Doing Research: Joining the Scholarly Conversation

When you hear the word *research*, you probably think of looking for articles in the library or surfing the Web to find quotes to finish a paper or project. But, in fact, you are doing research any time you consult a source to answer a question or solve a problem. If you check reviews on a site like TripAdvisor before booking a hotel, look up the correct spelling of a new word in the dictionary, or ask a group of friends on Facebook for restaurant recommendations, you are conducting research.

In some important ways, however, college-level research is a whole new ball game. You have probably been taught before how to do academic research, and some of the things you have learned and the habits you have developed will serve you well as you do research in college. Others will not. Earlier chapters in this book have emphasized that writing for academic audiences means understanding how academics think about issues. It also means understanding how they think about evidence, and what types of sources they will expect you to use. The tools for finding those sources discussed in this chapter can help you meet those expectations.

You are becoming an academic researcher at a very exciting time. Old ways of doing research are shifting and becoming more powerful, and new pathways to information are opening up every day. The technological innovations and seemingly ever-expanding field of resources also present a challenge, however: To do academic research well, you must learn to sort efficiently through vast amounts of material in order to find what you need.

You need to learn more than how to use article databases or check off items on a list for evaluating sources. You need an understanding of how knowledge is created and distributed in our world, and of how to leverage that understanding to find, use, evaluate, and manage information with purpose and intent. With today's tools, anyone can find sources to support a paper

with little effort. It is up to you to decide if you want to distinguish your work from the rest, to go beyond the obvious and find unique, interesting, compelling sources that will push you, and your audience, to think in new ways.

As an academic researcher, you play a number of different roles, and each one has its own set of choices. As a researcher, you need to learn to explore multiple perspectives, consider a variety of sources, cope with uncertainty, and keep an open mind. You must become an expert at gathering, organizing, and managing multiple information streams. You need to become a keen judge of what you find, effectively evaluating both information and the research processes that helped you find that information. Finally, as you become a creator as well as a consumer of information, you must come to understand the processes of scholarly knowledge construction and decide how you want what you create to be used and by whom. The strategies presented in this chapter aim to help you effectively manage all of these roles.

The lessons you have learned about thinking rhetorically are central to the research process. In Chapter 1, rhetoric was defined as "a practical art that helps writers make effective choices within specific rhetorical situations"; subsequent chapters helped you learn how to think rhetorically as a writer, and to use your rhetorical understanding to make appropriate choices as you navigate the writing process. Thinking rhetorically also makes you a better researcher and can help you make good choices throughout the research process.

The Questions for Analyzing Your Rhetorical Situation as a Researcher on p. 157 will guide you as you embark on any research project, so be sure to refer to them frequently.

FOR EXPLORATION

Think back to some academic research you've done in the past. First identify a positive research experience, and write several paragraphs about it. What made this research satisfying and productive? Now write a few paragraphs about a research experience that was frustrating, unproductive, or in other ways difficult. Why do you think it went the way it did? Finally, consider what you have learned by thinking and writing about these two experiences. Jot down a few pointers you should follow to improve your future research efforts.

Questions for Analyzing Your Rhetorical Situation as a Researcher

1. Think about what you are trying to accomplish in your research project. How do these goals affect your source selection?

2. What role does this rhetorical situation invite you, as a researcher, to play? Is it . . .

fixed by the requirements of the assignment (engaging with the scholarly literature, demonstrating original research)?

or

more open?

3. Could you benefit from looking at examples of this kind of writing?

What conventions and common practices do authors who conduct this kind of research follow?

4. What image of yourself do you want to present in your final project?

How will the sources you use help you present yourself in this way?

EXPLORING

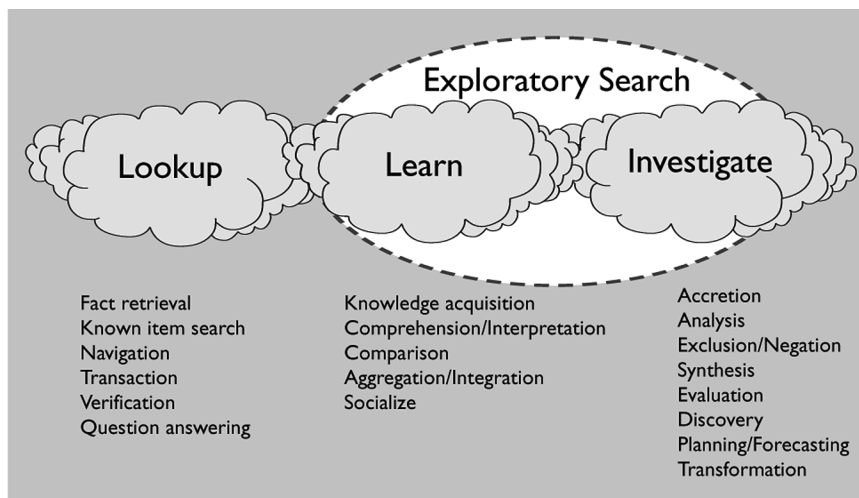### The researcher-explorer is . . .

- Interested in learning new things
- Ready to think about a question from multiple perspectives
- Familiar with lots of different sources
- Comfortable with uncertainty
- Open-minded

For any research project, you need to search for sources. *How* you search, though, varies depending on the type of research you need to do. It's useful to think about two kinds of searching: *exploratory searching* and *lookup searching*. You probably do dozens of lookup searches every day. If you want to know a movie time, how to spell a word, what the average temperature is for your city, or how much caffeine there is in green tea, a lookup search will get you the information you need. Lookup searching is about defining exactly what you need to know so that you can find the one source you need to get your question answered.

You may have had teachers who encouraged you to approach academic research as you would approach a lookup search—to think about your topic, define your argument, and narrow your focus as quickly as possible so that you can look for sources that match that focus. With deadlines looming and other classes demanding your attention, you, too, might be tempted to define a narrow, specific research question as quickly as possible. Try to resist this urge.

As discussed in Chapter 5, academic arguments are based on an open-minded exploration of the issues and a willingness to consider multiple perspectives. *Exploratory search*—not lookup search—will help you meet these goals. The process of conducting exploratory search can be demanding, but your gains in productivity will be significant.

You may think of exploration as something you do to prepare for research. Exploration, though, is not a preliminary stage of the writing process: It is an essential part of researching a complex topic for a scholarly audience. When you do academic research, you should expect to do several exploratory searches. For example, during an exploratory search on a topic like alternative fuels, you could come across a fascinating article on biodiesel, which might lead you to explore the conversation on that topic. You might then learn that many people make a connection between the production of alternative fuels like biodiesel and shortages in the global food supply. This could

Exploratory Search

Lookup | Learn | Investigate

Fact retrieval
Known item search
Navigation
Transaction
Verification
Question answering

Knowledge acquisition
Comprehension/Interpretation
Comparison
Aggregation/Integration
Socialize

Accretion
Analysis
Exclusion/Negation
Synthesis
Evaluation
Discovery
Planning/Forecasting
Transformation

Diagram of Exploratory Search[1]

lead you into another exploratory search, this time on how energy production and use affect hunger. As this example shows, academic research is a process of inquiry, which means exploring different bodies of literature and multiple points of view.

Considering Multiple Perspectives

Doing an exploratory search requires that you think rhetorically about your project. This means reflecting on your own needs and situation as a writer, considering your readers' perspectives, *and* recognizing the different points of view expressed by the authors who have written about your topic.

> **thinking rhetorically**
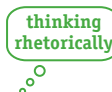
In Chapter 5, you learned that when you construct academic arguments, you must consider your own values and beliefs, as well as those of your readers. Exploration helps you understand multiple perspectives. Academic research is not a matter of identifying "both sides of the story": It is a rare topic that only has two sides. Instead, think about your topic as a continuum of ideas: There may be two extremes that are easy to define, but there are also a whole variety of different positions that fall into the middle ground. Most academic writers position themselves in that middle ground, synthesizing ideas from many places.

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[1] Gary Marchionini, "Exploratory Search, from Finding to Understanding," *Communications of the ACM* 49, no. 4 (2006): 420.

Think about the types of topics academic writers address, big questions like "Should the government regulate hate speech?" or "Should there be cooperative international action against global warming?" People who answer "yes" to either of those big questions can have *very* different reasons for doing so. As an academic writer, you want to explore all of these reasons in order to develop your own perspective. There will be gaps in your argument if you maintain a narrow focus, based on what you already know, throughout your research process.

Looking at a Variety of Sources

You can also expect gaps in your arguments when you only look at one *type* of source. Sources are created for different reasons, and different types of sources do different things for you as a researcher.

Using Reference Works

ENCYCLOPEDIAS.   Reference works like encyclopedias are a good place to get an overview of the issues related to a topic. An article from an encyclopedia like the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, which is intended for a general audience, will provide a broad, objective overview of a topic. An article from a scholarly encyclopedia, like the *Encyclopedia of Science, Technology and Ethics*, or the *Encyclopedia of Domestic Violence*, will provide a somewhat more detailed overview, and it may also outline the most common scholarly opinions or schools of thought on it. As an academic researcher, you may start here, but you will want to move beyond the neutral summaries these tools provide as you develop a deeper understanding of your topic.

WIKIPEDIA.   You are probably familiar with the online encyclopedia Wikipedia (http://wikipedia.org). You might also have been warned never to use Wikipedia in an academic project. Many instructors do forbid its use as a source in research projects because Wikipedia is a *wiki*, which is a Web site that anyone can edit. This makes it a very dynamic and comprehensive reference source — it tends to include articles on topics that are extremely current, and also on topics that are extremely esoteric — while at the same time making it unreliable in some instructors' eyes, since virtually anyone, expert or not, can change the content.

Wikipedia can nevertheless be an excellent place to explore a topic for researchers who are aware of how it works, and who understand that they will use different types of sources at different stages in their research process. Imagine, for example, that you are taking a class on technology and new media. Your instructor has assigned a research paper for the class, but

Wikipedia's Discussion and History Tabs

the topic is open. You've always wondered about the history of typewriters. Might this be a good topic? Consulting Wikipedia's article on typewriters could help you answer this question. If you determine that you do have a viable topic, you would then turn to additional sources (some of which will be recommended on the Wikipedia entry).

The *History* tab at the top of every Wikipedia article gives you access to every version of the article that has ever existed, so you can see how the argument on a page changes over time. Every Wikipedia article also has a Discussion page, which is like a backchannel where the people writing the main article can talk about it. Sometimes, these discussions are pretty dull, focused on formatting or punctuation. In other cases they are very useful, showing how people with different values, beliefs, or points of view differ in their interpretation of the same facts. Unlike an article in a traditional encyclopedia, the Wikipedia articles allow you to discover which claims in the article were divisive and which claims had wide agreement.

Browsing the Scholarly Literature

Reference sources like print encyclopedias and Wikipedia can be useful for gaining a general overview of your topic, but they are not the types of sources you will rely on to build your own academic arguments. In order to find the kinds of in-depth treatments that will be useful, expert researchers spend a fair amount of time browsing through scholarly articles and books on their topics, knowing that they will revisit these same sources later in their research process. As you explore such sources, keep your mind open to new ideas and new connections. One way to do this is to use broad keywords in your initial searches. For example, if you are interested in researching breast cancer, you could search Medline, a database of scholarly articles

about health, using a broad keyword phrase like "breast cancer" early in your process. Later, you decide that your real interest is in the effectiveness of screening methods for breast cancer. To find articles related to that interest, you could search the same database, using more specific phrases like "mass screening methods" or "early detection."

Most scholarly articles and the databases that index them include *abstracts*, short summaries where the author(s) briefly describe their research, their results, and their conclusions. While you are browsing, use these abstracts to see whether a particular article is likely to help you in further exploring your topic. Online catalogs for books, too, provide some information on what's covered through tables of contents, subject headings, and, in some cases, summary descriptions. When you locate a book on your topic, browse the table of contents, introduction and/or preface, and subject index to see whether it's worth a closer look. Take notes as you explore, recording specific terms scholarly authors use to talk about your topic and identifying the types of research studies commonly done on your topic. If certain authors or titles are mentioned frequently in the works you consult, make a note of them for future investigations.

Using Review Articles and Scholarly Anthologies

Some fields, particularly the biomedical sciences and social sciences such as psychology or social work, encourage the publication of *review articles*, in which the author analyzes the body of published research on a topic. An up-to-date review article is a gold mine for the researcher. Review articles not only list the most important and influential articles on a topic, but they also explain how those articles connect to each other.

Another useful tool is the *scholarly anthology,* which is a collection of influential articles on a topic published in book form. The editor of a scholarly anthology will usually include an introduction placing all of the work in the book in context. Like review articles, scholarly anthologies can provide a valuable shortcut to assembling the most important sources on a given topic.

Exploring the Social Web

Social media like blogs, Facebook, and Twitter might not seem relevant to an academic research process, but they can be. Many scholars maintain their own blogs, where they talk about their research and developments in their field. Some blogs are specifically devoted to discussions of peer-reviewed or scholarly research. Academic researchers who attend conferences and professional meetings often use Twitter to report on interesting papers and discussions. Finally, Facebook groups on special interests can provide you with contacts who share similar interests and with information on meetings,

lectures, and other events that might be of interest to you in exploring your topic.

Coping with Uncertainty

Research can be a stressful process, especially in the early stages. At different points in your research process, you will not know for sure what your topic is going to be; what you are going to say about it; what sources are available; and whether you will be able to complete everything you have to do in time. In this context, with deadlines looming, it can be difficult to take the time to explore and think about your topic before you start writing. The time you spend exploring, however, is anything but wasted. Identifying a focus that is truly yours eliminates a lot of the uncertainty from your process. It lets you separate relevant sources and lines of inquiry from those that are related, but tangential. And when your focus is connected to the larger conversation on your topic, you know that the sources that you need are there for you to find.

Keeping an Open Mind

Think back to Aristotle's three appeals. Because the idea of research is so tied up with evidence, it may seem as if the only one of Aristotle's appeals that could have any relevance here is *logos*. ✳ In fact, thinking about *ethos* is just as helpful in this early, exploratory stage of the research process.

> **thinking rhetorically**

As you learned in Chapter 5, your ethos as a writer is connected to the image of yourself that you want to present to the reader. One of the most important elements of *ethos* in academic writing is the idea of open- or fair-mindedness: You want to present yourself as the type of thinker who has carefully considered multiple perspectives on a topic, and who is able to refine, revise, and expand her thinking about a topic as she encounters new ideas and evidence. In the exploration phase of the academic research process, you are gathering the information you need to build your *ethos* as an academic writer.

This isn't always easy. It takes conscious effort to make sure that you give information that *challenges* your beliefs the attention it deserves. Research shows that the human brain tends to focus on information that is consistent with its previously held beliefs. To effectively explore, therefore, you need to take the time to think about what you are reading in your sources, and you also need to take some time for reflection. Be proactive about identifying areas where your beliefs are strong and difficult to change. Ask yourself frequently whether your own values and beliefs are preventing you from seeing the value of new information. (See pp. 120-21 for a summary of techniques you can use to examine your own values and beliefs in argument.)

Finding a Focus

Your main goal when you explore is to find a *focus* for your research—that is, to figure out what you think, and what you want to argue. This is not a matter of finding one or more sources that you agree with, so that you can adopt those authors' points of view as your own. It is not a matter of finding the "truth" about your topic in your sources (at least not finding a truth that has been articulated by someone else). Academic writers *construct* their arguments: that is, they build them out of the facts, figures, theories, concepts, ideas, and arguments that have been developed by a community of thinkers over the years. These arguments are original and creative in that they build on what has come before, drawing new connections among ideas, but they do not come out of nowhere.

Finding a focus helps you determine which sources are relevant and which are not, making it easier for you to leave aside things that are interesting but not helpful. This is not to say that your academic research process will be simple or linear. As you read and write about new ideas, your thinking on your topic will evolve. You may need to go back and explore again as you find new issues related to your topic, and you will probably keep looking for sources throughout your writing process.

Studies of how students do research suggest that finding a meaningful focus for a project is the most important thing a student can do to feel happy with the project's outcome. You may not find a good focus for every research project you do, but taking the time to try is well worth it. Effective academic writers develop strategies for finding a focus or at least for recognizing one when it appears. One third-year business major who does a lot of presentations, for example, hones her focus by creating and refining PowerPoints: When her slides begin to tell a coherent story, she knows she is focused enough to move forward in her research process. Another student, a senior history major, uses note cards to keep track of interesting ideas. He sorts and resorts the cards on a big table until an interesting connection jumps out and grabs him. Then, he can focus his information-gathering on developing that connection.

FOR EXPLORATION

Think back about a research project that you really feel good about. This might be a project you did for school, or it might be a time when you had to answer an important question for yourself. Reflect on your process, and write several paragraphs about this experience. What made this project really "yours"? What was your focus, or your answer? How did you put your answer or solution together? When did you feel like you knew what you wanted to say? While you were gathering sources? During the writing process? At some other point?

GATHERING INFORMATION

The researcher-gatherer . . .

■ Finds an individual focus and point of view on a topic
■ Plans an efficient research process
■ Finds and participates in communities and conversations about a topic
■ Thinks rhetorically about keywords
■ Uses the right research tools for the job

Planning Your Research Process

The first step in planning your research process is understanding your assignment's requirements: The best clue to how much and what kind of effort your project will take is there. Sometimes, the assignment will define everything you need to do, from the documentation style you must use for your citations, to the number of sources you need, to the databases and research tools you must use to find those sources. Sometimes, of course, those variables are up to you. Either way, it's critical to know from the outset what is in store, and what you can hope to achieve in the time you have.

Equally important are considerations of audience; the extent of research necessary (depending both on what you already know and what you want to find out); the specific type(s) of research called for (dependent on the topic and the discipline in which you are writing); and the amount of time you have to complete the project.

For questions that will help you start your research, see p. 166.

Managing Your Time

It should be obvious by now that academic research is a process that cannot, or at least should not, be done in one sitting or one session. Some sources are more accessible than others: You might be able to do all of your research at your computer, or you might have to go to the library, your professor's office, or an archive. You may also find sources that you want that are not accessible on your campus — for these sources, you will need to budget extra time. There are many useful online tools designed to help you manage your time, for instance the Assignment Calculator from the University of Minnesota Libraries (http://www.lib.umn.edu/help/calculator/).

Questions to Help You Start Your Research

1. **Do you have a clear sense of your assignment?**

Do you need to explain something, compare one idea to another, or argue a particular point of view?

Will you need to turn in anything — such as a first draft — before the final due date?

2. **Who is your audience?**

Will your readers already know something about the topic?

Will your readers have strong feelings or opinions about your topic?

3. **What role will research play in this writing project?**

What do you need to learn about your topic?

What knowledge do you already have about your project? Do you already have opinions about your topic?

How will you ensure that those opinions do not keep you from approaching your topic with an open mind?

4. **Does the topic require particular research strategies or sources?**

Many health topics, for example, call for up-to-date sources. For an essay on the evolution of rock 'n' roll, though, you would need to consult historical material and listen to some early recordings.

5. **Given the due date for your final project, how should you allocate your time?**

In a paper on corporate fraud for a business course, for instance, you might want to interview the CEO of a local company, so you would need to build in the time for this activity — along with time for print and online research.

There is another level of accessibility you should consider while planning your project: intellectual accessibility. Some research projects will ask you to stretch yourself and use sources that are difficult to digest. Even experts in a field will read scholarly sources multiple times to understand them: As a student, you will frequently do research in fields where you are not an expert. You should accordingly budget more time than you think you will need to read and understand your sources. You should also expect that you may need to do additional research to clarify new concepts and ideas that you find in your sources.

Staying Organized

Once you start gathering sources, you will need a plan for how to manage them. As your argument evolves, sources that seemed irrelevant early on might become essential. You don't want to spend your valuable writing time relocating an article you already found once. Many expert researchers use low-tech tools like note cards for this purpose (often with great success), but there are also some powerful online tools you can use to keep track of what you are finding.

Saving What You Find Online

Online article databases like Academic Search Premier and ProQuest come loaded with tools that will help you stay organized. Most will allow you to sort articles into folders, and to save or email those folders to yourself. Some allow you to create an account where you can store useful articles permanently. With these accounts, you can also save your searches so that you can revisit a set of results later, when and if your focus shifts.

If you are using many different research tools, you may want to keep track of what you find in a single place. Online spreadsheet tools like those found in Google Documents (http://docs.google.com) or Zoho (http://sheet.zoho .com) allow you to create a spreadsheet of sources that can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection. These tools are free, but they do require you to create an account.

Online bookmarking tools such as Delicious (http://delicious.com), Connotea (http://connotea.org), and CiteULike (http://citeulike.org) are also extremely useful. These tools also require you to create an account. Once you have done so, you can save useful sources to the Web and then access your library of materials from any computer with an Internet connection. (Just be aware that the default setting for these tools is public, meaning that the sources are visible to anyone browsing the service.) ✳

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Citation Managers

Citation management tools including Refworks, Endnote, and Zotero allow you to build a personal library of sources and also help you format your citations and build bibliographies. All of these tools integrate with word processing programs, allowing you to cite items in your library as you write. With the notable exception of Zotero (http://zotero.org), most of these tools are proprietary, meaning you need to purchase a license to use them; however, some colleges provide campus-wide licenses for their students and faculty. Check with your institution's library to see if you have access.

You should try a variety of these tools to see what works for you. An important part of being an effective academic researcher is managing all of the information you come across so that you can access it again later when you need it. Remember, one of the primary goals of academic research writing is to learn something new and then communicate that learning to other people. You don't want to lose your new understanding as soon as you turn the paper in: You want to make it part of your personal knowledge base.

The guidelines on p. 169 can help you manage a research project effectively.

NOTE FOR MULTILINGUAL WRITERS

If much of your research experience has been in a language other than English, when you start a research project you may want to work closely with general reference librarians and other librarians who specialize in your subject area. (Most university libraries have staff who specialize in areas such as the humanities, social sciences, biological sciences, or education.) If possible, meet weekly with a tutor in your writing center as well. At these meetings, you can review your ongoing work as well as your research timetable.

Finding and Participating in the Conversations about Your Topic

thinking rhetorically

To academic writers, books, articles, and presentations on a topic function as a kind of ongoing conversation. Participants in these conversations exchange ideas, build on them, challenge them, and reshape them into new questions. Like any conversation, these scholarly conversations have a set of (sometimes unwritten) rules that make them work. The people who participate in them may never engage with each other face-to-face, but in their scholarly

Guidelines for Managing a Research Project

1. Check the basics.

Make sure you have a solid understanding of the assignment, your audience, and your deadlines.

2. Take the time to explore the literature on your topic with an open mind.

Be open to new ideas and new information.

Think critically about how to integrate new information into what you already know and believe.

3. Develop a preliminary search strategy.

Decide which kinds of sources are likely to be the most helpful, and whether time constraints might be a problem with any of them.

4. Establish a timetable for the project, and review it often.

List the activities you need to complete, along with tentative due dates.

Schedules may vary quite a bit from one research project to another.

5. Expect the unexpected.

Build in enough time to give you flexibility to revisit sources and rerun searches as your thinking evolves.

As you learn about your topic, resources that seemed irrelevant at first might become valuable.

work they share certain assumptions about how ideas should be presented, about the kinds of evidence they should use, and about the types of questions they should address.

In order to participate in these conversations, you'll need to know first, how to find them, and, second, how to contribute to them once you do. Thinking rhetorically about your project can help you figure out how to do both, whether you are writing for the academic community in general, or for a specific disciplinary community.

The Basics of Online Searches

Most research today starts at the computer, with a keyword search. Though you will in most cases eventually need to consult printed books or primary documents for your research project, you will probably start your research online. In order to do so efficiently, you'll need to know a few basics.

DATABASES. Different online research tools contain different types of sources, but in all of them the computer stores information in a structured way. For example, in Academic Search Premier, a database of articles from journals, newspapers, and magazines (also called a *periodical database)* the computer stores the article *titles* in one category, or *field,* and the *authors* in another. The easiest way to visualize a database is as a simple table:

Title	Author	Source	Volume	Date
Habitat mapping of the Atlantic bluefin tuna derived from satellite data: Its potential as a tool for the sustainable management of pelagic fisheries	Druon, J-N	Marine Policy	34	March 2010
Pretty Good Yield and exploited fishes	Hilborn, R	Marine Policy	34	January 2010

The fields in a database vary depending on the type of information that is being collected. The Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) would look more like the following:

Title	Director	Writer	Release Date	Rating
School of Rock	Linklater, R.	White, M.	2003	PG-13
Across the Universe	Taymor, J.	Clement, D. La Frenais, I.	2007	PG-13

KEYWORD SEARCHES. *Keyword searches* are usually the best way to start searching a database. Used as search terms, keywords are the words you choose to describe your topic. The database or search engine you are using will scan its contents for your keywords, and give you a list of results that contain them.

It is important to understand, though, when you do a keyword search you are probably not searching every field in the database. For example, most article databases will look for your keywords in the title, abstract, and subject heading fields, but not in the text of the article itself. Why? Because if your keywords appear in one of the first three fields, the chances are good that the article will be relevant to your research. On the other hand, if your keywords appear just once in the text of a thirty-page article, it might be only tangentially related to your topic.

The searches that you do in academic databases and library catalogs are not as broad as those you do in search engines. They will retrieve fewer results, but because your results have your keywords in prominent places, they can be more relevant—once you figure out what the best keywords are. This might take some trial and error. Start with some broad keywords, and take note of the terms that are used to describe your topic in the articles you find. For example, searching a scholarly article database for articles about "animal testing," you may notice that the term "vivisection" appears frequently. You will probably want to try another set of searches that use that term.

The process of choosing keywords is, of course, a rhetorical process. Thinking rhetorically about your keywords will help you choose terms that are meaningful within a particular discourse. A part of this rhetorical process is also thinking about your audience: What terms will they expect you to use to talk about your topic? At the same time, you must also think about the people who have produced the sources you want to use, and identify the terms and words they might use in their work. The best keywords will be those that are important (and that mean the same thing) to people in both groups.

thinking rhetorically

SEARCHING THE INTERNET AND SEARCHING SPECIALIZED DATA-BASES. When searching for information on the Internet, most users turn to an Internet search engine like Google. These can be understood as extremely large databases. Computer programs called *Web crawlers* (or *spiders*) visit Web pages and pull data about the pages into a database. When you type keywords into Google's search engine, it doesn't search for your keywords everywhere on the Web; instead, it searches for them in its own huge database .

Internet search engines are becoming ever more sophisticated, but they index literally billions of Web pages. They are a powerful tool to use, especially when you are initially scanning to find out what is out there about your topic. Because they initially pull in information from all over the Web, they can help you find resources in places you would never think to search. At the

(before you search)   (when you search)
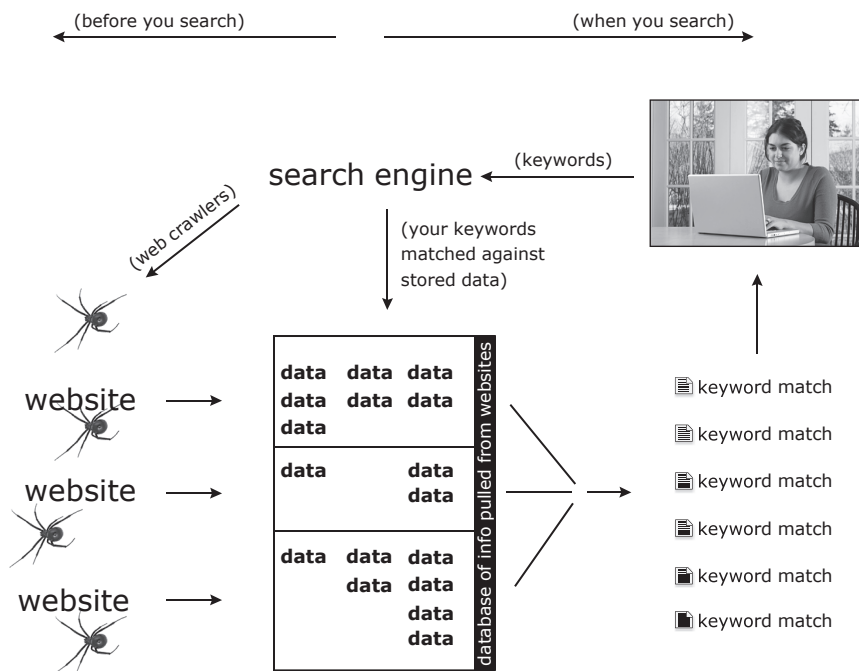
How Keywords Work in a Search Engine

same time, searches with one or two keywords in Google tend to return re-
sults that range widely—sometimes so widely as to be virtually useless. At
some point in your academic research process, you will need to search more
precisely. One strategy at that point is to use keywords effectively; another
is to think about using a different kind of research tool. In most cases, this
means turning to a *specialized database*.

Specialized databases like EBSCO's Academic Search Premier include
far less material than do Internet databases, so searching them will yield sig-
nificantly fewer results, but the results you do get will be more relevant for
academic research. If you type "Hawthorne Scarlet Letter" into Google, for
example, you will receive upwards of 800,000 returns, many of which are
only tangentially related to the classic novel. If you type "Hawthorne" and
"Scarlet Letter" as keywords into the first two search fields in Academic
Search Premier, by contrast, you'll receive 160 or so returns, virtually all of
which discuss the novel. When you make the shift from exploring to gather-
ing sources, this is a critical difference.

If your first search in a specialized database returns little or nothing of
use, don't assume that there are no articles about your topic. It may be that
your specific keywords are in the full text of the article but not in the title
or abstract, so you'll need to change the default so that your search includes

Keyword Searches via Google and Academic Search Premier

full text. On the other hand, it may be that your keywords are not widely used in academic books and articles. In your initial searches in article databases, then, your best strategy is frequently to start with a very broad search, using only one or two key terms. Once you have scanned enough results to get a sense of what is available on your topic, you can narrow your results by adding keywords that frequently appear in the titles and abstracts of relevant articles.

Keep in mind that the keywords that will be effective for one project may be entirely ineffective for another project, even if both projects are on the same topic. This concept is simple, but it can be hard to remember when you are immersed in the process of trying to find sources. Also, keep in mind that you are unlikely to craft a keyword search that will only retrieve relevant articles. You may well use some of the sources you find on your initial search, but you will most likely not use *all* of them. You will need to do additional searches as you develop your understanding of your topic.

ALTERNATIVES TO KEYWORD SEARCHING. Keywords will usually be your first entry point into a database, but they're not the only option you have. There are alternatives that offer you more precision and accuracy in your searching, as for example when you want to find a specific book or article. With most tools, you can specify particular fields to search. Choosing the "author" field to search for a specific author is an obvious way to use

field searching. You can also use fields to narrow your keyword searching. For example, say that a default keyword search in your database matches your keywords against the article title, journal title, abstract, and subject headings. If you specify that your keywords must appear in an article title, you will get fewer results, but those results are more likely to focus on your specific topic.

CONTROLLED VOCABULARY AND THESAURI.   Another way to increase the precision of your searches is to find out if your research tool gives you access to any kind of *controlled vocabulary*. Keywords are essentially uncontrolled vocabulary. If you prefer the term "film" to "cinema," you can use "film" as much as you want; if the authors who produce the texts you want to find use "cinema" exclusively, however, you'll have difficulty finding their work. This is why thinking rhetorically about your keywords is so important.

To ease some of these potential difficulties, some databases establish what is known as a controlled vocabulary. Authors can use "film" or "cinema"—whichever they prefer—but when their articles go into a database, the agreed-upon label "film" is attached to their article. Researchers then just have to find out what the agreed-upon, or controlled, term is for their topic.

The research tools you will use for academic writing usually have some kind of controlled vocabulary available. Some specialized databases like ERIC (for sources in education) or PsycINFO (for sources in psychology) provide searchers with powerful thesauri to help them refine their searches. Searchers can identify key terms, and the thesaurus will point them to related terms, both broader and narrower. By browsing these related terms, searchers can find additional sources that might provide interesting new perspectives on their initial query.

Research Tools

There are many different ways to do research today, and many different research tools to choose from. Some tools, like Internet search engines, provide access to a vast number of resources on every conceivable topic. Others are more specialized, like PsycINFO, providing you access to one type of resource or resources on a specific topic. Some are freely available online. Others are only available by subscription, and some of these subscriptions are so expensive that only large institutions can afford them. Luckily for you, as a part of your college or university community, you have access to many such resources.

In an academic research process, you can expect to use many different types of research tools as you gather your sources. You might use your library's catalog to track down a book you saw referenced in an article; you might run across an article on a scholarly journal's Web site and then use your library's

"Term Finder" Thesaurus (PsycINFO)

article databases to find the full text of the article; you might find a person with research interests similar to yours through a social bookmarking site like Delicious and visit some Web sites that person recommends. There are too many research tools available to discuss them all, and what you need for your project is always going to be specific to your particular rhetorical situation. Nevertheless, this section will give you a sense of what is possible using different types of research tools.

ARTICLE (OR PERIODICAL) DATABASES. Most article databases (also sometimes called *periodical databases*) are proprietary, meaning that they are only accessible if you are a subscriber, or if you are part of an institution that subscribes. As a college student you probably have access to a good number of proprietary article databases at your college library. Some databases are available through public libraries. You may also have access to article databases at your place of employment.

Some article databases store only descriptions of the articles using standard bibliographic information (author, title, subject, page length, etc.): They let you know that an article exists, but require you to go elsewhere to find the actual text. Other databases include the full text of the article along with the bibliographic information. A third category provides full-text access to some articles and only bibliographic information about the others.

When you find a description of an article in a database that does not offer full text, you have several options for finding the article itself. First, you need to check whether your library subscribes to the journal in which the article appeared. (Some libraries provide a link to the article databases that lets you check automatically; otherwise, you'll have to do a separate search in the library's catalog.) If your college does not have a subscription to the journal you want, you can usually request a copy of the article you need from another library: Ask your college librarian for help.

Some databases focus on a particular type of article, like newspaper articles, magazine articles, or journal articles. General-purpose databases include all types of articles and cover a variety of disciplines. They are often a good starting point for an academic research project. Examples include EBSCO's *Academic Search Premier*, Gale's *InfoTrac College Edition*, and the *ProQuest Research Library*. Other databases provide in-depth coverage of a particular discipline. If you have already chosen a major, it is an excellent idea to find out what the important databases are in your discipline. (Your instructors will expect you to consult these when you do research in your major, but they may not think to mention them specifically to you.)

A NOTE ON NUMBERS. You are no doubt familiar with typing keywords into an Internet search engine and getting back huge numbers of hits, many of which won't be credible, or even relevant. You probably look at only a small fraction of hits that appear on the first few pages of results. Your expectations for how many results you will get on *any* search, though, may be shaped by these experiences with Internet search engines. Some research shows that when students don't see large numbers of hits on a search, they worry about the quality of their search or the viability of their research topic, even when the number of hits is perfectly adequate to support their specific research needs.

Be realistic about the number of sources you really need to write your paper or fulfill your assignment. It may be tempting to throw a topic out when your initial searches on a scholarly periodical database like PsycINFO only retrieve twenty articles, but twenty scholarly articles is plenty to support a typical college research paper. For many papers you only need a few articles that really dig into your topic to generate enough ideas to build your own argument. Choosing a topic that is less well represented in the literature can be a great way to make your research stand out.

Questions to Consider When Choosing an Article Database

1. Is it a full-text database, or an index?

2. What are its dates of coverage?

3. How current is the content in the database?

4. Does the database focus on the literature in a particular field?

5. What are the most important databases for research in my discipline?

6. Is there an easy way to identify peer-reviewed or scholarly articles in this database?

7. Does the database offer special tools, like citation formatting, of particular interest to academic writers?

LIBRARY CATALOGS.   Library catalogs are databases that let you search everything in a library's collection. Every library tries to tailor its collection to the needs of its students and faculty, and, at almost all academic libraries, this means lots of books and journals. At a school with a strong film studies program, though, you could expect to find a large film collection in the library. At a school with a strong natural resources curriculum the library would likely house an extensive map collection. At a chiropractic college, you could even expect to find bones and skeletons available for checkout.

For questions to consider when using a library catalog, see p. 178.

SEARCHING THE INTERNET.   While there are some challengers, Google remains dominant in the area of Internet searches because of the huge amount of data it has indexed, and because its ranking algorithm continues to

Questions to Consider When Using Library Catalogs

1. If your institution has multiple libraries, can you limit your search to the specific library you want to use?

2. If your institution has multiple campuses, can you search the holdings of all campus libraries at the same time?

3. If your institution belongs to a regional consortium of libraries, can you easily search all of the libraries where you have borrowing privileges at the same time?

4. If you find a book or other item that is available on another campus, in another branch, or at another university, how easily and quickly can you expect to receive the book?

5. Can you easily limit your search to a particular type of information source (books, videos, maps, etc.)?

deliver results that are perceived to be highly relevant by its users. In addition to Google Search (its standard search engine), Google has two related search engines of particular interest to you as an academic researcher: Google Books and Google Scholar.

Google Books (http://books.google.com) is a large, searchable database of digitized books. In some cases, you can download the full text of the books; in others, you can only access a snippet that includes your keywords. Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com) is Google's attempt to provide a targeted search of scholarly information. With this tool, you can quickly scan the scholarly literature on a topic across a variety of disciplines. You can set your preferences in Google Scholar so that your results will be connected to the holdings of your college library. This allows you to search broadly in Google Scholar, and then get the articles at no cost to you through your library's subscriptions.

Google's dominance does not mean that it is the only Internet search option. There are a variety of alternatives available. Some of these will disap-

pear quickly, and no doubt others will emerge. Some search engines try to control Web searches by limiting the pool of sites being searched to those that have been selected by human editors: Two examples are Sweet Search (http://www.sweetsearch.com/), where students are the target audience, and the Librarians Index to the Internet (http://lii.org), which points users to Web sites that have been selected and reviewed by librarians.

Search tools also exist that are available by subscription only and provide you with easy ways to pay for the content you find. A good example of this is DeepDvye (http://www.deepdyve.com), a scholarly search engine that includes an option to "rent" articles. These services can be useful to you if your school's subscriptions are limited and after you leave school, but remember that while you are in school you should always make use first of the services and collections your tuition has already paid for.

There are also tools that try to look at searching in an entirely new way. WolframAlpha (http://www.wolframalpha.com/), for example, calls itself a "computational knowledge engine": Instead of providing links to Web sites, this tool makes assumptions about what you're looking for and compiles information about your search terms. (See p. 180 for a screenshot of a Wolfram Alpha search.)

USING THE SOCIAL WEB.   So-called social Web tools like Delicious and CiteULike (discussed on p. 167) provide you with a powerful way to find sources. When people use these tools to bookmark sites they find online, their bookmarks are usually public and searchable; searching with Delicious and CiteULike, then, allows you to search thousands of people's bookmarks at once. While you have no guarantees about any individual site, you do know that for every source you find, some person thought it was worth the effort to save. Also, if you really like the sources one person has saved, you can browse the rest of the items that person has saved in that category, and find new things that might interest you.

Finding sources in this way requires a shift in thinking: Instead of finding sources, you are finding people, people who are sharing their work and research on a topic of interest to you. You cannot control what they will find for you, or when, but you may well end up finding sources and ideas that you would not have found without joining that particular online community.

Conducting Field Research

Sometimes, instead of sifting through the research others have done, you will want to conduct some research yourself: You might want to interview an expert on your topic, obtain an array of opinions on a topic by means of a questionnaire, or observe an interaction or event firsthand. These kinds of activities are known as *field research*. Many students find that field research

WolframAlpha Search

helps them build enthusiasm for their learning because they are uncovering information that no one before has compiled in exactly the same way.

A note of caution is appropriate here. Any time you do research on other people, you must treat your research subjects ethically and with respect. You will have a great deal of latitude in interpreting what your subjects say in interviews, for example, or a particular behavior that they exhibit, so you must do so fairly and thoughtfully. For your field research to be valued by an academic audience, you must show that you have drawn your conclusions from your research, not from preconceived conclusions. Your campus may have training or guidelines for students engaged in primary research. Talk to your instructor, or investigate your school's Web site, to find out more.

Interviews

Interviews often provide information that is unavailable through other kinds of research. For a psychology paper about child abuse, for example, you might interview a local caseworker who works with abused children. For a

Guidelines for Conducting Interviews

1. **Request an interview in advance.**

> Explain why you want the interview, how long it will take, and what you hope to accomplish.

> On the day of the interview, show up on time.

2. **Bring a list of written questions, but be flexible.**

> If the interviewee focuses on one question or moves to a related issue, just accept this change in plans and return to your own questions when appropriate.

> If the interviewee doesn't want to answer a direct question, try asking about the subject in a less direct fashion.

3. **If you wish to tape-record the interview, remember to ask permission first.**

4. **Take notes during the interview, even if you use a tape recorder.**

> *Your notes will refresh your memory later on, when you don't have time to review the entire tape; they can also help you identify the most important points of the discussion.*

political science paper on the Iraq War, you might consult a veteran of the war. If you do conduct interviews, keep in mind that a good interviewer is first of all a good listener—someone who is able to draw out the person being interviewed. Since interviews are more formal than most conversations, be sure to prepare carefully for them by doing some background research on the interviewee and by preparing a list of questions.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires can provide information about the attitudes and experiences of a large number of people. You might, for instance, survey your fellow students about their views on college sports or your school's policy on hate speech. Some disciplines, such as sociology and political science, use questionnaire and polling data extensively as scientific measurements of the general population's views. In introductory classes, though, students generally use questionnaires to get a rough idea of broad trends or differing perspectives on a topic. The information you gather from such questionnaires can serve only as anecdotal evidence; it cannot, in other words, play a primary role in supporting an argument.

Observation

Sociologists and anthropologists have rich traditions in firsthand observation. They often do research as participant-observers, living in and moving among various communities to observe social customs and patterns of behavior. Scholars using this approach have gathered data on many kinds of groups, from day-care centers to crack houses to corporate boardrooms.

Although you most likely won't be doing such full-scale research, you can still generate stimulating material by closely observing various activities or groups. If you're writing a paper on the effectiveness of your local city council, for example, you might attend several meetings and take the role of participant-observer during question-and-answer sessions. You might also consider observing groups you already belong to: If you're writing about gender differences and work as a restaurant waitperson, for instance, you might study the tipping practices of men versus those of women. As with other forms of field research, observation can bring interesting new perspectives to a subject.

Guidelines for Designing and Using Questionnaires

1. Determine the purpose of the questionnaire and explain your purpose briefly at the top.

Consider: How will the results tie in to the rest of your research project?

2. Decide who will receive the questionnaire.

For a business paper, you might want to survey an entire small company, or a representative sample — say, every fifth employee from an alphabetized list — at a larger company.

3. Decide how you will distribute the questionnaire and obtain responses.

Will you email it, send it by regular mail, or hand it out in person?

Make sure the questionnaire states clearly how respondents should return it: Via your email address? By using the postage-paid reply envelope you've enclosed? Some other way?

4. Consider whether you need any "personal characteristics" questions such as gender, income, marital status, age, or education.

If, for example, you were gathering opinions about the homeless in your community for a sociology paper, the respondents' income levels may be relevant.

continued

5. **Write questions that are clear and to the point.**

It's usually best to ask questions with yes-or-no or multiple-choice answers, or to ask people to rank things on a scale (say, from 1 to 5). If a questionnaire is too long or complicated, few people will fill it out.

6. **Show a draft of your questionnaire to some friends before copying and distributing it.**

Seek feedback on the clarity, fairness, and user friendliness of your questions.

7. **Give respondents a deadline for returning the questionnaire.**

8. **Analyze the questionnaire results carefully.**

Look for trends, major points of agreement and disagreement, and so forth.

Try to summarize what you have learned before incorporating the results into your paper.

EVALUATING

The researcher-evaluator . . .

- Makes rhetorical choices about sources throughout the research process
- Knows the value of many types of information sources
- Understands how scholarly information is created and communicated
- Uses a variety of tools to evaluate sources
- Looks beyond the text itself when evaluating sources

Evaluation is a process of making rhetorical choices about your sources, choosing sources based on what you need both as a student and as a writer who wants to communicate with, and convince, an audience. As you have already learned, academic writers do not expect to produce the last word on a topic, but to contribute to an ongoing scholarly conversation. You are not trying to find someone else's version of the truth and report it; you are responsible for constructing your own perspective on the "truth" of your topic. This means that you cannot evaluate sources without reading them, thinking about them, and sometimes even writing about them.

A common tool used to evaluate information sources is a checklist of criteria. Checklists *can* help you identify some important information to keep in mind as you read and evaluate a source. It *is* useful, for example, to know whether a source is biased—that is, whether it is trying to promote an agenda or to advocate a particular position. Such checklists can be problematic, however, because they suggest that you can evaluate sources before you read them, and without considering your particular rhetorical situation. For example, finding out that a source is biased is not necessarily a reason to reject it. As an academic writer, you will frequently find that authors who articulate a point of view are more useful to you as you construct your own arguments than are those who remain determinedly "neutral." In order to fairly and usefully evaluate your source's appropriateness for your project, you have to identify the nature of the bias, weigh it against the source's factual accuracy, and decide what the bias will mean, in the end, for your project's purpose and audience.

The guidelines we present on pp. 191–92, following the discussion of Understanding and Evaluating Sources on pp. 186–90, will help you evaluate your sources with more precision than a simple checklist will allow.

Understanding and Evaluating Sources

In Chapter 3, you learned about writing for different audiences and within different discourses. Like your choice of language, medium, and writing strategies, your choice of sources will depend to some extent on your purpose, your project, and your audience. For most papers you'll write in college, your primary audience will be your instructor. While you may not know enough about your instructors as individuals to tailor your sources to their expectations, you *can* write to meet their expectations as members of the academic community.

In most cases, this will mean at a minimum using sources that are reputable and relevant to your topic. In many cases, this will also mean using a significant number of scholarly, or peer-reviewed, sources. In fact, the requirement to use a specific number of "scholarly," "refereed," or "peer-reviewed" sources is one of the most common requirements you will see in academic research paper assignments.

The sections that follow will help you understand how peer-reviewed sources differ from other types of sources and how to evaluate them.

Choosing Different Types of Sources

Newspaper and magazine articles are usually written for a general audience, so they are accessible to anyone with a standard level of education. They are intended to be current and up-to-date, though they may provide historical perspective as well. Magazine and newspaper journalists place a high value on objectivity, but you will also find opinion pieces and editorials in most newspapers and magazines. Newspaper and magazine articles usually do not provide a bibliography or list of sources, even though they are frequently based on a reporter's research. (See Jamais Cascio's article from *The Atlantic* on pp. 261–62 for an example.)

Scholarly journal articles are called peer-reviewed articles, or refereed articles, because unlike magazine articles, journal articles have been critiqued by experts. These are discussed in more detail on pp. 187–88.

Books are written for both expert and general audiences. They give an author room to provide an in-depth overview of a topic. They are a good place to go to find a broader context for your topic. Academic books are usually thoroughly researched, with extensive bibliographies, making them an excellent tool for finding additional sources as well as useful and informative in their

own right. Remember that sometimes only a part of a book will be useful to you; you do not need to read and use the entire thing.

Primary sources are different in different disciplines. A primary source is a source of original information, such as an eyewitness account of a historical event, data from experiments, novels, diaries, and more. Primary sources are called "primary" to distinguish them from *secondary sources*, or sources that provide synthesis or analysis of the information in primary sources.

Whether a source is primary or secondary depends in part on your research question. A history textbook, for example, would be a secondary source if you wanted to learn about the causes of the Civil War, and a primary source if you were interested in examining how history textbooks have changed over time.

Peer-Reviewed (Scholarly) Articles

Even when you are not required to use scholarly articles, they are useful sources when you are writing for academic audiences. *Peer review* is a collaborative process of quality control that is used by most academic journals to determine which articles should be published and which should not.

Here is a quick overview of a typical review process. An author or group of authors does a research study and writes the results of that study in the form of an article submitted to the editors of a journal in their discipline. The editors send the article to be reviewed by the author's peers—experts in the author's field of study. These reviewers examine the manuscript and write reviews in which they recommend one of these options: *publish*, *publish with revisions*, or *reject*. The reviews are sent back to the editor, who gives them to the author along with final decision. If the decision is *publish with revisions*, the authors will review the reports and decide whether they want to revise as requested. If they do, the review process may be repeated. If they do not, they retain their manuscript and may submit it to another journal. The whole process can take anywhere from a few months to several years.

As you have learned throughout this text, different disciplines or knowledge communities have different ways of doing things. Usually (but not always) peer-reviewed articles report on original research that contributes to the development of new knowledge within a discipline. The peer-reviewers will examine the author's manuscript to determine whether it is a good example of research in their shared discipline.

Peer reviewers have the expertise to determine whether the research methods selected for a study were appropriate for the question being studied. They can tell if the method was applied correctly, based on the description in the paper. They should be able to identify results that are reasonable for the study, and to comment on whether the authors' conclusions about those results make sense. They cannot know for sure, however, whether the

results reported are valid and accurate, or whether future researchers can replicate them. In recommending publication, they can only guarantee that, to the best of their abilities to judge, the research in the article will in some way inform or advance future research; in other words, it is worthy of further examination and discussion within the discipline.

What does this mean for you as you try to evaluate the scholarly articles you find? It means that you should not blindly accept their conclusions as "true," and that you should try to find out where they fit within the larger conversation in the discipline. Is an article responding to other researchers' findings? Does it fill a gap in knowledge within the discipline, examining a question that hadn't been answered before? Does it provide additional evidence for a theory or model that is important in the field? These questions can help you understand how important a particular article is and how relevant it might be to your project.

Online Sources

At one time, the type of information that was available on the Web was different from the information published by traditional scholarly and media outlets. This is no longer the case: A digital analogue exists for almost anything you can find in the print world. These digital versions are not always available for free, and they are not always easy to find, but newspaper articles, historical artifacts, out-of-print books, and scholarly journal articles are all out there. In most cases, then, it no longer makes any sense to think about online sources as something separate from print sources: Most of the skills you need to evaluate online sources are the same skills you should be using to evaluate any source.

There is, however, one thing to keep in mind when you are working with digital sources: They are less permanent than their print counterparts. A mistake in an article in a print encyclopedia, for example, will stay there until a new, corrected edition is released. Even then, the mistake will be present in the physical copies of the older edition. In an online encyclopedia, mistakes can be corrected as soon as they are discovered, leaving no public (or at least easily accessible) evidence that the mistake ever occurred.

This is important for you to understand as an academic writer. The ability to quickly correct mistakes is a good thing. But what if you, as an academic writer, refer your readers to a source, not knowing that it changed or moved after you referenced it? Online media outlets frequently refresh their front pages with new, up-to-date content. What if you cite an article that is there one day, and gone the next? This affects your readers' ability to track down your sources, and affects your credibility as an academic writer. If you rely heavily on information from hyper-dynamic sources—sources that change daily or hourly—you will make it difficult for your readers to appreciate the connections between your ideas and other ideas in the field.

This is not to say that you should not use dynamic online sources, simply that you should use them carefully and deliberately. If you know that a post or an article is going to disappear from a Web site shortly, provide a citation to the print version, if there is one; to a "permalink" or stable link to that specific information, if you can find one; or at least to the URL of the home page of the organization that published the information. (MLA, APA, and other documentation styles have specific rules for what to include in citations for online sources, so if your instructor requires that you follow a specific style, be sure that you adhere to those rules. For details, see the MLA and APA Documentation Guidelines section at the back of this book.)

You should also develop some additional evaluation skills to help you navigate this dynamic landscape. For example, the success of Wikipedia has led to a number of similar reference sources powered by wiki software. One of the features of these sites is *versioning*, meaning that as a page is revised, older versions are still available. You can use this information to ensure that there is an active community of people monitoring the information on the page, which can give you confidence that if bad or misleading information is added, it will be quickly repaired.

This idea of community is extremely important whenever you are evaluating information sources on the social Web, from blogs to wikis to online listserv archives to discussion boards. In general, a site with an active community, generating comments, links, ratings, or reviews, is easier to evaluate than one without an active community. Not only is the content being generated by the members of the community likely to be helpful as you evaluate, but the presence of the community itself demonstrates something about the impact of the source.

Tools for Evaluating Scholarly Resources

The social Web (sometimes known as Web 2.0) is especially useful to you as an academic writer because it can help you evaluate scholarly sources. You can easily find conversations among scholars on the Web. If you tap into these conversations, you can find a wealth of information about the relative value of different sources.

Here are descriptions of some useful resources for evaluating scholarly information. Be aware, though, that this is a rapidly changing landscape—by the time this book is published, some of these resources may have changed or disappeared, and others will launch that may be equally useful.

SCHOLARLY BLOGS.   Blogging may not seem very academic, but scholarly blogs can be a very important source of information for you in your evaluation process. ScienceBlogs (http://scienceblogs.com), for example, is a project that aggregates blogs written by scholars and experts for a general

audience. Not only do the bloggers analyze and critique scholarly articles in their posts, but the posts also frequently spark lively discussions in the comments area. Another site, Research Blogging (http://researchblogging.org), will point you to individual blog posts on academic topics. When scholarly bloggers write posts about a peer-reviewed research article, they can mark the posts with a special icon. The post then appears on the Research Blogging site and becomes a part of the Research Blogging Twitter feed.

RATINGS AND REVIEWS ON THE SOCIAL WEB. Too often, we try to evaluate sources just by examining them closely. You can obviously get useful information this way, and in fact this step is necessary, but in this age of networked information there is no reason to limit yourself to a solitary examination of a text. Social bookmarking sites like Delicious and CiteULike not only help you organize and find information, but they can also help you evaluate it: When you can see how many people have saved an article or a Web site, you gain some information about how important that source is in the larger conversation. CiteULike (http://citeulike.org) also provides users with the ability to rate and review sources directly. Similar services allow users to exchange information on books. These services, like Goodreads (http://goodreads.com) and Library Thing (http://librarything.com) also include rating and reviewing options. Some college library catalogs also include features that allow users to bookmark, rate, or review sources.

Going beyond the text will be especially useful as you navigate sources that advocate a particular point of view. Sometimes the quickest way to identify that point of view is to look up the author, site, or sponsoring organization online. The information you find may itself be biased, but you can still get a sense of whether there is controversy about the author, or whether the organization is associated with a particular point of view, which can provide helpful context for your independent evaluation process.

CITATION TRACKING. One of the ways that scholars show that they found a source interesting or useful is to cite it in their own work, so this can be an important factor to consider when you are evaluating sources. Your college library may license access to citation indexes such as the *Social Science Citation Index*, the *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*, and the *Science Citation Index*. These tools allow you to search for an author or an article and then track how many times that source has been cited by others in subsequent years. Google Scholar provides a similar service, listing a "cited by" line for every result.

Guidelines for Evaluating Sources

1. Is the source useful to you?

Considering where you are in the research process, does the source provide the kind of information you need? If it is not useful to you now, might it be useful to you later?

Do you have specific assignment requirements to fulfill? Does this source meet these requirements?

Does the source get you thinking? Does it give you ideas for new lines of inquiry, or help you draw connections between ideas?

2. Is this the kind of source your audience expects you to use?

Is the information neither too easy nor too difficult for your audience?

Will the source give your argument more credibility with your audience?

If the source is *not* what your audience expects, what can you do as a writer to show your audience *why* they should pay attention to it?

3. Who created this source?

If an author is identified, is it someone you find credible? Have other sources referred favorably to the author's work?

If you know little or nothing about the author, use a reference source or search engine to find out more.

Use a specialized database that will let you do citation tracking, or try Google Scholar's cited by link to see if the work is cited by other authors in the discipline.

continued

If *no* author is identified, has a group or an institutional sponsor produced the source? Is it credible?

If no author *or* sponsor is identified, you should reconsider your use of the source.

If you know little or nothing about the sponsor, use a reference source or search engine to find out more about it.

4. What is the author's (or institution's or agency's) *purpose* in creating this source?

Is the author trying to persuade you to do something or think in a certain way? If so, has that affected the quality of the information he/she provides — say, to include irrelevant or misleading information, or to exclude information that is relevant?

In order to gauge the quality of the information provided, compare it to other sources on a similar topic.

Is the site selling anything? If so, how much does this potentially affect the kinds of information presented and the ways in which it is presented?

5. If the source is a scholarly one, is it a good example of research in the discipline?

Does the author use footnotes and other references, indicating that the author is connecting the work to the larger conversation in their discipline?

Is the source cited in other works you're evaluating?

Is the information as up-to-date as you need it to be?

If you need cutting-edge information, an article from a preprint server (one that lets you see articles before they are published) might be most appropriate. For other research questions, a significant article from decades ago might be fine.

Reading More Closely and Synthesizing Material

Once you find a potentially useful source, study it with care so you can zero in on the specific information you need. Look, for instance, at the different elements in a source, such as an abstract, preface, introduction, and conclusion. Skim subheadings as well. They may direct you to some essential data, to an expert's point of view, or to a useful quotation. Last but not least, be sure to check footnotes and bibliographies, which can often lead you to other good sources — and to new opinions on the topic.

As you dig more deeply into your sources, you may begin to feel as though you're having a conversation with some of the experts. And, indeed, this is the way good research works: You'll agree with some sources, disagree with others, and begin to see trends in the information you gather. In other words, you'll be *synthesizing* information and reaching your own conclusions as you go along. For example, when Alletta Brenner researched human trafficking in American garment manufacturing, she began to see some major factors underlying human trafficking. She thus decided to group her information into three main categories: violation by factory owners, available immigrant labor, and poor enforcement of laws (see paragraph 3 of Alletta's essay on p. 207).

WRITING

The researcher-writer/content creator . . .

- Communicates in a way appropriate for the audience and discipline
- Avoids plagiarism
- Uses appropriate citation styles
- Uses information ethically, respecting the rights of others
- Understands his or her rights as a content creator and exercises them

Using Sources: Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

When you conduct research, you gather information from a number of sources. In many instances, you also come to know who the experts are on your topic, what issues they think are important, and whether you agree with them. How should you use these various types of information in your research paper?

You have three options for integrating sources into your writing. You can *quote* your source's words exactly. You can *paraphrase* them by explaining their meaning in your own words. Or you can *summarize* the source's information by significantly abbreviating a paragraph, a chapter, or even an entire book.

As you think about these options, keep in mind that many student writers tend to overquote material from their sources. In other words, they quote wording that isn't particularly striking rather than integrating the information by paraphrasing or summarizing. For example, if Report A says, "From the year 1990 up until the present time, we have seen some modest improvement in the rate of adult literacy in the United States," it's probably not necessary to quote this statement. Instead, you could paraphrase it: *According to Report A, the adult literacy rate in the United States has increased somewhat since 1990* (and end with an in-text citation of the source). As you go through your research material, how can you figure out whether it's better to quote a source or relay the information in some other way? The guidelines on p. 195 will help you answer this question.

Whether you quote, paraphrase, or summarize, it's essential to acknowledge sources accurately, both in the text of your paper and in the works cited list (or bibliography). Within the text itself, you'll often want to use a *signal phrase* to introduce a source. Such phrases not only mention the source but also may indicate—with an appropriate verb—your attitude toward it. For instance, the signal phrase *Although Chomsky claims* gives the distinct impression that you disagree with Chomsky. You could, however, create a different impression by saying, at the end of a sentence, *which is confirmed by noted linguist Noam Chomsky*. Or you might introduce this source in a more neutral fashion: *Chomsky believes,* or *As Chomsky points out,* or *Chomsky's research suggests.* Be careful to use appropriate signal phrases and to vary their location: They shouldn't always appear at the beginning of a sentence. Remember as well that the documentation style you're following (MLA, APA, or others) will generally specify what to include in a signal phrase or an in-text citation (see Writer's References, pp. 347–402).

Even when you understand *why* you're quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing a passage, you may be unsure about *how* to do so. When is a paraphrase just a paraphrase—and not *plagiarism* (the inappropriate use of another

Guidelines for Determining When to Quote, Paraphrase, or Summarize

1. *Quote directly* **when the exact wording of a source is crucial.**

When the language is especially powerful and memorable

When the author is an authority whose expertise buttresses your own position

When you disagree with the source but want to allow the author to speak in his or her own words

2. *Paraphrase* **when you want to convey information in your own words.**

When the author's own words are not particularly memorable but the details in the source are important

When you don't want to interrupt your discussion with a direct quotation

3. *Summarize* **when you want to present only the main idea of a long passage.**

When the details of a paragraph, a chapter, or an entire book are not important

When comparing two or more lengthy arguments or analyses (as in two books with opposing views)

person's words and ideas)? Is it permissible to omit or change words in a direct quotation? The following sections will shed some light on these issues.

Quoting Accurately

When you incorporate a quotation into your writing—for any reason—you must include the exact words from the source. The following original passage is from a classic essay about illiteracy in America. Read the original, and then see how one student used a short quotation from it in her research essay (following MLA style).

ORIGINAL PASSAGE

Illiterates cannot travel freely. When they attempt to do so, they encounter risks that few of us can dream of. They cannot read traffic signs and, while they often learn to recognize and to decipher symbols, they cannot manage street names which they haven't seen before. The same is true for bus and subway stops. While ingenuity can sometimes help a man or woman to discern direction from familiar landmarks, buildings, cemeteries, churches, and the like, most illiterates are virtually immobilized. They seldom wander past the streets and neighborhoods they know. Geographical paralysis becomes a bitter metaphor for their entire existence. They are immobilized in almost every sense we can imagine. They can't move up. They can't move out. They cannot see beyond.

—Jonathan Kozol, "The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society"

SHORT QUOTATION

Kozol points out that people who are illiterate often can't leave their own neighborhoods, which is "a bitter metaphor for their entire existence" (256).

In this example, Kozol is mentioned in a signal phrase, quotation marks surround his exact words, and a page reference appears at the end in a parenthetical citation (before the period, per MLA's style).

LONG QUOTATION

If you want to quote a longer excerpt, set it off in block style with no quotation marks. Introduce the quotation with a sentence or a signal phrase, and include a page reference at the end, *following* the period.

Although illiteracy creates serious problems in many aspect of a person's life, its effect on mobility is particularly devastating. Jonathan Kozol puts it this way:

Illiterates cannot travel freely. When they attempt to do so, they encounter risks that few of us can dream of. They cannot read traffic signs and, while they often learn to recognize and to decipher symbols, they cannot manage street names which they haven't seen before. The same is true for bus and subway stops. While ingenuity can sometimes help a man or woman to discern directions from familiar landmarks, buildings, cemeteries, churches, and the like, most illiterates are virtually immobilized. (256)

SQUARE BRACKETS AND ELLIPSES

Occasionally you may want to change a quotation to make it fit appropriately into your paper—or to eliminate some details in the original. Use square brackets ([ ]) to show changes and ellipses (. . .) to show deletions. Be careful to use both techniques sparingly and not to distort the meaning of the original source. Here's how a student used brackets and ellipses in the previous quotation.

Although illiteracy creates serious problems in many aspects of a person's life, its effect on mobility is particularly devastating. As Kozol puts it, "Illiterates cannot travel freely. . . . They cannot read traffic signs and . . . cannot manage street names which they haven't seen before. . . . [M]ost illiterates are virtually immobilized" (256).

Writing A Paraphrase

A paraphrase expresses an author's ideas in your own words. To write an acceptable paraphrase, you should use different sentence structures and language than the original, but keep the overall length about the same. Following is an acceptable paraphrase of the original passage on p. 196. Note that it begins by introducing the source and ends with a page reference in a parenthetical citation.

ACCEPTABLE PARAPHRASE

Jonathan Kozol, an expert on literacy, explains that illiterates are unable to travel on their own outside of their immediate neighborhoods—and that it is hazardous for them to do so. People who can't read can't figure out most signs—for traffic, unfamiliar streets, bus stops, and so on. Occasionally they might be able to determine where they're going by looking at a part of the landscape that they know, such as a church or building. But most of the time illiterates are unable to move very far from the area where they live. In a way, the inability to travel symbolizes the lives of illiterate people, who are frozen in their economic and social situation and thus lack hope about the future (256).

UNACCEPTABLE PARAPHRASE

An unacceptable paraphrase results from one or more of the following mistakes: using the author's own words (without putting quotation marks around them); following the author's sentence structure — and just substituting synonyms for some of the author's words; putting your own ideas into the paraphrase. Be on the lookout for such errors in your paraphrase so that you don't plagiarize someone's material inadvertently. Remember, too, that it's fine to include a quotation within a paraphrase. The unacceptable paraphrase below is based on Kozol's original passage on p. 196. As you read this paraphrase, try to pinpoint the mistakes in it.

> Jonathan Kozol, an expert on literacy, says that illiterate people cannot travel very easily. When they try to travel, they run into problems that most of us can't imagine. Illiterate people are unable to decipher traffic signs, unfamiliar street signs, and many other kinds of directional aids. Sometimes a familiar landmark or building may help an illiterate person figure out how to go somewhere, but most illiterate people remain immobilized in their own neighborhoods. They are, in a sense, geographically paralyzed. They can't move in any direction — or see the future. Because of these problems, the United States needs to take immediate steps to eliminate illiteracy in this country (256).

This paraphrase contains plagiarized material: Some words or phrases are identical to the original, and some sentence structures follow the original too closely. In addition, the writer has added her own opinion at the end — something Kozol didn't say in the original paragraph.

Writing a Summary

Unlike a paraphrase, a summary is a brief account of an original piece of writing, such as a paragraph, a chapter, or even an entire book. Always write a summary in your own words, and try to condense the source's most important ideas. Here is a summary of Jonathan Kozol's original paragraph on p. 196.

SUMMARY

> Because illiterates cannot read signs and other directional aids, they cannot travel far from where they live. In much the same sense, they cannot move socially or economically to improve their lives (Kozol 256).

Taking Notes

Quotations, paraphrases, and summaries all rely on notes taken while you're doing your research. It's essential, therefore, to take accurate notes and to recheck each one against the original source. For any source that you plan to use, its basic publication information should already be in your records (see "Staying Organized," pp. 167–68). On a note, then, include just enough data to identify the source (such as the author and a short title), give a page reference, and indicate what kind of note it is (e.g., *quotation or paraphrase*).

Most writers take notes on a computer, but some prefer to use note cards or a notebook. The choice is up to you. For online research, a good approach is simply to download the material you need — along with the pertinent publication data. Once you have a downloaded copy, you can mark it up for your own purposes, and you don't have to worry about introducing an error into your note.

Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is, quite simply, the intentional or unintentional use of others' words, ideas, or visuals as if they were your own. Whether you are a student, a scientist, a historian, or a politician, charges of plagiarism can have serious consequences. At some colleges, for example, students who plagiarize fail not only the assignment but also the entire course; at colleges that have honor codes, students may even be expelled.

There are a variety of online tools that can help you keep organized as you work and generate appropriate citations as you write. Many article databases provided by your college library will allow you to create a permanent folder of sources, which you can easily access later as you write. Some databases will also generate citations for you, in a variety of documentation styles. Ask your librarian if you need help using these features.

Bibliographic management tools like Zotero, EndNote, and Refworks will allow you to save references to articles and other sources as you do your research, take brief notes on your sources, and export formatted citations as you write. You can embed plug-ins for these tools into some word processing programs, which will allow you to connect to your source library as you write, generating your in-text citations as well as your final bibliography or works cited list. The time it takes you to learn to use these tools is well worth the protection they afford from unintentional plagiarism.

See the guidelines on p. 200 for a summary of strategies for avoiding plagiarism.

Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism

1. Give yourself enough time to complete your paper without undue stress.

2. Develop a working bibliography that is complete and accurate.

3. Develop a note-taking system that clearly identifies direct quotations and *use* it.

4. Write paraphrases and summaries in your own words.

Label them appropriately and include full citations.

If you include an author's language, even if it is only one brief but memorable phrase, use quotation marks.

5. Include citations for all source materials — written works as well as visuals — within the text of your paper *and* in a works cited or reference list.

6. When in doubt, ask your teacher or a tutor in the writing center. If you don't have time to ask, include the citation.

NOTE FOR MULTILINGUAL WRITERS

The concept of plagiarism is central to the modern Western intellectual tradition. It rests on the notion of intellectual property — the belief that language can be "owned" by writers who create original ideas. This belief contradicts the beliefs and practices of some other intellectual traditions. Indeed, in some countries, students are taught that using the words of others without citing them is a sign of respect, and writers in some countries assume that readers will recognize cited passages that are interwoven with the writers' own words. As a student at a North American institution, however, you need to follow Western documentation and citation practices. If you have questions or concerns about how to apply them, ask your instructor or Writing Center tutor.

Using Appropriate Citation Styles

You probably are aware that different disciplines use different documentation styles for integrating source material. MLA (Modern Language Association) style and APA (American Psychological Association) style are two of the most frequently required styles for undergraduates: MLA style is typically used in English and other areas of the humanities, whereas APA style is common in the social sciences. At the end of this chapter, you'll find a sample student essay using MLA documentation style (pp. 205–15). The documentation guidelines at the back of this book provide examples and explanations for MLA rules on pp. 348–80 and for APA rules on pp. 381–402.

Another popular documentation style is *Chicago* style, which is used in some disciplines in the humanities, including history. *Chicago* style is based on the guidelines in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, which is published by the University of Chicago Press. The Council of Science Editors (CSE) also has its own style, one that's commonly used in mathematics and the physical sciences. As you begin your research, it's important to find out which documentation style your instructor expects you to follow. If an instructor doesn't specify, be sure to ask.

Understanding and Asserting Your Rights as a Content Creator

As you have seen, online communities can be useful to you as an academic writer. Participating in these communities can help you at every stage of your research process. Fully participating, however, means putting some content

of your own online. As an academic writer in the twenty-first century, you need to think of yourself as a creator, not just a consumer, of information. If you stop and think about it, you'll probably find that you are already contributing some online content, whether it be Facebook status updates, photos, or videos; reviews of a recent online purchase; or bookmarks at a site like Delicious.

Copyright

As a content creator, you have to decide how much control you want to assert over the things you create. Whenever you create something—text, images, sounds, or all three—you own the copyright to the thing you create unless you specifically transfer that copyright to someone else. You do not need to ask for copyright, or to register your work anywhere: As the creator, it is your intellectual property. As you develop your skills as an academic writer, you may be in a position to publish your own research, even as an undergraduate. When that happens, you will usually be asked to sign an agreement turning over some, or all, of your copyright to a publisher.

Copyleft, Creative Commons, and Privacy

Most online services allow you to decide how public you want your contributions to be. If you save bookmarks to Delicious, for example, your bookmarks will be public unless you specifically decide to make them private. If you upload photographs to Facebook, they will also be publicly accessible by default unless you change your privacy settings. There is no right answer to the question "How public should my content be?" but you should always *make* the decision, actively, for any content you post.

One way that you can exert some control over content you do make public is by attaching a Creative Commons (http://creativecommons.org/) license to your work. These licenses allow you to define whether or not other people have permission to use your work, and under what conditions they may use it. There are a variety of licenses to choose from. These licenses do not eliminate your copyright, nor do they legally transfer ownership of your intellectual property to anyone else. They simply grant permission, in advance, to others who may want to use your work.

It is important that you, as an academic writer, understand when and where you need permission to use the work of others. For example, if you want to find some images to use in a presentation that will later be posted on the Web, you need to be very careful about the images you choose. You are, in effect, publishing your presentation by posting it to the Web, and if you use

someone else's image without permission, you are violating their rights. One way that you can guarantee that you are legally and ethically using the content produced by others is to look for a creative commons license that defines your right to use the information. By using the Creative Commons searches available at Flickr (http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/) or at the Creative Commons site, you can determine whether the photographer or artist has given you prior permission to use his or her work. If not, you will have to contact him or her before publishing the work online.

Using Visuals Effectively

As you collect your source materials and consider the permissions you need to use different sources, pay close attention to the visuals you plan to use—tables, photographs, figures, maps, and other kinds of illustrations. Keep in mind that visuals should always be used to support a point you are making, not just to dress up your paper. Remember, too, that you need to cite sources for visuals, as you do for written materials from others.

Once you have chosen a visual that will enhance your essay, be sure to incorporate it into the written text appropriately. Here are a few tips to follow:

- Refer to the visual in your text, and explain its content if necessary.
- Position the visual close to where you mention it.
- Label the visual, and cite its source.

For more on using visuals in your own projects, see pp. 133–37 and 302–20.

Isn't There More to Say Here on Writing?

This final section might strike you as brief, when there's clearly so much to think about in writing with, and from, research. Yet the brevity of this section illustrates something important about the recursive nature of the writing process, and, indeed, of all rhetorical activities. While there's much to learn about ways of doing research, there's really no "research paper writing process" that's clearly distinct from the many other strategies for writing you've learned about in other chapters: Part I leads you to think about writing and rhetoric broadly; Part II helps you accomplish specific kinds of college writing; and Part III gives you practical strategies for reading and writing effectively. So the short answer to the question posed by the heading above is that there *is* more to say—and you'll find it in the rest of the book.

Sample Research Essay Using MLA Documentation Style

Here is a research essay by Alletta Brenner, a student at the University of Oregon.

✳ bedfordstmartins.com/rewriting
For additional sample research projects using MLA, APA, Chicago, or CSE documentation styles, go to **Re:Writing** *and click on* **ModelDoc Central.**

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Alletta Brenner
Professor Clark
WR 222
11 May 2007

Sweatshop U.S.A.: Human Trafficking
in the American Garment-Manufacturing Industry

In early 1999, Nguyen Thi Le, a Vietnamese mother of two, signed a four-year contract to work for a garment factory in American Samoa. The island is a U.S. territory with a low minimum wage where enterprises seeking to benefit from cheap labor costs can produce items with a "Made in U.S.A." label. Dazzled by the opportunity to live in America and earn American wages, Nguyen eagerly looked forward to her new job, even though she would have to move an ocean away from her family and take out high-interest loans to cover the five thousand dollar fee for airfare and work permits. Despite these hardships, the job seemed to offer her the chance to earn wages more than twelve times those available at home. If she worked

Fig. 1. Two Vietnamese workers after they were beaten at the Daewoosa factory, American Samoa, 2000. National Labor Committee.

Brenner 2

abroad for just a few years, Nguyen believed, she could dramatically improve the quality of her family's life (Gittelsohn 16).

Opens with a narrative to engage readers' interest

However, upon arrival, Nguyen found a situation radically different from what she had expected. She and the other Daewoosa workers were paid only a fraction of the wages the garment factory had promised. The factory owner deducted high fees—sometimes half their monthly paychecks—for room and board that the contract had indicated would be "free," and when orders were slow, the owner didn't pay them at all. Kept in a guarded compound, Nguyen and her fellow garments sewers had to work sixteen- to eighteen-hour days under deplorable conditions. When they complained, they were often punished with violence, intimidation, and starvation (see figs. 1 and 2). According to the *New York Times*, when word of these abuses surfaced and the factory finally shut down in 2001, the women were left out on the streets with no means to return home (Greenhouse). Stuck in Samoa, Nguyen learned that back home, loan sharks were hounding her family to repay the debt she had incurred. Though Nguyen eventually received U.S. government aid, which allowed her to move to the American mainland and

Fig. 2. Daewoosa woman worker who lost her eye after being brutally beaten on November 28, 2000. National Labor Committee.

Brenner 3

acquire a new job, it will take many years for her to recover from the damage to her personal and financial life (*"Made in the U.S.A."?*).

Human Trafficking: An Overview

Though what happened to Nguyen and the other workers may seem unusual to you, such occurrences are common in the United States today. Every year thousands of persons fall victim to human trafficking: they are transported either against their will or under false pretenses for the purpose of economic or sexual exploitation. In recent years, politicians as well as the media have paid more attention to human trafficking. Movies, newspaper articles, presidential speeches, and United Nations resolutions portray human trafficking as a negative consequence of globalization, capitalism, and immigration. Yet rarely do such accounts analyze the larger questions of how and why human trafficking exists. This essay will address some of these larger questions. In the American garment-manufacturing industry, three forces fuel human trafficking: violations by factory owners, an available immigrant labor force, and poor enforcement of laws. Before analyzing these factors, this discussion will take a closer look at the term *human trafficking* and the scope of its practice.

The official definition of the term *human trafficking* evolved in 2001 as a part of a United Nations treaty on transnational crime. The UN's *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons* defines human trafficking as the "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other means of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or position of vulnerability . . . for the purpose of exploitation" (Article 3). According to this definition, human trafficking has three components: 1) movement over geographical space, either across or within national borders; 2) the extraction of profits by the exploitation of victims' bodies or skills; and 3) the coercion of victims, which may include a wide range of tactics and forms (Gallagher 986-87).

How, then, does human trafficking work in practice? It can occur both within and across national borders and may involve a single perpetrator

Main topic of human trafficking introduced

States thesis and key questions for essay

Definition and background information provided

Brenner 4

or an organized criminal network of recruiters, transporters, sellers, and buyers. The victims of human trafficking usually want to migrate and seek new employment. Van Impe reports that human traffickers typically pose as employers, employment agencies, or smugglers, offering to help victims by assisting them in entering a country or providing a job (114). Once an individual accepts this help, the trafficker may keep up the charade for quite some time, so when victims eventually realize what has happened, they may feel there is no choice but to submit to the trafficker's demands. After individuals have moved and started working, human traffickers use abusive and illegitimate tactics to force victims to work. They may, for example, threaten victims with physical violence, deportation, or debt bondage, wherein traffickers claim that a victim owes them money for transport or other services and then force him or her to work off the debt (U.S., Dept. of State, *Trafficking* 21).

How widespread is human trafficking in the United States? Both because of its relative wealth, and because it is a destination country for millions of migrant workers every year, the United States is one of the primary destinations for trafficked persons worldwide ("Country Report"). The U.S. Department of State estimates that between fourteen and eighteen thousand persons are trafficked in the United States each year (*Trafficking* 1-4); although the basis for these numbers is unclear, they appear to be consistent with global estimates on human trafficking. Not all victims are foreign-born, but immigrants are particularly vulnerable to such exploitation. In the United States, two-thirds of all human-trafficking cases investigated and brought to court since 2001 have involved foreign-born migrant workers, according to a recent report by the U.S. Department of Justice (75-91).

Human Trafficking in American Garment Manufacturing

Some of the largest human trafficking cases uncovered to date in the United States have occurred in the garment-manufacturing industry. In addition to the Daewoosa factory in American Samoa, investigators have found large

Signal phrase for source at end of sentence, before in-text citation

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sweatshops utilizing human trafficking in California, New York, and the Northern Mariana Islands. Police discovered one of the worst cases in El Monte, California, in 1995, where they found seventy-two Thai immigrants in an apartment complex surrounded by razor wire and armed guards. Trafficked from Thailand, the men and women had endured eighteen-hour workdays, seven days a week for seven years, sewing clothing for some of the nation's best-known clothing companies. Constantly threatened by violence to themselves and their families at home, the victims were forced to live in the same tiny, filthy apartments in which they worked. Grossly underpaid and forced to buy food and other necessities from their captors at inflated prices, the workers were in constant debt. To make matters worse, when police discovered and raided the compound, they arrested the workers for immigration violations and put them in jail. Only when local leaders and nongovernmental organizations spurred public outrage over the case were the workers released on bond and able to begin normal lives in the America they had once envisioned (Ross 143-47).

Violations by factory owners are one reason human trafficking such as that in El Monte occurs. Because most American clothing companies outsource the production of their garments to factories around the world, U.S. factories are under constant pressure to lower costs. Unfortunately, this pressure often translates into poorer wages and working conditions for those who produce clothing in this country and illegal activity on the part of their employers (Bonacich and Appelbaum 137). A common violation is the failure of factory owners to pay workers the legally mandated minimum wage. Unlike most U.S. workers, garment workers earn a piece-rate wage rather than an hourly wage. Because the amount of available work and the going rate for items sewed constantly fluctuates, the amount workers earn often reflects downward pressure. Employers, however, are supposed to make up the difference so that workers still make the minimum wage. When employers fail to do so or attempt to comply with the law by forcing workers to speed up production, the result is substandard pay. Some workers in the

First subtopic: violations by factory owners

Brenner 6

American garment-manufacturing industry earn less than four dollars an hour, and those who work from home make even less, sometimes as little as two dollars per hour.

Studies of garment manufacturers throughout the United States have found that violations of wage, hours, and safety laws are the rule, not the exception. For example, one study of textile-manufacturing operations in the New York City area found that seventy-five percent of them were operating in the informal sector—not legally licensed or monitored—with substandard wages and working conditions (*"Treated Like Slaves"* 5). A different study described in *Behind the Label* found that sixty-one percent of garment manufacturers in Los Angeles were violating wage and hours regulations, underpaying their workers by an estimated seventy-three million dollars every year. Yet another study found that in more than half of firms inspected, workers were in danger of serious injury or death as a result of health and safety law violations (Bonacich and Appelbaum 3).

Violations by factory owners, however, are only one part of the picture in the garment industry. Another factor is the availability of an immigrant labor force. Factories that produce clothing in the United States and its territories are heavily dependant upon immigrants to meet their labor needs. For example, Bonacich and Appelbaum report that in Los Angeles, which has the highest concentration of garment manufacturers in the nation, eighty-one percent of workers are Asian and Latino immigrants (171-75). In American territories, immigrant labor is even more prevalent. In Saipan, the U.S. territory with the largest number of garment factories, almost all garment workers are foreign-born. Because the indigenous populations of many territories are so small, most garment manufacturers could not survive without imported labor. For this reason, territories do not operate under the same immigration laws as the American mainland, where relatively few visas are available to low-skilled workers. Consequently, employers in U.S. territories are able to legally recruit and import thousands of employees from Asia and South America (Parks 19-22).

Second subtopic: available immigrant labor force

Brenner 7

For a number of reasons, the use of a predominantly immigrant workforce makes it easier for unscrupulous manufacturers to coerce and exploit workers. First, immigrant workers facing economic hardships often have no choice but to take risks and accept poor treatment and pay. A book published by Human Rights Watch quotes one Guatemalan woman who stayed with her abusive employers for many years:

> I am the single mother of two daughters. The salary there [in Guatemala] is not sufficient for their studies, their food, their clothes. I want them to get ahead in life. . . . Sometimes one is pressured by the economic situation. It's terrible what one suffers. . . . Sometimes I ask myself why I put up with so much. It's for this, for my mother and my daughters. (Pier 9-10)

A second reason is that those who enter the country illegally fear deportation. Indeed, as Lelio points out, because of their status, illegal immigrants often work in the informal sector "under the table" in order to avoid authorities, which makes it much easier for traffickers to exploit them (68-69). These jobs may be within individual homes, or at businesses owned by other immigrants within tightly knit ethnic communities. The strong fear of deportation that permeates many such communities enables factory owners to effectively enforce a code of silence on their employees, legal and illegal immigrants alike (Bonacich and Appelbaum 144-47).

A third reason is that many immigrants lack English language skills and knowledge of American laws and culture. Thus they find it difficult to do anything about the situation they're in.

Even though most immigrant workers at garment factories in American territories are there legally, they are just as vulnerable to human trafficking. Like immigrant workers in the mainland United States, they are often under a great deal of pressure to support families back at home. Because most immigrant workers in the territories take out high-interest loans simply to get

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their jobs, they are even more likely to accept deplorable working conditions than are illegal immigrants on the mainland. When employers fail to pay their workers appropriately (or sometimes at all), they can prevent workers from paying off their debts and thereby keep them as virtual prisoners. Indeed, human rights organizations have reported that thousands of garment workers live in severe debt bondage throughout American territories in the Pacific (Clarren 35-36).

The incidence of human trafficking gets further impetus from the "guest worker" immigration laws. Because such workers' visas depend on their employment with a particular firm, leaving the employer with whom they are contracted would break the terms of their visa. Ironically, this places legal guest workers in a more precarious position than those who immigrate illegally, for guest workers who violate the terms of their visas face deportation. Though some workers do leave and turn to prostitution or other forms of black market work to survive, the fear of being sent back home is a constant one. As a result, most stay with their abusive employers, hoping to someday pay off their debts and leave (Clarren 38-41).

Third subtopic: poor enforcement of laws

A final factor that contributes to human trafficking in the garment industry is that where protective labor laws and standards do exist, their enforcement tends to be lax (Branigin 21-28). Despite the rampant violation of labor and safety laws throughout the industry, most garment manufacturers are able to avoid legal repercussions. Even when human-trafficking cases in the garment industry do occur, they tend to run much longer than other trafficking cases, averaging over six years in duration (U.S., Dept. of State, *Matrix* 6-9). This occurs for several reasons. First of all, as noted previously, many garment factories operate illegally. Because the Department of Labor only investigates such operations when someone makes an official complaint, traffickers who can control their victims are able to avoid detection. This is generally not a difficult task because victims of trafficking often lack the skills and knowledge required to take such action.

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Second, inspectors from the Department of Labor and Occupational Safety and Health Administration rarely visit those factories that do operate legally. Even when workers complain, it can take up to a year for the government to open a case and make inspections. Moreover, when an investigation finally begins, owners often have advance warning, allowing them to conceal violations before the inspectors arrive. Some factory owners under investigation have been known to close up shop and disappear, leaving their employees out on the streets with months of back pay owed to them. These tendencies are especially prevalent in U.S. territories because of the geographic and bureaucratic distance between the islands and the governmental bodies that are supposed to regulate them. With the enforcement of most laws left up to local officials and agencies, many of whom stand to profit from arrangements with factory owners, human traffickers find it easy to avoid government interference. The risk for such activity is thus relatively low (Ross 210-11).

Conclusion

In 2001, the same year that Nguyen's case hit the American media, President Bush proclaimed that the United States has a special duty to fight against "the trade in human misery" that human trafficking represents today. Since then, the United States has created a wide range of anti-trafficking laws and measures, but little has changed in the lives of human-trafficking victims. Although the owner of the Daewoosa factory was eventually convicted of enslaving more than 250 workers in his factory, other garment manufacturers continue to operate much as they did a decade ago. Some high-profile American clothing companies, such as the Gap, have promised to stop contracting with factories that violate labor laws; however, the essential set-up of the industry remains fully intact. Until these problems are directly addressed, human trafficking will continue to be a blemish on the American dream and, as President Bush recognized in a 2004 speech, "a shame to our country."

Conclusion
restates the
problem

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FOR THOUGHT, DISCUSSION, AND WRITING

1. After reviewing this chapter's discussion of paraphrasing and summarizing, select one of the sample essays that appear in Chapter 7, "Writing in the Disciplines: Making Choices as You Write." Choose a paragraph from the essay—one that strikes you as particularly interesting or informative. After reading this paragraph carefully, first write a paraphrase of it, and then summarize the same passage. Finally, write a paragraph explaining why your paraphrase and summary of this passage are effective.

2. Identify an important journal for scholars in your major. You will probably have to ask someone (a major advisor, a professor, or a librarian) to recommend a journal that is important and useful in your field. If you do not have a major yet, ask the person who teaches your favorite class to recommend a journal of interest to scholars in that field.

    Now, browse through a copy of that journal, taking note of the articles and the topics they cover. As you browse, ask yourself the following:

    ■ How did you gain access to the journal? You might have found the journal online, if access is open. More likely, you needed to access the journal via your library. Think about access as an issue: How easy or difficult is it for people to use the content in this journal? What would the advantages and disadvantages be of changing its level of accessibility?

■ What do the articles tell you about how scholars in your field write? Do the articles have common characteristics (abstracts, section headings, citation styles)? Do the authors write in first person or third? Do they place their arguments into a context for you? What are some things they seem to assume you, as the reader, already know?

Write a paragraph reflecting on what you've learned.

3. Go to an academic social bookmarking Web site like CiteULike (http://citeulike.org) and do a simple search on a topic you recently discussed in one of your courses. The search results will represent articles or other sources that other scholars have saved to the site. Look at the tags these people used to identify the articles (if you are using CiteU-Like, there is a small "tags" link on the top of the results page), and look through at the abstracts and titles of the articles.

   After doing this research, write out some of your thoughts about the social bookmarking process. Which concepts are tagged? How much variety did you find in the tags—that is, how many different terms do people use to refer to the same set of concepts? What does an examination of tagging tell you about how people in this field do research?

4. Go to ScienceBlogs (http://scienceblogs.com) or ResearchBlogging (http://researchblogging.org). Find a post about an article written by a scholar in your major discipline or a post about an article on a topic discussed in one of your classes. Read the blog post and any responses to it. Take note of important issues or any points of controversy, and try to determine where this scholarly discussion fits within the larger field.

   Now, find and read the original article. (If the article is not available for free online—that is, if the link provided takes you to a fee-based site—search for the article through your library instead.) Compare the discussion on the blog about the article to the article itself. What information is available in both places? What information is available only in the post, or only in the article? How might each source be useful in an academic research process?