

# Research Writing Workshop

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**Part 2**

Writing

“There are only two kinds of research: perfect research and published research ...

“Perfect research is never published and published research is never perfect.”

Johan Olaisen

“Research results seem to be incomplete until they are written up, and in the writing come new insights into the work that you didn’t have when you were performing it. Language structures thought through rhetorical conventions which stimulate additional thought.

Research activity proceeds in a fairly linear fashion, whereas language poses problems of explanatory necessity to complete its statements.

“You can often DO something immediately following a prior action, but you often cannot SAY something following a previous statement without setting the background for its understanding. I suppose the missing component is that when writing you understand that you cannot assume the reader had your same state of mind, whereas as the actor DOING things, you knew your state of mind.”

(Amsler 2007)

**Do**

Introduce terms.

Define terms.



What does this term mean?

How do I use the term?

What meaning and function  
do these terms have in the  
context of this inquiry?

# Sources

Excellent sources for definitions and language work in English

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary

Webster's Online at Britannica

Oxford English Dictionary

Shorter Oxford English Dictionary

# Do

Write carefully.

Build good sentences.

Link related sentences in clear paragraphs.

Work toward an overall structure.

**Strunk and White**

# **“Elementary Principles of Composition**

Choose a suitable design and  
hold to it.

Make the paragraph the unit of  
Composition.

Use the active voice.

“Put statements in a positive form.

Use specific, definite, concrete language.

Omit needless words.

Avoid a succession of loose sentences.

“Express coordinate ideas in similar form.

Keep related words together.

In summaries, keep to one tense.

Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end.”

(Strunk and White. 2000: vi)

# **“An Approach to Style**

(With a list of reminders)

Place yourself in the background.

Write in a way that comes naturally.

Work from a suitable design.



“Write with nouns and verbs.

Revise and rewrite.

“Do not overwrite.

Do not overstate.

Avoid the use of qualifiers.

Do not affect a breezy manner.

Use orthodox spelling.

“Do not explain too much.

Do not construct awkward adverbs.

Make sure the reader knows who is speaking.

Avoid fancy words.

Do not use dialect unless your ear is good.

“Be clear.

Do not inject opinion.

Use figures of speech sparingly.

Do not take shortcuts at the cost of clarity.

“Avoid foreign languages.

Prefer the standard to the offbeat.”

(Strunk and White. 2000: vi)

*The Elements of Style*  
is the best, shortest, and  
simplest writing guide in  
English today.

Buy a copy.

Read it.

Use it.

# Do

When speaking as the author of an article, write in the first person using active verbs.

Take responsibility for opinions and findings.



# Do

Cite direct quotations carefully and explicitly.

Cite indirect quotations and paraphrased quotations carefully and explicitly.

**Do**

Provide sources.

Offer evidence.

# Reference and Citation

References are a conceptual tool for the writer *and* for the reader. Skilled authors recognize the stylistic and intellectual issues involved in referencing.

Outstanding authors practice and master the art of referencing.

Friedman's

**Ten Commandments**

of Reference and Citation

I

Use citations constructively to substantiate the argument of an article.

II

Use citations creatively to advance the argument of an article.

### III

The author must argue a case in the explicit narrative of the article.

External sources support an argument.

External support for an argument cannot replace the argument.

Do not confuse the two.

## IV

Use precise, fine-grained references that permit the reader to locate quoted material at the exact location in the source document. Fine-grained references allow the reader to question and challenge cited sources.

V

Treat direct quotations, indirect quotations, and paraphrases the same way. Give precise references for all quotations and cited sources.



VI

Always review and re-read cited passages from referenced sources.

VII

Never use second-hand references from other authors. Always check cited sources first hand.

## VIII

Never use loose or vague references.

## IX

Each item cited in the text must appear in the reference list.

Every item in the reference list must appear in the text.

X

Each source cited in the text requires an appropriate in-text citation and an entry in the reference list. Every entry in the reference list must be complete.

All citations and all references must use the same style. All citations and references must be complete and consistent to be correct.

# Avoid These Common Problems

## **Don't**

Don't use footnotes for substantive content.

Place issues in the body of the paper or cut them entirely.

## Don't

Don't use footnotes for references if a publisher requires author-year style.

Footnotes often lead to such substantive problems as missing notes, missing details, inconsistencies, poorly formatted entries, and confused styles.

# References

Amsler Robert. 2007. "Subject: RE: 20.391 Feynman's version of Kelvin's declaration." *Humanist Discussion Group*, Vol. 20, No. 392. London: Centre for Computing in the Humanities, King's College London. Date: Fri, 12 Jan 2007, Subject: 20.392 making, saying, understanding. Archived at: [www.princeton.edu/humanist/](http://www.princeton.edu/humanist/)

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# Thank you

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