Writing Workshops

Center for Learning and Academic Support Services (C.L.A.S.S.)
California State University, Dominguez Hills
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RESEARCH
PAPER
Writing Research Paper

1. Definition of research paper
2. Choosing and narrowing your topic
3. Creating your bibliography
4. Organizing your material
5. Writing the paper
1. What is a Research Paper?

The usual term paper is research into already recorded information.

At its simplest, writing a research paper opens up new perspectives by enlarging your comprehension and thus your appreciation of some aspect of the world.

At its most fortuitous, it can lead to a new contribution to knowledge.
2. Choosing and Narrowing Your Topic

Examples of narrowing topics:

(a) Athletics
   Athletic equipment
   Clothing for athletes
   Clothing for running
   Running shoes

(b) Architecture
   Modern architecture (in Los Angeles)
   Gothic churches
   California missions

(c) Taxation
   Federal taxation
   Federal income taxes
   Exemptions from federal income taxes
(d) Women’s rights

Women’s early fight to get the vote
Attitudes toward women’s fight to get the vote
Abuses of women working for suffrage in the early 1900s
Imprisonment of women working for suffrage in the early 1900s

(e) Drama

Tragedy
Shakespearean tragedy

Macbeth

Figures of speech in Macbeth

(f) Herman Melville

Melville’s ideas
His ideas on the evils of civilization
His ideas about the evils of money, as they appear in Typee and his letters
3. Creating Your Bibliography

Sources for material:

- Library
  - Books, periodicals, newspapers, films
- CSU data bases:
  - MLA Bibliography, jstor, Wilsonweb, etc.
- Class notes
- Interviews
- Public documents
- Radio and television broadcasts
Assembling a working bibliography:

A working bibliography is the record you keep, from the time you begin your research until you finish the paper, of your references, that is the books and other sources you consult.

The most efficient way to list your references is on 3-by-5-inch cards, one for each reference.

By the time you write your paper, the working bibliography will include every book or periodical you have found useful.
Card Citing Just One Section of a Book Written by Many Authors. Note that the section referred to is enclosed in quotation marks, the editors are after the title when a specific author is cited, and the page numbers must be given for the section referred to. In this particular set, authors' names are not put with their articles. Only by reading the introduction to the set would you know where to find authors. Always check introductory material in books to be sure you do not overlook such important information. This type of bibliography card you would make out after you had the book in your hands and had skimmed it or at least looked through the table of contents. ~
Card for Just One Volume of a Multivolume Set in Which Each Volume Has a Separate Title. Note that the copyright date for the individual volume is given here and that, since the volume is in a sense a part of the title, it is put in roman numerals. This card gives the number of pages in the book. The xliii refers to such introductory material as title page, table of contents, introduction, and so on, which always come before the regular text. The xliii suggests that this book has a long introduction of some kind. Of the text proper and anything after it, such as index, bibliography, and so on, there are 429 pages. Note that only the number of this one volume is added to the call number.
Card for a Book with No Known Author but with Editor and Translator

Card for One Volume of a Set with Three Editors Instead of Authors. The English and others could have been used instead of the Latin et al.
Card for a Book with Two Authors

E184    Daniels, Roger, and Harry
         A1    N. L. Kitano
D25

American Racism: Exploration of the Nature of Prejudice

Card for All Volumes of a Multivolume Work. Note that two copyright dates are given, indicating that at least one volume was published later than the rest. Note also that the volumes are added to the call number.
4. Organizing Your Material

• Making a tentative outline from the note cards.

• Making a topical outline from tentative outline.

• Formulating a final thesis (research question).

• Working out a logical outline to support the thesis.
The Topic

The following outline samples were prepared for a freshman English class research assignment on Joseph Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness*.

The writer of this research paper was curious about the interrelation between the ivory and slave trade.
What is a Tentative Outline?

After the reading is finished, the next step is to sort out the notes according to similarity of content and organize them into a slug outline. Tentative (also called slug) outline constitutes the first step in organizing the material, that is, the information culled from the sources and recorded on note cards.

In this step, cards of similar information are sorted out and put together to form a tentative structure of the paper.
1. Statistics about the ivory trade
   Dates of ivory export
   Trade importance of ivory, 1859
   Trade importance, 1867
   Ivory, trade in

2. About ivory
   Quality of ivory best
   African ivory most desirable
   Soft ivory most desirable

3. Statistics on slaves
   Annual no. at height
   Export at height

4. Natives, slavery and ivory
   Natives already had slaves
   Natives traded undesirables to Arabs
   Slave return, sold again
   Tribes stored iv. to trade for capt. members
   Cannibals trade iv. for slaves
   Bubis had slaves, kind to
   Natives unaware value of iv.

5. Tsetse made human transport necessary

6. Organization of trading areas
   Areas of trade
   Trade routes, central Afr.

7. Traders
   Indian traders
   Traders, leading
   Trader, Kilonga-Longa
   Tippu Tib, leading trader
      Descript. Tip
      Tip’s untrustworthiness
      Tip’s word good
      Tip falsely accused treachery
      Tip’s name and parents
      Tip’s nickname
      Origins Tip’s nickname
      Tip incited strife

8. Traders’ centers
   Hqts. for raids
   Arab strongholds
   Trading posts

9. Traders, devastation
   Traders devastation
   Devas. by iv. hunters
   Dev. left in slaving
   Country devas.

10. Arab traders’ inhumanity
    Arab disregard for life
    Saw chain gang
    Kill slaves, hunter
    Traders massacre
    Kill adults, keep child. slaves
    Arabs capt. natives trade for ivory

11. Traders’ methods
    Methods, kill and trade
    Methods, incite natives
    Arabs furnish guns

12. Elephants, depletion
    30,000 el. slain annually
    El. killed for hunger, ivory, trade
    Herds depleted after Arabs

13. Ivory hunting
    Iv. hunting dangerous
    Getting tusk off hard job
    Poison elephants
    Descrip. killing el.
    Weight of tusk

14. Elephant hunting regulated, 1905

15. Restrictive action against slavery
    Restr. action ineffective
    Restrict. action, not abolition
    Laws vs. slaving ignored

16. Slavery condoned
    Slavery condoned, reasons
    Stan. naive re abolish slave trade

17. European interest in slavery
    Europ. expl. and invest. in Afr.
    Anti-slavery society

18. Effective action
    Livingst. started effective abol.
    Abolition begun
    Arabs out after 1886
    Int’l conf. slave trade

19. Modern methods
    How transported
    Old slave trade gone, descrp.

20. Miscellaneous
    Mary K’s bus.
    Slaves worth more than Afr. gold
This step is a more compact outline based on the spread of the material shown on the slug outline. The material now has a definite shape, but it is still too vague to make a good outline for writing the rough draft.

I. Statistics on the ivory and slave trade
   A. Dates
   B. Importance

II. Why they were combined
   A. Slaves and ivory in same area
   B. Export market for both
   C. Natives both ivory and slave traders themselves
   D. Testse fly
III. Explorer’s report on Arabs’ part in the combined trade
   A. Organization
      1. Trade routes
      2. Strongholds
   B. Methods
      1. Kill and trade for ivory
      2. Slave children
      3. Incite natives
   C. Results
      1. Devastation
      2. Inhumanity
      3. Depletion of elephant herds

IV. Efforts to correct the situation
   A. Early restrictive acts
   B. Deterrents
   C. Influence of explorers
   D. Abolition

V. Present condition
The Tentative Thesis

A tentative thesis is to pose some general questions to which the writer hopes to find answers.

*Thesis:* Why and how did slavery and ivory trading grow up together and last so long as a combined business?

1. How much of business was it?
2. Why were the two combined?
3. How were the two carried on together?
4. Why was the slavery part allowed?
5. How and why was the slave trade stopped?
Outline

Thesis: Various factors in the nineteenth century encouraged the growth of the combined ivory and slave trade in Africa and retarded the abolition of the slave trade until after European explorers' reports shocked the European world into action.

I. Four conditions encouraged combining ivory and slave trading.
   A. Slaves and ivory were abundant in the same area.
   B. The outside world provided huge markets for both.
   C. The African natives themselves practiced combined ivory and slave trading.
   D. The tsetse fly made human bearers necessary.

II. European explorers reported to the world the evils of Arab slave and ivory trading in Central Africa.
   A. They reported on the trade routes set up for ivory and slave raiding.
   B. They reported on the evils of the combined trade.
      1. They reported on the devastation of the country.
      2. They reported on the traders' inhuman methods.
         a. The traders had no regard for human life.
         b. They killed adults and reared children as slaves.
            (1) Girls were put in harems.
            (2) Boys were trained to become slave raiders for their Arab masters.
      c. The explorers reported how the Arabs incited native fighting and then exploited the winners.
   C. They reported the depletion of the elephant herds.

III. The elimination of the slave trade was slow.
    A. Early efforts were futile.
       1. There were still markets for both slaves and ivory.
       2. Despite agitation by missionaries, the average European was too callous or selfish to work for abolition.
       3. The African natives made no protests against a combination which they carried on themselves.
    B. European explorers' reports finally led to successful action.
       1. Military expeditions were sent out to unseat the Arab traders.
       2. Leading European colonizers in Africa finally made effective pacts and regulatory laws.

IV. Conclusion: Today the ivory trade is carried on without slavery.
Devising a Final Thesis Statement

The thesis statement asserts the main idea controlling the paper’s content and organization. In turn, every part of the paper’s content supports the thesis statement by explaining it further or offering evidence and examples that show it is accurate. Your thesis will grow out of the thinking you do about the research topic and from deciding on a focus for the information collected from your sources. A good thesis invites the reader’s interest.
Japanese: Linguistic Diversity

Japanese, like any other language, has continued to develop for centuries. New vocabulary, pronunciation, spellings, and dialects increasingly flourish in Japanese. In addition, Japanese has developed honorifics and gender-specific terms to express the respect required within the society and has borrowed words to respond to technological innovation from the outside. During the last hundred years, other changes have begun to help those with disabilities that affect language facility.
Pueblo Indian Neophytes during Early Spanish Rule in New Mexico

The social atmosphere in Spain during the fifteenth century was one of passionate religious zeal brought about by centuries of Christian-Muslim conflict. The Spanish brought with them this fervor as they colonized the recently discovered “New World.” After the triumph of the Protestant Reformation in northern and central Europe, mission work was perceived as a way of restoring the Roman Catholic Church’s prominence in the world. The Americas provided an ideal venue as they housed millions of “pagan” natives, supposedly ready and waiting for Catholic salvation. The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico were among the Spaniards’ targets for conversion. The Spanish began the conversion of the natives immediately following conquest; they subdued the Indians with “a sword in one hand and a bible in the other.” They employed many methods to convert the natives, but a vast number of Indians converted not because of true piety or direct force exerted by the Spanish. Most, like the Pueblos of New Mexico, converted to Catholicism primarily out of necessity, simply to survive in the new environment that the Spanish had created.
Hamlet’s Treatment of Ophelia

One can trace Hamlet’s path through Elsinore following nothing but the puzzled looks of consternation and despair playing across the faces of those with whom he interfaces; that is if one hasn’t the stomach to skip from corpse to corpse across the landscape of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. No matter the origin, Hamlet’s incessant riddling, his “plaguey language,” as one critic put it, renders perplexed characters, audiences, and critics alike, producing innumerable ambiguities with which we must contend in order to make sense of the play in which he plays a part. Among the more famous, or infamous perhaps, of these ambiguous moments in *Hamlet* has earned itself a name—a testament as much to its elusiveness as to its significance in the broader scope of the play. Hamlet’s treatment of Ophelia in the “nunnery scene” (Act III, Scene I) seems oddly ferocious, jarring Ophelia and critic alike. but what accounts for such unbriddled vitriol on his part?

-- Chris Potts
The Influence of *Daddy* on Sylvia Plath’s Works

Sylvia Plath was nearing her thirtieth birthday in the month that she composed *Daddy* and several other of her strongest poems. As her marriage to poet Ted Hughes began falling apart during this time, Plath used her anger and pain as catalysts to transform her earlier dependency on male authority figures into spiteful, creative independence. It is no surprise that *The Jailer, Fever 103, Ariel,* and *Lady Lazarus* all echo *Daddy* in their vivid images of rebirth and purification mixed with angry renunciation of males. The speaker’s of *Lady Lazarus* rises “out of the ash” the way the poet’s genius itself seemed to rise out of her own suffering and spiritual rebirth. Plath’s suicide four months after writing *Daddy* and these other late poems only adds a further, harsh validity to the psychological and spiritual complexity of all her work.
Teen Pregnancy and Addiction

The crack and cocaine epidemic in America has gone beyond killing the users to addicting children even before they are born. All across America today doctors are delivering babies whose symptoms range from all-out dependency on crack or heroin to major brain and organ damage due to the mother’s use of drugs. The problem is so great that next year, more babies born in the United States will die from drug addiction than in any other country in the world (Keeler 23). Though federal and state programs to educate the young have reduced their numbers, drug-dependent pregnancies seem destined to continue in this country for some time.
Blacks’ Response to *Huckleberry Finn*

“All modern literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn,*” wrote Ernest Hemingway in 1935. “It’s the best book we’ve had” (22). Although most literary critics and scholars, as well as the general public, would agree with Hemingway’s assessment, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is also one of the most controversial classics on American bookshelves. Banned and denounced as “the veriest of trash” by the Concord Library committee when it was first published din in America (Rule 10), *Huckleberry Finn* has borne a long history of staunch criticism and debate, first over what white audiences viewed as its common vulgarity and, increasingly in the twentieth century, over the what many perceived as its racist and demeaning portrayal pf black character. The result has been a concerned, often outraged black response to *Huckleberry Finn* that centers not only upon the work’s language and characterization but upon its consequent value as literature, as well.
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