

# Writing an Academic Research Paper

LIB 1201

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“There is something almost magical about creating a successful research paper. If you have a solid, narrowly-focused, analytical research question, you can pretty much see in your mind’s eye the problem to be addressed. If you have a well-structured outline, you can also see the path through the paper to a conclusion before you even start writing it... If you keep the narrow focus on what you are doing, magic will happen.”

Badke, p. 238

# Research Paper Strategies

- Start by presenting and summarizing your sources
  - Badke: describe then analyze
  - OWL: [Quoting, Paraphrasing, Summarizing](#)
- Avoid excessive quotation
  - I need to hear your voice and thoughts!
  - 2 short sentences of 35 words max per quote

# More Research Paper Strategies

- Finally, analyze your sources in light of your research question
  - And arrive at conclusions
  - Was your research question answered?
  - Do you have any recommendations?
  - Conclusions do not need to be long!

# General Writing Advice

- Omit needless words
- Spellcheck (F7 key on a PC), proofread; watch your CAPS, commas, and semicolons; grammar counts
- Purdue [OWL](#) for almost any writing question
- “*it is,*” “*that is,*” “*they are*” NOT *it’s, that’s, they’re*
- Avoid “Basically,” “and so on.” “etc.”
- Do not use first or second person: *I, me, we you, yours*

# Writing Strategies

*Establish why your claims are important*

X matters/is important because \_\_\_\_\_.

Although X may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today's concern over \_\_\_\_\_.

Ultimately, what is at stake here is \_\_\_\_\_.

These findings have important consequences for the broader domain of \_\_\_\_\_.

These conclusions will have significant applications in \_\_\_\_\_ as well as in \_\_\_\_\_.

Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of \_\_\_\_\_, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about \_\_\_\_\_.

# More Writing Strategies

## *Introduce quotations*

X states, “\_\_\_\_\_.”

According to X, “\_\_\_\_\_.”

In her book, \_\_\_\_\_, X maintains that “\_\_\_\_\_.”

Writing the journal *Commentary*, X complains that, “\_\_\_\_\_.”

In X’s view, “\_\_\_\_\_.”

X complicates matters further when he writes, “\_\_\_\_\_.”

## *Explain quotations*

In other words, X believes \_\_\_\_\_.

In making this comment, X argues that \_\_\_\_\_.

X’s point is that \_\_\_\_\_.

The essence of X’s argument is that \_\_\_\_\_.

# Even more writing strategies

## *Disagree with your sources and offer reasons*

By focusing on \_\_\_\_\_, X overlooks the deeper problem of \_\_\_\_\_.

X's claim that \_\_\_\_\_ rests upon the questionable assumption that \_\_\_\_\_.

Proponents of X are right to argue that \_\_\_\_\_. But they exaggerate when they claim that \_\_\_\_\_.

While it is true that \_\_\_\_\_, it does not necessarily follow that \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Agree with sources and offer your own analysis*

X is surely right about \_\_\_\_\_ because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that \_\_\_\_\_.

X's theory of \_\_\_\_\_ is extremely useful because it sheds insight on the difficult problem of \_\_\_\_\_.



# Agree and Disagree with your sources to synthesize your research and offer new knowledge

## *Disagree with your sources and offer reasons*

By focusing on \_\_\_\_\_, X overlooks the deeper problem of \_\_\_\_\_.

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X is surely right about \_\_\_\_\_ because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that \_\_\_\_\_.

X's theory of \_\_\_\_\_ is extremely useful because it sheds insight on the difficult problem of \_\_\_\_\_.

# Parenthetical documentation in MLA: Refer to relevant source information when you quote or paraphrase

**Known author:** Lastname describes social media as “ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing” (263).

There is ample evidence that copyright lawsuits result in xyz and abc (Lastname 222).

**No known author/no page number:** There are many ways to define privacy, including as a “morbi sit amet ligula sapien” (Reliablewebsite).

- If you use an in-text parenthetical citation, the source must appear on your Works Cited page
- See the [OWL](#) for more examples or use [EasyBib](#) for help

# Working with Track Changes in Word

Track Changes & Comments:

<https://youtu.be/FVG2au1kuCs>

See [Track changes while you edit](#) for more help

# Think/Pair/Share

- Divide into groups of 2
- One person speaks, the other listens and writes; after 5 minutes exchange roles
  - Discuss your experience as a writer of research papers
    - what has worked for you in the past? What questions do you have about the process? What advice would you give another student?
- Be prepared to share your advice with everyone

# For Monday, April 20

*Discussion:* Rationale for documentation and citation

*Reading:* Hauptman pp. 7-13; if you missed class get the book on reserve in the library (call number PN171 .F56 H38 2008) Bugeja & Dimitrova, [What, in fact, causes footnotes to vanish?](#) (pp. 33-39 of eBook available from City Tech Library)

*Blogging:* Write one reading response blog post, due Monday

*Blogging extra:* one reading response blog post for the following:

Fister, [\*The Devil in the Details\*](#)

Grimmelman, [\*The Google Dilemma\*](#)

The research paper draft is due on Monday, April 27 by the beginning of class!