What do we mean by research?

Research refers to the systematic investigation and study of a particular topic or subject matter with the aim of discovering new knowledge, insights, or solutions to problems. It involves collecting and analyzing data, evaluating existing theories and ideas, and generating new hypotheses and theories. Research can be conducted in a variety of fields, including science, social sciences, humanities, and business. The ultimate goal of research is to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and understanding in a particular area.

Choosing a topic

Choosing a topic for research can be a challenging task. It is important to select a topic that is interesting, relevant, and has enough information available to conduct a thorough investigation. Here are some steps to consider when selecting a research topic:

1. Identify your interests: Start by thinking about topics that you are interested in or passionate about. This will help you stay motivated throughout the research process.

2. Read widely: Conduct a literature review to identify gaps in existing knowledge or areas that require further investigation.

3. Consult with experts: Seek advice from professors, colleagues, or professionals in the field to get their input on potential topics.

4. Consider feasibility: Ensure that the topic is feasible within the time and resources available for the research.

5. Refine the topic: Narrow down the topic to a specific research question or hypothesis that can be investigated in depth.

6. Evaluate the significance: Consider the potential impact of the research on the field and its relevance to current issues or challenges.

Overall, selecting a research topic requires careful consideration and planning. It is important to choose a topic that is both interesting and feasible, and that has the potential to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

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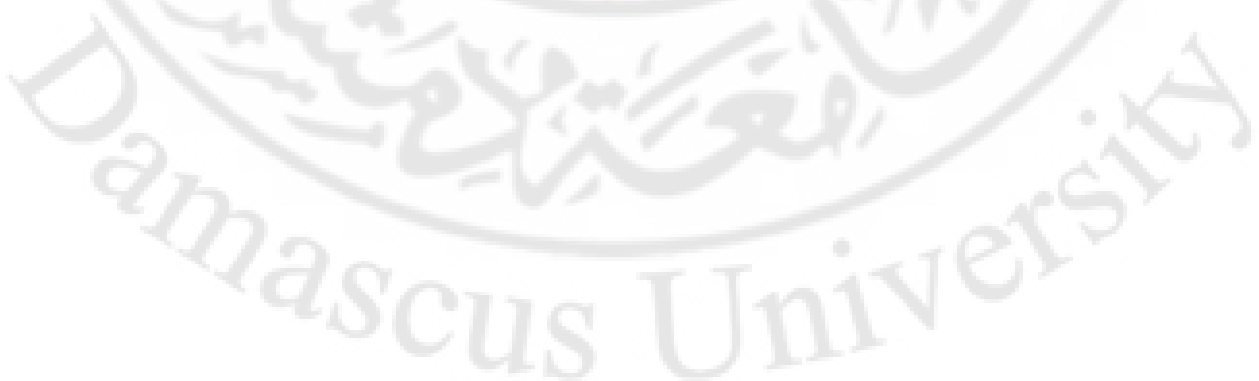
Researching Topic

Once a topic has been selected, the next step is to conduct research. Here are some steps to consider when researching a topic:

1. Develop a research plan: Create a plan that outlines the research objectives, methods, and timeline.

2. Gather information: Collect information from various sources such as books, articles, journals, and online databases.

3. Evaluate sources: Assess the credibility and reliability of the sources to ensure that the information is accurate and trustworthy.

4. Organize information: Create an outline or a mind map to organize the information and identify key themes and ideas.

5. Analyze data: Use qualitative or quantitative methods to analyze the data and draw conclusions.

6. Write a research report: Summarize the findings in a clear and concise report that includes an introduction, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

7. Share findings: Share the findings with others in the field through publications, presentations, or conferences.

Overall, conducting research requires a systematic approach that involves gathering, analyzing, and organizing information to answer a research question or hypothesis. It is important to use credible sources and methods to ensure that the findings are reliable and valid.

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Plagiarism

It is important to note that when conducting research, it is essential to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's work or ideas without giving proper credit or citation. It is considered unethical and can have serious consequences, including legal action, academic penalties, and damage to one's reputation. To avoid plagiarism, it is important to properly cite all sources used in the research and to use quotation marks when directly quoting someone else's words. Additionally, paraphrasing should be done in one's own words and not simply replacing a few words from the original text.

Avoiding plagiarism

To avoid plagiarism, one can follow the following steps:

1. Understand what plagiarism is: Plagiarism is not just copying someone else's work word-for-word. It includes using someone else's ideas, data, or research without proper citation.

2. Use proper citation style: Different citation styles require different formats for citing sources. Make sure to use the appropriate citation style for your discipline and follow it consistently throughout your work.

3. Keep track of sources: Keep a record of all sources used in your research, including books, articles, websites, and other materials. This will help you to properly cite them later.

4. Use quotation marks: When using someone else's words, put them in quotation marks and include a citation to give credit to the original author.

5. Paraphrase properly: When paraphrasing someone else's ideas or research, make sure to put it in your own words and cite the source.

6. Use plagiarism detection tools: There are various online tools that can help detect plagiarism in your work. Use them to check your work before submitting it.

7. Seek help if needed: If you are unsure about how to properly cite a source or paraphrase someone else's work, seek help from your instructor or a writing center.

By following these steps, you can avoid plagiarism and ensure that your work is ethical and credible.

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Examples of Plagiarism

1. Copying and pasting text from a website or article without proper citation.

2. Using someone else's ideas or research without giving them credit.

3. Submitting someone else's work as your own.

4. Paraphrasing someone else's work without properly citing the source.

5. Using a paper or assignment that you previously submitted for another class without permission from the instructor.

6. Using a friend's work or paying someone else to write your paper for you.

7. Using images, graphs, or charts without giving credit to the original source.

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Documentation systems

There are several documentation systems that can be used to properly cite sources and avoid plagiarism. Some common documentation systems include:

1. APA (American Psychological Association) Style: commonly used in social sciences, psychology, and education.

2. MLA (Modern Language Association) Style: commonly used in humanities, literature, and language studies.

3. Chicago Manual of Style: commonly used in history, arts, and social sciences.

4. IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) Style: commonly used in engineering, computer science, and technology.

5. Harvard Referencing System: commonly used in business, law, and social sciences.

It is important to check with your instructor or department to determine which documentation system is preferred for your assignment or discipline.

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In-Text Citations

Regardless of the documentation system used, in-text citations are essential to properly acknowledge sources. In-text citations are brief references within the body of the text that indicate the source of information used. They typically include the author's last name and the year of publication. For example, (Smith, 2018).

Direct quotations must be cited with the page number as well, such as (Smith, 2018, p. 23). Paraphrased information also requires an in-text citation to give credit to the original source.

In addition to in-text citations, a complete reference list or bibliography should be included at the end of the document. This list provides detailed information about each source cited in the text, such as the author, title, publication date, and publisher. The format of the refe In-text citations are necessary to acknowledge sources used in the body of a document. They typically include the author's last name and year of publication, such as (Smith, 2018). Direct quotations require a page number as well, such as (Smith, 2018, p. 23). Paraphrased information also requires an in-text citation. A complete reference list or bibliography should be included at the end of the document, providing detailed information about each source cited. The format of the reference list will depend on the documentation system used. rence list will depend on the documentation system used.

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Summarizing

In-text citations are important for giving credit to sources used in a document. They usually include the author's last name and publication year, and direct quotations also require a page number. Paraphrased information also needs to be cited. A reference list or bibliography should be included at the end of the document, with detailed information about each source cited. The format of the reference list will depend on the documentation system used.

Paraphrasing

It is crucial to provide in-text citations in a document to acknowledge the sources used. These citations usually comprise the author's surname and year of publication, while direct quotes require the inclusion of page numbers. Any reworded information must also be cited. At the end of the document, a reference list or bibliography should be included, providing detailed information about each source cited. The format of the reference list will vary depending on the documentation system employed.

Directed Quotations

Direct quotations are exact words or phrases taken from a source and should be enclosed in quotation marks. In-text citations for direct quotes should include the author's surname, year of publication, and page number(s) where the quote can be found. For example:

According to Smith (2018), "the use of technology in education has revolutionized the way students learn" (p. 25).

If the quote is longer than four lines, it should be presented in a separate block of text, indented from the left margin and without quotation marks. In this case, the in-text citation should come after the period at the end of the quote. For example:

Jones (2016) stated:

The increasing use of social media has transformed the way people communicate with each other. As a result, businesses must adapt their marketing strategies to reach their target audience effectively. (p. 42)

In the reference list, the source should be listed in full, including the author's name, title of the work, publication date, publisher, and any other relevant information. The format of the reference list will depend on the documentation system used, such as APA, MLA, or Chicago style

Works Cited and References

The Works Cited page is used in MLA style to list all the sources cited in the paper. The References page is used in APA style for the same purpose. Both pages should be arranged alphabetically by the author's surname or by the title if there is no author. Each entry should contain all the necessary information about the source, including the author, title, publication date, publisher, and any other relevant information. The format of the entries will depend on the documentation system used

Writing with precision

When creating a Works Cited or References page, it is important to be precise in the information provided for each source. This includes ensuring that the author's name is spelled correctly and that the publication date is accurate. Additionally, it is important to include all necessary information, such as the publisher and page numbers, to allow readers to easily locate the source. Following the proper format for the documentation system used, whether MLA or APA, is also crucial for creating a clear and organized Works Cited or References page.

Elements of the essay

Elements of the Essay

Gordon Harvey

Elements-of-the-essay

When you are asked to write essays for university classes, you are usually being asked to write arguments. An argument is a proposition plus some reasons why the writer thinks it true: "I think that X is the case, because A, which implies B, which leads to C," where A, B, and C are sub-topical propositions containing items of evidence that support the truth of X and that follow one another in a significant, developing order. Following are some basic elements of academic argument (whatever terms you use for them):

Thesis: your main insight or idea about a text or topic, and the main proposition (though it may have several parts) that your essay demonstrates. It should be true but arguable (not obviously or patently true, but one alternative among several), be limited enough in scope to be argued in a short composition and with available evidence, and get to the heart of the text or topic being analyzed (not be peripheral). It should be given early (not just be implied -- though its fullest and sharpest statement may be withheld for a time), and it should govern the whole essay (not disappear in places).

Motive: the reason, which you establish at the start of your essay, why a reader (someone besides your instructor) might want to read an essay on this topic, needs to hear your particular thesis argued and explained.* How is it that your thesis isn't just obvious, that other people hold or might hold other views (which you think need correction or adjustment) or need enlightening. Your motive won't necessarily be the reason you first got interested in the topic, or the personal motivation behind your engagement with it, which could be private and idiosyncratic: indeed it's what you say to suggest that your argument isn't idiosyncratic, but rather of interest to all

serious students of your topic. Nor should the others you posit who hold another view, might be puzzled or surprised, might have missed something, be straw dummies. Your motive should be a genuine: a misapprehension or puzzle that an intelligent reader would plausibly have and argue for, a point that such a reader would really overlook. Defining motive should be the main business of your introductory paragraphs, where it is usually introduced by a form of the complicating word "But."

Evidence: the data -- facts, examples, or details -- that you refer to, quote, or summarize to support your thesis. There needs to be enough evidence to be persuasive; it needs to be the right kind of evidence to support the thesis (with no obvious pieces of evidence overlooked); it needs to be sufficiently concrete for the reader to trust it (e.g. in textual analysis, it often helps to find one or two key or representative passages to quote and focus on); and if summarized, it needs to be summarized accurately and fairly.

Analysis: the work of breaking down, interpreting, and commenting upon your data, of saying what can be inferred from the data such that it supports a thesis (is evidence for something). Analysis is what you do with data when you go beyond observing or summarizing it: you show how its parts contribute to a whole or how causes contribute to an effect; you draw out the significance or implication not apparent to a superfical view. Analysis is what makes the writer feel present, as a reasoning individual; so your essay should do more analyzing than it does summarizing or quoting.

Keyterms: the recurring terms or basic oppositions that your argument rests upon, usually literal but sometimes metaphors. These terms usually imply certain assumptions -- unstated beliefs about life, history, literature, reasoning, etc. that you don't argue for but simply assume to be true. An essay's keyterms should be clear in meaning (define if necessary) and

appear throughout (not be abandoned half-way); they should be appropriate for the subject at hand (not unfair or too simple -- e.g. implying a false or constraining opposition); and they should not be inert clichés or abstractions (e.g. "the evils of society"). The attendant assumptions should bear logical inspection, and if arguable they should be explicitly acknowledged.

Structure: the sequence of main sections or sub-topics, and the turning points between them. Your sections should follow a logical order, and the links in that order should be apparent to the reader (see "stitching"). But it should also be a progressive order -- there should be a direction of development or complication, not simply be a list or restatements of the thesis ("Macbeth is ambitious: he's ambitious here; and he's ambitious here; and he's ambitious here too; thus, Macbeth is ambitious"). And the order should be supple enough to allow your to explore the topic, not just hammer home a thesis. (If the essay is complex or long, its structure may be briefly announced or hinted at after the thesis, in a road map or plan sentence.)

Stitching: words that tie together the parts of your argument, most commonly by (a) signaling transitions, acting as signposts to indicate how a new section, paragraph, or sentence follows from the one previous; but also by (b) by recollecting an idea or word or phrase used or quoted earlier. Repeating keyterms is especially helpful at points of transition from one section to another, to show how the new section fits in.

Sources: persons or documents -- referred to, summarized, or quoted -- that help you demonstrate the truth of your argument. They are typically sources of (a) factual information or data, (b) opinions or interpretation on your topic, (c) comparable versions of the thing you are discussing, or (d)

applicable general concepts. Whether you are affirming or challenging your sources, they need to be efficiently integrated and fairly acknowledged by citation -- see Writing with Sources.

Reflecting: acts of pausing your demonstration to reflect on it, to raise or answer a question about it -- as when you (a) consider a counter-argument -- a possible objection, alternative, or problem that a skeptical or resistant reader might raise; (b) define your terms or assumptions (what do I mean by this term? or, what am I assuming here?); (c) handle a newly emergent concern (but if this is so, then how can X be?); (d) draw out an implication (so what? what might be the wider significance of the argument I have made? what might it lead to if I'm right? or, what does my argument about a single aspect of this suggest about the whole thing? or about the way people live and think?); (e) consider a possible explanation for the phenomenon that has been demonstrated (why might this be so? what might cause or have caused it?); and (f) offer a qualification or limitation to the case you have made (what you're not saying). The first of these reflections can come anywhere in an essay; the second usually comes early; the last four often come late (they're common moves of conclusion).

Orienting: giving bits of information, explanation, and summary that orient the reader who isn't expert in your subject, enabling such a reader to follow the argument. The orienting question is, what does my reader need here? And the answer can take many forms: necessary factual information about the text, author, or event (e.g., given in your introduction); a summary of a text or passage about to be analyzed; pieces of information along the way about passages, people, or events mentioned (including announcing or "set-up" phrases for quotations and sources -- see Writing with Sources). The challenge is to orient briefly and gracefully.

Stance: The implied relationship of you, the writer, to your readers and subject: how and where you implicitly position yourself as an analyst. Stance is defined by features such as style and tone (e.g. familiar or formal); the presence or absence of specialized language and knowledge; the amount of time spent orienting a general, non-expert reader; the use of scholarly conventions of form and style. Your stance should be established within the first few paragraphs of your essay, and it should remain consistent.

Style: the choices you make of words and sentence structure. Your style should be exact and clear (should bring out main idea and action of each sentence, not bury it) and plain without being flat (should be graceful and a little interesting, not stuffy).

Title: should both interest and inform. To inform -- i.e. inform a general reader who might be browsing in an essay collection of bibliography -- your title should give the subject and focus of the essay. To interest, your title might include a linguistic twist, paradox, sound pattern, or striking phrase taken from one of your sources (the aptness of which phrase your reader comes gradually to see). You can combine the interesting and informing functions in a single title or split them into title and subtitle. The interesting element shouldn't be too cute; the informing element shouldn't go so far as to state a thesis. Don't underline your own title, except where it contains the title of another text.

Definitions and Examples of Basic Sentence Elements

Independent clause: An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence. It contains a subject and a verb and is a complete idea.

I like spaghetti.

He reads many books.

Dependent clause: A dependent clause is not a complete sentence. It must be attached to an independent clause to become complete. This is also known as a subordinate clause.

Although I like spaghetti

Because he reads many books

Subject: A person, animal, place, thing, or concept that does an action. Determine the subject in a sentence by asking the question "Who or what?"

I like spaghetti.

He reads many books.

Verb: Expresses what the person, animal, place, thing, or concept does. Determine the verb in a sentence by asking the question "What was the action or what happened?"

I like spaghetti.

He reads many books.

The movie is good. (The be verb is also sometimes referred to as a copula or a linking verb. It links the subject, in this case "the movie," to the complement or the predicate of the sentence, in this case, "good.")

Object: A person, animal, place, thing, or concept that receives the action. Determine the object in a sentence by asking the question "The subject did what?" or "To whom?/For whom?"

I like spaghetti.

He reads many books.

Prepositional Phrase: A phrase that begins with a preposition (i.e., in, at for, behind, until, after, of, during) and modifies a word in the sentence. A prepositional phrase answers one of many questions. Here are a few examples: "Where? When? In what way?"

I like spaghetti for dinner.

He reads many books in the library.

English Sentence Structure

The following statements are true about sentences in English:

A new sentence begins with a capital letter.

He obtained his degree.

A sentence ends with punctuation (a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point).

He obtained his degree.

A sentence contains a subject that is only given once.

Smith he obtained his degree.

A sentence contains a verb or a verb phrase.

He obtained his degree.

A sentence follows Subject + Verb + Object word order.

He (subject) obtained (verb) his degree (object).

A sentence must have a complete idea that stands alone. This is also called an independent clause.

He obtained his degree.

Simple Sentences

A simple sentence contains a subject and a verb, and it may also have an object and modifiers. However, it contains only one independent clause.

Key: Yellow, bold = subject; green underline = verb, blue, italics = object, pink, regular font =prepositional phrase

Here are a few examples:

She wrote.

She completed her literature review.

He organized his sources by theme.

They studied APA rules for many hours.

Compound Sentences

A compound sentence contains at least two independent clauses. These two independent clauses can be combined with a comma and a coordinating conjunction or with a semicolon.

Key: independent clause = yellow, bold; comma or semicolon = pink, regular font; coordinating conjunction = green, underlined.

Here are a few examples:

She completed her literature review, and she created her reference list.

He organized his sources by theme; then, he updated his reference list.

They studied APA rules for many hours, but they realized there was still much to learn.

Using some compound sentences in writing allows for more sentence variety.

Complex Sentences

A complex sentence contains at least one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. Dependent clauses can refer to the subject (who, which) the sequence/time (since, while), or the causal elements (because, if) of the independent clause.

If a sentence begins with a dependent clause, note the comma after this clause. If, on the other hand, the sentence begins with an independent clause, there is not a comma separating the two clauses.

Key: independent clause = yellow, bold; comma = pink, regular font; dependent clause blue, italics

Here are a few examples:

Although she completed her literature review, she still needed to work on her methods section.

Note the comma in this sentence because it begins with a dependent clause.

Because he organized his sources by theme, it was easier for his readers to follow.

Note the comma in this sentence because it begins with a dependent clause.

They studied APA rules for many hours as they were so interesting.

Note that there is no comma in this sentence because it begins with an independent clause.

Using some complex sentences in writing allows for more sentence variety.

Compound-Complex Sentences

Sentence types can also be combined. A compound-complex sentence contains at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

Key: independent clause = yellow, bold; comma or semicolon = pink, regular font; coordinating conjunction = green, underlined; dependent clause = blue, italics

She completed her literature review, but she still needs to work on her methods section even though she finished her methods course last semester.

Although he organized his sources by theme, he decided to arrange them chronologically, and he carefully followed the MEAL plan for organization.

With pizza and soda at hand, they studied APA rules for many hours, and they decided that writing in APA made sense because it was clear, concise, and objective.

Using some complex-compound sentences in writing allows for more sentence variety.

Pay close attention to comma usage in complex-compound sentences so that the reader is easily able to follow the intended meaning.

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