making false claims in their ads.

On references after the first one to the evidence, refer to it by the last name of the author.

Formatting of Works Cited Pages, Annotated Bibliographies, and Works Consulted Documents

Whenever you include quotes and paraphrases in your research essays, you **must** note the bibliographic information about where you found this evidence. In MLA style, this is called a "Works Cited" page. The "Works Cited" page is a list of citations which is alphabetized based on author's last names (or, if a piece of evidence doesn't have an author, on the title of the evidence, not counting the words "A," "An," or "The") that explains where you found your research.

Works cited pages include *only* the evidence that you quoted in your essay. Unlike an annotated bibliography (like the project I describe in Chapter Six), a works cited pages include only a citation and not an annotation. Finally, you might be required to put together a "Works Consulted" list. This is a list of citations for all the work that you considered but didn't necessarily quote in your research project.

MLA style calls for Works Cited pages to be double-spaced with a hanging indent of a half inch, as you can see in the examples here. The specific format for each of your entries on your Works Cited page will vary according to the type of evidence. But in general, each of your entries should include enough information about the research you are quoting or paraphrasing so that the reader could find this research themselves if they wanted to find it.

Books

Works Cited entries for a book always include:

- *The Author or authors.* Last name first of the first author; for each author after that, it is first name first.

- *Title of the book.* You should underline the title or put it in italics.

- *Publication information.* This includes the name of the publisher and the city of publication.

- *Year of publication.*

Book, single author

Brackett, Virginia. F. Scott Fitzgerald: Writer of the Jazz Age. Greensboro, NC : Morgan Reynolds Publishers, 2002.

Book, two or more authors

With multiple authors, list the first author last name first, separated from the author's first name with a comma. List all of the authors first name followed by the last name.

Jennings, Simon, Michel J. Kaiser, and John D. Reynolds. Marine Fisheries Ecology. Oxford: Blackwell Science, 2001.

Book, corporate or group author

National Research Council. Inland Navigation System Planning: The Upper Mississippi River—Illinois Waterway. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2001.

Selection from an anthology or a chapter from a book that is edited

Lehan, Richard. "The Great Gatsby--The Text as Construct: Narrative Knots and Narrative Unfolding." F. Scott Fitzgerald : New Perspectives. Eds. Jackson R. Bryer, Alan Margolies, and Ruth Prigozy. Athens, GA: U Georgia P, 2000. 78-89.

Don't use "p." or "pp." for noting page numbers.

If you include two or more items from the same anthology or edited book, you should list the edited book as an entry by itself in the works cited page.

Bryer, Jackson R., Alan Margolies, and Ruth Prigozy, Eds. F. Scott Fitzgerald : New Perspectives. Athens, GA: U Georgia P, 2000.

In addition, list each of the selections from the anthology according to the author of the selection, the title, and then a reference to the anthology.

Lehan, Richard. "The Great Gatsby--The text as construct: narrative knots and narrative unfolding." Bryer, Margolies, and Prigozy, 78-89.

Book, translation

Derrida, Jacques. Writing and Difference. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978.

Book, edition other than the first

Baase, Sara. Gift of Fire : Social, Legal, and Ethical Issues for Computers and the Internet. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Entry from a reference work
If there is a specific author for the entry, list it. Otherwise, begin with the title of the entry.

Gale, Robert L. "Nick Carraway." An F. Scott Fitzgerald Encyclopedia. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998.

"Crime." The Random House Dictionary of the English Language. 2nd ed. New York: Random House, 1987.

Periodicals

Works Cited entries for magazines, journals, newspapers, and other periodicals include:

- *The Author or authors.* Last name first of the first author; for each author after that, it is first name first.
- *Article Title.* Enclose the title and sub-title in quotes, with the period at the end of the title inside the quotes.
- *Publication information.* This includes the periodical title, underlined or italicized; the volume and issue number, when they are available; and the date of publication. For journals, the year goes in parentheses followed by a colon and the page numbers. For magazines and newspapers, list the month or the day and the month before the year, and don't use parentheses. Don't use "p." or "pp." to indicate page numbers.
- *Date of publication.* This listing will vary according the frequency of the periodical, whether or not it is published by volume, and so forth.

Article in a weekly magazine

Wood, Chris. "Fighting Net Crime." Macleans 12 June 2000: 38-40.

Article in a monthly magazine

Canby, Peter. "The Forest Primeval: A Month in Congo's Wildest Jungle." Harper's Magazine July 2002: 41-56.

Article in a newspaper

Markoff, John. "New Center Will Combat Computer Security Threats." The New York Times 1 October 1999: C2.

Editorial or Letter to the Editor
After the title, indicate if the selection is an editorial or a letter as indicated in the examples below.

McLoughlin, Mary Lou. Letter. Newsweek 5 August 2002: 12.

"Hauptman, Timmer, Carlberg for Council." Editorial. The Ann Arbor News 22 October 2002: A8.

Article in a journal paginated by volume
Some academic journals number the pages according to the volume instead of the issue.

Vann, Irvin B., and G. David Garson. "Crime Mapping and Its Extension to Social Science Analysis." Social Science Computer Review 19 (2001): 471-479.

Article in a journal paginated by issue
Some academic journals number the pages of each issue. When this is the case, put a period after the volume number and before the issue number.

Mansfield, Peter. "The Cancer Industry." The Ecologist 32.3 (2002): 23.

Unsigned article in a periodical
When no author's name is available in any type of periodic publication, begin with the name of the article. When alphabetizing it on your Works Cited page, exclude "A," "An," and "The." For example, an unsigned article in a magazine would look like this:

"An Overdose on Drug Advertising. Is it Driving Up Costs?" Business Week 22 May 2000: 52.

Electronic and Internet-based Sources

Properly citing things from electronic and Internet-based sources like the World Wide Web, email, newsgroups, and CD-ROMs can be confusing. Because these resources are still relatively "new" to the academic community (at least relative to things like books and paper journals), there is still some debate about the precise method of citing some of these sources. The sixth edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* makes a lot of progress in addressing these kinds of sources, but questions remain and new types of electronic sources are coming available all the time.

Even though electronic and internet-based sources may look different from traditional journals and books, the basic elements and goals of citation remain the same. Entries should include:

- *Author or Authors,* which again, should be last name first of the first author and first name first for each author after the first. Unlike traditional books and periodicals, the names of authors of electronic resources (especially Web sites) are often located at the end of the article or another location.

- *Title of the article or selection.* For an online journal or periodical, a selection from a database, a scholarly project, or similar resource, indicate the title of the article or selection with quotes.

- *Publishing information.* This might be the title of the online journal or periodical, or the name of the database, scholarly project, or similar resource. This information should appear underlined or in italics.

- *Date of publication.* As is the case with periodicals, this listing will vary according the frequency of publication of the periodical, whether or not it is published by volume, and so forth. As is the case with the names of the author or authors, finding the date of publication for many electronic resources is challenging. Be sure to look for it carefully, including at the end of the selection.

There are two other elements that are generally common to electronic and internet-based sources:

- *Information about the type of electronic resource.* As the examples suggest, you need to indicate that your piece of evidence is from an electronic database, a Web site, an email message, and so forth.

- *The date of access.* Quite literally, this means the date that you found the research. This is important because, as most "Web surfers" have experienced, electronic resources can change and be unavailable without warning.

A "text only" periodical article available via an electronic database

As I discussed in chapter two, most community college, college, and university libraries nowadays offer their patrons access to electronic versions of some traditional print resources. These databases, such as Wilson Select and Articles First, include "full text" of articles that appeared originally as an article in the print publication as part of the entries.

These sorts of electronically available resources are just as credible as print resources because they are essentially one in the same. The electronic version of an article from *Time* magazine is just as credible as the same article from the "paper version" of *Time* magazine. The concern comes in how you properly cite this material.

If the periodical article is available to you as "text only" and it does not include page numbers, layout, or graphics, you need to indicate clearly that you are accessing that article via an electronic database. To properly cite an article that is only text, you need to first note all of the relevant information you would in a print version of the article and then indicate information about the electronic database, including:

- *The name of the database.* In this example, Wilson Select.
- *The library or library system where you accessed that database.* In this case, it would be Eastern Michigan University Halle Library. If you don't know this information, write "Electronic."
- *The date of access.* That is, when you found the article.
- *The address of the database or where you accessed the database.*

Wechsler, Jill. "Minority Docs See DTC Ads as Way to Address 'Race Gap.'" Pharmaceutical Executive May 2002: 32, 34. WilsonSelect Database. Eastern Michigan University Halle Library. 20 October 2002. <http://www.emich.edu/halle>.

A "PDF" periodical article available via an electronic database
Increasingly, databases like Wilson Select are making articles available in Portable Document Format (PDF). PDFs, which have to be downloaded to a computer and viewed or printed out with software like Adobe Acrobat, look exactly like the print version of a periodical article. They include page numbers, graphics, charts, and anything else associated with the original layout. Essentially, they are the same as the print version (or at least a photocopy of the print version).

Because of this, I recommend that you cite PDF versions of periodical articles that you find via an electronic database the same way that you cite an article you find with print.

Article in a Periodical Published on the World Wide Web
To cite an article from a periodical that is published on the World Wide Web, adapt as closely as possible the rules for citing articles that appear in print. The major difference is you need to indicate the Web address or "URL" of the publication.

Sauer, Geoffrey. "Hackers, Order, and Control." Bad Subjects February 1996. 15 August 2002. <http://eserver.org/bs/24/sauer.html>.

Goozner, Merrill, and Andrew Sullivan. "The Pharmaceutical Industry." Slate 9 April 2001. 13 January 2002. <http://slate.msn.com>

Article in a Web Version of a Print Periodical or Other Media Outlet
Many newspapers and popular magazines release a "web version" of the publication. Cite these sorts of documents as you would articles from a periodical published on the Web.

Pear, Robert. "Drug Companies Getting F.D.A. Reprimands for False or Misleading Advertising." New York Times 28 March 1999. 15 August 2002. <http://www.nytimes.com>.

"World Cybercrime Experts See Need for Laws, Ties." CNN.com 16 October 2002. 24 October 2002. <http://www.cnn.com>.

Book Being Accessed Electronically Through a Database or The Web

As is the case with periodicals, include the same information you would with a traditional print book, along with the date of access and the information about the database of the Web site.

Icove, David J., Karl A. Seger, and William R. VonStorch. Computer Crime: A Crimefighter's Handbook. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly and Associates, 1995. Net Library E-Book. Eastern Michigan University Halle Library. 27 October 2002. <http://www.emich.edu/halle>.

Scholarly or Reference Web-based Database

F. Scott Fitzgerald Centenary Homepage. University of South Carolina. 16 July 2002. < http://www.sc.edu/fitzgerald/>.

General Web Page or Web Site
If available, include the author or authors of the Web page or site, the title, and the date of publication. If there is no title available, include a descriptive phrase such as "home page," not underlined, italicized, or within quotation marks.

Stanger, Keith. "Library Guy" Keith Stanger's Home Port. 7 September 2002. 24 October 2002. <http://keithstanger.com>

Krause, Steven. Home page. 28 March 2005. <http://www.stevendkrause.com>.

When you are missing information about the web site, cite based on the information that you have available.

Posting to a emailing list, online group, or newsgroup
Begin with the author's name (even if the name is obviously a pseudonym), followed by the subject line of the post, the phrase *Online posting*, the name of the emailing list, group, or newsgroup, and the URL of the group, if available. If it's possible, cite from the group's archives.

Denkinger, Troy. "Re: [SLE] very newbie network quest." Online Posting. 1 February 2000. English SuSE Linux Discussions. 24 October 2002. <http://lists.suse.com/archive/suse-linux-e/2000-Feb/>.

Email message

Poe, Marshall. "Re: Reflections/Questions about your JEP article." Email to the author. 5 June 2002.

Synchronous communication message
This would include a posting in a MOO, a MUD, an IRC, or other chat format. Whenever possible, be sure to cite from the group's archives.

Spehar, Donna L. "Researching Who Done It: Building Online Research Skills for Composition II Students." C&W Online 2001/Connections MOO. 16 April 2001. 24 October 2002. <http://web.nwe.ufl.edu/cwonline2001/archives/sphear-0416.html>.

CD-ROM, diskette, or similar medium
Cite this kind of source like you were citing the print version of the resource, but indicate the nature of the medium in the citation.

Johns Hopkins University and the Annenberg/CPB Project. A Doll House: Based on the Play by Henrik Ibsen. South Burlington, VT: The Annenberg/CPB Multimedia Collection, 1997.

Other Kinds of Sources

Interview
List the person interviewed as if they were the author. If the interview came from another source (radio or television, for example), indicate that with the citation information. If it is an interview that you conducted, be sure to list that and how you conducted the interview (personal interview, telephone interview, email interview, etc.)

Simmons, Gene. Interview with Terry Gross. Fresh Air. National Public Radio. 4 February 2002.

Wannamaker, Annette. Personal Interview. 13 August 2000.

Lecture or Speech
List the name of the speaker, the title in quotation marks, the name of the institution or group sponsoring the speech, the place, and the date. If there is no title for the speech, use an appropriate label such as "Lecture" or "Keynote speech."

Mauk, Jonathan. "Anti-Reading: Evaluating Student Essays in Current-Traditional Pedagogy." Conference on College Composition and Communication Convention. Milwaukee, WI. 29 March 1996.

Government Document
If identified, begin with the last name of the author; if not, begin with the name of the government followed by the appropriate agency or subdivision. Only abbreviate things if they can be easily understood. For congressional documents, be sure to note the number, session, and house of Congress ("S" for Senate and "H" or "HR" for House of Representatives), and the type (Report, Resolution, Document, etc.) in abbreviated form, and number the material. If you are citing from the *Congressional Record,* provide only the date and page number. Otherwise, end with the publication information, often the Government Printing Office (GPO).

United States Congress, House Committee on Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Oceans,

and Wildlife. Ecosystem-based Fishery Management and the Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. U.S. House 107th Congress. Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, 2002.

Pamphlet or Brochure
Treat pamphlets and brochures as books. If the name of the author is unavailable, begin with the name of the pamphlet or brochure.

Sun Safety for Kids: The SunWise School Program. Washington, DC: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2000.

Film, DVD, or Videocassette
Generally, begin with the title, underlined or italicized. Then list the director, the company distributing the work, the version of the work you are citing if it is either a DVD or video, and the year of release. If you are focusing on a particular performer, director, producer, or writer, you can begin with that person's name. For example:

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. Dir. Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema, 2001.

Luhrmann, Baz, dir. Moulin Rouge. 2000. DVD. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2001.

Television or Radio Program
Cite the way that you would a film, DVD or video, but be sure to note the network.

The Daily Show. John Stewart. Comedy Central Network. 24 October 2002.

All Things Considered. National Public Radio. 24 March 2001.

An Abbreviated Guide to APA Style

Parenthetical Citation

APA style uses "parenthetical citation" to indicate quotations, summaries, paraphrases, and other references to evidence that supports your point. There should be enough information within the parenthetical citation to help your reader locate the complete bibliographic information on your "References" page.

In APA style, the general rule is to indicate the author of the evidence you are citing immediately followed by the date (in parentheses) when that evidence was published. Also, it's best to try to "weave" the citation into the text of your essay instead of merely "dropping" quotes into place. See Chapter Three, "Quoting and Paraphrasing Your Research," for suggestions on how to do this effectively.

Author in a phrase

To indicate a paraphrase, use the author's last name followed immediately by the date of publication in parentheses.

Baase (1997) suggests that the appeals of living in smaller communities has been attractive to many information professionals.

When you are quoting directly from the author, you should still note the author's last name followed by the date of publication in parentheses. In addition, at the end of the quotation, list the page number, preceded by "p.," in parentheses.

Still, Baase (1997) indicates that many professionals "prefer city life for its vibrancy and career and social opportunities" (p. 296).

Author in the citation

When you don't name the author in the sentence, you need to include it in the parenthetical citation.

The threat some believe the Internet represents a serious threat to community that needs to be regulated with laws (Baase, 1997).

Two authors

Use both author's last names in all references. When naming the authors within the text of your essay, join their names with the word "and;" when noting them within the citation, use an ampersand (&).

```
Skinner and Fream (1997) found differences in
attitudes about computer crime among men and women.

There are differences in attitudes about computer
crime among men and women (Skinner & Fream, 1997).
```

Three to Five authors
Use all of the authors' last names for the first reference. For each subsequent reference, use the first author's last name and the phrase "*et al.*"

```
Hawisher, LeBlanc, Moran, and Selfe (1996) point out
that before 1980, the computer was for most English
teachers "new and difficult territory" (p.48).

Hawisher et al. (1996) also state...
```

For **six or more authors,** use only the first author's last name followed by the phrase "*et al.*" on all references, including the first.

Group or corporate author
If the text is the product of a group, a committee, a corporation, etc., use the group or corporate author as you would an author name. If the name of the group is long, use the complete name on the first reference, followed by an abbreviation in brackets. Use the abbreviation on subsequent references.

```
According to the National Research Council (2001), the
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers often finds itself
between those advocating for commerce and those
wanting to protect the environment.
```

Unknown author
Use the title of the work or a shortened version of it instead of the author's name.

```
Famous personalities have become an important tool in
direct to consumer (DTC) drug marketing ("DTC
Marketing: Special Report," 2002).
```

Two or more sources in the same parenthetical citation
Writings in APA style commonly use multiple sources in one parenthetical citation when the writer is summarizing evidence. In

instances like this, list the works alphabetically by the author's last name and separate each entry by a semi-colon.

```
However, hackers might also be considered "good" and
helpful in preventing computer crime as well (Neighly,
2000; Palmer, 2001).
```

For multiple works by the same author, note the author's last name and the years of the works, separated by a comma.

Author of two or more pieces of evidence in your project
It's not uncommon to cite different works from the same author in an essay. APA style makes clear which piece of evidence you are referring to by the year of publication—for example, (Markoff, 2000), (Markoff, 2001).

If the year is the same, attach the suffix "a," "b," "c," and so forth after the year. The suffixes are then assigned to specific articles in the reference list—for example, (Markoff, 2000 a), (Markoff, 2000b).

Work in an anthology or chapter in a book
When you quote a work that is reprinted in an anthology, use the name of the author of the work (not the name of the editor) and the page numbers from the anthology. In your References page, you will note the name of the editor and the anthology or book.

```
Lehan (2000) connects the character Gatsby with other
myths of man-god figures, both as seen through his
eyes and the eyes of other characters.
```

Indirect source
An indirect quote is when you quote from a piece of evidence where that writer is quoting someone else. Note the source of the quote as you would with any other parenthetical citation, but make it clear in the sentence that your source is quoting someone else.

```
According to Naughton (2000), Steve Miller said "I
have no financial incentive to kid you about anything"
(p. 24).
```

A work without a date (including Web sites)
For a web site or any other document that doesn't have a date of publication, note "n.d." for "no date" in the parentheses.

```
"The Term Hacker," according to Susan Brenner's web
site Cybercrimes.net (n.d.), "also tends to connote
membership in the global community defined by the
net."
```

Personal Communications
In APA style, you should include parenthetical references to any personal communications within your essay. This would include things like letters, email correspondence, personal interviews, and the like. APA style also discourages including this sort of evidence on a "Reference" page. See the discussion about including Email messages, interviews, and lecturers or speeches in the next section.

Formatting of Reference Pages, Bibliographies, and Annotated Bibliographies

Whenever you include quotes and paraphrases in your research essays, you must note the bibliographic information about where you found this evidence. In APA style, this is called a "Reference" page. A Reference page is a list of citations which is alphabetized based on author's last names (or, if a piece of evidence doesn't have an author, on the title of the evidence, not counting the words "A," "An," or "The") that explains where you found your research.

Reference pages include *only* the evidence that you quoted in your essay. A "bibliography" is a list of all of the works that you consulted but that you didn't necessarily quote. Unlike an annotated bibliography (like the project I describe in Chapter Six), a reference pages include only a citation and not an annotation.

APA style calls for reference pages to be double-spaced with a hanging indent of a half inch, as you can see in the examples here. The specific format for each of your entries on your reference page will vary according to the type of evidence. But in general, each of your entries should include enough information about the research you are quoting or paraphrasing so that the reader could find this research themselves if they wanted to find it.

Books

Reference page entries for a book always include:

- *The Author or authors.* List all of the authors last name first and only the initials of the first and middle names. Separate multiple authors with a comma and separate the last author from the list with an ampersand.

- *Publication date.* Enclose the date in parentheses.

- *Title of the book.* You should underline the title or put it in italics. Capitalize *only* the first letter of the first word of the title and the first letter of the first word after a colon, unless the word is a proper noun.

- *Publication information.* This includes the name of the publisher and the city of publication.

Book, single author

Brackett, V. (2002). F. Scott Fitzgerald : writer of the jazz age. Greensboro, N.C. : Morgan Reynolds Publishers.

Book, two or more authors
With multiple authors, list all of the authors last name first followed by the writer's first initial. List the authors as they appear on the book, and end the list with an ampersand.

Jennings, S., Kaiser, M. & Reynolds, J. (2001). Marine fisheries ecology. Oxford: Blackwell Science.

Book, corporate or group author

National Research Council. (2001). Inland navigation system planning: The upper Mississippi river—Illinois waterway. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Selection from an anthology or a chapter from a book that is edited

Lehan, R. (2000). The Great Gatsby--The text as construct: narrative knots and narrative unfolding. in Bryer, J., Margolies, A., & Prigozy, R. (Eds). F. Scott Fitzgerald : New perspectives. Athens, GA: U Georgia P, pp. 78-89.

In APA style, repeat this style of citation if you cite multiple chapters from the same book or anthology. Note also that in APA style, titles of chapters or entries are not in quotes and the page numbers of a chapter are indicated with the abbreviation "pp."

Book, translation

Derrida, J. (1978). Writing and difference. (A. Bass, Trans.). Chicago: U of Chicago P.

Book, edition other than the first

Baase, S. (2003). Gift of fire : Social, legal, and ethical issues for computers and the Internet. (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ : Prentice Hall.

Entry from a reference work
If there is a specific author for the entry, list it. Otherwise, begin with the title of the entry.

Gale, R. (1998). Nick Carraway. An F. Scott Fitzgerald Encyclopedia. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Crime. (1987). The random house dictionary of the English language. (2nd ed.). New York: Random House.

Periodicals

Reference page entries for magazines, journals, newspapers, and other periodicals include:

- *The Author or authors.* Last name first and the first initial of each author.
- *Date of publication.* Following the author in parentheses, as was the case with books.
- *Article Title.* Followed by a period, though not in quotes.
- *Publication information.* This includes the periodical title, underlined or italicized, the volume and issue number in parentheses (when they are available), and page numbers. In newspapers, precede page numbers with "p." if it is a single page or "pp" if it is more than one.

Article in a weekly magazine

Wood, C. (2000, June 12). Fighting net crime.
Macleans, pp. 38-40.

Article in a monthly magazine

Canby, P. (2002, July). The forest primeval: A month in Congo's wildest jungle. Harper's Magazine, pp. 41-56.

Article in a newspaper

Markoff, J. (1999, October 1). New center will combat computer security hreats. The New York Times, p. C2.

Editorial or Letter to the Editor
After the title, indicate if the selection is an editorial or a letter as indicated in the examples below.

McLoughlin, M. (2002, August 5). Rethinking hormone therapy. [Letter to Editor]. Newsweek, p. 12.

Hauptman, Timmer, Carlberg for council. (2002, October 22) [Editorial]. The Ann Arbor News, p. A8.

Article in a journal paginated by volume
Some academic journals number the pages according to the volume instead of the issue. Note the volume number in italics or underlined after the title.

Vann, I., & Garson, G. (2001). Crime mapping and its extension to social science analysis. Social Science Computer Review, 19, pp. 471-479.

Article in a journal paginated by issue
Some academic journals number the pages of each issue. When this is the case, note the volume number (underlined or in italics) and the issue number in parentheses though not underlined or in italics.

Mansfield, P. (2002). The cancer industry. The Ecologist,32 (3), p. 23.

Unsigned article in a periodical
When no author's name is available in any type of periodic publication, begin with the name of the article. When alphabetizing it on your references page, exclude "A," "An," and "The." For example, an unsigned article in a magazine would look like this:

An overdose on drug advertising. Is it driving up costs? (2000, May 22). Business Week, p. 52.

Electronic and Internet-based Sources

Properly citing things from electronic and Internet-based sources like the World Wide Web, email, newsgroups, CD-ROMs, and so forth can be confusing. Because these resources are still relatively "new" to the academic community (at least relative to things like books and paper journals), there is still some debate about the precise method of citing some of these sources. What I offer here are my interpretations of the APA rules for citing electronic and internet-based sources; when in doubt about these guidelines, I would encourage you to ask your teacher and to consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or the APA web site.

Even though electronic and internet-based sources may look different from traditional journals and books, the basic elements and goals of citation remain the same. Entries should include:

- *Author or Authors,* which again, should be last name first followed by first initial for each author. Unlike traditional books and periodicals, the names of authors of electronic resources (especially Web sites) are often located at the end of the article or another location.

- *Date of publication.* Following the author in parentheses, as was the case with books and periodicals.

- *Title of the article or selection.* For an online journal or periodical, a selection from a database, a scholarly project, or similar resource, indicate the title of the article or selection. Capitalize only the first word in the title and subtitle and any proper nouns.

- *Publishing information.* This might be the title of the online journal or periodical, or the name of the database, scholarly project, or similar resource. This information should appear underlined or in italics.

There are two other elements that are generally common to electronic and internet-based sources:

- *The date of access.* Quite literally, this means the date that you found the research. This is important because, as most "Web surfers" have experienced, electronic resources can change and be unavailable without warning.

- *The "address" of whatever it is you are citing.* Indicate the URL of a web site, a message from a newsgroup, a reference to an email, and so forth.

A periodical available via an electronic database
As I discussed in chapter two, most community college, college, and university libraries nowadays offer their patrons access to electronic versions of some traditional print resources. These databases, such as

Wilson Select and Articles First, include "full text" of articles that appeared originally as an article in the print publication as part of the entries.

Now, on the one hand, these sorts of electronically available resources are just as credible as print resources because they are essentially one in the same. The electronic version of an article from *Time* magazine is just as credible as the same article from the "paper version" of *Time* magazine. On the other hand, you need to indicate to your readers that you are citing the electronic version because this version isn't *exactly* the same as the print version. Since the "full text" available electronically is *just* text, periodicals available electronically don't include page numbers and they don't include any illustrations or graphics.

To properly cite an article from a periodical available via an electronic database, first note all of the relevant information you would in a print version of the article. Following this, write "Retrieved" followed by the date you found the article, and then "from" followed by the name of the database.

Wechsler, J. (2002). Minority docs see DTC ads as way to address 'race gap.' Pharmaceutical Executive, 27 (5), pp. 32, 34. Retrieved October 20, 2002 from WilsonSelect Database.

Article in a Periodical Published on the World Wide Web
To cite an article from a periodical that is published on the World Wide Web, adapt as closely as possible the rules for citing articles that appear in print. Following this, write "Retrieved" followed by the date you found the article, and then "from" followed by the address of the Web site.

Sauer, G. (1996, February). Hackers, order, and control. Bad Subjects. Retrieved August 15, 2002, from http://eserver.org/bs/24/sauer.html

Goozner, M., & Sullivan, A. (2001, January 13). The pharmaceutical industry. Slate. Retrieved January 13, 2002, from http://slate.msn.com

Article in a Web Version of a Print Periodical or Other Media Outlet
Many newspapers and popular magazines release a "web version" of the publication. Cite these sorts of documents as you would articles from a periodical published on the Web.

Pear, R. (1999, March 28). Drug companies getting F.D.A. reprimands for false or misleading advertising. New York Times. Retrieved August 15, 2002, from http://www.nytimes.com

World cybercrime experts see need for laws, ties. (2002, October 16) CNN.com. Retrieved October 24, 2002, from http://www.cnn.com

Book Being Accessed Electronically Through a Database or The Web
As is the case with periodicals, include the same information you would with a traditional print book, along with the date of access and the information about the database of the Web site.

Icove, D., Seger, K. & VonStorch, W. (1995). Computer crime: A crimefighter's handbook. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly and Associates, 1995. Retrieved October 27, 2002 from Net Library E-Book.

Scholarly or Reference Web-based Database

F. Scott Fitzgerald centenary homepage. (2002, January 7). University of South Carolina. Retrieved July, 16 2002, from http://www.sc.edu/fitzgerald/

General Web Page or Web Site
Include the author or authors of the Web page or site, the title, and the date of publication.

Stanger, K. (2002, September 7). "Library guy" Keith Stanger's home port. Retrieved October 24, 2002, from http://keithstanger.com

When you are missing information about the web site, cite based on the information that you have available.

Posting to a emailing list, online group, or newsgroup
Begin with the author's name (even if the name is obviously a pseudonym), followed by the date, and the title or subject of the post. Include the phrase "Message posted to" and then the name of the mailing list, online group, or newsgroup, followed by the phrase "archived at" and the location of the group's archives, if available.

Denkinger, T. (2000, February 1). Re: [SLE] very newbie network quest. English SuSE Linux Discussion, archived at http://lists.suse.com/archive/suse-linux-e/2000-Feb/

Email message
The APA *Publications Manual* discourages the inclusion of any "personal communication" like email messages, letters, memos, or personal interviews in a Reference page because personal communications "do not provide recoverable data."

The APA *Publications Manual* goes on to say that you should "Use your judgment" about including personal communications like email in a Reference page. Here is an example of how you might do this:

Poe, M. (2002, June 5). Re: reflections/questions about your JEP article. Personal Communication, electronic mail.

Synchronous communication message
For MOOs, MUDs, Chat room, IRCs, etc. Be sure to include information about a message archive, if available.

Spehar, D. (2001, April 16). Researching who done it: building online research skills for composition II students. C&W Online 2001/Connections MOO, archived at http://web.nwe.ufl.edu/cwonline2001/archives/sphear-0416.html

CD-ROM, diskette, or similar medium
Cite this kind of source like you were citing the print version of the resource, but indicate in brackets the nature of the source.

Johns Hopkins University and the Annenberg/CPB Project. (1997). [CD-ROM]. A doll house: Based on the play by Henrik Ibesn. South Burlington, VT: The Annenberg/CPB Multimedia Collection.

Other Kinds of Sources

Interview
List the person interviewed as if they were the author. If the interview came from another source (radio or television, for example), indicate that with the citation information.

Jeffrey, P. (2002 March). "A conversation with Paul L. Jeffrey: Runaway prescription drug costs." [Interview with journal]. Policy and Practice of Public Human Services 60(1), 10-13.

In APA, the rules for interviews that you conduct (personal interview, telephone interview, email interview, etc.) are different. The APA *Publications Manual* discourages the inclusion of any "personal communication" including personal interviews in a Reference page because personal communications "do not provide recoverable data."

The APA *Publications Manual* goes on to say that you should "Use your judgment" about including personal communications in your References page. Here is an example of how you might do this:

Wannamaker, A. (2000, August 13). Personal communication.

Lecture or Speech

Mauk, J. (1996, March 29). Anti-reading: Evaluating student essays in current-traditional pedagogy. Conference on College Composition and Communication Convention. Milwaukee, WI.

Government Document

If identified, begin with the last name of the author; if not, begin with the name of the government followed by the appropriate agency or subdivision. Only abbreviate things if they can be easily understood. For congressional documents, be sure to note the number, session, and house of Congress ("S" for Senate and "H" or "HR" for House of Representatives), and the type (Report, Resolution, Document, etc.) in abbreviated form, and number the material. If you are citing from the *Congressional Record,* provide only the date and page number. Otherwise, end with the publication information, often the Government Printing Office (GPO).

United States Congress. (2002). House committee on resources, subcommittee on fisheries conservation, oceans, and wildlife. Ecosystem-based fishery management and the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens fishery conservation and management act. U.S. House 107th Congress. Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO.

Pamphlet or Brochure

Treat pamphlets and brochures as books, though note in brackets that it is a pamphlet or brochure. If the name of the author is unavailable, begin with the name of the pamphlet.

Sun safety for kids: The SunWise school program. (2001). Washington, DC: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Film, DVD, or Videocassette

Give the last name followed by the first initial of the producer, director, writer, etc., of the work. Follow each name with the function of the contributor in parentheses. After giving the year and title of the film, indicate it is a "motion picture" in brackets, followed by the country of origin and the name of the production company.

Jackson, P. (Director) (2001). The lord of the rings: The fellowship of the ring. [Motion Picture]. United States: New Line Cinema.

Luhrmann, B. (Director) (2001) Moulin Rouge. [DVD]. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment.

Television or Radio Program

Stewart, J. (Host)(2002, October 24). The Daily Show. [Television Program]. United States: Comedy Central.

All things considered. (2001, March 24). [Radio Program]. United States: National Public Radio.