



# Developing Writing Skills

Advanced Functional and Applied Skills  
in the use of English Academic Writing

Module 1

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# Research and Writing

- ▶ The Research Paper as a form of Exploration and Communication
- ▶ Using Library Research Sources
- ▶ Taking Notes: Methods and Types

# **The Research Paper as a form of Exploration and Communication**



# Personal Essay and Research Paper

## ➤ Personal Essay

- Individual thoughts, feelings, opinions.
- No reference to other sources of information or ideas.

## ➤ Research Paper

- Goes beyond the scope of personal essay.
- Requires us to go beyond personal knowledge and experience.
- Materials beyond our personal resources are sought out, investigated and used in a research paper.

# Research Paper

- ▶ A research paper is an academic presentation where one undertakes to explore an idea, probe an issue, solve a problem or make an argument and in the process is compelled to seek out, investigate and use materials beyond one's personal domain and compiles the findings and conclusions.
- ▶ A research paper may be in printed, electronic or multimedia format.

# Primary Research

- ▶ Primary research is the study of a subject through first hand observation and investigation.

It may involve analysis of:

- ▶ A literary or historical text
- ▶ A film or a theatrical performance
- ▶ A survey
- ▶ An interview
- ▶ An experiment

# Secondary Research

- ▶ Secondary research involves examination of the findings and observations of other researchers in the subject.
  - ▶ It involves books and articles about
    - ▶ Literary works
    - ▶ Political debates
    - ▶ Scientific issues
    - ▶ Historical events
- ▶ Most academic papers depend at least partly on secondary research.

# Using Secondary Research

- Most academic papers depend at least partly on secondary research.
- Learning to identify and analyze the works of other researchers is an important constituent of research activity.
- A research paper involves
  - Discovering, assessing and assimilating others' research
  - Articulating one's ideas, clearly and effectively

# Combining Research and Original Ideas: 1

- Research increases one's knowledge and understanding of a subject.
- Research sometimes confirms one's ideas.
- At other times it forces one to change or modify one's opinions.
- Research compels one to think deeply.

# Combining Research and Original Ideas: 2

- ▶ Other sources are important for
  - ▶ Getting new information
  - ▶ Surveying positions already taken on the subject
  - ▶ Lending authority to one's viewpoint
  - ▶ Expanding one's ideas
  - ▶ Offering methods and modes that can be applied to new data or subject
  - ▶ Furnishing negative examples against which one needs to argue
- ▶ Main purpose of research is to assimilate and build upon others' works and arrive at one's own understanding of the subject.

# Different Approaches to Research and Writing

- Approaches to research and writing a paper vary widely.
- It depends on the individual researcher as well as the research topic.
- The activities that almost all writers of research papers go through include:
  - Selecting a suitable topic
  - Conducting research
  - Compiling a working bibliography
  - Taking notes
  - Outlining and
  - Preparing the research paper.

# Exploration and Discovery

- ▶ Writing a research paper involves many technicalities.
- ▶ However, no way it is simply a mechanical exercise.
- ▶ Writing a research paper is intellectually stimulating.
- ▶ It is a form of exploration that leads to new discoveries.
- ▶ The mechanics of writing a research paper should never overwhelm the intellectual challenge of pursuing a question that interests the researcher.
- ▶ The greatest satisfaction of research and scholarship is the excitement involved in developing and testing ideas.

# Research Papers and Professional Writing

- The skills involved in writing a research paper helps one not only in the academic field but also in professional areas.
- Many proposals and reports involving Government, Non Government Organizations, Businesses and Professions depend on consultation of secondary research material.
- Almost all professions necessitates the use of sources of information about a specific subject and combining these information with one's ideas and thus effectively present one's thoughts, findings and conclusions.

# A form of Communication

- ▶ A research paper is a form of written communication.
- ▶ Like all non-fiction modes of writing – letters, memos, reports, essays, articles, books – it should present information and ideas clearly and effectively.
- ▶ A research paper demands lively and intelligent writing and proper presentation of ideas.
- ▶ The documentation should only support the thesis and provide concise ideas about the source of information – never overshadow the main idea.

# Using Library Research Sources



# Resources and Services

## ➤ Resources

- Print Resources
- Electronic Resources
- Non Print Media

➤ Films, Sound Recordings etc.

## ➤ Services

- Computer Services
- Access to Internet
- High Quality Printers
- Reprographic Facilities

# In-house and Out-house Facilities

- In-house facilities

- Books
- Publications in print form
- Microfilm materials
- Special collections

- Out-house facilities

- Bibliography in electronic format
- Full-text databases in electronic format

# Orientation and Instruction

- Introductory pamphlets or handbooks
- Guided tours
- Lectures and classes on
  - Using the library
  - Developing research strategies
  - Searching World Wide Web
- Website provides information on
  - Any lecture or class
  - Description of available resources and services
  - Online tutorials

# Professional Reference Librarians

- ▶ Tell one about available instructional programs.
- ▶ Help one locate source materials.
- ▶ Prepare and distribute, in print and electronic forms, research guides to specific fields of study.
- ▶ May be available in person, or by telephone, e-mail or instant messaging.
- ▶ Consulting a librarian may significantly save one's time and effort to locate the right kind of research material required.

# Library Research Sources: 1

## ➤ Electronic Sources

- Reference Work
- Full-text database
- Subscriptions to Journals in electronic form

## ➤ Books and Similar Publications

### ➤ Books

- Most books may be borrowed
- Reference works in print are not borrowable

### ➤ Pamphlets

### ➤ Dissertations

# Library Research Sources: 2

## ➤ Print Periodicals

- Scholarly Journals
- Newspapers
- Magazines

## ➤ Additional Sources

- Sound recordings
- Video recordings
- Unpublished writings
  - Manuscripts
  - Private letters in special collection

# The Central Information System

- Most academic libraries provide an online central information system to guide students and faculty members to research resources.
- The system includes:
  - **Library's Catalog of Holdings** – books, periodicals, electronic sources, audio visual material etc.
  - **Bibliographic Database** – e.g. *MLA International Bibliography* and *Science Direct*
  - **Other Electronic Resources** – reference works, full-text databases, recommended Web sites with links
  - **Other Information** – Library location, hour, policies
- **World-Cat** – a database listing the holdings of over 10,000 libraries.

# Reference Works: 1

## ► Print:

### ► General reference

- Dictionaries
- Encyclopedias
- Biographical sources
- Yearbooks
- Atlases
- Gazettes

### ► Specialized reference

- Subject specific
- Indexes
- Bibliographies
- Abstracts collections

# Reference Works: 2

- ▶ **Electronic:**

- ▶ Online

- ▶ CD-ROM or DVD-ROM

- ▶ Electronic medium has generally more obvious advantage in terms of currency, broad coverage, ease of downloading and printing, link to other works and sophisticated search capabilities. ***Reference Universe*** allows one to search indexes of more than 10,000 reference works.
- ▶ Print version provides better coverage as many reference works are only available in print.

# Reference Works Providing Data about Research Material: 1

- ▶ **Indexes and Bibliographies** – lists of publications usually classified by subject.
  - ▶ **Articles in newspapers** – *The New York Times Index*
  - ▶ **Articles in Periodicals** – *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*
  - ▶ **Subject specific specialized bibliographies** – *The Philosopher's Index*
  - ▶ **Combination of several indexes in electronic format** – *OmniFile Full Text*
  - ▶ **Bibliographies published as books, periodicals, pamphlets or parts thereof**  
– *Bibliographic Index*

# Reference Works Providing Data about Research Material: 2

- ▶ **Collections of abstracts** – summaries of journal articles and other literature.

Helps in screening out the irrelevant.

- ▶ **Abstracts of newspaper articles** – *Newspaper Abstract*
- ▶ **Abstracts of Periodical articles** – *Periodical Abstracts*
- ▶ **Abstracts of Book Reviews** – *Book Review Digest*
- ▶ **Abstracts of articles in scholarly journals on a specific subject** – *Biological Abstracts*
- ▶ **Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations** – *Dissertation Abstracts International*

# Reference Works Providing Data about Research Material: 3

- ▶ **Guides to research** – attempts to direct one to most important sources of information and scholarship in the area of research. Guides are usually selective and evaluative rather than being comprehensive or objective.
  - ▶ **Research Guides covering entire field** – *Literary Research Guide: An Annotated Listing of Reference Sources in English Literary Studies and Philosophy: A Guide to Reference Literature*
  - ▶ **Research Guides devoted to specific subjects within a fields** – *Reference Guide to Mystery and Detective Fiction*

# Reference Works Providing Basic Information about Subjects: 1

- ▶ **Dictionaries** – concise definitions about words or topics.
  - ▶ **Authoritative Dictionaries** – *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, The Oxford English Dictionary.*
  - ▶ **Concise Dictionaries** – *The American Heritage College Dictionary, Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.*
  - ▶ **Dual-language Dictionaries** – *The New World Spanish-English, English-Spanish Dictionary.*
  - ▶ **Thesaurus** – lists groups of synonyms - *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus, Roget's International Thesaurus*
  - ▶ **Specialized Dictionaries** – *Black's Law Dictionary, Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*

# Reference Works Providing Basic Information about Subjects: 2

- ▶ **Encyclopedias** – introductory information about subjects.
  - ▶ **Popular General Encyclopedias** – *The Encyclopedia Americana, The Encyclopaedia Britannica.*
  - ▶ **Specialized Encyclopedias** – *The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Science, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*
- ▶ **Biographical Sources** – describes lives of prominent people.
  - ▶ **Information on living people** – *Current Biography, The International Who's Who.*
  - ▶ **Information on persons no more living** – *American National Biography, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

# Reference Works Providing Basic Information about Subjects: 3

- **Yearbooks** – present facts about years in the past, generally updates to encyclopedias, published between editions – *The Americana Annual, Britannica Book of the Year, The Europa Yearbook.*
- **Almanacs** – annual publications containing data, especially statistics – *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, the World Factbook.*
- **Atlases** – collection of maps – both print and online versions. Web based atlases include – *The National Atlas of the United States of America, Google Earth.*

# Reference Works Providing Basic Information about Subjects: 4

- ▶ **Gazetteers** – provide geographic information. *The Columbia Gazetteer of the World, Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary.*
- ▶ **Statistical Resources** – provide numerical or quantitative facts.
  - ▶ **Governmental sources** – *American FactFinder, FedStats.*
  - ▶ **Intergovernmental and nongovernmental sources** – *Statistical Yearbook, Demographic Yearbook* published by United Nations.

# Searching a Reference Database:

## 1

- ▶ Standard reference work in every field – *MLA International Bibliography* – in the fields of language and literature.

- ▶ **Electronic** – The electronic version offer information on more than 20,00,000 titles.

Presented

- ▶ **Online version**

- ▶ **CD-ROM version**

- ▶ **Print** – The printed library edition is published annually in 2 books. Contains 67,000 titles.

# Types of Searches - Electronic Version: 1

- **Author** – A list of the titles by the author in the database.
- **Title** – If the entire title is known , the particular book can be found. If only a part of the title is entered, all titles with that part name will be displayed.
- **Subject** – All books having the particular descriptor (e.g. “detective fiction”) are displayed.
- **Expanded searches** – If one needs to broaden one’s search area one may use the option of expanded search. In this case a topic like “detective” will generate various related topics like “detective comics”, “detective fiction”, “female detective” and so on with links to relevant bibliographies. A search like “femini\*” / “femini\$” will generate records on “femininity”, “feminine discourse” etc.

# Types of Searches - Electronic

## Version: 2

- **Boolean searches** – search on the basis of Boolean logic named after 19<sup>th</sup> C. British mathematician and logician George Boole.
  - *Or* – for expansion (Arthur Conan Doyle or Sherlock Holmes)
  - *Not* – for narrower search (Othello not Shakespeare)
  - *And* – for specific comparisons (Othello and Otello)
- **Other advanced searches** –
  - Works in a particular publication source
  - Works in a particular language
  - Works within a particular timeframe

# Searching an Online Catalog

- An important part of the library's central information system is the online catalog of holdings. Search may be based on:
- **Author**
- **Title**
- **Subject heading**
- **Call number** – the designation by which the work is shelved in the library
- **Keyword** – A keyword search looks for individual words regardless of their location in a name, title or subject heading.
- **Boolean searches**
- **Other advanced searches**

# Information Needed for Research

- All data that appears in the catalog entry is generally not required for research.
- The data which must be recorded for citation are:
  - Author
  - Title
  - Full publication information
- Apart from this important data include:
  - Origin of the reference
  - Call number
- Information recorded must be verified due to possibilities of errors in the catalogs.

# Call Numbers: 1

- ▶ **The Library of Congress system** – divides books into 20 major groups
  - ▶ **A**        General Work
  - ▶ **B**        Philosophy, Psychology and Religion
  - ▶ **C**        Auxiliary Sciences of History
  - ▶ **D**        World history and history of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, New Zealand etc.
  - ▶ **E- F**     History of the Americas
  - ▶ **G**        Geography, anthropology, recreation
  - ▶ **H**        Social Sciences
  - ▶ **J**        Political Science

# Call Numbers: 2

- ▶ **K** Law
- ▶ **L** Education
- ▶ **M** Music and books on music
- ▶ **N** Fine arts
- ▶ **P** Language and literature
- ▶ **Q** Science
- ▶ **R** Medicine
- ▶ **S** Agriculture
- ▶ **T** Technology
- ▶ **U** Military science
- ▶ **V** Naval science
- ▶ **Z** Bibliography, library science, and information resources

# Call Numbers: 3

- ▶ **The Dewey decimal system** – divides books into 10 major groups
  - ▶ **000** Computers, information and general reference
  - ▶ **100** Philosophy and psychology
  - ▶ **200** Religion
  - ▶ **300** Social sciences
  - ▶ **400** Language
  - ▶ **500** Science
  - ▶ **600** Technology
  - ▶ **700** Arts and recreation
  - ▶ **800** Literature
  - ▶ **900** History and geography

# Location of Library Materials

- **Open shelves** – Where a user has open access.
- **Closed stacks** – Ordinary user do not have access. Generally a library staff collects the work on presentation of a call slip.
- **Reserved works** – If the word Reserved appears on a catalog entry it indicates that the work is required in a course and stored in a special section at the instructor's request so that the work may not be borrowed but stays available for students in the course.
- **Reference works** – Works too widely used and hence remain in the library.
- **Other sections** – Areas for periodicals, pamphlets and non-print materials like CD-ROMs, films, audio, video materials.

# Full-Text Databases

- ▶ **AnthroSource** – Contents of over 30 scholarly journals published by the American Anthropological Association.
- ▶ **ARTstor** – Over 7,00,000 images relating to art and architecture.
- ▶ **Early English Books Online (EEBO)** – A digital collection of over 1,00,000 books and pamphlets published in England between 1473 and 1700. Allows users to view materials that are fragile.
- ▶ **EBSCO** – Various full-text databases
  - ▶ *Academic Search Premier*
  - ▶ *Business Source Premier*
  - ▶ *Masterfile Premier*
- ▶ **Project Muse** - Recent issues of about 400 journals in humanities and social sciences

# Other Library Resources and Services

- ▶ **Microforms** – Printed matter greatly reduced in size by microphotography – microfilm, microfiche, microcard. Used to store back copies of periodicals and rare materials.
- ▶ **Media Center** – Audio and Video recordings.
- ▶ **Electronic and other resources** – Computers with internet connection, Photocopiers etc.
- ▶ **Interlibrary loans** – Many libraries have agreements to exchange research materials with other libraries. One may initiate the process with the help of the librarian if the concerned library does not possess the title.

# Web Sources: 1

## ➤ Range of Sources –

- Library Catalogs
- Sites of Professional Organizations
- Sites of Government Agencies
- Sites of Commercial Enterprises
- Sites of Educational Entities
- Sites of Individual Scholars

## ➤ Using Recommended Sites –

- Guidance of Instructors, academic department, librarian
- Library's link to important sites
- Recommended sites for courses

## ➤ Gateway Sites –

- “metapage” or “gateway” links to other sites.
- *Voice of the Shuttle* - humanities, *Crossroads* – American Studies

# Web Sources: 2

## ➤ Searching the Web –

- **Search tools** – used for locating Internet materials. *Google, Windows Live, Yahoo!* mostly used. Important to narrow down search and getting rid of unimportant data.
- **Bookmarking and recording of the URL** – any useful document must be bookmarked and its url recorded for future reference and citation purpose.
- **Recording date of access** – date of access must be recorded for citation as the contents of an web page may change from time to time.
- **Internet sources among other sources** – often a web based research alone is considered inadequate. It must be supplemented with other forms of research.

# Taking Notes: Methods and Types



# Methods of Note-Taking

- No two researcher follow the same method of note taking.
- Notes may be taken on
  - Index cards
  - Sheets of paper
- Notes taken on computers prove to be more accurate, especially while transcribing.
- Important to note down author's name and complete title of the source and information to locate it on working bibliography
- If it is not a part of working bibliography all publication details to be noted and the work must be put on working bibliography.

# Types of Note-Taking

- Generally there are three types of note-taking.
- **Summary** – When only the general idea of large amounts of material is required.
- **Paraphrase** – When detailed note on specific lines or passages is required but exact wording is not required.
- **Quotation** – When some sentence or passage in its original wording might make an effective addition to the paper. Every word and punctuation must be scrupulously noted. Use of quotation marks is a must.

# Recording Page or Reference Numbers

- ▶ In summarizing, paraphrasing and quoting an accurate record of the pages or other numbered sections must be kept.
- ▶ When a quotation continues to another page or section it is important to note where the page or section break occurs as the entire quotation may not be needed at a later stage.

# Using a Computer for Note-Taking

- Often in a library one has to take notes by hand. Strategies for storing and retrieving notes vary.
- For a short paper for which there are few notes, one may place all materials in a single file and draw from it as and when necessary.
- For a longer paper with numerous resources one may create a separate file for each source.
- One can also only enter the quotations on the computer and keep the summaries and paraphrases on paper, to eliminate the possibility of error involved in transcribing quoted words more than once.
- Downloading quotations from a database.

# Amount and Accuracy of Note-Taking

- Important to steer a middle course between recording too much and recording too little.
- Accuracy is a must – especially for quotations but also for summaries and paraphrases.
- Very important to note down the source of the materials.