

The Wadsworth Guide to Research

Instructor's Resource Manual

Second Edition

Chapter 1: Research and the Rhetorical Situation

Overview:

The *Wadsworth Guide to Research* is both a pragmatic research guide designed to help students understand and implement collegiate level research projects and an introduction to theories of rhetoric where students connect their communicative acts to the broader context of audience, purpose, topic and their own stance as an author. The beauty of a rhetorical approach to research-based writing is that students are not learning about writing in a vacuum. These rhetorical principles inform communication, allowing students to connect pragmatic collegiate research strategies with work they will do outside of the classroom. Therefore, Chapter 1 is designed to broaden student understanding of what research means, both inside and outside of the classroom, as well as communicate the foundation of rhetorically-based writing: the rhetorical situation. Finally, in order to help students understand academic audiences, the chapter concludes with a short introduction to different academic disciplines and their basic values. Instructors functioning within Writing in the Disciplines or Writing Across the Disciplines (WID/WAD) curricula might find this section particularly helpful in aligning *The Wadsworth Guide to Research* with the aims of their course.

Answers for Research in Action:

1. Ideally, students will connect author, audience and purpose to Kendall's topic.

Author: Kendall's experience in the homeless shelter has given her a real stake in understanding how mental illness works. Rather than choosing a concept randomly, Kendall is using her experience with the specific individuals she has encountered to guide her research.

Audience: While Kendall is interested in fulfilling her professor's requirements for the project, the shelter management needs Kendall to report on her findings. Kendall is more likely to connect the problems that she is researching to a series of real solutions and coping strategies that she can communicate to the volunteers at the shelter.

Purpose: Kendall's research has real consequences. First, she can better understand and help mentally ill people at the shelter. She can also improve the ability of the other volunteers to connect with the people they are trying to help. Kendall can't use unreliable or outdated research—and she has to be careful to distinguish new and innovative theories and therapies from what is commonly accepted.

2. Students should understand that different audiences might require different approaches when communicating information. It would be helpful to get students to distinguish between the professor, and fellow volunteers at the shelter. With her professor, Kendall can assume some basic scientific or psychological knowledge that may be lacking in the shelter volunteers. Kendall may have to write in a more formal tone for her professor. In contrast, the volunteers at the shelter may have more real-life experience with the mentally ill than the college professor. Kendall may have to spend more time introducing her professor to the importance of her argument.

Presentation/Publication: Students should be aware that Kendall's ability to choose her presentation mode may be more restricted by the requirements of her professor. Kendall may be limited in terms of a formal written paper or other assignment guidelines. For the

volunteers, Kendall might find it far more effective to consider an oral presentation with visual aids or handouts, or create a web resource. Additionally, Kendall may have to consider presenting her information to the volunteers at multiple times—if the volunteers are on different shifts she may have to prepare a manual or a list.

3. Students have plenty of options for strong responses here. On a practical level, Kendall might want to learn more about both of her audiences. She probably needs to review the details of her writing assignment and her professor's familiarity with her topic. Similarly, Kendall would also want to understand the background of the other volunteers so her research can be useful to their experience at the shelter. Location is quite important as the geographical and political environment surrounding the shelter could influence what Kendall researches. For example, if the shelter was in an area that had a strong support program for the mentally ill, Kendall might want to research connections between those programs and the shelter. Alternatively, the shelter could be filling a void in care for the mentally ill, and the lack of other services would be important to consider. Students could consider the ethical complications of researching mental illness when real people in desperate situations are directly impacted. Is it ethical for Kendall to "diagnose" those at the shelter? Is it ethical for Kendall to use what she has witnessed in order to select her topic?

4. This is a nice opportunity to get students to reflect on the soft factors that influence our scholarship in the real world. Does Kendall have other classes? She is taking on a big assignment. Does Kendall have access to the kinds of library and medical resources she might need to find reputable research? How easy or difficult will it be to prepare a research project for her professor? Does Kendall find formal writing easy or challenging? How easy or difficult will it be for Kendall to meet with the shelter volunteers? Does Kendall find oral presentation easy or challenging? Does Kendall have access to a computer? It might be interesting to get students to speculate about how the project might increase in difficulty if Kendall had a laptop, a desktop, or was working from a school computer lab.

Approaches for class discussion/grading Answers for the Write: Discover Disciplinary Patterns and Conventions.

While it is impossible to describe the exact set of answers the student interview will reveal, we have provided a set of touch points to aid in grading or processing these answers in a class discussion.

Tips for students struggling with finding a subject:

If you are planning on implementing the class discussion suggestions below, it could be helpful to direct these students to multidisciplinary or professional subjects. While a Chaucer scholar will give a fairly straightforward series of responses that will conform to the guidelines on page 13, a digital humanist would really blow some of these distinctions out of the water! Scholars in Cultural, Gender, or Sexuality studies often blend several disciplinary approaches. Other "fun" subjects could be interested in intersections between medicine and art, historians of science or medicine, or those interested in scientific or medical ethics. If your institution has an extension program,

talking to a professor whose job is to communicate technical or scientific innovations back to the community would also challenge disciplinary distinctions.

Guidelines for Class Discussion

1. Strong responses here will cover both aspects of the question, looking at student assignments and at the subject's own writing projects. Students should be encouraged to contribute responses that are not traditional, "research paper" kinds of projects. Attention should also be paid to the large role that oral presentation, email, and multimedia or web-based projects can play for both students and the interview subject.

2. The idea behind this question is to get students to begin to recognize basic disciplinary distinctions. It might be helpful to refer to the chart on page 13, asking students from each disciplinary area to compare answers with emphasis on role of the researcher, areas of inquiry and even formal conventions of the field. Students who interview professionals may be surprised to discover the rigid conventions of their chosen field—consider an attorney who must submit her court documents with rigidly defined fonts, headings and citation.

3. It would be helpful here to stress the common ground between disciplines. This approach might make a nice touchstone for identifying common writing struggles like proofreading, writer's block, intimidation, choosing proper sources and so forth.

**Before discussing questions 4-6, it might be helpful to have students examine their writing sample (from question 7) in order to compare the documentary evidence to what their subject has responded. A nice class activity might be to have students in pairs or small groups examine these samples in order to determine: 1. Research materials used. 2. Format of the document 3. Tone of the document (formal or informal). 4. Active or passive voice 5. Citation style. Students could then use those answers when answering questions 4, 5, and 6. Small groups would allow students without a writing sample to participate in this part of the discussion.

4-6. A potential approach to these answers (which will be quite diverse) would be to construct a blank "chart template" based on the chart on page 13—use these student answers to fill in the classroom chart. Once you have compiled these student answers, you could compare your class feedback to that listed in the textbook. Hopefully, your student answers will vary from those presented in the textbook. In that case, it is very helpful to make the point that these disciplinary categories are guidelines, about as useful as any other set of guidelines. While tools like the chart may be helpful in drawing broad distinctions, the real work of academia is a glorious mess—one that is becoming increasingly multidisciplinary in character.

7. Students should be encouraged to examine 1. Research materials used. 2. Format of the document 3. Tone of the document (formal or informal). 4. Voice of the document (active or passive). 5. Citation style

Chapter 2: Writing Processes

Overview:

This chapter has two major elements. The first is a delightful conversation about how students approach the writing process and a chance to deconstruct some really negative myths about how writing happens. The second is a chance to dip a toe into the world of classical rhetoric, specifically Aristotle's Five Canons of Rhetoric.

There are two basic approaches for helping students explore different Invention, Researching, Drafting, Peer Review, Revising, Editing, Proofreading, Publishing activities in this chapter. Some instructors prefer to offer an initial "buffet" of these activities, getting students to quickly explore an activity in a five minute trial period and reflect on its efficacy. Other instructors tend to return to the activities as they work with their first class writing project. In this case, an instructor might want to focus on the writing myths or the Invention activities and remind students that they will return to the other activities at other stages of the process. *The Wadsworth Guide to Research* has connected the DIY assignments with these activities, often asking students to return to a strategy at various stages in the process.

While instructors of all backgrounds probably have familiarity with the foibles and quirks of composition, classical rhetoric may be a bit more intimidating. It is completely possible to teach this chapter without additional reference to classical rhetoric. However, other instructors might prefer to offer some additional information. In that case, some helpful resources are:

- Silva Rhetoricae for a quick overview of classical rhetoric terms and concepts: <http://rhetoric.byu.edu/>
- Aristotle's Rhetoric in full-text: <http://rhetoric.eserver.org/aristotle/>
- For those who dig it in Greek, the Perseus project has an interactive version including hyperlinked translation and grammar help: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0059>

The Coursemate interactive quiz also includes a few sly references to figures in classical rhetoric which could be helpful for class discussion. Demosthenes is a famous classical rhetorician, whose biography is located here: <http://www.livius.org/de-dh/demosthenes/demosthenes.html>. Aspasia, a lost female rhetorician, is the subject of a fantastic essay: Jarratt, Susan and Rory Ong. "Aspasia: Rhetoric, Gender and Colonial Ideology." in *Reclaiming Rhetorica*. Ed. Andrea A. Lunsford. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995.

For those who want to shake it up a bit by challenging the notions our rhetorical heritage is the province of ancient Greece and Rome, I also suggest perusing *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics*. Ed. Carol S. Lipson and Robert Binkley. West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2009.

Answers for Research in Action:

This scenario provides an opportunity for instructors with an ESL background or an interest in second-language writing to provide some vital context for their student writers. While instructors should avoid “singling out” any ESL students in their classroom, it might be nice to have a general conversation about writing outside of your comfort zone, including any student experiences speaking and writing in non-English speaking countries, as well as the experiences of non-native English speakers.

1. Ideally, students will connect all the elements of the rhetorical situation, author, topic, audience and purpose to Qi’s research on colleges in NYC.

Author: It would be helpful for student’s to recognize the linguistic and cultural issues that Qi must encounter when doing research in a language that isn’t English.

Topic: While student answers will vary, it would be helpful to emphasize the stakes here for Qi. Research often has powerful personal consequences. What is at stake for Qi if he chooses the wrong college?

Audience: It might be nice to highlight the differences in the following scenarios: Qi and his family have similar goals, i.e. does his family also want him to be an engineer, for a college education versus different goals for Qi and his family? Qi’s family has an unlimited budget for college, versus the need to keep to a budget. Qi’s decision to attend college is independent of a government or corporate scholarship program, versus Qi attending college via a program that might dictate a particular major or degree program.

Purpose: I would highlight the commuting issue, which could be lost in this scenario. Having to factor in a commute and off-campus living arrangements would change the factors Qi would have to consider.

2. Much of the conversation from Answer 1 should serve to break out the basic issues Qi faces: cost, commute, support for non-native English speakers, and curriculum.

Resources: Students should mention college websites, guidance counselors, parents, teachers, and (if Qi has a corporate sponsorship) his future employer.

3. Again, conversation about obstacles would center on Qi’s need to perfect his English, commuting into NYC (poor Qi!), and the cost of his education. Opportunities here might include communities and resources at each college for international students. This might be a nice chance to discuss cool resources for ESL students on your campus, including any clubs or social organizations.

4. Again, a multitude of possible answers here. A possible entry into a discussion of writing processes might be the challenges in audience, especially if Qi has to have a contentious conversation with his parents about his college choice. It would be helpful to have students speculate on different ways Qi could get his message out to other international students.