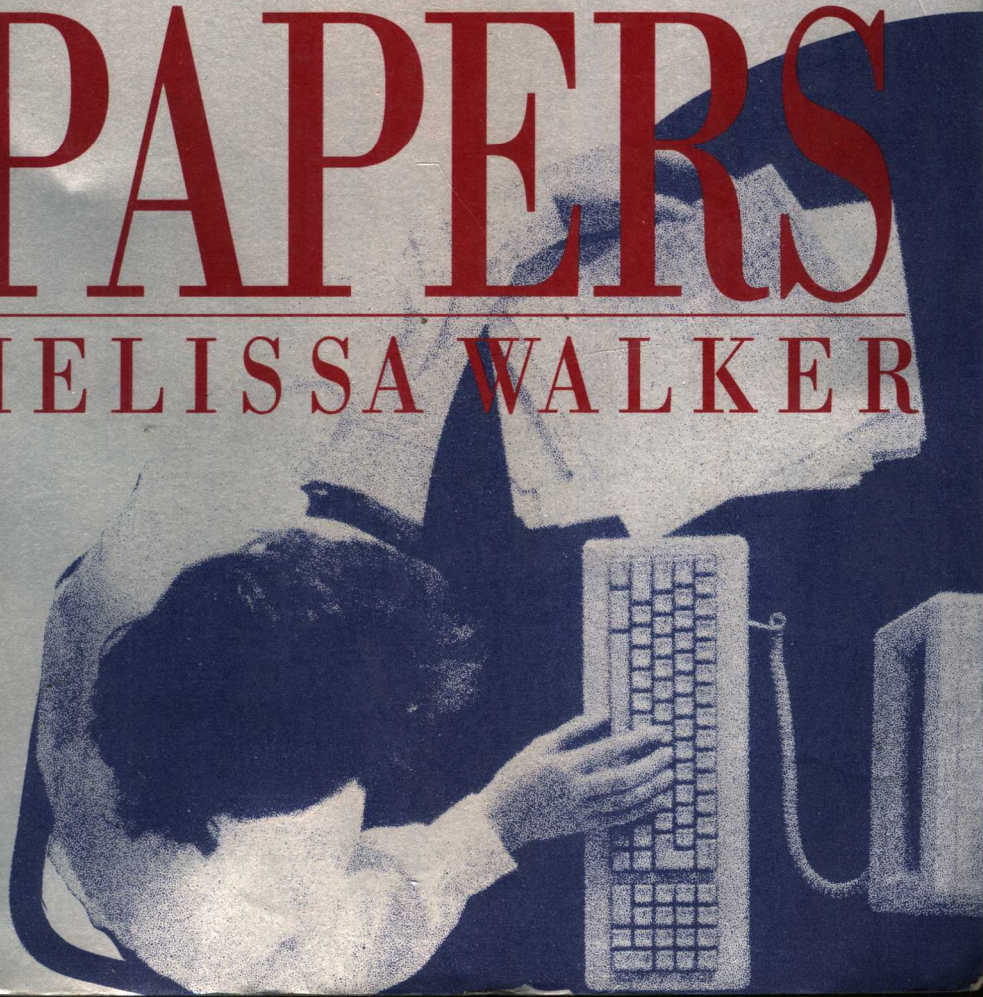


A NORTON GUIDE

WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS

MELISSA WALKER

THIRD EDITION

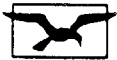


Third Edition

WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS

A N O R T O N G U I D E

MELISSA WALKER Emory University



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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

Writing Research Papers: A Norton Guide provides all the necessary guidance and information for students to do research and produce satisfactory research papers; but it goes beyond that. To counter the notion some students bring with them to college that research is a senseless exercise having to do with footnotes and index cards, this book teaches the spirit and value of independent learning. It helps students appreciate that learning to do research on their own can be an exciting part of their college experience and that the skills acquired can serve them in other academic endeavors and throughout their lives.

This text contains instruction in basic research skills: narrowing a topic, using library sources, recording information, and organizing material. It provides guidance in the process of writing and documenting a research paper: writing rough drafts, revising, preparing a bibliography, integrating sources, and producing a final accurate copy. While much of the book is concerned with teaching library research skills, it also contains substantial information on research activities beyond the library. Students will learn how to contact people who can give them information not available in published materials and how to conduct an effective interview. There are new sample letters that show students how to ask for information or for an interview, as well as a new interview, with Professor Peter Vitousek of Stanford University, demonstrating that students can request and get information from experts. In addition to general instruction appropriate to research in all disciplines, there are clear examples for reporting and documenting according to three styles commonly used in undergraduate assignments: the styles of the Modern Language Association (1988), the American Psychological Association (1983), and the citation-sequence system used in many technical and scientific papers and endorsed by the new style manual of the Council of Biology Editors (1993).

The third edition of *Writing Research Papers* includes substantial new material. The significant revision of the science chapter includes updating the scientific documentary style to be consistent with the style of the Council of Biology Editors, an expanded discussion of scientific research, and an exciting new sample paper on seed dispersal in tropical rain forests. There is a new chapter on doing research about literature, with two sample papers—a documented essay on Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and a documented argumentative paper on the controversies surrounding Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

The book now contains six sample research papers: Linda Orton's short paper in chapter 8 provides students with an easy, accessible example of an original approach to research findings reported in a straightforward, readable way. Michael Gold's paper, "Conflict and Cooperation: The Making of *Rebel Without a Cause*" (ch. 11), is the result of a carefully planned search for materials followed by innovative use of various kinds of sources as Michael pieces together the story of how that film was made; in chapter 12, David Harris's paper, "The Need for Education to Combat the Psychological Effects of the Nuclear Threat on Children," illustrates the development of a strong persuasive argument. Lisa Lee's paper (ch. 13), "The Fate of Seeds in Tropical Forests: Determining Factors," exemplifies a straightforward presentation of research findings following a commonly used format of scientific writing, including an abstract, an introduction, methods, discussion, and conclusion. In chapter 14, Carla Medina's "Always Trouble: Huck Finn and American Social Values" is also an argumentative paper, as Carla takes a position about this novel, the controversies it generates, and the social values that feed it. She presents her findings in a way that makes her position clear. Carla's other paper, "The Voices of *The Color Purple*," demonstrates a way to combine analysis of a literary work with critical responses of others to the work. In addition to a narrative of the students' research, chapters 11–14 contain not only a sample paper (or papers), but step-by-step summaries of the processes that culminated in the papers.

Each of these papers uses the appropriate documentation style. The short paper on Eleanor Roosevelt, the paper on *Rebel Without a Cause*, and the two literary papers use the most up-to-date MLA style of parenthetical documentation with a "Works Cited" list; the paper on the psychological effects of the nuclear threat is documented with the revised APA style; and the science paper uses the updated citation-sequence system of the 1993 manual published by the Council of Biology Editors. Instructions for documenting sources in these three disciplines were prepared with the assistance of the editors of the style manuals, Walter Achtert of the MLA, Leslie Cameron of the APA, and Robert Huth of the CBE.

For the convenience of teachers who want their students to document their papers with endnotes or footnotes based on the approved MLA format, appendix A includes instructions for citing sources with notes, an expanded list of sample citations, and pages from a paper documented with endnotes.

Since the last edition of this book was published, the advent of electronic information has transformed many libraries. Computer terminals that read directly from on-line catalogs have replaced many card catalogs, traditional indexes are now available in a CD-ROM format and on-line, and some students are now more comfortable doing an electronic search than they are using bound volumes. Yet numerous libraries have not adopted extensive electronic equipment and materials.

This edition is designed to be helpful to students using computerized sources as well as to those who still depend largely on traditional materials; it encourages students to use the appropriate references, rather than the most convenient. There are sections throughout the text that advise students to find out what computer-read materials are available in their libraries. There are descriptions of these new materials and suggestions about how to use them. The sections on the research that led to the new sample papers include discussion of the computer sources that the students actually used as well as alternatives for students who do not have access to such sources.

The annotated bibliography in appendix B has been expanded and updated. It includes new reference books, new editions of old favorites, and a description of those indexes available on-line and on CD-ROM.

In the past few years, the number of students who use computers for all aspects of the research process has greatly increased. While many do not go to a computer lab until they are ready to type, revise, and print the final copy, others use a computer from the beginning—for recording and arranging sources, taking notes, composing a first draft, printing drafts for revision, making final corrections, and preparing and printing the final copy. This new edition provides instruction and encouragement in special sections throughout the text for students who want to use a computer whenever possible. Lisa Lee's experience also serves as a model for such students.

Of course not all students have access to computers or know how to use a word-processing program. To ensure that those students have what they need, this text retains detailed guidelines for students who complete the entire project using pencils, paper, cards, notebooks, legal pads, and finally a typewriter.

Other new features have been introduced into the third edition of *Writing Research Papers* to enhance the book's usefulness for students.

Checklists, deployed throughout the text and clearly indexed inside the front cover, summarize essential points, help students avoid pitfalls, and make it easy for them to review what they most need to know about research. General example boxes get students thinking about research outside their areas of interest.

Activities at the end of each chapter are now divided into two categories: general activities that help build research skills across the disciplines, and project activities that directly apply to the student's own research.

The new design highlights the research processes of Michael Gold, David Harris, Lisa Lee, Carla Medina, and Linda Orton so that students can easily follow their progress from beginning to end. Detailed lists preceding the sample papers summarize and clarify the step-by-step process that leads to the completed projects.

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I would especially like to thank my students at Emory University this term who have taken on their research projects with enthusiasm and energy and have produced a set of papers that have been a joy to read, reminding me how much I have always learned from my students.

Others made it possible for me to have the time and quiet needed to write. I am grateful to Mercer University for giving me leave for a term to begin the work and to Eleanor West of the Ossabaw Island Foundation for providing a retreat from other responsibilities.

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current status of the MLA style for this edition. David Uchitelle of the MLA was also helpful.

During the writing of the first edition, the American Psychological Association also revised its style manual. I would like to thank Leslie Cameron of the APA for helping ensure that the format and citations of the psychology paper conform to the current authorized style.

The new sample paper on a scientific topic is documented with the latest style recommended by the Council of Biology Editors. Professor Edward Huth, chairman of the CBE Style Manual Committee, provided me with advance copy of the newly revised manual to ensure that the format and citations of the science paper are correct. I deeply appreciate his cooperation.

All these people have contributed their knowledge to this book but are not, of course, responsible for any errors that may be in the text.

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