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The
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RESEARCH PAPER SMART

WHERE TO FIND IT
HOW TO WRITE IT
HOW TO CITE IT

原著：(美) *Liz Buffa*



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前 言

随着出国留学和双语教学在中国的普及,以及各个大学中外国专家、教授,包括“海归派”的不断增多,中国学生越来越多地接触到了一个新名词——“研究报告”,也就是英文的 Research Paper:小到课堂作业、实验报告,大到期末考试、毕业论文,统统地都要交一份 Paper,页数从3页到300页不等,而且还得用英语写。

这也难怪中国的学生一提到写研究报告就头痛,幸亏不仅仅是中国的学生是这样,就连美国的学生也如此。只不过据说他们不是头痛,而是哆嗦,而且哆嗦的程度和研究报告要求的页数成正比。

本书就是美国的教学专家写给美国学生的,但也适合于面临同样问题的中国学生。作者 Liz Buffa 在本书中要告诉所有这些学生们:写研究报告是有章可循、有法可依的,而且这个方法是非常简单的。作者通过简明扼要、风趣幽默的语言详细介绍了写作研究报告的全过程:从立题、纲要、搜集资料到写作格式、写作方法和结论。并且针对课堂作业、评论、实验报告、可行性报告、论文等多种体裁,分别讲解。

本书是美国最大的助学、备考、人生策划类图书写作集团  推出的助学参考类图书,是畅销书系 Smart 系列图书中的一本。此次,在中国推出的 Smart 系列图书还包括《兰登书屋英语词汇高手》、《兰登书屋英语阅读高手》、《兰登书屋英语沟通高手》和《兰登书屋英语写作高手》。



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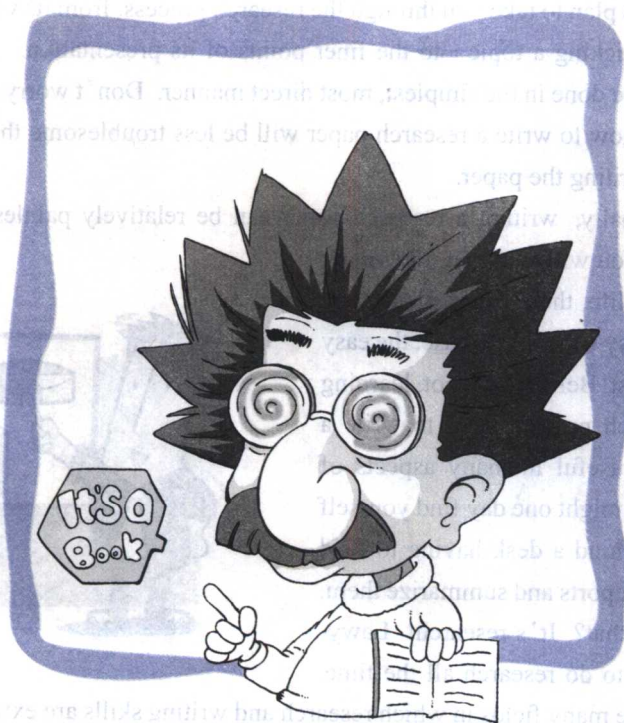
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Introduction



WHY BE RESEARCH PAPER SMART

Most students tremble at the thought of a research project. It seems that the amount of trembling is directly proportional to the length of the paper assigned. A two- or three-page paper might seem bad enough, but problems increase exponentially as you approach twenty pages, thirty pages, and even longer papers.

Fortunately, there's a way out of this for you, the reader of this book. We plan to take you through the research process, from its very inception—icking a topic—to the finer points of its presentation. All of this will be done in the simplest, most direct manner. Don't worry. Figuring out how to write a research paper will be less troublesome than the task of writing the paper.

Actually, writing a research paper can be relatively painless and useful. You will find that, like many things in life, there is a difficult way and an easy way. In this case, the easy way is best. Believe it or not, learning to research properly and to write a paper is useful in many aspects of life. You might one day find yourself sitting behind a desk having to read through reports and summarize them.

What's that? It's research! Lawyers need to do research all the time.

There are many fields in which research and writing skills are extremely useful. So, stop thinking you can just do a halfway decent job in college and that you will never have to do this again.

You will find that the only thing you feared is the unknown. Perhaps



you have never really used a library, or you have never had to write footnotes. These things may be intimidating, but we will make them easy.

WHAT IS A RESEARCH PAPER?

Let's begin by giving a simple definition for a research paper. Your teachers might be asking you to write "a report," "a term paper," or even just "a paper" on a subject. Are these research papers? Are we talking about the same thing? These terms are all quite vague, and there is no set definition for each, but we'll give you a brief example of what is usually considered acceptable for each of the following types of assignments. To illustrate, we will take a simple subject: George Washington.

REPORT

If an instructor asked you to write a report on George Washington, most likely he would expect you to read some general information about George Washington and present the material you have learned in written form.

You would demonstrate to your professor that you have done the reading required for the class, as well as some outside reading. You would not be expected to go beyond basic sources (textbooks or reference works), or find out anything startling or new about George Washington.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

A persuasive essay is usually quite short (perhaps a page or two). Its purpose is to persuade a reader of a particular point of view. If you were asked to write a persuasive essay about George Washington, it might have a title like "George Washington: Our Greatest President." To present a rea-

der with an argument for George Washington's greatness, you would use some of the information gleaned from basic sources read in the course.

You must find facts that support your point of view, but, unless you are asked to do so, you do not necessarily have to find contradictory sources.

PERSONAL ESSAY

Personal essays are also usually quite short, and are frequently assigned in writing classes. You are not expected to do research for a personal essay. Here, you are simply relating some personal experience. A professor might require you to write a personal essay relating your grade school instruction on George Washington. This might be a useful way to discuss some of the myths and misinformation children are taught.

TERM PAPER

A term paper is a broad category, into which many types of papers might fall. It is usually a final paper for a course. Its form will vary depending on the course and the teacher. A term paper is not necessarily a long research paper.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This is most similar to a report. If you were studying George Washington in your introduction to political science course, you might be asked to read several different sources and summarize each. A "review of the literature" assignment allows you to demonstrate that you understand the basic information presented in each source. Typically, you will include a "review of the literature" as part of a full research paper or thesis.

RESEARCH PAPER

A traditional research paper goes beyond all of the above in scope.

First of all, you are typically looking to find out something you didn't know before. A research paper about George Washington might set out to prove that George Washington was not a great general, but only won the American War for Independence because the British were incompetent. You would seek out many different sources to support your idea or thesis. You are expected to do more than just summarize what you read; you are expected to draw conclusions from it.



THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

These are the most advanced forms of research writing. Thesis work generally refers to a high caliber of detailed research conducted on a graduate level, or on the undergraduate level in a senior honors class. A dissertation is a book-length report that culminates years of research on a topic. It is the completion of the doctoral degree and, as such, must conform to the most rigorous standards of research and writing.

We will go into more detail in later chapters about how to work on many types of papers. However, as you can see, different papers require different things from the writer. Your professor will spell out in detail the type of paper you are writing, or she will expect you to ask. The first lesson is: Always consult your professor about any lingering questions you

may have. No book can answer questions about a teacher's expectations.

WHY SHOULD PAPERS CONFORM TO CERTAIN STYLES?



There will certainly be some point in your research and writing when you throw your hands up at the absurdity of it all.

Why bother with nitpicky footnotes? Who cares if the commas are here and the periods are there? Why can't I write things in my own style? These are legitimate questions. It may appear to you that professors are a bunch of sadists whose only joy is getting students to fret over arcane points of style and grammar.

The primary goal of writing is communication. While you may be more relaxed about points of style in your speech, you need to be exact in written communication. Good writing is precise and clear. Don't confuse using a lot of big words with being a good writer. Learning about how to style a paper properly will help you learn how to communicate clearly. Using standard notation for things like footnotes and bibliography entries enables your teacher to identify your outside sources and see that you have cited them correctly.

It bears repeating: The process of writing a research paper will be rewarding and useful in many different areas throughout your life. *Research Paper Smart* is designed to make that process as smooth as possible.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

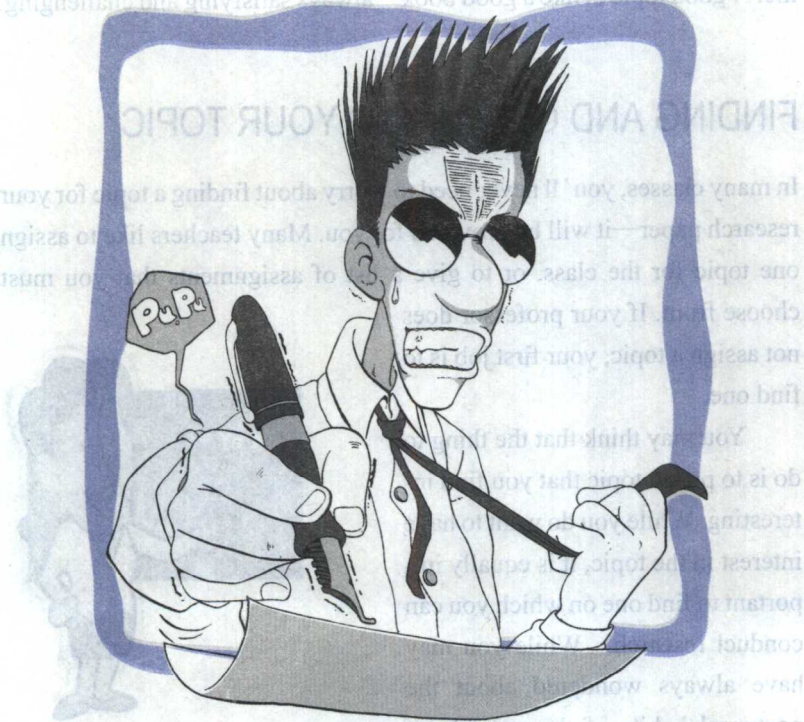
The order of topics in *Research Paper Smart* is designed to follow, chronologically, the steps you need to go through in writing a research paper.

If you've already been assigned a topic, you can skip the first section about finding and narrowing down your research topic.

If, however, this is the very beginning of your first real research paper, then start at the beginning and use each section to guide you through the process.

CHAPTER 1

Getting Started



Of a good beginning, cometh a good end.

John Heywood

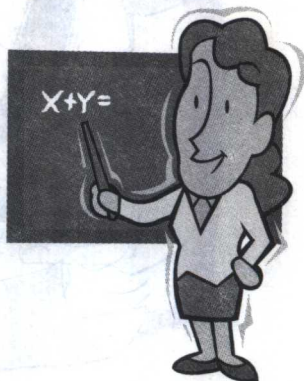
Perhaps the most difficult part of any project is getting started. The broader the range of topics in front of you, the more difficult it is to begin. The starting point, however, is one of the most critical points of your research project. Embarking down the path of research on a topic that offers little or no information will be among the most frustrating tasks you can imagine. A good topic is like a good book—always satisfying and challenging.

FINDING AND CLARIFYING YOUR TOPIC

In many classes, you'll never need to worry about finding a topic for your research paper—it will be provided for you. Many teachers like to assign one topic for the class, or to give a list of assignments that you must choose from. If your professor does not assign a topic, your first job is to find one.

You may think that the thing to do is to pick a topic that you find interesting. While you do want to have interest in the topic, it is equally important to find one on which you can conduct research. While you may have always wondered about the nocturnal habits of the animals of

Ndola, if there is no scholarly work on the subject, you will be in trouble. So your first job is to select a broad category. Perhaps it will be dictated



by the nature of the course you are taking. If not, you may consider one of the following sources:

- ★ Personal experience
- ★ Peer groups (network with friends to discuss areas of interest)
- ★ Topics in the news
- ★ Your course syllabus
- ★ Table of contents for the standard text in your course
- ★ Bibliography for the standard text in your course
- ★ *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*
- ★ An encyclopedia
- ★ A librarian

You want to find a topic that has three important characteristics:

- ★ It is of interest to you.
- ★ There appears to be a lot of information available on this topic.
- ★ You have the background or expertise to understand and write about the information you'll be reading.

While the first point—your interest in the topic—is very important, the latter two are not to be underestimated. Avoid picking difficult science topics, for example, if you have little science background. You will