Carole Slade

Form & Style

Eleventh Edition

esearch Papers • Reports • Theses

nation on Chicago, MLA, and APA Documentation and the Internet

Form and Style

Research Papers, Reports, Theses

ELEVENTH EDITION

Carole Slade *Columbia University*

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Preface

Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses, now in its eleventh edition, will help you with any kind of research-based writing. Writers of research papers, theses, dissertations, and reports for college, graduate school, business, government, and professions will find the basic principles of research and writing thoroughly yet succinctly described here.

The review of the fundamental process of research makes *Form and Style* suitable as a textbook in many courses: composition and rhetoric courses, writing courses in the disciplines, and seminars in research and methods at the undergraduate and graduate levels. For the first time, *Form and Style* incorporates exercises. These are designed to work with each student's own research materials, thereby avoiding the distractions of new or artificial material. The exercises reinforce some of the most difficult concepts and procedures and at the same time help students go through the necessary steps of writing their papers. (Look up *exercises* in the index for a complete list.)

The book continues to serve experienced writers with its discussion of procedures for writing various types of theses and thorough presentation of principles of documentation and bibliographic forms for three style sheets. The book also presents a comprehensive treatment of the conventions for presenting the results of a research project.

Form and Style also works well as either a reference work or an instructional text. The redesigned index allows the reader to locate subjects quickly and easily, while the glossary provides explanations of abbreviations. Individuals can use the exercises out of sequence or, because the book provides a sequential guide to the processes of researching and writing, some writers may wish to begin by reading straight through the book.

Chicago Manual, MLA, and APA Documentation Systems

As before, *Form and Style* presents three frequently used documentation systems in separate chapters. The instructions for using these systems draw on the most recent editions of the three style sheets: *The Chicago Manual of Style,* 14th ed. (1993), *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association,* 4th ed. (1994), and the Modern Language Association's *Handbook for writers of Research papers,* 5th ed. (1995) and *Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing,* 2nd ed., (1998), both by Joseph Gibaldi. (These systems are abbreviated in *Form and Style* as *Chicago Manual,* MLA, and APA.)

Remember that style sheets do not proclaim universal principles, but rather present a set of agreements that facilitate communication among groups who use them. For this reason, style sheets regularly change to accommodate new ideas and to reflect trends in style and language. Style sheets cannot possibly cover every situation you might encounter in conducting research and assembling a paper. When you encounter a problem

not specifically treated by *Form and Style*, you should follow the general principles that govern the style sheet you are using, and most important of all, make consistent use of whatever format or rule you select.

Most writers choose a documentation system on the suggestions of an adviser, the requirements of a department or university, or the conventions of a field of study. In the absence of any of these requirements, writers of papers of general interest should use the widely accepted *Chicago Manual* system, whereas writers within particular disciplines can select either the MLA or the APA system. *Form and Style* also provides information on legal citation and on the author-number system of references in appendixes.

Organization and Coverage

Form and Style is divided into two sections: Part I, The Processes of Research and Writing, covers the essential procedures that most writers employ as they create a paper; Part II, Systems of Documentation, provides a general introduction to citation, followed by separate chapters on using *Chicago Manual,* MLA, and APA documentation.

■ Part I: The Processes of Research and Writing

Chapters 1 through 6 explain the processes required for producing the text of a research paper, thesis, or report. In the interests of brevity and clarity, instructions and examples in these chapters draw on *Chicago Manual* style. Most of the principles also apply to MLA and APA styles, but where differences exist, the alternatives are provided. As my authority for usage and spelling, I continue to rely on *The American Heritage Dictionary,* 3rd ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 1993).

Chapter 1 introduces the process of writing a research paper, from the initial steps of choosing a topic, preparing a working bibliography, and collecting information through the stages of outlining, drafting, and revising the paper. These explanations of fundamental processes make the book accessible and useful to undergraduates at all levels. Some graduate students may want to use this chapter to review the essential stages in writing a research paper.

Chapter 2 describes the standard elements of a thesis or dissertation and explains the usual requirements for the research and writing of such projects. The chapter offers guidelines for preparing three types of graduate papers: theses based on the collection of empirical data, theses based on critical analysis or philosophical speculation, and theses based on historical research.

Chapter 3, thoroughly reorganized in this edition, explains the basic principles of attributing ideas and quotations to their sources. Because most plagiarism results from careless application of the rules for documentation, the chapter reviews the methods for accurately documenting direct and indirect quotations. The current guidelines for introducing quotations are also explained.

Chapter 4 discusses the principles of grammar and mechanics most often needed in writing and revising research papers, as well as advice about the style, tone, and voice appropriate for research papers. Chapter 5 offers instructions for preparing tables and figures, as well as for presenting figures, graphs, and computer-generated materials. The chapter now assumes that researchers will be presenting much of their data with computer-generated materials. Chapter 6 presents the process of preparing the finished copy and gives instructions for typing and printing. In all chapters, this edition addresses techniques for writing, revising, and proofreading on word processors and computers.

■ Part II: Systems of Documentation

Part II gives detailed coverage of the *Chicago Manual*, MLA, and APA documentation systems. The introduction to this section reviews the principles of documentation applicable to all three systems, such as the purposes of citation and the organization of entries in bibliographies and lists of works cited.

Chapter 7 explains the *Chicago Manual* system for notes accompanied by a bibliography. A section of note and bibliography entries placed on facing pages helps the writer translate information about a work from bibliography form into note form, and vice versa. This edition adds note and bibliography forms for many new types of sources, with an emphasis on computer materials. Chapter 8 provides instructions for MLA documentation, and Chapter 9 provides instructions for APA documentation. The sample pages in APA format appear at the end of these chapters and are designed to clarify the distinction between formatting of references for a manuscript and a printed document. For ease of identification, a colored tab marks each chapter.

■ Sample Pages

Sample pages in Chapters 1, 2, 5, 8, and 9 illustrate the formats for research papers and systems of documentation described in *Form and Style*. These pages are designed to resemble pages typed on a typewriter or printed by a computer and will serve as models for research papers, theses, and dissertations. The appearance of any printed book necessarily differs from that of a typescript, particularly in its spacing, margins, and typefaces; therefore, the printed text of *Form and Style* may vary slightly from the format recommended here for typescripts.

Acknowledgments

As in previous editions, I heartily thank the colleagues and friends who have helped in various ways with the book and the students in my courses on scholarly writing. I dedicate this edition of *Form and Style* to the memory of the librarian who has taught me much over the years about reference works and electronic sources, the late Anita K. Lowry, of Columbia University and the University of Iowa.

I am exceedingly fortunate to have a long association with Houghton Mifflin, which has provided me with a succession of first-rate editors and copyeditors from whose creative, intelligent, and attentive work I have learned and the book has benefitted. I particularly want to thank Dean Johnson, senior sponsoring editor of English in the College Division, for his wise and pithy guidance on a range of matters. His new assistant, Bruce Cantley, gave seemingly instantaneous assistance whenever I needed it.

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I The Processes of Research and Writing

1 Writing Research Papers

Whatever the subject or scope of your project, the procedures for writing a paper based on research are quite similar. The essential processes include (1) choosing a topic, (2) preparing a working bibliography, (3) collecting information, (4) outlining the paper, (5) drafting the paper, and (6) preparing the final copy. Although you will probably move through these steps more or less sequentially, you should not consider any of them fully completed until you hand in the final copy of the paper. For example, while you collect information, it is likely that you will also reframe your topic and take down information for your bibliography or list of works cited. And when you outline the paper, you may find that you need more information in certain areas. In drafting the paper you probably will find that you need to reorganize your outline. Your final paper will display the quality and scope of the work you put into each of these steps.

Exercise: Read the preface and the introduction to a book related to your research to see what the author tells you about the processes of research and writing.

Choosing a Topic

The choice of a topic involves identifying a general subject area, defining the topic and narrowing it, and stating the topic as a question or hypothesis. As you gather information through research, you will want to reconsider all of these decisions and eventually to formulate a thesis statement. When you think you have enough evidence, write out a tentative thesis statement but avoid considering it final until you have written through the entire paper. A misstated or inaccurate thesis statement left in place can thwart your efforts to write.

■ General Subject Area

An instructor or adviser sometimes specifies a broad area of study. The instructor may assign a particular topic, provide a list of possible topics, or give the writer a free choice of topics. You can begin to consider possible topics for a research paper at the moment you decide to take the course.

When taking notes on the lectures and readings you can jot down subjects of interest. Graduate students can begin to compile a list of possible thesis or dissertation topics early in their academic careers, perhaps selecting graduate classes that will contribute to their knowledge of these subjects and trying out ideas in seminar presentations or papers.

AREAS OF INQUIRY Even in the fields that seem to have been well covered by other scholars, possibilities for further research can often be found. Scholars sometimes suggest undiscussed areas of inquiry or unresolved controversies in their own work; this kinds of information often appears in the notes and the conclusions. Also, commonly held but unsubstantiated conclusions or new ways of testing the basic assumptions in a field can provide subjects for research. Consideration of the terminology in your discipline can yield innovative ways to illustrate it or even new definitions. Recently published books or developments in current events can afford new insight into existing theories and thus lead to opportunities for research; contradictions or disjunctions among the various books also suggest possible topics.

Exercise #1: Compare discussions of the same topics in two or more textbooks in your field to see if you can discern any areas of disagreement.

Exercise #2: Study the notes of a article related to your subject to see whether the author suggests any avenues for additional research on the subject.

■ Definition of the Topic

As you make decisions leading to a topic, you should also consider such factors as your interest in the subject, your ability to be objective (especially if the topic is controversial), and the time available for completing the assignment. Evaluate the possibilities according to the following criteria: importance and interest, manageability, and availability of resources. You do not want to begin working on a topic that will not hold your interest, that is not significant, that is not practical under the circumstances, or that cannot be completed within the time allotted for the assignment.

IMPORTANCE AND INTEREST Naturally, you will want to devote your time to a topic of considerable importance and interest to your readers. To a certain extent, importance and interest are subjective judgments that depend on the nature of the assignment and the requirements of the instructor. Also, a topic that seems trivial to persons in one field of study might hold great significance for specialists in another. Your instructor or adviser should confirm the importance of your topic, and your paper should convince readers of its significance.

In some cases, a clearly important subject, such as gun control, may not make a good topic if the extensive public debate hampers your ability to make an original contribution or if your strong feelings prevent you from at least examining opposing viewpoints and reaching fair conclusions.

MANAGEABILITY Careful limiting of a topic will help you conduct research successfully. If a topic is too vague or broad, too narrow, or too specialized, you may not be able to find enough suitable material. A topic that is too broad will not give sufficient direction to research and probably will necessitate superficial treatment of the subject. A topic that is too narrow will yield inadequate information, limiting your ability to reach a valid conclusion. If a topic is too specialized or too technical, it may demand knowledge you cannot acquire in the time allotted for your project. For example, you probably would not want to choose a topic that requires extensive statistics unless you have some background in mathematics or can consult with a statistician. Ultimately, of course, readers will judge the manageability of your topic by the treatment you give it because a good paper defends not only its content but also its scope.

AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES Even if a topic is worthwhile and manageable, it may not be suitable if the necessary research materials are not available. The resources of the library in which you are working, as well as your access to other libraries or to electronic materials, should help guide your choice of topic. If your research paper entails a survey or an experiment, you need to determine whether you can collect the required data within the time limits of the assignment.

■ Formulating an Initial Statement of the Topic

You might wish to state your topic as a question or as a hypothesis, depending on the nature of the subject and the assignment. Formulating the topic as a question prevents you from settling on a thesis without having tested it sufficiently with exploratory research.

Topics stated as questions

```
--Does the extensive use of e-mail communication affect the
organizational hierarchy in a business?
--Should any nation that explodes a nuclear device be
admitted to the so-called nuclear club?
```

Most professional researchers identify their primary motives solving problems and discovering new information. Ideally, then, your question should be one to which you really would like to know the answer, and the answer should not be simple or obvious.

As you gather information, you may discover that you have asked the wrong question or that you are more interested in answering a related question. If so, you can revise your question. You will also be able to narrow your question as you work. A question about the psychological effects of computer-assisted instruction might be narrowed to focus on instruction in foreign languages, perhaps even on one specific language, possibly even on one particular program for learning that language. Even in early stages of work, you can begin to formulate possible answers to your question in the form of preliminary thesis statements, which may have to be abandoned or refined as you continue exploring your topic.

For some fields of research, particularly those involving empirical or descriptive research, you may want to state your topic as a *hypothesis,* that is,

a tentative explanation or argument that you will test, either with your own empirical research or a survey of data collected by others.

Topics stated as hypotheses

```
--The preponderance of evidence suggests that the planet is
experiencing the phenomenon known as global warming.
--Television programs aired in prime time should (should
not) be censored for sex and violence.
```

Drawing on the facts and ideas you find by doing research, you will test the hypothesis, and you will revise it as many times as your information warrants. For example, the writer of the sample paper "Are Books Obsolete?" (see the outline for this paper on page 35) began with the hypothesis that given rapid developments in computer technology, electronic materials will quickly replace printed books. After doing some research, she concluded that her initial hypothesis was wrong. (See page 47 for a more scientific definition of the word *hypothesis*.)

Your answer to the question or your revised hypothesis will become the *thesis statement,* or what some instructors call the *controlling idea,* of your paper.

Preparing a Working Bibliography

Once you have selected the broad subject of your paper, you can begin research to determine how to narrow and shape the topic. This effort should result in a *working bibliography,* a list of sources that appear to be relevant at the initial stage of your research. Developing the working bibliography requires knowledge of library resources, both print and electronic, and the use of reference systems to locate sources. Also, you need to develop a method of preparing bibliographical information, whether on index cards or in computer files (see page 16).

During the first phase of your research, you should record information about every source you encounter that might be relevant to your study, even if you are not certain you will be able to use it. If you ignore potential sources at this early stage, you may later wish that you had citations for works that seemed irrelevant early on but later proved significant. The nature and scope of your topic, along with the requirements of the assignment, should indicate the appropriate number of sources for your working bibliography.

Library resources

Even before you begin to work on a particular assignment, you should become familiar with the resources offered by your library: the information desk, the reference area, the card catalog (in card form or on-line), indexes to periodicals, reading rooms, the reserve reference area, government documents, and special collections. Your library may also provide services such as interlibrary loan, computerized searches, and database services, as well as equipment such as computer terminals, typewriters, copy machines, and microform readers. Some libraries distribute printed guides and conduct tours of their facilities. If your library does not, spend some time locating library resources on your own. Also, investigate all the different libraries that you may be able to use, such as the libraries of other public and