

**T H E  
R E S E A R C H I N G  
R E A D E R**

**SOURCE-BASED WRITINGS ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES**



**D I A N E D O W D E Y**

# **The Researching Reader: Source-Based Writings Across the Disciplines**

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## To The Instructor

The purpose of *The Researching Reader* is to provide examples of academic researched writings with the appropriate scholarly apparatus to serve as models for students in courses emphasizing the research process. The aim of the book is to help students learn to write researched papers by having them read, analyze, and discuss the examples in this book. By providing only examples of documented articles, the book stresses the importance of documentation in scholarly research. It also concentrates on helping students understand the research tradition in various disciplines and in evaluating the validity and significance of scholarly research.

Students often have difficulty understanding the published academic research they are reading for their own research projects. Most of the time, they do not know how to approach the article or what kinds of questions to raise. They may concentrate on significant or relevant content and neglect the development of the argument, the use of sources, or the types of evidence being presented. Discussing these ideas in class can help students become better readers and evaluators of researched writings.

Analyzing models of researched writing can also help students become better writers of research papers. In their own written research, students may have problems in developing and using appropriate rhetorical strategies and organizational methods. By discussing the techniques used by the authors of the articles in this book, students can become more aware of which strategies and methods would be successful in their own writing. Students also often have problems in deciding how and when to synthesize, paraphrase, or quote the materials they have gathered. By discussing the ways professional researchers and writers have made their decisions and incorporated source materials, students will gain an understanding of how best to use such material in their own papers.

The articles have been chosen from a wide variety of disciplines within the traditional academic areas of the humanities, social sciences, and the sciences. The articles represent the variety of scholarly apparatus (documentation and citation standards) both within and across the disciplines. The articles illustrate a diversity in methods of research. Most of the articles present research based on written source material, because that is the type of research most often done by undergraduates. However, examples of research based on surveys and controlled observation have

also been included. Most of the articles were written for professional, academic audiences, but some of the articles are aimed at a general readership. The selections have a variety of lengths and complexity. Some fairly long articles have been included to accustom students to the average length of scholarly articles and to serve as models for their own substantial research papers while shorter articles and excerpts have been included to provide examples of narrow, focused research. Because almost all of the articles are examples of professional academic writing, they are intellectually challenging.

Students need to be aware of the conventions of academic research, in order to read and comprehend it for their own work. They also may be asked to write papers that conform to academic standards in a variety of different disciplines throughout their college career. Understanding, writing, and evaluating research is one of the bases for becoming an educated, literate member of society. Academic scholars tend to emphasize thoroughness, reporting on all relevant prior research. In analyzing a single work, they tend to be exhaustive in discussing all parts of it. Students may find this thoroughness repetitive, but they need to be aware that it is the standard of published academic research and is, in fact, one of the distinguishing characteristics between academic research and popular researched writing. Often, they will be expected to be thorough and exhaustive in their own research papers.

Students producing research papers in different disciplines need to be aware that standards for documentation vary from discipline to discipline and even within a discipline. The articles have been chosen to represent many different standards and care has been taken to see that all of the current standards of citation have been included. However, it is important to remember that many journals have their own standards, and often citations in books do not conform exactly to any published standard. The head and sidenotes describe the citation method and label it, if possible.

Some disciplines have been represented by more than one article, because each article presents different types of research or different rhetorical modes, such as the three examples of literary criticism. One criteria of selection was the accessibility of the literary text analyzed by the article. According to a survey done in the spring of 1988 by the Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature at State University of New York at Albany, both *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Great Gatsby* are among the top ten most assigned books in American high schools. Plays by Beth Henley and Marsha Norman have been released as movies and are available on videocassette, so that students can see some of the work under discussion, if so inclined. The articles also focus on different aspects of literary works and traditions. Hoffman's article is primarily a focus on an individual character, although it also is a refutation of a critical interpretation of the work. Eble's article places *The Great Gatsby* in the tradition of the

American novel, and also provides some biographical information to help interpret the work. McDonnell's article is a good example of comparison, and also of writing about a literary work about which there is not much criticism available. Thus, each article helps students see some of the approaches a critic can take to a literary work. Each uses a different version of MLA style guides, so students can compare the current use with examples of earlier styles.

The three book reviews, one in each major section, all use different source and documentation styles. Ludington's review of two Hemingway biographies, in addition to being an example of comparison, also quotes another review of one of the books and an interview with the author. The documentation style is completely parenthetical—giving all pertinent information for the citation in parenthesis. Keller's review uses classification and examples to demonstrate the strength and weaknesses of the book. It uses parenthetical author and date documentation. Gruber's review focuses on why this book is significant to her audience and what new information it presents. She only cites the book she is reviewing. From these examples, students get a variety of ideas and strategies that might be appropriate for their own reviews or analysis of a work.

The material in this book has been thoroughly class tested. Several students surprised themselves by discovering that they really enjoyed articles in a discipline they thought they had little interest in. They also gained a greater appreciation for the research activity involved in various disciplines. If one article appeared on a student's "least favorite" list, it appeared on another student's "most favorite" list.

Charles Bazerman's article on "What Written Knowledge Does," was considered difficult by almost all of the students. I decided to include it anyway, because the content of the article seems quite important to anyone studying or engaged in the research and writing process. It sparked a lively class discussion as students reacted to his statements about research in different academic disciplines. If they were researching a project outside of a discipline they were currently studying, it provided them with some background about how to read research in that area. *The Researching Reader* can be used to explore the differences in research methods and presentation in different disciplines, and the Bazerman article provides an excellent introduction to that idea.

The material at the end of each article has been designed to help students analyze and understand the selections and the documentation styles. Questions are aimed at helping the student see the important ideas in the article, responding to the article and its argument, and recognizing the organization, audience, and appeals of the article. These questions and analyses should get students thinking about the style and organization of their own arguments and presentation of their materials in their own writing.

One reason students have problems reading academic writing is that the vocabulary level is often more sophisticated than that to which they have been previously exposed. Definitions have been provided for specialized vocabulary specific to a discipline. Foreign terms have been translated; individuals have been identified; and classical allusions have been explained.

Other terms with which the student may be unfamiliar have been listed at the end of the questions to encourage students to look up words in a dictionary. These words have been chosen because they are words that a student should be encouraged to add to his or her working vocabulary. My students admitted that without an external spur, such as the list, they would not have bothered looking up the accurate definition. I believe that it is imperative that we encourage students to read with a dictionary at their side, yet realize that there are limits to the number of words it is reasonable to expect them to look up for a single article. The vocabulary definitions and lists acknowledge this reality.

I hope you will find the articles interesting and challenging, and that you will find the book useful in teaching your students about research and documentation in scholarly writing.

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# Introduction to Research

## HOW TO READ AND EVALUATE RESEARCHED WRITING

This book will help you become a better reader of researched writing. In your academic career, you will probably be required to read a great deal of researched writing. Knowing how to read it critically and actively can make reading a more enjoyable experience while helping you become a better writer of researched writing.

The aim of most researched writing is to present new knowledge or information or to present a new explanation or interpretation of information already known. You should always approach reading researched writing with a skeptical and inquiring mind. Just because something has been published, doesn't make it true. You must pay attention to the evidence presented and the way the writer has supported the major ideas or theses.

Mortimer Adler in *How to Read a Book* suggests that in order to read with an active and inquiring mind, you need to approach the work with a series of questions (46–48). The following questions are appropriate when reading researched writing in any field.

1. What is the work about in its entirety? Search out the major thesis and look for how it has been divided into various topics.
2. What does the detailed information focus on? Look for the assertions the evidence supports.
3. What is the significance of the message? What claims does the author make about why the topic is important?

Different kinds of researched writing require different types of inquiry. Each section of this book deals with a different type of researched writing. However, *all* researched writing is interested in making an argument or proving some point. You should constantly assess how well the evidence presented supports the argument or assertions. Researched writing often presents various propositions or answers to questions. Propositions are declarations of knowledge or opinion. However, "propositions are nothing but expressions of personal opinion unless they are supported by reasons" (Adler 115). In reading researched writing, you want to know not just what the propositions are, but why the author thinks you should accept them (Adler 115). Don't accept the author's argument until you understand how he or she arrived at the conclusion.

Reading researched writing on subjects about which you have little previous knowledge may be difficult. Studies by Jeanne S. Chall, E. D.

Hirsch, Jr. and David Harrison have shown that people read more quickly and with greater comprehension if they are reading about a familiar subject. That is one reason you may discover that reading for college assignments takes up much more time than you spent reading previously. You are being exposed to topics about which you may have little prior knowledge. Reading about a topic for the first time, however, is the only way to gain the necessary knowledge that will help you understand the topic. By approaching the work with questions, being an active reader, and paying attention to your personal reactions to the work, you can make this initial process more interesting for yourself. If you don't pay attention to what your reaction is, you become disconnected from the communication process. This disconnection can lead to what Charles Bazerman has called "pseudo-boredom."

Pseudo-boredom comes when you feel you just cannot be bothered to figure out what all the new information and ideas mean; the mind backs away from a real and demanding occupation. . . . [T]he only cure for pseudo-boredom is to become fully and personally involved in the book already in front of you. By recording and developing your reactions and thoughts, you can talk back to the author. Although the consecutively numbered pages of the book keep coming past you in a straight line, you can turn the thoughts expressed on them in your own direction. Once you are involved, pseudo-boredom vanishes. (21)

Often understanding what the new information and ideas mean requires turning to other books for additional information. You need to get in the habit of having a dictionary handy anytime you are reading researched writing. Specialists in fields use technical vocabulary, and unless you understand it, the information contained in the work will be lost on you. Although it may be annoying to have to stop and look up words in a dictionary, doing so will enhance the accuracy of your reading and allow you to become more actively involved in the reading process.

Sometimes a dictionary is not sufficient to provide all the background information you need. Not all technical words are defined in standard dictionaries. You will need to utilize the specialized dictionaries available in a library to find some terms. Dictionary definitions, even in specialized dictionaries, are brief, so you may need to read an encyclopedia article to provide more information to help you understand the background of the topic. There are both general and specialized encyclopedias.

In this book, specialized terms in the articles have been defined to help speed your reading and research process.

## WHY DO RESEARCH?

Doing research and writing researched papers is an important part of your college education. Learning to use the multitude of sources available in libraries—including books and periodicals, indexes and abstracts,

government documents and corporation reports, databases available on-line or on compact discs—is only the first step to producing researched writing and to understanding the importance of research. You need to learn the conventions of research in specific fields: is it based on written documents, experiments in the laboratory or in the field, surveys of opinions or actions; is the written information primarily using argument and proving a thesis, or demonstrating a hypothesis; is proof presented through words or numbers? The techniques and types of research vary among the academic disciplines.

Research is important outside the university as well. Business people do research on new products, new markets, new managerial techniques. They do research to be sure the equipment and services they use are the best possible. They also need to be sure they are complying with all laws and regulations. Lawyers do research to find similar cases that set a precedent for their case. Doctors do research to find out about new treatments, new drugs, and even new diseases. Accountants do research to keep abreast of tax laws and standard accounting practices. Engineers research new practices, new materials, and new techniques for creating products and technologies. Nurses research new techniques of patient care as new instruments and equipment are introduced and new diseases become prevalent. Investment brokers research companies to determine if they are a good investment, while keeping up with the pertinent laws and regulations that can affect them and their clients. Farmers research everything from seed types best suited to soil and weather conditions to accounting practices and marketing techniques. Teachers research the best techniques for teaching, testing, and grading. Almost every profession requires that its practitioners know how to find information, extract and synthesize what is relevant, and present it so that the information is useful to others, as well as for themselves. These are the same goals you have in writing research papers.

### **THE RESEARCH PROCESS**

What is involved in research varies from discipline to discipline, from area to area. In some cases, reading texts and formulating a thesis defines the research process. In other disciplines, laboratory experiments are a significant part of the research process. Some disciplines require observation of the habits of people or animals. Other disciplines require surveys. Some disciplines take the information collected and use a variety of mathematical or statistical tests on it. Other disciplines evaluate the information according to theories or standards. All types of research require some reading of previous studies on the topic. As an undergraduate, you may perform experiments, collect observations, or take a survey; or you may be the subject of an experiment or a survey. You may have to write up what this research revealed or what you learned as a participant. But much of your researched writing as a student will be evaluating and synthesizing

other published material. You may also use published sources as authorities to back up your own ideas and interpretations. There are many books available on the research process in specific disciplines; these books direct you to standard bibliographies and indexes for that discipline. You might want to investigate some of these books to guide you in doing library research.

You will utilize the resources of your college library for your research. It is important that you familiarize yourself with its catalog, serials holdings (journals, periodicals, and newspapers), and with the indexing services it has available. Knowing the basic physical layout will help you do your research more quickly. The reference librarians are the most valuable resource your library provides because they know the sources of information available in your library and can explain how to use them. Once you have a topic that you want to research, they can give you much advice about which indexes and other research tools will provide the best information on your topic. Don't expect them to do the research for you, but ask them for help and advice any time you are having a problem finding information on your topic. Keep in mind that not all libraries have material on all topics, so you may need to change topics if your library simply doesn't have that information. Also libraries have different kinds of reference material available; all the sources listed in *The Holt Guide to Documentation and Writing in the Disciplines*, or any other guide to research may not be at your library. Your reference librarians will be able to suggest alternatives.

Almost any topic is a suitable beginning place for doing research. You must be willing to narrow it or broaden it as your research progresses and as you gain additional information on the topic. For example, "the framing of the U.S. Constitution" is too broad a topic to cover adequately in a ten- to twenty-page paper. However, as a starting point for research, it can lead you to a narrower topic that would be appropriate. Similarly, a reference in an art history text about Renaissance artist Paolo Uccello's use of geometry may provide a starting point for a topic that would broaden out to include the development of perspective in painting by using mathematics. The subject section of the card catalog, indexes, and other research tools will use a *controlled vocabulary* to list topics. This means that only certain terms are used to describe subjects. Often, you will have to use a term broader than your actual topic in order to find the books and articles that deal with your subject. For example, if you are analyzing Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's short story "The Fight," you will need to look for books and articles on the author and on the entire short story collection *Georgia Scenes* in order to find information about this particular short story. The reference librarians will help you decide which terms you need to use in the different reference materials.

## EMPIRICAL AND NORMATIVE RESEARCH

Generally, researched writing either presents empirical or normative research, or some combination. Empirical research is information based on observation, on information that can be collected and verified through our senses and reasoning ability. Sometimes empirical research has connotations of being information that can be quantified, but not always. Normative research presents information that “ought” to be accurate. Sometimes, this has connotations of ethical responsibility such as “people ought to be good” or “a society ought to be concerned about handicapped individuals,” and the research supports these types of statements. However, normative research can also be theoretical in nature. For example, astronomers examining the orbits of Uranus and Neptune, determined mathematically that there “ought” to be a ninth planet. So other astronomers began to look for one, and eventually Pluto was seen. The articles predicting the existence of a ninth planet would be an example of normative research; the articles reporting the citing of Pluto would be an example of empirical research. Thus, all disciplines use both empirical research methods and normative research methods.

## CONVENTIONS OF DOCUMENTATION AND CITATION

The chief distinguishing characteristic of researched writing is its use of *scholarly apparatus*—the methods of indicating the sources from which information was taken. There are many standards of providing such information. The articles contained in *The Researching Reader* give a broad range of these standards. You will need to determine what standards are appropriate for your class and your topic. Then you need to refer to a style manual or handbook that explains in detail the various kinds of formats for that standard. The headnotes of the articles in this book describe the basic format used by that article for citing books and journals. But no attempt has been made to explain how to document books with editors or translators, or newspapers, or films or other types of source material. For this information, you need to consult *The Holt Guide to Documentation and Writing in the Disciplines* or some other style manual.

The sections on research in *The Researching Reader* discuss some of the standards used in citing sources and documenting sources in that area. As you read researched writing, you may find all these differences bewildering and often the distinctions do not seem to have any clear purpose. You need to remember that these systems are only conventions and that they have changed radically through time. Some of the articles included in *The Researching Reader* represent the conventions of scholarship from the 1920s, 1940s, 1950s as well as current standards. As you read older material, you may find these differences confusing, unless you are aware that there have been many changes.



After you become used to a system, it seems natural and easy to use it. Most of the currently preferred systems are fairly simple and abbreviated ways of directing readers to the material cited. Each of these systems has its own strengths and weaknesses, and, in general, each represents what kinds of information professionals in that discipline believe are important to cite and document.

### HOW THE RESEARCHING READER IS ORGANIZED

This book has been divided into sections corresponding to the three largest divisions of scholarship: the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences. Each of these fields has a unique subject area that it investigates, unique methods of doing research, and unique ways of presenting that research in papers, articles, and books. Each field has different methods and expectations of source citation and research documentation. The humanities focus on artifacts produced by humans, and the creative process involving these artifacts and their implementation as people relate to each other and the environment. The social sciences focus on how humans interact with each other and with human institutions. The sciences focus on the external environment and how natural things operate and behave.

Each introductory section on research provides an example of researched writing. The citation and documentation conventions that have been used in these introductory sections conform to the *MLA Handbook for Writers*, which is identical to the *MLA Style Manual*, parenthetical documentation system.

For each article, technical and foreign terms have been defined for you. You have also been given some questions to help you focus on the thesis and supporting information, the rhetorical strategies, the documentation conventions used by the author, or the organizational method used in the article. For each article, you have also been given a vocabulary list of words that you need to familiarize yourself with in order to make your reading and writing easier.

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