

Research and Writing Workshop



**HOW TO DO GOOD RESEARCH,
COLLECT RELEVANT DATA AND
ORGANIZE A MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2009
12:30-1:30PM**

Why Research?



- Increased, in depth, understanding of an issue
- Learn how to work in a particular field
- Learn how to synthesize information and integrate it into your own understanding of the issue
- Learn logic and critical thinking
- Learn methods of investigation and discovery
- Learn argumentative skills

What Research is not



- Mindless regurgitation of everything you have read about a subject
- Repeating an argument you found in a book or article
- An attempt to find *the only* answer to a question

Research is..



- a report that an individual presents to others
- about the conclusions he or she has reached
- after investigating a subject
- and carefully assessing the information she or he has gathered.”

(Hubbuck, *Writing Research Papers Across the Curriculum*, 1992)

Remember...



- You are not passive in the research process
- Books and articles are not records of truth, but part of an ongoing conversation you are invited to participate in
- You need to act like an expert in your field, even though you are not one yet

When Researching...



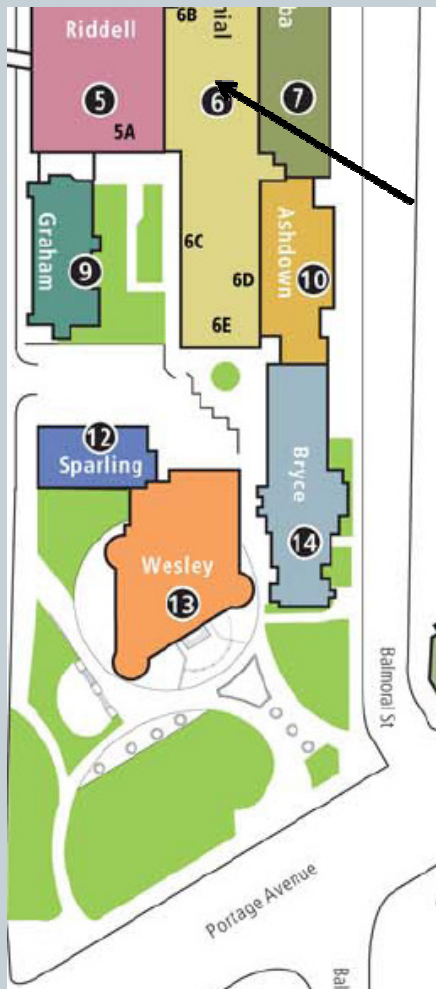
- Exercise critical thinking skills
 - Ask Questions
 - Gather information
 - Make Judgments

Choosing a Topic



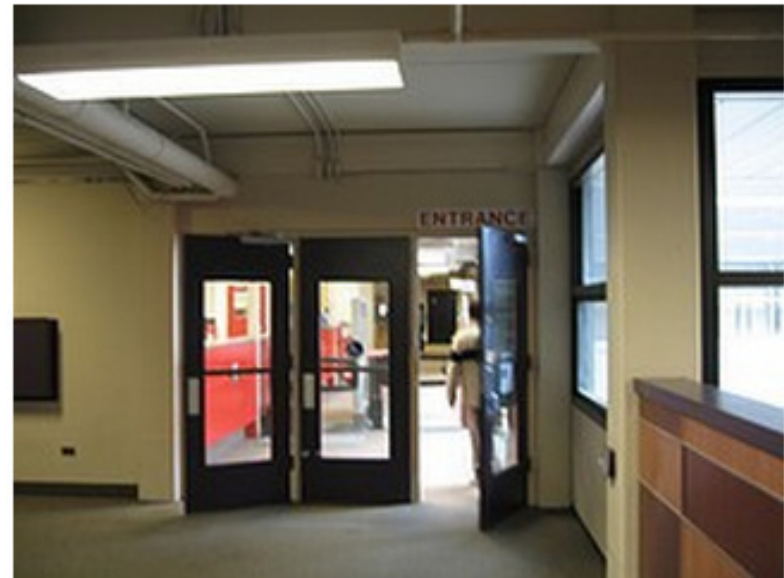
- Read the Syllabus first
 - What are you expected to do?
 - How long should the paper be?
 - Sometimes possible topics are provided, use them as a guide.
- Choose something you find interesting!
- Choose a topic that allows you to demonstrate your abilities to research, analyze, synthesize and write.

Entering the Library



Library
is
Here

Library Entrance



Narrowing the Topic

- Most essay topics begin their life far too large.
- Do preliminary research
 - This helps narrow the topic
 - Ensures there are enough sources available
- Formulate a research question



Go to the Reference section first!

Beginning the Detective Work



- Give yourself enough time
 - Not just about research, you need time to think about your findings
- Know your assumptions
 - Write down what you think you will find. This will help you be more objective.
- Know what authors are doing
 - “If you want to understand what an author is saying, you also need to see what he or she is doing”
 - ✦ Most works do not just present facts, they try to persuade
 - The researcher must always be making judgments- do you agree with what is being said? Why?

Library Resources



The Reference Desk:
not just for looks

- Librarians are a great and often overlooked source.
- They know the library
- They know where to find things
- and may even know to look in places you wouldn't think to look.



For a less personal approach...

You can also ask the reference desk questions online.

This is especially helpful if you're a commuter!

Just go to:

University of Winnipeg
Library

Research

Research Help

Ask A Question

Ask A Question

Submit this form to ask a question about the Library and to request research assistance.

Your Name ■

30 characters remaining

Your E-Mail Address ■

Patron Type ■

- Student
- Faculty
- Staff
- Public

Phone Number (including area code)

Ask Your Question ■

Also Online, The Entire Book Catalogue!



- Accessing the catalogue online is a great way to do initial research.
 - You can even research from home.
 - I find it's a great breakfast activity!
- You can look up books and most journals
- Online, you also have access to other libraries
 - Interlibrary loans are a great option if your library does not have the book you want
 - Just remember to look early!



Be Specific, or not

Sometimes you need to broaden your research question to get more information.

Just remember to keep your original quest in mind!



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG
LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES

Keyword

Title

Author

Subject

Call #

ISBN/ISSN

Advanced Keyword Search

NO ENTRIES FOUND

Please fill in the form, select limits, and click Submit (or choose a [Simple Keyword Search](#)).

[Clear Form](#)

Any Field: <input type="text" value="farming"/>	And <input type="text" value=""/>
Any Field: <input type="text" value="climate change"/>	And <input type="text" value=""/>
Any Field: <input type="text" value="sub-saharan africa"/>	And <input type="text" value=""/>
Any Field: <input type="text" value=""/>	And <input type="text" value=""/>

Limited to:

Location:

Material Type:

Language:

Year: After and Before

Publisher:

Sorted By:

Search and Sort:

[Submit](#)

Use Subject Searches

While I started with a keyword search-farming and climate

This lead me to a subject heading:



(Search History)
KEYWORD View Entire Collection Search

5 results found, sorted by **relevance** | [date](#) | [title](#) .
Record: [Prev](#) [Next](#)

Title **Climate change and vulnerability / edited by Neil Leary ... [et al.].**

Location	Call #	Status
CMU Main	QC 981.8 C5C55a 2008	AVAILABLE

1 copy being processed for Main Stacks (UW).

Descript xviii, 428 p. : ill., maps ; 24 cm.

Bibliog. Includes bibliographical references and index.

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1. For whom the bell tolls: Vulnerabilities in a changing **climate** / Neil Leary / James Adejuwon / Wilms Bailey / Vicente Barros / P. Batima / Ruben M. Caffera / Suppakorn Chirvanho / Cecilia Conde / Alain De Condamond / Alex De Sherbinin / Tom Downing / Hallie Eakin / Anthony Nyong / Maggie Opondo / Balgis Osman-Elasha / Rolph Payet / Florencia Pulhin / Juan Pulhin / Janaka Ratnisiri / El-Amin Sanjak / Graham von Maltitz / Monica Wehbe / Yongyuan Yin / Gina Ziervogel P.3.
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Subject

12. vulnerability to dengue fever in Jamaica / Charmaine Neal
D. Chadee / Rainaldo Crosbourne / Albert Owino / Karen Polsc
Climatic changes.

Alt Author
ISBN

Climatic changes -- Developing countries.


Leary, Neil.

1844074692 (hardback)


Now there are over 23 potentially relevant books!



(Search History) 



SUBJECT 

Climatic changes -- Developing coun

View Entire Collection 

Search

Nearby SUBJECTS are:

Result Page:  

Save Marked Records

Save All On Page

Mark		Year	Entries
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Cost Effectiveness	1995	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Detection Canada	c2003	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Detection Northwest Territories Sachs Harbour	c2000	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Detection Polar Regions Congresses	2009	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Developing Countries		2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Economic Aspects		23
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Economic Aspects Canada		8
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Economic Aspects Congresses		2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Economic Aspects Europe History	c1977	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Economic Aspects Evaluation	1991	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Economic Aspects Mexico		2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Economic Aspects North America	c2003	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Economic Aspects Quebec Province	1997	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climatic Changes Economic Aspects Southeast Asia	c2007	1

Moral of the Story:



USE BOTH KEY WORD SEARCH AND SUBJECT HEADINGS!

**(THIS WORKS FOR BOTH BOOK AND JOURNAL
SEARCHES)**

Which are the Best Sources?



- Picking up a book does not mean you have to read it through!
 - You can judge a book by its cover, read the back comments, is it relevant?
 - Read the introduction and conclusion
 - If it's relevant...
- Examine the bibliography at the end of the book or Journal Article
 - This will help you find new sources
 - Looking at footnotes will tell you which source is most useful

Is the Source Relevant?



- Does this source help answer your research question?
 - Preliminary evaluation can be done by reading the table of contents, introduction, and conclusion.
 - Read only the relevant sections and what is necessary for background information

Is the Source Appropriate and Current?



- Some sources are simply not appropriate for a university level paper
- The source should have been published recently
 - Remember, you are participating in a discussion, the discussion must be going on today.
 - Not all old sources need to be rejected, however
 - ✦ Ex. Philosophy, History and English departments all use old sources – Aristotle, and Shakespeare
 - ✦ But, though a paper on Aristotle will be using an old source- Aristotle, but should also refer to current interpretations

Is the Source Reliable?



- Ask if the information in this source can be trusted
 - ✦ Author's credentials and experience – biographic dictionary or internet search
 - ✦ Scholarly and trustworthy publisher – encyclopedias, university presses, or publishers that specialize in scholarly books
 - ✦ Peer-reviewed journals

Is this Source Accurate and Verifiable?



- **Accuracy:**

- ✦ Accurate facts
- ✦ Logical and persuasive arguments
- ✦ Evidence to support claims
- ✦ Balanced tone

- **Verifiability:**

- ✦ Sources are cited
- ✦ Sources appear reliable

Credentials for Online Sources



Author – name should be given and it's good if there's and "About Us" section and e-mail address to contact the author

- ✦ Publisher or sponsoring organization

- Reliable sites .gov – government agency; .edu – educational institution; .org – not-for-profit organization;
- Unreliable – .com – commercial sites, ads or junk mail

- ✦ Mission statement or editorial policy

- ✦ Sources

- ✦ Currency – at least one date should be posted and the last update should be within the last year.
- ✦ Online versions of reliable print info, such as major newspapers, can usually be considered as reliable as the print versions.

Identifying Key Ideas



- Remember, you are reading the sources to find answers to your questions
- To find a sources' key ideas look in:
 - The forward
 - The Preface
 - The introduction
 - Beginning and ending of chapters
 - The Index

Questions to ask a source



- What is the hypothesis or thesis?
- What evidence is used to support the thesis?
- What meaning does the author give to the facts presented?
- How does the argument fit together?
- What approach and method is the author using?
- Is there evidence or arguments the author is ignoring?

Taking Notes



- Write a summary of the work or important chapters and arguments using the questions asked
 - Summaries force you to identify the most important aspects of a work.
- Paraphrase
 - Ask what the author is doing, not just what is being said
 - ✦ Ex. “Yoder shows that...”
- Take notes of facts and data that will be useful.

Bibliography



- Always remember to take bibliographic information!
 - Author's full name
 - Full book title
 - Publisher
 - Date of Publication
 - City of publication
 - Translator
 - Editor
 - Pgs (if journal article or article in larger book)
 - Page you took the information from!

Organizing a Research Paper



HOW TO ARGUE YOUR POINT PERSUASIVELY

Who are you writing for?



- Do not write for your professor!
 - Essays should not try to prove that research has been done
 - Writers should not assume the reader knows about the subject
- Instead, pretend fellow students are reading the paper.
 - Assume the reader is interested in the subject
 - Assume you will have to explain your argument. The reader does not know what you are thinking, or why.
 - Assume an air of confidence
 - ✦ You need to try to persuade others that your argument is valid

The Thesis



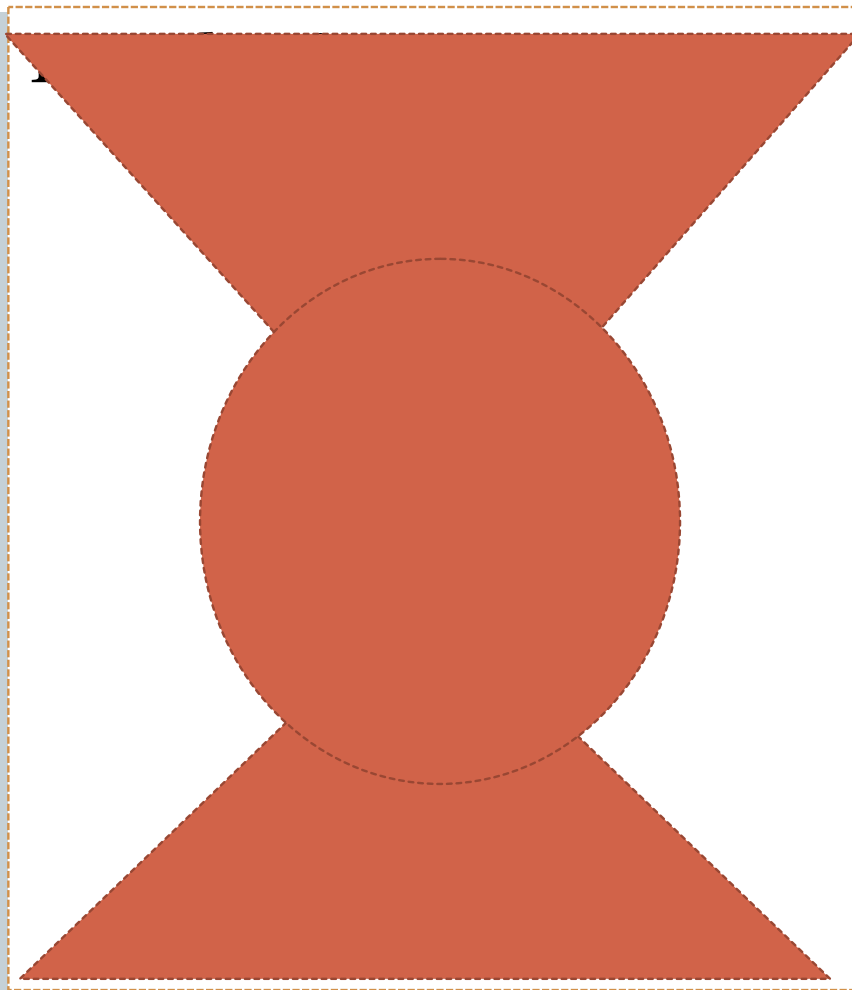
- This is the most important part of the entire essay
 - Ex. Climate change, induced by western industrialized countries has adversely affected agricultural sustainability and practices in poor and developing countries.
 - Western countries need to take responsibility for the climate change industrialization has caused by helping farmers struggling with the effects of this change on agriculture.
- The thesis should be stated in one sentence.
 - ✦ This sentence will need to be explained, it should not be self explanatory

Structuring Your Paper



- The paper needs to:
 - Get the reader's interest
 - Provide an argument
 - Argue a point convincingly
 - Provide the needed background information

Shaping an Essay



- Begin broad, convince the reader to pay attention
- Fill in the details
- Review why this argument is important

Formal Outline



- Thesis
- I. Major Point
 - A. Minor Point
 - ✦ 1. Evidence (writer A)
 - ✦ 2. Evidence (your analysis)
 - B. Minor Point
 - ✦ 1. Evidence (your analysis)
 - ✦ 2. Evidence (important quote)
- II. Major Point
 - A. Repeat until you are able to prove your thesis

The Introduction



- Draw the reader in
 - Why should the reader care?
- Give the reader some idea of where you are going
 - Surprises do not usually convince
- State your thesis
 - Usually this occurs at the end of the introduction

The Body of the Essay



- This is the substance of your essay
- Consists of major and minor points
- All paragraphs must directly relate to and help argue your thesis
 - You should include alternative viewpoints

Thinking in Paragraphs



- Each paragraph is like a mini essay
 - Has a purpose in the overall argument
 - Proves a point
 - Is connected to the thesis
 - Includes both expert opinion
 - Includes your analysis
 - Shows its connection to what came before and what comes after.

The Conclusion



- Remind your reader of the thesis
 - Tell the reader what you have just proven
- Connect the thesis to the body of the essay
 - Use phrases like “as we have seen”
- Demonstrate again why this discussion was important