
The Bedford Guide to the Research Process

SECOND EDITION

Jean Johnson



S E C O N D E D I T I O N

**The Bedford Guide
to the Research Process**

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at College Park*

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**The Bedford Guide
to the Research Process**

Preface

The Bedford Guide to the Research Process, Second Edition, helps students recognize their natural curiosity and desire to learn and apply these motivating forces to more sophisticated forms of research. My goal has been to provide information that students need about the research process while encouraging them to educate themselves and to make their own choices with confidence.

Organization

Like its predecessor, this second edition serves students in two ways: as a step-by-step guide to the research process for a course in which a research paper is assigned and as a reference for writing papers both in college and after graduation. Chapter 1 provides help with choosing a topic—for some students the hardest part of writing a research paper. Chapter 2 assists students in planning the paper and designing a search strategy. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 present detailed guidelines for collecting information from library sources as well as from questionnaires, interviews, oral history, and court documents. Students are also shown how to keep accurate notes and records—on paper or on a computer—as well as how to paraphrase, summarize, quote, and document sources in their papers while avoiding plagiarism.

The principles and practice of re-searching and outlining are discussed in Chapter 6. Then, to emphasize that more than one draft is needed in writing a research paper and that each draft serves a special rhetorical purpose, students are guided through three writing stages: the first draft (Chapter 7), the revising process (Chapter 8), and preparation of the final copy (Chapter 9). Optional or auxiliary parts of a paper—such as illustrations, table of contents, and abstracts—are discussed and illustrated.

Chapters 10, 11, and 12 explain the guidelines of the three major systems for documenting, formatting, and using in-text parenthetical citation: the MLA or author/page system, used primarily in the humanities; the APA or author/date system, favored by writers in the social sciences; and the number system, used by writers in the sciences.

(For those who prefer to use footnotes or endnotes, Appendix 2 contains guidelines for using the *Chicago Manual of Style* format.) These final chapters include four annotated student papers from different academic disciplines to illustrate the three systems.

Features Retained and Strengthened

The features that instructors and students appreciated in the first edition, such as the step-by-step procedures, the optional search log, the end-of-chapter exercises, and the examples of student writing from many disciplines, have been retained and, I believe, improved. The inclusion of actual student experiences encourages students to see themselves as explorers in an engaging and worthwhile human activity, *not* as mere computers receiving, storing, and repeating information at the command of a teacher. Furthermore, students writing in various disciplines—from engineering, biology, sociology, psychology, or computer science to history, arts, music, or literature—will find student examples at every stage in their process, providing them with a sense of how others have worked in their field.

The annotated list of references in Appendix 1, a cross-curricular feature that many instructors found to be one of the most helpful parts of the first edition, has been expanded to include more subject areas and greater coverage of databases. Appendix 3 has been revised and expanded to direct advanced students to style manuals in twenty-eight disciplines.

New Features

In response to suggestions from those who used the first edition and developments in the fields of research and composition, I have introduced several new features.

Computer-aided Research and Writing. More and more students have computers available at school and at home. For many students, “writing” has come to mean composing on the computer. Libraries are using computers to store their information and also to make it available to students. Therefore, advice on using computers has been added to each chapter so that, if students wish, they will be able to integrate automated research and writing resources into each stage of their writing and research process. Chapter 3 includes a list of the commonly used databases in each discipline, along with the types of format available for each and a summary of the subject matter covered. So many databases are now available in a variety of formats—online, on CD-ROM, and in print—that the choice can be confusing; this edition explains the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Critical Thinking and Rhetorical Argument. Because critical thinking is necessary at each stage of the research process, many new student examples are included to demonstrate thinking skills and logical argumentation. In addition, Chapter 6 provides guidelines for analyzing and evaluating a paper's argument or thesis according to the model set forth by Stephen Toulmin in *The Uses of Argument*. A new research paper in Chapter 10 employs the techniques of rhetorical argument as it explores a current controversial subject, the repatriation of Native American artifacts and remains.

Collaborative Learning. The classroom provides an opportunity for students to help each other. To facilitate such learning, I have added peer review exercises to every chapter where they are appropriate.

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I have many to thank for the improvements in this new edition. For their thoughtful comments on the first edition and the first draft, I thank reviewers Brian Kennedy, Cedarville College; Charles Elwert, University of Illinois; and Tom Recchio, University of Connecticut.

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Without the help of knowledgeable librarians, I could not have included the information on the library that is one of the central features of this book. Judy Solberg of the University of Maryland at College Park provided the research for the expanded annotated reference list in Appendix 1. My thanks also to Em Claire Knowles, Daphne Harrington, and Candy Schwartz of the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science for their careful and perceptive reviews of the chapters on the use of computers in searching. Librarians Ed Adams, Pat Herron, John King, Robert Merikangas, and Ann Masnik at the University of Maryland were unfailingly patient in answering my many questions. Thanks also to John Dorsey of the Boston Public Library for his help in providing reference materials. For guidance on library databases, I often turned to William B. Katz's *Introduction to Reference Work* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987).

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While I have been teaching my students about research, they have been teaching me. I want to thank especially Kenneth Bogart, Marisa Colli, Melinda Godwin, David Kuijt, and Justin Lev-Tov, who allowed me to use parts of their work in this second edition. My thanks, too, to my friend and colleague Mary Scheltema for suggestions based on her students' use of the first edition.

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