Research Writing

Presented by the Graduate Writing Centers at ASU
University Academic Success Programs
(480) 965-9072

https://tutoring.asu.edu/graduate
Research Writing

• Gives you an opportunity to show that you understand the research of the field you are writing about and that you examined it at length (summary)

• Provides a chance for you to use or apply the material in ways that go beyond what you have read (synthesis—comparison and contrast)

• Allows you to make a contribution in your field
Key Aspects for Research Writing

• Using critical reading strategies
• Evaluating the quality of sources that you read
• Forming your own opinion
• Finding samples
• Talking to professors about expectations
• Paying attention to your ideas (content) & your language
Reading with a Purpose

• Use a reading log to keep track of key information as you read and to help you paraphrase later.

• Use a synthesis log to start comparing and contrasting ideas presented in sources.

• Record questions about information you want to find or learn more about.

• At the end of reading, have something physical to show for your time.
  • Use note cards or an outline—be as creative as you want.

• After reading related sources, compare and contrast them using a synthesis log.

Read in such a way that you can explain to another person what you read in your own words.
Evaluating Sources for Credibility

• Is the source peer-reviewed?
  • If not, do you have a good rationale for using this source (e.g., popular source like a newspaper or magazine, online source, etc.)?

• Is the year of the source’s publication relevant to your argument?
  • Do you need a current source as evidence or to strengthen your own argument?
  • Do you need an older source to show context, history, or background?
    • Example: why use outdated census data vs. up-to-date census data?

• On what theory is the source based?

• What methodology does the source use (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods)?
Your Tools for Referencing Sources

Quoting (Author’s last name, Year, p. #)

Direct or exact transcription of original text word for word

Gonzalez (2010) asserts the value of relationships in social work: “To do well together, the social work professional and the client must build a communicative, trusting relationship” (p. 66).

Paraphrase (Author’s last name, Year)

Translation of specific parts of text expressed in your own words

Trust is integral to strong working relationships between clients and their social workers (Gonzalez, 2010).

Summary (Author’s last name, Year)

Overview of a section or entire book or chapter work expressed in your own words

Training social workers to be reflective and to find ways of developing trust will be crucial for the next decade (Gonzalez, 2010).

Note: These examples are written in APA style. Confirm with your professor what citation he or she expects you to use.
**Provide a full bibliographic citation using your preferred citation style (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago Style):**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List the main ideas that the author(s) offers.</th>
<th>If applicable, what research questions or objectives does the author(s) describe as guiding or informing the article/study?</th>
<th>As a result of the ideas explored in the source, what conclusions does the author(s) offer to readers?</th>
<th>How does this article affect or relate to your area of interest? Did it answer any questions or did it lead to new questions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discusses the dispute between both proponents and opponents of school choice</td>
<td>He asks &quot;what about school choice causes such controversy?&quot; – leading to his argument that school choice is often misunderstood or an option that only wealthy parents take advantage of.</td>
<td>In order for a school choice and/or voucher system to be successful in a free market, it must incrementally implemented throughout various cities and careful assessment must be done to ensure the populations at risk, namely minorities and urban poor, are benefiting from program.</td>
<td>- It answered my question about what school choice is, though it seemed to focus largely on voucher systems, not options in enrolling students in high-performing schools outside district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proponents believe that a &quot;free-market competition will force all schools to improve since parents can 'vote with their feet' and move their children to high-performing schools (Owens, 2002, p. 718).&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- This article raised new questions about inequities amongst minorities and low-income populations in regards to their school choice options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challengers contend that school choice &quot;does not adequately value education, and that the market economy has consistently failed to serve the interests of lower-income Americans (Owens, 2002, p. 718).&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens seeks to reconcile these two perspectives by narrowing the debate down to three key issues: the free market, the urban poor, and religious education (2002, p. 722).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What areas for future research does the author(s) imply or explicitly suggest? Are there any sources in the bibliography that you might want to find and use?**

- He doesn’t explicitly suggest research, but implies that not enough research has been focused on the benefits of giving parents a choice in determining their child’s educational options.

[Image 0x0 to 960x541]
**SOURCE SYNTHESIS AND COMPARISON**

Literature reviews are essential in research papers as well as theses and dissertations. Through the literature review, the writer offers a synthesized discussion of research related to a thesis research question or a paper’s topic. A literature review is designed to do the following:

- Provide a context for your reader/audience
- Legimize your idea — e.g., “there is a reason why I think this is important”— by discussing it in relation to what other scholars have said/studied
- Help you further frame and define the issue, problem, or purpose for your project
- Allow you to make a space to contribute to the conversation, find gaps in the existing research, or add to the general understanding of your topic

A literature review is NOT a single paragraph summary of each article you have found (that is an annotated bibliography, which serves as preparation for writing a literature review).

A literature review IS a synthesis or blend of the concepts you found in each source: reviewing the relevance of concepts presented in the sources; evaluating the content; and comparing different sources to show similar schools of thought, to highlight disagreements, to show gaps in research, to show what has been done already, and ultimately to show how your research will fit into the existing research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there any similar concepts, connections, themes, or ideas?</th>
<th>List at least 3 ways in which your sources differ from each other. Are there opposing ideas or does one source have a completely unique theme that is not found in any of your other sources?</th>
<th>List any concepts/ideas/theories/methodologies from the sources that you find most valuable to your topic. Which source(s) seemed most important to your research question/topic and why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forming an Opinion

• Make an argument/have a clear thesis statement that describes what your paper will be about:
  • Offering a critique of an author’s ideas
  • Agreeing or disagreeing with published information
  • Connecting ideas from the field
  • Identifying new processes or conclusions
  • Evaluating methods and theories
  • Applying information to a new project or problem
Forming an Opinion: Summary vs. Synthesis

• Combine your own ideas with multiple sources to form an original point of view or argument.

• Summary is restating other people’s thoughts and research on your topic. Synthesis is driven by your analysis of sources to support your central argument or thesis statement.

• Synthesis shows your readers that you have really grappled with the material. It enables you to make a contribution to the knowledge in your field.
Finding Samples

• Find examples of research writing.
  • Talk to your faculty and fellow students for examples.

• Use the samples to learn how to write in new or different ways.

• These samples are not necessarily meant to provide you with content information but with writing strategies.
Finding Samples

• Find samples that “show” how to:
  • Write an introduction
  • Structure a literature review
  • Cite sources
  • Vary sentence style
  • Develop a conclusion

• Get inspiration for how to write sections of your own thesis or dissertation or even an article:
  • Organization
  • Type of language used
  • Scope of information presented

• Use the library databases or talk to your advisor to find sample texts.
# Ideas vs. Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you meet the assignment criteria?</td>
<td>Is your sentence structure clear?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you written in the proper format?</td>
<td>Do you have any grammatical errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your paper well organized?</td>
<td>Have you properly cited sources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your point or argument clear?</td>
<td>Is your word choice accurate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you summarized appropriately?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you synthesized or analyzed appropriately?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you included evidence?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UASP Writing Centers

• Multiple campus locations: 60-minute in-person appointments
• Online: 50-minute, real-time appointments
• Free!
• Get help at any stage of the writing process.
• You can schedule 1 appointment per day and up to 4 appointments per week.
• Go to https://tutoring.asu.edu/writing-centers to schedule an appointment or call (480) 965-9072.
UASP Writing Center Locations

- **Downtown Phoenix**
  - University Center Building, 1st Floor, Suite 101
  - 602-496-4278

- **Polytechnic**
  - Academic Center Building, Room 160
  - 480-727-1452

- **Online**
  - Access through your computer using Adobe Connect
  - 480-965-9072

- **Tempe**
  - Noble Library, 2nd Floor, Room 280
  - Business Administration Building, BA 202
  - 480-965-4272

- **West**
  - Fletcher Library, Lower Level Room 2
  - 602-543-6155