The Curious Researcher
The Curious Researcher

A Guide to Writing Research Papers

NINTH EDITION

Bruce Ballenger
Boise State University
For Rebecca, who reminds me to ask, Why?
Contents

Thematic Table of Contents xi
Preface xv
About the Author xxi

Introduction Thinking about—and Rethinking—the Research Paper 1

Learning and Unlearning 101
EXERCISE 1 This I Believe

Using This Book
The Exercises 3
The Five-Week Plan 3
Alternatives to the Five-Week Plan 4

Understanding Your Assignment
Discovering Your Purpose 4
Writing to Find Out and Writing to Prove 5
Analyzing a Research Assignment 6
A Thesis: Where and When? 7
Audience 8
Structure 9
Narrator 10
Types of Evidence 10
Thinking Like an Academic Writer and Researcher 11
“It’s Just My Opinion” 11
Facts Don’t Kill 12

EXERCISE 2 Reflecting on “Theories of Intelligence” 12
“Theories of Intelligence” by Bruce Ballenger 13

Creative Research Papers? 17

The First Week
The Importance of Getting Curious 19
Seeing the World with Wonder 20
Getting the Pot Boiling 20

EXERCISE 1.1 Building an Interest Inventory
Browse for a Topic 21

Making the Most of an Assigned Topic 24
From Topic to Question 25
Where’s Waldo? and the Organizing Power of Questions 25

EXERCISE 1.2 The Myth of the Boring Topic 26

Developing a Working Knowledge 27
CASE STUDY ON DEVELOPING WORKING KNOWLEDGE: THEORIES OF DOG TRAINING 28

EXERCISE 1.3 Building a Bibliography 31

THE REFERENCE LIBRARIAN: A LIVING SOURCE 32

Narrowing the Subject 32

EXERCISE 1.4 Finding the Questions 34
Crafting Your Opening Inquiry Question 34

Possible Purposes for a Research Assignment 37

EXERCISE 1.5 Research Proposal 38
How to Read an Academic Article 38
Rhetorical Reading Strategies 39

The Second Week 41
What Are Your Research Routines? 41
Planning for the Dive 42

EXERCISE 2.1 Worksheet for Power Searching 46
What’s a Good Source? 48

vii
A RHETORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SOURCES

• SEEING SOURCES FOR WHAT THEY DO AND NOT WHAT THEY ARE
• THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT SOURCES IN ACADEMIC WRITING
• EVALUATING ONLINE SOURCES FOR ACADEMIC ESSAYS

A Key to Evaluating Internet Sources

• Authored Documents
• Unauthored Documents

Developing Focused Knowledge

SEEING PATTERNS

What About a Thesis?

ARE YOU SUSPENDING JUDGMENT?
• ARE YOU TESTING ASSUMPTIONS?
• WHAT ARE YOU ARGUING?

Keeping Track of What You Find: Building a Bibliography

Searching Library Databases for Books and Articles

Finding Books

UNDERSTANDING CALL NUMBERS
• COMING UP EMPTY HANDED
• CHECKING BIBLIOGRAPHIES
• INTERLIBRARY LOAN

Article Databases

Saving Search Results

EXERCISE 2.2 Search Book and Article Databases

Advanced Internet Research Using Google Scholar

LINK TO YOUR LIBRARY
• EXPLOIT RELATED RESULTS
• FILTER USING ADVANCED SEARCH

Living Sources: Interviews and Surveys

Arranging Interviews

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS
• FINDING PEOPLE TO TALK TO
• MAKING CONTACT
• CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

What Questions to Ask?
• DURING THE INTERVIEW
• NOTETAKING

Planning Informal Surveys

DEFINING GOALS AND AUDIENCE
• PAPER OR ELECTRONIC?
• TYPES OF QUESTIONS
• CRAFTING QUESTIONS
• AVOID LOADED QUESTIONS
• AVOID VAGUE QUESTIONS
• DRAWBACKS OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS
• DESIGNING YOUR MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS
• USING SCALED RESPONSES

CONDUCTING SURVEYS

In-Person Surveys
• Internet Surveys

Fieldwork: Research on What You See and Hear

• PREPARING FOR FIELDWORK
• NOTETAKING STRATEGIES
• USING WHAT YOU SEE AND HEAR

3 The Third Week

Writing in the Middle: Conversing with Sources

NOTETAKING AS A SCENE OF WRITING

EXERCISE 3.1 Getting into a Conversation with a Fact

What I Hear You Saying

EXERCISE 3.2 Explore, “Say Back,” and Synthesize

Your Voice and Theirs: Using Sources Responsibly

A TAXONOMY OF COPYING

PLAGIARISM Q & A

WHY PLAGIARISM MATTERS

THE NOTETAKER’S TRIAD: QUOTATION, PARAPHRASE, AND SUMMARY

PARAPHRASING
• SUMMARIZING
• QUOTING

NOTETAKING METHODS

EXERCISE 3.3 Dialogic Notetaking: Listening in, Speaking up

“WHAT? I FAILED? BUT I PAID FOR THOSE CREDITS! PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS EVALUATING FACULTY” BY THOMAS LORD

NOTETAKING TECHNIQUES

THE DOUBLE-ENTRY JOURNAL

THE RESEARCH LOG

NARRATIVE NOTETAKING

ONLINE RESEARCH NOTEBOOKS

WHEN YOU’RE COMING UP SHORT: MORE ADVANCED SEARCHING TECHNIQUES

ADVANCED LIBRARY SEARCHING TECHNIQUES

ADDITIONAL ADVANCED INTERNET SEARCHING TECHNIQUES
Thinking Outside the Box: Alternative Sources 108
EXERCISE 3.4 Building an Annotated Bibliography 109

4 The Fourth Week 111
Getting to the Draft
Exploration or Argument? 112
What Do I Know?
EXERCISE 4.1 Dialogue with Dave 113
Say One Thing
Organizing the Draft
Following Narrative Logic
Following Argumentative Logic
Exploring or Arguing: An Example
Preparing to Write the Draft
Refining the Question
Refining the Thesis
EXERCISE 4.2 Sharpening Your Point 124
Deciding Whether to Say I
Starting to Write the Draft: Beginning at the Beginning
Flashlights or Floodlights?
Writing Multiple Leads
EXERCISE 4.3 Three Ways in 129
Writing for Reader Interest
Who’s Steering and Where to?
Working the Common Ground
Putting People on the Page
USING CASE STUDIES 132 • USING INTERVIEWS 133
Writing a Strong Ending
ENDINGS TO AVOID 133
Using Surprise
Writing with Sources
Synthesizing Sources and the Moves Writers Make
Handling Quotes
PROBLEM #1: STOP AND PLOP QUOTATION 137
Passive Blending 138 • Active Blending 139
PROBLEM #2: BREADLESS SANDWICH QUOTATION 139
Passive Blending 139 • Active Blending 139

5 The Fifth Week 146
Seeing the “Triangleness” of the Draft
Revising for Readers: Writer- to Reader-Based Prose
IS IT ORGANIZED AROUND A CLEAR PURPOSE? 148 • DOES IT ESTABLISH SIGNIFICANCE? 149
EXERCISE 5.1 Wrestling with the Draft 150
DOES IT SAY ONE THING? 151 • USING A READER 151
EXERCISE 5.2 Directing the Reader’s Response 152
Reviewing the Structure
USING YOUR THESIS TO REVISE 153
Examining the Wreckage 153
EXERCISE 5.3 The Frankenstein Draft 153
OTHER WAYS OF REVISING THE STRUCTURE 155
Type of Essay 155 • Lead 155 • Logical Structure 155
Reresearching
Finding Quick Facts
Local Revision: Revising for Language
Who Are You in Your Draft?
Managing Persona Through Diction and Style
Tightening the Seams Between What You Say and What They Say
VERBAL GESTURES 160
Scrutinizing Paragraphs 162
IS EACH PARAGRAPH UNIFIED? 162
Scrutinizing Sentences 162
USING ACTIVE VOICE 162 • USING STRONG VERBS 163 • VARYING SENTENCE LENGTH 163 • EDITING FOR SIMPLICITY 165
AVOIDING STOCK PHRASES 165
# Contents

## EXERCISE 5.4  Cutting Clutter

| Preparing the Final Manuscript | 165 |
| Considering a “Reader-Friendly” Design | 166 |
| Using Images | 167 |
| Following MLA Conventions | 168 |
| Proofreading Your Paper | 168 |
| PROOFREADING ON A COMPUTER | 169 |
| • LOOKING CLOSELY | 169 |
| • 10 COMMON THINGS TO AVOID IN RESEARCH PAPERS | 169 |

## EXERCISE 5.5  Picking Off the Lint

| USING THE “FIND” OR “SEARCH” FUNCTION | 171 |
| • AVOIDING SEXIST LANGUAGE | 172 |

## Looking Back and Moving On

## EXERCISE 5.6  Another Dialogue with Dave

## Appendix A  Guide to the New MLA Style

### Part One: Citing Sources in Your Essay

| The Common Knowledge Exception | 178 |
| The MLA Author/Page System | 178 |
| The Basics of Using Parenthetical Citation | 178 |
| PLACEMENT OF CITATIONS | 179 |
| 1.2.1 When There Are No Page Numbers | 180 |
| • 1.2.2 When You Mention One Author | 181 |
| • 1.2.3 When You Mention More Than One Author | 181 |
| • 1.2.4 When There Is No Author | 181 |
| • 1.2.5 Works by the Same Author | 182 |
| • 1.2.6 Works by Different Authors with the Same Name | 183 |
| • 1.2.7 Indirect Sources | 183 |
| • 1.2.8 Personal Interviews | 183 |
| • 1.2.9 Several Sources in a Single Citation | 183 |

### Sample Parenthetical References for Other Sources

| 1.2.10 An Entire Work | 184 |
| • 1.2.11 A Volume of a Multivolume Work | 184 |
| • 1.2.12 A Literary Work | 184 |

### Part Two: Building Citations

| 2.1 Author | 184 |
| 2.1.1 The Basics | 184 |
| • 2.1.2 When No Author is Listed | 185 |
| • 2.1.3 Other Kinds of Contributors | 185 |
| 2.2 Title | 185 |
| • 2.2.1 The Basics | 185 |
| • 2.2.2 When There Is No Title | 186 |
| • 2.2.3 Container | 185 |
| • 2.3.1 The Basics | 185 |
| • 2.3.2 Other Kinds of Containers | 187 |
| 2.4 Other Contributors | 188 |
| 2.5 Version | 188 |
| 2.6 Number | 188 |
| 2.7 Publisher | 189 |
| • 2.7.1 The Basics | 189 |
| • 2.7.2 When the Publisher Is Not Obvious | 189 |
| 2.8 Publication Date | 189 |
| • 2.8.1 The Basics | 189 |
| • 2.8.2 Other Publication Date Information | 190 |

### Part Three: Preparing the Works Cited Page and Other Formatting

| Alphabetizing the List | 191 |
| Indenting and Spacing | 191 |
| 3.2 The Layout of Print Essays | 192 |
| • 3.2.1 Printing | 192 |
| • 3.2.2 Margins and Spacing | 192 |
| • 3.2.3 Title | 192 |
| • 3.2.4 Header with Pagination | 193 |
| • 3.2.5 Placement of Tables, Charts, and Illustrations | 193 |
| 3.3 Some Style Considerations | 194 |
| • 3.3.1 Handling Titles | 194 |
| • 3.3.2 Style Related to Sources and Quotations | 194 |

### Part Four: Student Paper in MLA Style

| “Seeing Past Fear” by Rachel Gallina | 196 |

## Appendix B  Guide to APA Style

### Part One: Citing Sources in Your Essay

| The Basics of Using Parenthetical Citation | 206 |
| 1.1 The APA Author/Date System | 206 |
| WHEN TO CITE PAGE NUMBERS | 207 |
| • 1.1.1 A Work by One Author | 207 |
| • 1.1.2 A Work by Two Authors | 207 |
| • 1.1.3 A Work by Three to Five Authors | 207 |
| • 1.1.4 A Work by Six or More Authors | 207 |
| • 1.1.5 An Institutional Author | 208 |
| • 1.1.6 A Work with No Author | 208 |
| • 1.1.7 Two or More Works by the Same Author | 208 |
| • 1.1.8 Authors with the Same Last Name | 208 |
| • 1.1.9 Several Sources in a Single Citation | 208 |
| • 1.1.10 Indirect Sources | 209 |
| • 1.1.11 New Editions of Old Works | 209 |
| • 1.1.12
Contents

Interviews, E-Mail, and Letters 209 • 1.1.13
A Web Site 209

Part Two: Formatting Your Essay 210
2.1 Formatting the Essay and Its Parts 210
2.1.1 Page Format and Header 210 • 2.1.2
Title Page 210 • 2.1.3 Abstract 210 • 2.1.4
Body of the Paper 210 • 2.1.5 Headings 212
• 2.1.6 Handling Quoted Material 212 • 2.1.7
References List 213 • 2.1.8 Tables and
Figures 214 • 2.1.9 Appendix 214 • 2.1.10
Notes 214

2.2 Some Style Considerations 215
2.2.1 Use of Italics 215
2.2.2 Treatment of Numbers 215

Part Three: Preparing the
References List 215
3.1 Order of Sources and Information 215
Order of Sources 215
Order of Information 216
AUTHOR OR AUTHORS 216 • DATE 216 • BOOK
TITLE OR ARTICLE TITLE 216 • PERIODICAL
TITLE AND PUBLICATION INFORMATION 216
• PUBLICATION INFORMATION FOR
BOOKS 217 • DIGITAL SOURCES 217

3.2 Citing Books, in Print and Online 218
3.2.1 A Book with One Author 218 • 3.2.2 A
Book with Two Authors 218 • 3.2.3 A Book with
Three to Seven Authors 218 • 3.2.4 A Book
with Eight or More Authors 218 • 3.2.5 A Book
with an Institutional Author 218 • 3.2.6 A Book
with No Author 219 • 3.2.7 An Encyclopedia
Entry 219 • 3.2.8 A Chapter in a Book 219
• 3.2.9 A Book with an Editor 219 • 3.2.10 A
Selection in a Book with an Editor 219 • 3.2.11
A Republished Work 219 • 3.2.12 A Government
Document 219

3.3 Citing Articles, in Print and Online 220
3.3.1 A Journal Article 220 • 3.3.2 A Journal
Article Not Paginated Continuously 220
• 3.3.3 A Magazine Article 220 • 3.3.4
A Newspaper Article 221 • 3.3.5 An Article
with No Author 221 • 3.3.6 An Article
on a Web Site 221 • 3.3.7 An Abstract 221
• 3.3.8 A Book Review 222 • 3.3.9 An
Editorial 222 • 3.3.10 A Letter to the
Editor 222 • 3.3.11 A Published
Interview 222

3.4 Citing Other Sources 222
3.4.1 An Entire Web Site 222 • 3.4.2 A Film,
DVD, or Online Video 223 • 3.4.3 A Television
Program 223 • 3.4.4 An Audio Podcast 223
• 3.4.5 A Blog 223 • 3.4.6 A Wiki 223
• 3.4.7 Online Discussion Lists 223
• 3.4.8 A Musical Recording 224

Part Four: Student Paper in APA Style 224
“Looking for Utopia: The Men and
Women of the People’s Temple”
by Laura Burns 225

Credits 000
Index 000
# Thematic Table of Contents

## RESEARCH SKILLS

### INTRODUCTION
Understanding Your Assignment 1

### CHAPTER 1
WIKIPEDIA AND BEYOND: ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND WORKING KNOWLEDGE
EX. 1.3 Building a Bibliography 30
EX. 1.4 Finding the Questions 31
EX. 1.5 Research Proposal 38

### CHAPTER 2
The Power of Words to Find and Filter Information
EX. 2.1 Worksheet for Power Searching 46
EVALUATING ONLINE SOURCES FOR ACADEMIC ESSAYS
Keeping Track of What You Find: Building a Bibliography 58
Searching Library Databases for Books and Articles 60
Advanced Internet Research Using Google Scholar 65
Living Sources: Interviews and Surveys 67
Fieldwork: Research on What You See and Hear 76

### CHAPTER 3
What I Hear You Saying
EX. 3.2 Explore, “Say Back,” and Synthesize 83
Your Voice and Theirs: Using Sources Responsibly 84
The Notetaker’s Triad: Quotation, Paraphrase, and Summary 88
Notetaking Methods 91
EX. 3.4 Building an Annotated Bibliography 109

### CHAPTER 4
Writing with Sources 135

### CHAPTER 5
Finding Quick Facts 156
Local Revision: Revising for Language 158

## RESEARCH STRATEGIES

### INTRODUCTION
Writing to Find Out and Writing to Prove 1

### CHAPTER 1
Developing a Working Knowledge 19
Narrowing the Subject 32
Reading for Research 37

### CHAPTER 2
What are Your Research Routines? 41
Planning for the Dive 42
What’s a Good Source? 48
Developing Focused Knowledge 55
Living Sources: Interviews and Surveys 67
Fieldwork: Research on What You See and Hear 76

### CHAPTER 3
Writing in the Middle: Conversing with Sources 79
Notetaking as a Scene of Writing 80
Notetaking Methods 91
When You’re Coming up Short: More Advanced Searching Techniques 106

### CHAPTER 4
Following Narrative Logic 116
Following Argumentative Logic 117
Synthesizing Sources and the Moves Writers Make 136
# Thematic Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 5</strong></td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reresearching</strong></td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENRE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 1</strong> This I Believe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Your Assignment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting Research in Alternative Genres (PRAGs)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts Don’t Kill</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 1</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 2</strong> Reflecting on “Theories of Intelligence”</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Research Papers?</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 2</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 2.1</strong> Worksheet for Power Searching</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s a Good Source?</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 3</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 3</strong> A RHETORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SOURCES</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What about a Thesis?</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 4</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 3.1</strong> Getting into a Conversation with a Fact</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notetaking as a Scene of Writing</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 5</strong></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 3.2</strong> Explore, “Say Back,” and Synthesize</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notetaking Methods</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 6</strong></td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 3.3</strong> Dialogic Notetaking: Listening in and Speaking up</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to the Draft</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 7</strong></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 4.1</strong> Dialogue with Dave</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing the Draft</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 8</strong></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 4.2</strong> Sharpening Your Point</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing to Write the Draft</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 9</strong></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 4.3</strong> Three Ways In</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refining the Question</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 10</strong></td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 4.4</strong> Refining the Thesis</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting to Write the Draft: Beginning at the Beginning</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 11</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 4.5</strong> Writing for Reader Interest</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ways of Reviewing the Structure</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 12</strong></td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Persona Through Diction and Style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing the “Triangleness” of the Draft</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 13</strong></td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EX. 4.6</strong> Three Ways In</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing for Reader Interest</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Revising for Readers: Write-to Reader-Based Prose  
EX. 5.1 Wrestling with the Draft  
EX. 5.2 Directing the Reader’s Response  
EX. 5.3 The Frankenstein Draft  
Local Revision: Revising for Language  
EX. 5.4 Cutting Clutter  
Preparing the Final Manuscript  
EX. 5.5 Picking off the Lint

### INQUIRY

#### INTRODUCTION

Learning and Unlearning 101
Understanding Your Assignment
Thinking Like an Academic Writer and Researcher
Creative Research Papers?

#### CHAPTER 1

The Importance of Getting Curious

| Developing a Working Knowledge | 28 |
| Narrowing the Subject | 32 |
| Crafting Your Opening Inquiry Question | 34 |
| CHAPTER 2 | 41 |
| What about a Thesis? | 57 |
| CHAPTER 3 | 79 |
| Writing in the Middle: Conversing with Sources | 79 |
| Notetaking as a Scene of Writing | 80 |
| CHAPTER 4 | 111 |
| Following Narrative Logic | 116 |
| Following Argumentative Logic | 117 |
| Refining the Question | 122 |
| Refining the Thesis | 122 |
| EX.4.2 Sharpening Your Point | 124 |
| CHAPTER 5 | 146 |
| Looking Back and Moving On | 173 |
| EX. 5.6 Another Dialogue with Dave | 173 |
Preface

Features of the New Edition

Writing a textbook is like discovering an aunt you never knew you had. She arrives unexpectedly one summer and stands at your door beaming and expectant. Naturally, you welcome her in. How charming she is, and as you get to know her, you get to know yourself. This is her gift to you. At some point, many months later, you see her luggage by the door, and with a certain sadness, you send her off. “Come again,” you yell as she ambles away. “Come again anytime. I’ll miss you!” And you do. Your fondness for this newly discovered relative grows as you learn that other people who aren’t even blood related like her too.

If a textbook is successful, the aunt returns again and again, and you get to know her well. Though you may wish, especially in the beginning, that she wouldn’t visit so often, after a few weeks there are new conversations and new discoveries. That’s the way it has always been for me with The Curious Researcher, and the ninth edition is no different. Here are some of the new features of the book that make me feel that way:

• **New content on presenting research in alternative genres.** Since the early editions of The Curious Researcher, how students compose research projects has changed. Though they may often still write papers, research is also presented in other genres, many of which are multimodal. In this edition, a recurring feature on “Presenting Research in Alternative Genres” helps students to reimagine their projects as a slide presentation, infographic, photographic essay, or poster. They will find tips for choosing, planning, designing, and reflecting on a relevant genre for their research project.

• **Latest approaches on how to think about sources.** While genres for student research have evolved, approaches for how researchers look at sources have, too. Inspired by the recent Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, a dramatic new report from the group that represents university librarians, this edition encourages students to see sources in a more rhetorical context. The question “what is a good source?” is no longer simply that it is scholarly. Instead, students are encouraged to consider their audience, genre, and purpose.

• **Updated MLA citation conventions.** With the publication of the latest MLA Handbook came a revolution in how to document sources in the humanities. In the new edition of The Curious Researcher, students will find a straight-forward and lively discussion of these changes that will help them adapt to the new style, including lots of examples.

• **More help on crafting search terms.** Now more than ever, care in choosing search terms and phrases for library databases and Web searches makes a huge difference in the quality of results. This edition includes some new ways of thinking about how to come up with the best language.

• **New sections on narrative and argumentative logic.** From the beginning, The Curious Researcher advocated the exploratory research essay as a useful alternative to the argumentative research paper. The new edition looks...
at each option more closely, examining how essay and argument draw on different reasoning strategies, information that will help students choose which is most appropriate for their project.

- New thematic table of contents. For users who want to tailor their use of the book to meet the needs of a particular course or the particular challenges of their students, this edition features a table of contents organized around five key categories: research skills, research strategies, writing process, inquiry, and genre.

Placing Inquiry at the Heart of the Course

For many of my college writing students, there are two kinds of school writing—“creative” writing and “academic” writing—and the two have very little in common. Creative writing is typically any personal writing assignment—a personal narrative, a reader response, or a freewriting exercise—and academic writing is almost anything that involves research. I’ve spent quite a few years now trying to understand this perceived gap between creative and academic writing, a distinction that I have found troubling because it short-circuits the connection I have been trying to build between the personal and the academic, especially the idea that students’ own subjectivities are not only relevant to academic work but are also an inescapable part of it. I also know from my own experience as an academic that research writing is a creative enterprise. Why don’t my students see that? I’ve wondered.

The answer, in part, lies with the traditional research paper assignment itself. Despite our best intentions, students often see the assignment as a closed process: come up with a thesis quickly, hunt down evidence to support it, and wrap it up—all the while focusing less on learning something than on getting it right: the right number of pages, the right citations, the right margins. This isn’t the way academics approach research at all, of course. We do research because we believe there is something to discover that we don’t already know. How might I help my students understand that?

The answer is to teach inquiry, which is “the heart of the [academic] enterprise.” Reviewing the state of undergraduate learning, the Boyer Commission lamented the largely passive experience that students have during their first year. They sit in lectures, regurgitate information in exams, and if they do write, students often do so without much passion. Rarely do they get a chance to genuinely inquire into questions that interest them where the motive is discovery. How strange this is, especially because we often imagine the first year as an introduction to thinking and learning as college students. Shouldn’t they get at least some experience with genuine inquiry, which is so central to higher education? The Boyer Commission concurred. The freshman year, the report concluded, should provide “new stimulation for intellectual growth and a firm grounding in inquiry-based learning.”

The Curious Researcher answers that call. Research-based assignments, especially in the first-year writing class, present an ideal opportunity to encourage inquiry-based learning and the kinds of thinking it demands. In the many years I’ve taught inquiry, I’ve found that students—though sometimes confused at first—embrace the opportunity to exercise their curiosity. In some ways, new generations of college students are better prepared for inquiry-based approaches because they have lots of practice following trails on the Web as they explore questions that interest them. They know discovery. They just don’t experience it much in school. This book provides students with a more systematic approach to exploration, one that draws on intellectual practices and skills that will help them search, think,
and write well. *The Curious Researcher* also tries to inspire students to ask those questions that will shape their thinking well after they leave school. But how does it do that?

### Teaching the Spirit of Inquiry

Over the years, I’ve refined *The Curious Researcher’s* approach to teaching inquiry, but it still rests on these premises:

1. **Students should have the experience of investigating a topic in an open-ended way, at least initially.** Whether their research projects are ultimately exploratory or argumentative, students should experience the power of suspending judgment. This goes completely against their instincts, which are to nail things down as quickly as possible. However, discovery depends on entertaining contradictions, tolerating ambiguities, and simply wondering about what you read and hear.

2. **Inquiry seeds argument.** Most research writing in college is argumentative. Yet in most cases, we develop arguments inductively, through inquiry. We discover our thesis either by exploring the evidence or by testing our thesis against the evidence, including evidence that is inconvenient or contrary to what we already think.

3. **One of the most useful—and difficult—things to teach and to learn is the power of questions.** Inquiry-based approaches rest on wonder. These investigations often begin with questions of fact—*What is known about the health effects of tanning booths?*—that later flower into a question, say, of policy—*What should be done to minimize the risks of tanning booths?* The power of questions fuels the critical mind and drives the research.

4. **Writing as a way of thinking is a vital tool in discovery and learning.** What students in any major can learn in a writing class is how to put language into the service of inquiry. As any composition instructor knows, writing isn’t just a means of getting down what you already know. It’s much more interesting than that. Writing can help writers discover what they think. In an inquiry-based classroom, this is invaluable, and we need to teach students how to use writing not only to report the results of their research but also to think about what they’re discovering as they do research.

### Ways of Using This Book

Because procrastination ails many student researchers, this book is uniquely designed to move them through the research process, step-by-step and week by week, for five weeks—the typical period allotted for the research paper assignment. The structure of the book is flexible, however; students should be encouraged to compress the sequence if their research assignment will take less time or ignore the sequence altogether and use the book to help them solve specific problems as they arise.

Naturally, the book is organized narratively, beginning with some of the issues students will initially encounter as they begin a research assignment, things like confronting their assumptions about research and finding a topic, and then taking them through the process of acquiring the knowledge about it to create a composition. Students who follow the five-week sequence usually find that they like the way *The Curious Researcher* doesn’t deluge them with information, unlike so many other research texts. Instead, *The Curious Researcher* doles information out week by week, when it is most needed. I’ve also been told by instructors who use the book for online classes that its structure is particularly well suited for teaching research writing in that environment, especially because each chapter contains exercises that help students work on their own to push their projects along.
Alternatives to the Five-Week Plan

The narrative structure is just one way your students might experience the book. Imagine the content falling into the following categories:

- **Skills.** Discrete practices and techniques that students might begin to master (e.g., paraphrasing, documentation, annotated bibliography, understanding databases, crafting interview questions, avoiding plagiarism, integrating quotes)

- **Strategies.** Approaches to gathering, evaluating, and organizing information (e.g., evaluating sources, developing working knowledge, notetaking as conversation with sources, choosing appropriate databases)

- **Genre.** Consideration of how forms and conventions of research are shaped by users and situations (e.g., considering alternative genres, reading academic articles, citation conventions, types of research papers, etc.)

- **Writing Process.** Methods of composing, including invention exercises, and how they respond to rhetorical situations (e.g., brainstorming topics, drafting lead paragraphs, revision, structuring the draft, writing for readers, model student essays, etc.)

- **Inquiry.** Intellectual practices and ways of knowing that encourage exploration and discovery (e.g., unlearning, narrative and argumentative logic, qualities of strong inquiry questions, etc.)

Because writing courses that feature research assignments vary widely, you might consider which of these five categories best support the class you’re teaching. The new edition includes an alternative table of contents on page xii that is organized around each of these categories and will help you decide what content might work for your class.

REVEL™

Educational Technology Designed for the Way Today’s Students Read, Think, and Learn

When students are engaged deeply, they learn more effectively and perform better in their courses. This simple fact inspired the creation of REVEL: an interactive learning environment designed for the way today’s students read, think, and learn.

REVEL enlivens course content with media interactives and assessments—integrated directly within the authors’ narrative—that provide opportunities for students to read, practice, and study in one continuous experience. This immersive educational technology replaces the textbook and is designed to measurably boost students’ understanding, retention, and preparedness.

Learn more about REVEL
http://www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/

Acknowledgments

I began working on the first edition of this book back in 1991, and in the many years since then, I’ve been fortunate to have great students who tutored me on what worked and what didn’t. Over the years, these have included many more students than I can name here, but I’d like to single out a few who have been particularly helpful: Andrea Oyarzabal, Amanda Stewart, and Rachel Gallina. My daughter, Becca Ballenger, to whom I dedicated the first edition of this book, is now a part-time collaborator. She’s always been a wonderful daughter, and now she’s turned into a wonderful writer, too.

A special thanks to Sara Robertson, reference librarian at Portland Community College. Sara reviewed the book to make sure the coverage of information literacy and library resources reflected the latest thinking in her field. She was also instrumental in encouraging me to develop a new approach in Chapter 2 on how to evaluate
sources rhetorically, which is one of the best new additions to the text.

The strong support from the Pearson team is key to this book’s success. My editor at Pearson, Ginny Blanford, cheerfully spurred me on, offering valuable insights about how to make the book work better. Her expertise on the new MLA guidelines was a godsend. My former editor, Joe Opiela, took a risk on *The Curious Researcher* back in the early nineties, and for that I’m forever grateful. I also appreciate the enormous contribution that Randee Falk made to the book’s evolution in the last few editions. My new friends at Ohlinger Publishing Services—Cynthia Cox and Emily Biberger—skillfully shepherded the book through editing and production.

A number of my colleagues have been unflagging in their support of *The Curious Researcher* over the years. Thanks to Carrie Seymour, a colleague at Boise State, who led me to the fine work of one of her students, which is now featured as a model essay in Appendix A. I’d also like to thank Deborah Coxwell-Teague, at Florida State University, and Nancy DeJoy, at Michigan State University. Both have been enthusiastic boosters of the book over the years. There are many others I’ve met traveling to campuses around the country who have been generous in their support and have said very kind things to me about the book. These visits are great learning opportunities for me, and they’ve been instrumental to an evolution in my thinking about how to teach writing and inquiry to all kinds of students in many different contexts. Thanks to all of you.

Most of all, I’m grateful to my wife, Karen, and my two daughters, Becca and Julia, for always leaving the light on to guide me home.

I would like to thank those individuals who have reviewed my book. Reviewers for the eighth edition include the following: Kathleen J. Cassity, Hawaii Pacific University; Sydney Darby, Chemeketa Community College; Holly DeGrow, Mt. Hood Community College; Tom Hertweck, University of Nevada–Reno; Nels P. Highberg, University of Hartford; Elizabeth Imafuji, Anderson University; and Shevaun Watson, University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. I would also like to extend my thanks to the reviewers of this edition: Shanti Bruce, Ph.D., Nova Southeastern University; Julia Combs, Southern State University; Jordan Curtis, Bryant & Stratton College, Syracuse; Michael Delahoyde, Washington State University; Martha Silano, Bellevue College; Dr. Ann Spurlock, Mississippi State University; and Jennifer Wetham, Clark College.

Bruce Ballenger
About the Author

Bruce Ballenger, a professor of English at Boise State University, teaches courses in composition, composition theory, the essay tradition, and creative nonfiction. He’s the author of seven books, including the three texts in the Curious series: *The Curious Researcher*, *The Curious Reader*, and *The Curious Writer*, all from Pearson Education. His book *Crafting Truth: Short Studies in Creative Nonfiction*, is also from the same publisher. Ballenger lives in Boise, Idaho.