GLOBAL EDITION

Writing Research Papers

A Complete Guide

FIFTEENTH EDITION

James D. Lester • James D. Lester, Jr.

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Writing Research Papers

A Complete Guide

Fifteenth Edition

Global Edition

James D. Lester

James D. Lester, Jr.
Austin Peay State University

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Preface to the Instructor

For decades, this text has been the leader in offering current, detailed guidance about academic research, writing, and documentation. Over the last two decades, the world of academic research has changed dramatically. Most research is now done online, and this new universe of information has not only put an almost unimaginable wealth of new sources at our fingertips, but it has also brought challenges in evaluating the credibility and usefulness of those sources. Questions of academic integrity and unintentional plagiarism have arisen around the integration of electronic sources. This new fifteenth edition of *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide* confronts these new challenges and offers clear, detailed guidance to assist student researchers as they struggle to keep pace with online research, electronic publishing, and new documentation formats.

What Is New in This Edition?

- **New "Clear Targets" at the beginning of each chapter** provide students with a list of learning objectives that serve as a ready guide for finding documentation information quickly and that provide students with the key goals of the chapter.
- **New explanations of research techniques** in Chapter 4 show students how to apply cutting-edge tools and strategies in their research, including keyword searches with expanded Boolean operators and social networking sites.
- **Three new student papers** plus a new annotated bibliography provide fresh models of student research work.
- **Updated coverage of APA documentation style** brings students up to speed with the latest revisions especially how to handle electronic source documentation.

Key Features

The world of academic research is changing rapidly, especially with the ascendance of online research. Virtually every college student now writes on a computer and researches online. The fifteenth edition of *Writing Research Papers* continues to offer a wide array of resources to help students successfully plan and execute their research papers.

Help with Digital Research

The digital revolution is so pervasive in research writing today that a single chapter cannot properly encompass the topic. Instead, every chapter of this text has been updated to reflect the current context for academic writing, including the impact of technology on searching for appropriate topics, finding and evaluating source material, gathering notes and drafting the paper, avoiding plagiarism and embracing academic integrity, and, of course, documenting sources. Students are directed step by step through the various formats for documenting online sources and are offered clear, detailed guidance on blending electronic citations into their writing. The most extensive updated content is included in Chapter 4, where explanations are provided about new research techniques using social networking sites and keyword searches with expanded Boolean operators.

Current Documentation Guidelines

Since discipline-specific style guides offer very different methods for documenting sources—particularly electronic sources—depending on the academic field of research, a guide of this sort is vital to students who are responding to writing assignments in a variety of disciplines. To enable students to document sources correctly, this edition includes updated guidelines for the most important documentation formats.

- **Up-to-date coverage of MLA documentation style.** The Modern Language Association (MLA) significantly revised its documentation style for both print and electronic sources in the most recent edition of the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing,* and the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* All sample citations and student papers in Chapters 1 to 14 reflect the current MLA style guides.
- **Revised APA documentation coverage.** The American Psychological Association (APA) also revised its documentation guidelines in the *APA Publication Manual.* All sample citations and student papers in Chapter 15 follow current APA documentation standards.
- **Current standards for CMS style.** The most recent edition of the University of Chicago Press' *Chicago Manual of Style* emphasizes the role of electronic research. All sample citations and student papers in Chapter 16 follow current CMS documentation standards.

Research Tips for Avoiding the Pitfalls of Plagiarism

Chapters 1 to 10 provide at least one "Research Tip," a feature that offers instruction and examples for citing sources appropriately and ethically, and avoiding plagiarism. Beginning with the section "Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism," in Chapter 1, *Writing Research Papers* clearly

explains what plagiarism is and presents strategies students can use to avoid unintentional plagiarism. Moreover, there is a special emphasis on how to blend quotations into academic writing and document Internet sources.

Guidelines for Evaluating Online Sources

Understanding what constitutes an appropriate source for an academic paper is more and more challenging for students, as more and more sources become instantly available online. *Writing Research Papers* assists student researchers in deciding if and when to use familiar search engines such as Google or Yahoo!, and also offers detailed advice on how to find respected scholarly sources—and how to determine whether a source is in fact credible. A checklist, "Evaluating Online Sources," helps students gauge the quality of online articles.

Student Papers

Student writing examples provide models for student writers of how other students have researched and drafted papers on a wide range of topics. With seven annotated sample papers, more than any other text of this kind, *Writing Research Papers* demonstrates format, documentation, and the different academic styles. Student papers include:

Ashley Irwin, "Sylvia Plath and Her 'Daddy"' (MLA Style)

Kaci Holz, "Gender Communication" (MLA style)

Caitlin Kelley, "More Academics for the Cost of Less Engaged Children" (APA style)

Clare Grady, "The Space Race: One Small Step—One Giant Leap" (CMS style)

Sarah Bemis, "Diabetes Management: A Delicate Balance" (CSE style)

Sarah Morrison, "Annotated Bibliography: Media Ethics" (MLA style)

Sarah Morrison, "Media Ethics: A Review of the Literature" (MLA style)

Sample abstracts in MLA and APA style are also displayed. Additional sample research papers are available in the *Instructor's Manual* and *Model Research Papers from across the Curriculum*.

Reference Works by Topic

The list of references in the Appendix, "Finding Reference Works for Your General Topic," provides a user-friendly list of sources for launching your research project. Arranged into ten general categories, as listed on pages 375–382, the Appendix allows a researcher to have quick access to relevant library books, library databases, and Internet sites.

Accessible, Navigable Design

As in previous editions, *Writing Research Papers* is printed in full color, making information and features easier to find and more pleasing to read, and bringing strong, visual elements to the instruction. Icons identify special features, like the "Where to Look" boxes signaling cross-references.

Additional Resources for Instructors and Students

CourseSmart*. Students can subscribe to *Writing Research Papers*, Fifteenth Edition, as a CourseSmart eText (at www.coursesmart.co.uk). The site includes all of the book's content in a format that enables students to search the text, bookmark passages, save their own notes, and print assignments that incorporate lecture notes.

Instructor's Manual

This extensive guide contains chapter-by-chapter classroom exercises, research assignments, quizzes, and duplication masters. Instructors can visit www.pearsonglobaleditions.com/Lester to download a copy of this valuable resource.

*This product may not be available in all markets. For more details, please visit www.coursesmart.co.uk or contact your local Pearson representative.

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JAMES D. LESTER, JR.

james.lester@cmcss.net

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Contributor

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1 Introduction to Academic Writing

Chapter 1 Clear Targets

Communication begins when we make an initial choice to speak or to record our ideas in writing. Regardless of the writer's experience, writing is a demanding process that requires commitment. This chapter charts a direction for your research project:

- Understanding why research is an important method of discovery
- Learning the conventions of academic writing
- Overcoming the pitfalls of plagiarism with proper documentation
- Understanding the terminology of a research assignment
- Establishing a schedule for your research project

The written word—whether it is a history paper, a field report, or a research project—creates a public record of our knowledge, our opinions, and our skill with language; hence, we must strive to make our writing accurate, forceful, and honest.

Discovering a well-focused topic, and more importantly a reason for writing about it, begins the process. Choosing a format, exploring sources through critical reading, and then completing the writing task with grace and style are daunting tasks.

Despite this, writing is an outlet for the inquisitive and creative nature in each of us. Our writing is affected by the richness of our language, by our background and experiences, by our targeted audience, and by the form of expression that we choose. With perceptive enthusiasm for relating detailed concepts and honest insights, we discover the power of our own words. The satisfaction of writing well and relating our understanding to others provides intellectual stimulation and insight into our own beliefs and values.

As a college student, you will find that your writing assignments will extend past personal thoughts and ideas to explore more complex topics. Writing will make you confident in your ability to find information

and present it effectively in all kinds of ways and for all sorts of projects, such as:

- A theme in a first-year composition course on the dangers of social networking sites.
- A paper in history on Herbert Hoover's ineffectual policies for coping with the Great Depression of the early 1930s.
- A report for a physical fitness class on the benefits of ballroom dancing as exercise.
- A sociological field report on free and reduced-cost lunches for school-aged children.
- A brief biographical study of a famous person, such as American agrarian labor leader César Chávez.

All of these papers require some type of "researched writing." Papers similar to these will be assigned during your first two years of college and increase in frequency in upper-division courses. This book eases the pressure—it shows you how to research "online discussion groups" or "the Great Depression," and it demonstrates the correct methods for documenting the sources.

We conduct informal research all the time. We examine various models and their options before buying a car, and we check out another person informally before proposing or accepting a first date. We sometimes search online for job listings to find a summer job, or we roam the mall to find a new tennis racket, the right pair of sports shoes, or the latest DVD. Research, then, is not foreign to us. It has become commonplace to use a search engine to explore the Internet for information on any subject—from personal concerns, such as the likely side effects of a prescribed drug, to complex issues, like robotics or acupuncture.

In the classroom, we begin thinking about a serious and systematic activity, one that involves the library, the Internet, or field research. A research paper, like a personal essay, requires you to choose a topic you care about and are willing to invest many hours in thinking about. However, unlike a personal essay, a research paper requires you to develop your ideas by gathering an array of information, reading sources critically, and collecting notes. As you pull your project together, you will continue to express personal ideas, but now they are supported by and based on the collective evidence and opinions of experts on the topic.

Each classroom and each instructor will make different demands on your talents, yet all stipulate *researched writing.* Your research project will advance your theme and provide convincing proof for your inquiry.

- *Researched writing* grows from investigation.
- *Researched writing* establishes a clear purpose.
- *Researched writing* develops analysis for a variety of topics.

Writing Research Papers introduces research as an engaging, sometimes exciting pursuit on several fronts—your personal knowledge, ideas gleaned from printed and electronic sources, and research in the field.

1a Why Do Research?

Instructors ask you to write a research paper for several reasons:

Research Teaches Methods of Discovery. Explanation on a topic prompts you to discover what you know on a topic and what others can teach you. Beyond reading, it often expects you to venture into the field for interviews, observation, and experimentation. The process tests your curiosity as you probe a complex subject. You may not arrive at any final answers or solutions, but you will come to understand the different views on a subject. In your final paper, you will synthesize your ideas and discoveries with the knowledge and opinions of others.

Research Teaches Investigative Skills. A research project requires you to investigate a subject, gain a grasp of its essentials, and disclose your findings. Your success will depend on your negotiating the various sources of information, from reference books in the library to computer databases and from special archival collections to the most recent articles in printed periodicals. The Internet, with its vast quantity of information, will challenge you to find reliable sources. If you conduct research by observation, interviews, surveys, and laboratory experiments, you will discover additional methods of investigation.

Finding material on electronic sources and the Internet, Chapter 4, pages 60–82.

Research Develops Inquiry-Based Techniques. With the guidance of your instructor, you are making inquiry to advance your own knowledge as well as increase the data available for future research by others.

Research Builds Career Skills. Many career fields rely on investigation and inquiry for fact-finding purposes. Researchers work across a broad spectrum of disciplines, including the physical and life sciences of biology, chemistry, and physics. Engineering sciences in the aerospace, computer science, and automotive production fields must rely on past research while forging new manufacturing trends. Social scientists in the fields of economics, sociology, psychology, and political science foster advancements in society through investigative studies. Research professionals are on the cutting edge of scientific and technological developments, and their work leads to new medicines, consumer products, industrial processes, and numerous other developments.

Research Teaches Critical Thinking. As you wade through the evidence on your subject, you will learn to discriminate between useful information and unfounded or ill-conceived comments. Some sources, such as the Internet, will provide timely, reliable material but may also entice you with worthless and undocumented opinions.

Research Teaches Logic. Like a judge in the courtroom, you must make perceptive judgments about the issues surrounding a specific topic. Your decisions, in effect, will be based on the wisdom gained from research

of the subject. Your paper and your readers will rely on your logical response to your reading, observation, interviews, and testing.

Research Teaches the Basic Ingredients of Argument. In most cases, a research paper requires you to make a claim and support it with reasons and evidence. For example, if you argue that "urban sprawl has invited wild animals into our backyards," you will learn to anticipate challenges to your theory and to defend your assertion with evidence.

Making a claim and establishing a thesis, 2f, pages 42–45.

1b Learning the Conventions of Academic Writing

Researched writing in each discipline follows certain conventions—that is, special forms are required for citing sources and designing pages. These rules make uniform the numerous articles written internationally by millions of scholars. The society of language and literature scholars, the Modern Language Association, has a set of guidelines generally known as MLA style. Similarly, the American Psychological Association has its own APA style. Other groups of scholars prefer a footnote system, while still others use a numbering system. These variations are not meant to confuse; they have evolved within disciplines as the preferred style.

What is important for you, right now, is to determine which documentation style to use. Many composition instructors will ask you to use MLA style, as explained in Chapters 11–14, but they are just as likely to ask for APA style (Chapter 15) if your topic concerns one of the social sciences. In a like manner, your art history instructor might expect the footnote style but could just as easily request the APA style. Ask your instructor early which style to use and organize accordingly.

MLA Style, pages 268–276
APA Style, pages 307–335
Chicago (CMS) Style, pages 336–354
CSE Style, pages 355–374

Regardless of the research style that you employ, your writing should advance substantive issues and inquiry. Keep in mind three key investigative conventions:

Analysis	Classify the major issues of your study and provide detailed analysis of each in defense of your thesis.
Evidence	Provide well-reasoned propositions and statements that are supported by facts, details, and evidence with proper documentation.
Discussion	Relate the implications of your findings and the merits of the study, whether an author's poetic techniques, a historical movement, or a social issue.

1c Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism

The most important convention of academic writing is the principle of giving proper credit to the work of others. **Plagiarism is defined as the act of claiming the words or ideas of another person as your own.** Plagiarism is a serious violation of the ethical standards of academic writing, and most colleges and universities have strict penalties, including academic probation or expulsion, for students who are guilty of plagiarism. Most schools publish an official code of student conduct (sometimes called an academic integrity policy), and you should be familiar with this document as it applies to your research and writing.

Some students will knowingly copy whole passages from outside sources into their work without documentation. Others will buy research papers from online sources or friends. These intentional acts of academic dishonesty are the most blatant forms of plagiarism. *Unintentional plagiarism,* however, is still a violation of academic integrity. Unacknowledged use of another person's sentences, phrases, or terminology is plagiarism, so provide a citation and use quotation marks to show exactly where you are drawing on others' work. Similarly, unacknowledged use of another person's ideas, research, or approach is also plagiarism, so write careful paraphrases.

Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism, Chapter 7, pages 113–126.

CHECKLIST

Avoiding Unintentional Plagiarism

The following guidelines will help you avoid unintentional plagiarism.

- **Citation.** Let readers know when you borrow from a source by introducing a quotation or paraphrase with the name of its author.
- **Quotation marks.** Enclose within quotation marks all quoted words, phrases, and sentences.
- **Paraphrase.** Provide a citation to indicate the source of a paraphrase just as you do for quotations.
- **Parenthetical citations and notes.** Use one of the academic documentation styles (MLA, APA, CMS, or CSE) to provide specific in-text citations for each source according to the conventions of the discipline in which you are writing.
- **Works cited or references pages.** Provide a complete bibliography entry at the end of your paper for every source you use, conforming to the standards of the documentation style you are using.

1d Understanding a Research Assignment

Beyond selecting an effective subject, you will need a reason for writing the paper. Literature instructors might expect you to make judgments about the structure and poetic techniques of Walt Whitman. Education instructors might ask you to examine the merits of a balanced curriculum for secondary students. History instructors might want you to explore an event—perhaps the tactics and strategies of the abolitionist movement leading up to the American Civil War.

Understanding the Terminology

Assignments in literature, history, and the fine arts will often require you to *evaluate, interpret,* and *perform causal analysis.* Assignments in education, psychology, political science, and other social science disciplines will usually require *analysis, definition, comparison,* or a search for *precedents* leading to a *proposal.* In the sciences, your experiments and testing will usually require a discussion of the *implications* of your findings. The next few pages explain these assignments.

Evaluation

To evaluate, you first need to establish clear criteria of judgment and then explain how the subject meets these criteria. For example, student evaluations of faculty members are based on a set of expressed criteria—an interest in student progress, a thorough knowledge of the subject, and so forth. Similarly, you may be asked to judge the merits of a poem, an art exhibit, or the newest trends in touchscreen cameras. Your first step should be to create your criteria. What makes a good movie? How important is a poem's form and structure? Is space a special factor in architecture? You cannot expect the sources to provide the final answers; you need to experience the work and make your final judgments on it.

Let's see how evaluation develops with one student, Sarah Bemis, who was asked to examine diabetes. At first, Sarah worked to define the disease and its basic attack on the human system. However, as she read the literature she shifted her focus from a basic definition to evaluate and examine the methods for controlling diabetes. Her paper, "Diabetes Management: A Delicate Balance," appears on pages 364–374.

In many ways, every research paper is an evaluation.

Interpretation

To interpret, you must usually answer, "What does it mean?" You may be asked to explain the symbolism in a piece of literature, examine a point of law, or make sense of test results. Questions often point toward interpretation:

What does this passage mean?
What are the implications of these results?
What does this data tell us?
Can you explain your reading of the problem to others?

For example, your instructor might ask you to interpret the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*; interpret results on pond water testing at site A, in a secluded country setting, and site B, near a petrochemical plant; or interpret a scene from Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People.*

In a paper on Internet dating, one student found herself asking two interpretive questions: What are the social implications of computer dating? and What are the psychological implications?

Definition

Sometimes you will need to provide an extended definition to show that your subject fits into a selected and well-defined category. Note these examples:

1. A low-fat diet reduces the risk of coronary disease.

   You will need to define "low-fat" by describing foods that make up a low-fat diet and naming the benefits from this type of diet.

2. Title IX has brought positive changes to college athletic programs.

   You will need to define the law in detail and specify the changes.

3. The root cause of breakups in relationships is selfishness.

   This topic will require a definition of selfishness and examples of how it weakens relationships.

A good definition usually includes three elements: the subject (low-fat diet); the class to which the subject belongs (diets in general); and the differences between others in this class (low-carb or Atkins). Definition will almost always become a part of your work when some of the terminology is subjective. If you argue, for example, that medical experiments on animals are cruel and inhumane, you may need to define what you mean by *cruel* and explain why *humane* standards should be applied to animals that are not human. Thus, definition might serve as your major thesis.

Definition is also necessary with technical and scientific terminology, as shown by Sarah Bemis in her paper on diabetes. The paper needed a careful, detailed definition of the medical disorder in addition to the methods for managing it. By her inquiry, she reached her conclusion that medication in harmony with diet and exercise were necessary for victims of the disease. Her research paper appears on pages 364–374.

Proposal

A proposal says to the reader, "We should do something." It often has practical applications, as shown by these examples:

- To maintain academic integrity, college administrators must enact stringent policies and punishments for cheating and plagiarism.
- A chipping mill should not be allowed in our town because its insatiable demand for timber will strip our local forests and ruin the environment.