

Mastering the Essay

Lesson 6 – The Research Paper, Part 2: Deepening Your Research

READINGS

- “A Bitter Penance” (Forbes)
- **Google Scholar: The Ultimate Guide** (Paperpile)
<https://paperpile.com/g/google-scholar-guide/>
- **8 Tips for Effective Internet Research** (Web Writer Spotlight)
<https://webwriterspotlight.com/tips-to-nail-online-research>
- **How to Search Academic Databases** (The Nature of Writing)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfYZGPPmftQ&ab_channel=TheNatureofWriting
- **Library Resources for Alberta, Canada** (*Please familiarize yourself with these sources—you won't use all of them, but they are all good sources to help you find additional information about your research topic.*)
 - **University of Alberta** <https://www.library.ualberta.ca/sandbox/ask-us-old>
 - **University of Calgary** <https://library.ucalgary.ca/ask>
 - **Calgary Public Library Digital Library** <https://calgarylibrary.ca/read-learn-and-explore/digital-library/>
 - **Calgary Public Library Hotline** <https://calgarylibrary.ca/contact-us/>

PLAGIARISM

- A natural transition from the reading is to the topic of plagiarism—from the Latin word for "kidnapping." Discuss academic honesty. What is it? Why do people violate it? Is it only plagiarism if you have a “bad” intention?
- Writing a good annotated bibliography and keeping notes while you research will help you in two ways: 1) as you write, you will more easily be able to find a source or a quote that comes to mind, 2) you will avoid plagiarism because you will easily be able to find where you read a fact.
- This week, you will finish your annotated bibliography and write an outline which includes which evidence you will use in which paragraph. We will review this next week as well, but keep in mind when to cite someone else’s work:
 - **When the information you are describing is not common knowledge/was not something you knew before researching it.**
 - **When you quote a source.**
 - **When you paraphrase someone else’s words.**
 - **When you summarize something from someone else’s work.**

DEEPENING YOUR RESEARCH

- When you first begin to research a good topic, you generally have only a superficial knowledge of the topic. Last week, you focused on finding good survey sources to help you get a "lay of the land." You were like a lookout on top

of a tall mountain, trying to find the valleys, the cities, the best paths, before the rest of the troops attempted passage.

- This week, you will want to go into more detail on your subject. Use the list of keywords, phrases, and topics that you formulated last week in your notes (hopefully you did this!) to find more particular information on your subject.
- BUT FIRST, it is helpful to do some planning. **Sketch out a brief, informal outline of what you think you will include in your paper.** Then, make a list of topics that you need more information on. It can be also helpful to make a list of questions that you still need to answer. Perhaps you have discovered that there are several controversies about your topic, plan to dig into each perspective even if you think you already agree with one. Remember that your **working thesis** should be changing continually as you learn more.
- **Variety of sources:** Every major claim (often every body paragraph) should have at least three sources supporting it. One source can serve as support for several different claims, but every major claim needs a variety of research to verify it.
- **Moving beyond the five-paragraph essay:** Beginning students are often taught the five-paragraph essay (intro, three body paragraphs, conclusion). There is nothing wrong with this form, but it is limiting if it is the only way you know how to write. For this paper, **you will need to plan on having at least four body paragraphs and at least three sources for each paragraph.** You may use the same source in multiple paragraphs.
- Some sources for deeper research:
 - **Google Scholar** can be an excellent source for technical papers, research studies, and peer-reviewed papers. "Peer-review" means that a paper was read by several other experts in the area and checked for accuracy and depth. A peer-reviewed paper is written by an expert for other experts, and so it can be a bit difficult for the layperson to understand, but this kind of resource is one of the most robust and trustworthy you can find. See the **Paperpile** resource in the readings for this lesson to understand better how to use this resource. **See the article "8 Tips for Effective Internet Research"** to learn how to use internet search engines like a professional researcher—you will be surprised by what you did not know!
 - **Books:** Hopefully last week you were able to go to a library and check out a pile of books on your topic. If you were not, please try to go this week. Even in the age of the internet, old fashioned books are still an essential resource. **Remember that you do not need to read all of a book:** Skim it intelligently to glean the necessary information (as we discussed last week). Use the introduction, table of contents, and index to find sections relevant to your topic.
 - **Academic databases** are generally paid subscriptions to huge, specialized search engines that pull information from thousands of scholarly journals and other technical sources. You typically will not be able to access these at home, but you may from your local library. EBSCOhost is one of the largest, most general databases which will contain relevant information for most subjects. See the YouTube video in this week's readings "How to Search Academic Databases." If you find a friendly librarian, he or she

can also help you use a database.

Research is time-consuming, and you often have to glance over three or four sources before you find one that is just what you need. It's important to "over research" and find more than you think you will need. It's better to have too much information than too little! On the other hand, researching can become its own means of procrastinating—it's easier to keep reading new articles and books than it is to do the hard work and put pen to paper and write.

Assignment

Deepen your research by finding at least 3-4 additional sources for your research paper and **add them to your annotated bibliography** (make sure to alphabetize by author's last name as you go). You will submit the full annotated bibliography, including the sources that you already submitted last week. Make sure that you **first make a quick sketch of an outline of your paper** (you do not need to submit this) so that you know what you are looking for. After (or during) your deeped research, write a **detailed outline** of your paper which includes: 1) thesis, 2) sub-theses, 3) the quotes or information you will include in each body paragraph with a proper MLA citation. For example: ". . . legos are the most popular toy in America" (Lamberti 10). Your outline should include a plan for at least **four body paragraphs**. As you write the outline, think about smooth, logical transitions from topic to topic. Remember that the better of a job you do this week, the easier and quicker writing will be next week.