Writing Research Papers
A Complete Guide

Sixteenth Edition

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Contents

Preface to the Instructor ix

1 Writing from Research 1
1a Why Do Research? 3
1b Learning the Conventions of Academic Writing 4
1c Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism 5
1d Understanding a Research Assignment 6
Understanding the Terminology 6
Causal Argument 9
Comparison, Including Analogy 9
1e Establishing a Research Schedule 10

2 Finding a Topic 12
2a Relating Your Personal Ideas to a Scholarly Problem 14
Connecting Personal Experience to Scholarly Topics 14
Speculating about Your Subject to Discover Ideas and to Focus on the Issues 16
2b Talking with Others to Refine the Topic 20
Personal Interviews and Discussions 20
Online Discussion Groups 20
2c Using Online Searches to Refine Your Topic 21
Using an Online Subject Directory 21
Using an Internet Keyword Search 22
2d Using the Library’s Electronic Databases to Find and Narrow a Topic 23
2e Using the Library’s Electronic Book Catalog to Find a Topic 23
2f Developing a Thesis Statement, Enthymeme, or Hypothesis 25
Thesis 25
Enthymeme 27
Hypothesis 27
2g Drafting a Research Proposal 28
The Short Proposal 28
The Long Proposal 29
Charting Your Research Project 33

3 Organizing Ideas and Setting Goals 34
3a Using a Basic Order to Chart the Course of Your Work 35
3b Using Your Research Proposal to Direct Your Notetaking 35
3c Listing Key Terms and Phrases to Set Directions for Notetaking 36
3d Writing a Rough Outline 37
3e Using Questions to Identify Issues 38
3f Setting Goals by Using Organizational Patterns 38
3g Using Approaches across the Curriculum to Chart Your Ideas 39
3h Using Your Thesis to Chart the Direction of Your Research 40
Arrangement by Issues 40
Arrangement by Cause/Effect 40
Arrangement by Interpretation and Evaluation 41
Arrangement by Comparison 41
Charting Your Research Project 42

4 Gathering Sources Online 43
4a Beginning an Online Search 45
4b Reading an Online Address 48
4c Using Keyword and Boolean Expressions 49
Subject Directory Search Engines 52
Robot-Driven Search Engines 52
Metasearch Engines 52
Specialized Search Engines 52
Educational Search Engines 52
Educational Search Engines Maintained by Libraries 54
4d Using RSS and Social Bookmarking 55
RSS Feeds 55
Web 2.0 and Social Bookmarking 55
iv Contents

4e Searching for Articles in Journals and Magazines
   Online Journals 57
   Online Magazines 58
4f Searching for Articles in Newspapers and Media Sources 58
4g Searching for Photographs and Other Visual Sources 60
4h Accessing E-books 60
4i Using LISTSERV, Blogs, and Chat
   E-mail News Groups 61
   Real-Time Chatting 61
4j Examining Library Holdings via Online Access 61
4k Finding an Internet Bibliography
   Search Engine 62
4l Conducting Archival Research on the Internet
   Go to the Library 63
   Go to an Edited Search Engine 63
   Go to a Metasearch Engine 63
   Go to a LISTSERV or Usenet Group 64
   Utilize Newspaper Archives 65
Charting Your Research Project 65

5 Gathering Sources in the Library
5a Launching the Search 67
5b Developing a Working Bibliography 68
5c Finding Books on Your Topic
   Using Your Library’s Electronic Book Catalog 69
   Using the Library’s Bibliographies 70
5d Finding Articles in Magazines and Journals
   Searching the General Indexes to Periodicals 72
   Finding Indexes by Topic in the Appendix 76
   Readers’ Guide to Periodical Literature 76
   Social Sciences Index 77
   Humanities Index 77
   Searching for an Index to Abstracts 77
   Searching for Abstracts of Dissertations 79
5e Searching for a Biography
   Biography Index 80
   Current Biography Yearbook 80
   Contemporary Authors 80
   Dictionary of Literary Biography 80
5f Searching for Articles in Newspaper Indexes 80
5g Searching Special Subject Directories 81
5h Searching for Government Documents 82
5i Searching for Essays within Books 83
Charting Your Research Project 83

6 Conducting Field Research 85
6a Investigating Local Sources
   Interviewing Knowledgeable People 86
   Writing Letters and Corresponding by E-mail 87
   Reading Personal Papers 88
   Attending Lectures and Public Addresses 89
6b Investigating Government Documents 89
   Local Government 89
   State Government 89
   Federal Government 89
6c Examining Audiovisual Materials, Television, and Radio 90
6d Conducting a Survey with a Questionnaire 91
6e Conducting Experiments, Tests, and Observation 94
Charting Your Research Project 95

7 Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism 97
7a Using Sources to Enhance Your Credibility 98
7b Placing Your Work in Its Proper Context 99
7c Understanding Copyright 100
7d Avoiding Plagiarism
   Common Knowledge 102
   Correctly Borrowing from a Source 104
7e Sharing Credit in Collaborative Projects 107
7f Honoring and Crediting Sources in Online Classrooms 108
7g Seeking Permission to Publish Material on Your Website 109
Charting Your Research Project 110
8 Reading and Evaluating Sources

8a Finding Reliable Sources 111
8b Selecting a Mix of Primary and Secondary Sources 117
8c Evaluating Sources
  Evaluating the Key Parts of an Article 118
  Evaluating the Key Parts of a Book 120
  Evaluating the Key Parts of an Internet Article 123
8d Outlining a Source 123
8e Summarizing a Source 125
8f Preparing an Annotated Bibliography 126
8g Preparing a Review of the Literature on a Topic 129
Charting Your Research Project 136

9 Writing Effective Notes and Creating Outlines 137

Gathering Printouts, Photocopies, Scanned Images, and Downloaded Data 138
9a Creating Effective Notes
  Honoring the Conventions of Research Style 138
  Using a Computer for Notetaking 139
9b Writing Personal Notes 139
9c Writing Direct Quotation Notes
  Quoting Primary Sources 142
  Quoting Secondary Sources 142
9d Writing Paraphrased Notes 143
9e Writing Summary Notes 146
9f Writing Précis Notes
  Use the Précis to Review Briefly an Online Article 148
  Use the Précis to Write an Annotated Bibliography 149
  Use the Précis in a Plot Summary Note 149
  Use the Précis as the Form for an Abstract 149
9g Writing Notes from Field Research 150
9h Creating Outlines Using Academic Models
  A General All-Purpose Model 151
  Model for Advancing Your Ideas and Theories 151
Charting Your Research Project 157

10 Drafting the Paper in an Academic Style 158

10a Focusing Your Argument
  Maintaining a Focus on Objective Facts and Subjective Ideas 159
10b Refining the Thesis Statement
  Using Questions to Focus the Thesis 160
  Adjust or Change Your Thesis During Research if Necessary 163
10c Writing an Academic Title 164
10d Drafting the Paper from Your Research Journal, Notes, and Computer Files
  Writing from Your Notes 165
  Writing with Unity and Coherence 166
  Writing in the Proper Tense 166
  Using the Language of the Discipline 167
  Writing in the Third Person 168
  Writing with the Passive Voice in an Appropriate Manner 169
10e Using Visuals Effectively in a Research Essay 169
  File Formats 172
10f Avoiding Sexist and Biased Language 173
Charting Your Research Project 174

11 Blending Reference Material into Your Writing 175

11a Blending Reference Citations into Your Text
  Making a General Reference without a Page Number 176
  Beginning with the Author and Ending with a Page Number 176
  Putting the Page Number Immediately after the Name 177
## Contents

Putting the Name and Page Number at the End of Borrowed Material 177

11b Citing a Source When No Author Is Listed
   - Citing the Title of a Magazine Article 178
   - Citing the Title of a Report 179
   - Citing the Name of a Publisher or a Corporate Body 179

11c Citing Nonprint Sources That Have No Page Number 179

11d Citing Internet Sources
   - Identify the Source with Name or Title 179
   - Identify the Nature of the Information and Its Credibility 180
   - Omitting Page and Paragraph Numbers to Internet Citations 181

11e Citing Indirect Sources 182

11f Citing Frequent Page References to the Same Work 183

11g Citing Material from Textbooks and Large Anthologies 184

11h Adding Extra Information to In-Text Citations
   - One of Several Volumes 185
   - Two or More Works by the Same Writer 186
   - Several Authors in One Citation 187
   - Additional Information with the Page Number 187

11i Punctuating Citations Properly and Consistently 187
   - Commas and Periods 188
   - Semicolons and Colons 189
   - Question Marks and Exclamation Marks 189
   - Single Quotation Marks 190

11j Indenting Long Quotations 191

11k Citing Poetry
   - Quoting Three Lines of Poetry or Less 192
   - Quoting Four Lines of Poetry or More 193
   - Indenting Turnovers for Long Lines of Poetry 193
   - Retaining Internal Quotations within a Block 193
   - Providing Translations 194

11l Handling Quotations from a Play 194

11m Altering Initial Capitals in Quoted Matter 195

11n Omitting Quoted Matter with Ellipsis Points 195

11o Altering Quotations with Parentheses and Brackets 198
   - Parentheses 198
   - Brackets 199

Charting Your Research Project 200

### 12 Writing the Introduction, Body, and Conclusion 201

12a Writing the Introduction of the Research Paper 201
   - Provide the Thesis Statement 202
   - Provide the Enthymeme 202
   - Provide a Hypothesis 203
   - Relate to the Well Known 203
   - Provide Background Information 204
   - Review the Literature 204
   - Review the History and Background of the Subject 205
   - Take Exception to Critical Views 205
   - Challenge an Assumption 206
   - Provide a Brief Summary 206
   - Define Key Terms 207
   - Supply Data, Statistics, and Special Evidence 207

12b Writing the Body of the Research Paper 208
   - Organize by Chronology 208
   - Compare or Contrast Issues, Critical Views, and Literary Characters 209
   - Develop Cause and Effect 210
   - Define Your Key Terminology 210
   - Explain a Process 211
   - Ask Questions and Provide Answers 211
   - Cite Evidence from the Source Materials 212
   - Use a Variety of Other Methods 212

12c Writing the Conclusion of the Research Paper 213
   - Restate the Thesis and Reach beyond It 214
   - Close with an Effective Quotation 214
   - Return the Focus of a Literary Study to the Author 215
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compare the Past to the Present</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer a Directive or Solution</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss Test Results and Limitations</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charting Your Research Project</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13 Revising, Proofreading, and Formatting the Rough Draft</strong></td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13a Conducting a Global Revision</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revising the Introduction</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revising the Body</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revising the Conclusion</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in Peer Review</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13b Formatting the Paper to MLA Style</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title Page or Opening Page</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Text of the Paper</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Endnotes Page</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Cited</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13c Editing before Typing or Printing the Final Manuscript</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Computer to Edit Your Text</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13d Proofreading on the Screen and on the Printed Manuscript</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charting Your Research Project</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13e Sample Papers in MLA Style</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Literary Research Paper</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Research Paper</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14 Works Cited: MLA Style</strong></td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14a Formatting the Works Cited Page</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14b Key Elements of the Works Cited List</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15 Writing in APA Style</strong></td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15a Writing Theory, Reporting Test Results, or Reviewing Literature</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Article</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of an Empirical Study</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Article</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15b Writing in the Proper Tense for an APA Paper</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15c Using In-Text Citations in APA Style</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15d Preparing the List of References</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodical</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprint Material</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources Accessed Online</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article from a Library Database</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD-ROM</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encyclopedia Article</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Text Article</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15e Formatting an APA Paper</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Paper</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of Empirical Research</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Article</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15f Writing the Abstract</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15g Sample Paper in APA Style</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16 The Footnote System: CMS Style</strong></td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16a Inserting a Superscript Numeral in Your Text</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Full or Abbreviated Notes</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16b Formatting and Writing the Footnotes</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16c Writing Footnotes for Electronic Sources</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16d Writing Subsequent Footnote References</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16e Writing Endnotes Rather Than Footnotes</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16f Writing Content Footnotes or Content Endnotes</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16g Using the Footnote System for Papers in the Humanities</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16h Writing a Bibliography Page for a Paper That Uses Footnotes</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16i Sample Research Paper in the CMS Style</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17 CSE Style for the Natural and Applied Sciences</strong></td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide by Discipline</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17a Writing In-Text Citations Using the CSE Citation-Sequence System</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17b Writing a References Page</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17c Writing In-Text Citations with Name and Year</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17d Using Name-Year with Bibliography Entries</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranging the References List</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17e Sample Paper Using the CSE Citation-Sequence System</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Creating Electronic and Multimedia Research Projects</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18a Beginning the Digital Project</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18b Building Digital Presentations</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18c Research Project Websites</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a Single Web Page</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importing, Entering, and Modifying Text</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citing Your Sources in a Web-Based Research Paper</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18d Using Graphics in Your Electronic Research Paper</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic File Formats</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Your Own Digital Graphics</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18e Using Sound and Video in Your Electronic Research Paper</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18f Preparing a Writing Portfolio</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18g Presenting Research in Alternative Formats</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charting Your Research Project</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 16th edition of Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide now marks the 50th anniversary of this text. First published by Scott, Foresman in 1967, I recall that the artwork on the front of the book featured a typewriter. To that end, I can remember the countless hours that my father and mother both spent toiling at the keys of that typewriter to perfect the first edition. What started as a typed version that was run off on a mimeograph machine and sold in the campus bookstore at Emporia State University in Kansas has expanded into the detailed guidebook that it is today. This new edition is dedicated to my father, Dr. J. D. Lester. Although he is no longer with us, his love of literature, writing as a craft, his students through forty years of instruction, and my mother helped to establish Writing Research Papers as the foremost handbook for current, detailed guidance about academic research, writing, and documentation.

For decades, this text has been the leader in offering current, detailed guidance about academic research, writing, and documentation. Over the last two decades, the world of academic research has changed dramatically. Most research is now done online, and this new universe of information has not only put an almost unimaginable wealth of new sources at our fingertips, but it has also brought challenges in evaluating the credibility and usefulness of those sources. Questions of academic integrity and unintentional plagiarism have arisen around the integration of electronic sources. This new sixteenth edition of Writing Research Papers confronts these new challenges and offers clear, detailed guidance to assist student researchers as they struggle to keep pace with online research, electronic publishing, and new documentation formats.

What Is New in This Edition?

- New “Goals and Outcomes” at the beginning of each chapter provide students with a list of learning objectives that serve as a ready guide for finding documentation information quickly and that provide students with the key goals of the chapter.
- New explanations of research techniques in Chapter 4 show students how to apply cutting-edge tools and strategies in their research, including keyword searches with expanded Boolean operators and social networking sites.
- Three new student papers plus a new annotated bibliography provide fresh models of student research work.
- Updated coverage of MLA and APA documentation style brings students up to speed with the latest revisions, especially how to handle electronic source documentation.

Key Features

The world of academic research is changing rapidly, especially with the ascendance of online research. Virtually every college student now writes on a computer and researches online. The sixteenth edition of Writing Research Papers continues to offer a wide array of resources to help students successfully plan and execute their research papers.

HELP WITH DIGITAL RESEARCH  The digital revolution is so pervasive in research writing today that a single chapter cannot properly encompass the topic. Instead, every chapter of this text has been updated to reflect the current context for academic writing, including the impact of...
technology on searching for appropriate topics, finding and evaluating source material, gathering notes and drafting the paper, avoiding plagiarism and embracing academic integrity, and, of course, documenting sources. Students are directed step by step through the various formats for documenting online sources and are offered clear, detailed guidance on blending electronic citations into their writing. The most extensive updated content is included in Chapter 4, where explanations are provided about new research techniques using social networking sites and keyword searches with expanded Boolean operators.

CURRENT DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES Since discipline-specific style guides offer very different methods for documenting sources—particularly electronic sources—depending on the academic field of research, a guide of this sort is vital to students who are responding to writing assignments in a variety of disciplines. To enable students to document sources correctly, this edition includes updated guidelines for the most important documentation formats.

- **Up-to-date coverage of MLA documentation style.** The Modern Language Association (MLA) significantly revised its documentation style for both print and electronic sources in the most recent edition of the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, and the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. All sample citations and student papers in Chapters 1 to 14 reflect the current MLA style guides.

- **Revised APA documentation coverage.** The American Psychological Association (APA) also revised its documentation guidelines in the *APA Publication Manual*. All sample citations and student papers in Chapter 15 follow current APA documentation standards.

- **Current standards for CMS style.** The most recent edition of the University of Chicago Press’ *Chicago Manual of Style* emphasizes the role of electronic research. All sample citations and student papers in Chapter 16 follow current CMS documentation standards.

**RESEARCH TIPS FOR AVOIDING THE PITFALLS OF PLAGIARISM** Chapters 1 to 10 provide at least one “Research Tip,” a feature that offers instruction and examples for citing sources appropriately and ethically, and avoiding plagiarism. Beginning with the section “Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism,” in Chapter 1, *Writing Research Papers* clearly explains what plagiarism is and presents strategies students can use to avoid unintentional plagiarism. Moreover, there is a special emphasis on how to blend quotations into academic writing and document Internet sources.

**GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING ONLINE SOURCES** Understanding what constitutes an appropriate source for an academic paper is more and more challenging for students, as more and more sources become instantly available online. *Writing Research Papers* assists student researchers in deciding if and when to use familiar search engines such as Google or Yahoo!, and also offers detailed advice on how to find respected scholarly sources—and how to determine whether a source is in fact credible. A checklist, “Evaluating Online Sources,” helps students gauge the quality of online articles.

**STUDENT PAPERS** Student writing examples provide models for student writers of how other students have researched and drafted papers on a wide range of topics. With seven annotated sample papers, more than any other text of this kind, *Writing Research Papers* demonstrates format, documentation, and the different academic styles. Student papers include:

- Ashley Irwin, “Sylvia Plath and Her ’Daddy’” (MLA style)
- Anthony Ruvolo, “The Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and a New Interpretation of the Capitoline Triad” (MLA style)
- Whitley Rentfro, “Of Highways and Bike-ways: Filling the Lane for the Future” (APA style)
Clare Grady, “The Space Race: One Small Step—One Giant Leap” (CMS style)
Sarah Morrison, “Annotated Bibliography: Media Ethics” (MLA style)
Sarah Morrison, “Media Ethics: A Review of Literature” (MLA style)

Sample abstracts in MLA and APA style are also displayed. Additional sample research papers are available in the Instructor’s Manual, Model Research Papers from across the Curriculum, and on MyWritingLab.

REFERENCE WORKS BY TOPIC The list of references in the Appendix, “Finding Reference Works for Your General Topic,” provides a user-friendly list of sources for launching your research project. Arranged into ten general categories, the Appendix allows a researcher to have quick access to relevant library books, library databases, and Internet sites.

ACCESSIBLE, NAVIGABLE DESIGN As in previous editions, Writing Research Papers is printed in full color, making information and features easier to find and more pleasing to read, and bringing strong, visual elements to the instruction. Icons identify special features, like the “Where to Look” boxes signaling cross-references. The spiral-bound version of Writing Research Papers also includes tab dividers to make information easier to find. The tabs include additional websites, as well as tables of contents for the following sections.

Additional Resources for Instructors and Students

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 at www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/.

INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL This extensive guide contains chapter-by-chapter classroom exercises, research assignments, quizzes, and duplication masters. Instructors can visit www.pearsonhighered.com/IRC to download a copy of this valuable resource.

Acknowledgments

Many key people supported the development of Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide, Sixteenth Edition. I am grateful to the following students for their help and for allowing me to use their work as models in this book: Ashley Irwin, Whitley Rentfro, Clare Grady, Charlotte Dawn Fullerton, and Sarah Morrison.

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Preface to the Instructor

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Heartfelt appreciation is also extended to the members of my family: Martha, Sarah, Logan, Caleb, Jessica, and granddaughters Peyton and Paris. Their love and patience made this project possible.

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