UNIT I RESEARCH BASICS

DEFINITION OF RESEARCH

Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. Once can also define research as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. In fact, research is an art of scientific investigation. The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English lays down the meaning of research as "a careful investigation or inquiry specially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge.''Redman and Mory define research as a "systematized effort to gain new knowledge."

Some people consider research as a movement, a movement from the known to the unknown. It is actually a voyage of discovery. We all possess the vital instinct of inquisitiveness for, when the unknown confronts us, we wonder and our inquisitiveness makes us probe and attain full and fuller understanding of the unknown. This inquisitiveness is the mother of all knowledge and the method, which man employs for obtaining the knowledge of whatever the unknown, can be termed as research. Research is an academic activity and as such the term should be used in a technical sense.

According to Clifford Woody research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organising and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis. D. Slesinger and M. Stephenson in the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences define research as "the manipulation of things, concepts or symbols for the purpose of generalising to extend, correct or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in construction of theory or in the practice of an art."

Research is, thus, an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its advancement. It is the persuit of truth with the help of study, observation, comparison and experiment. In short, the search for knowledge through objective and systematic method of finding solution to a problem is research. The systematic approach concerning generalisation and the formulation of a theory is also research. As such the term 'research' refers to the systematic method.

Research Methodology consisting of enunciating the problem, formulating a hypothesis, collecting the facts or data, analysing the facts and reaching certain conclusions either in the form of solutions(s) towards the concerned problem or in certain generalisations for some theoretical formulation.

TYPES OF RESEARCH

The basic types of research are as follows:

(i) Descriptive vs. Analytical:

Descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; he can only report what has happened or what is happening. Most ex post facto research projects are used for descriptive studies in which the researcher seeks to measure such items as, for example, frequency of shopping, preferences of people, or similar data. Ex post facto studies also include attempts by researchers to discover causes even when they cannot control the variables.

The methods of research utilized in descriptive research are survey methods of all kinds, including comparative and correlational methods. In analytical research, on the other hand, the researcher has to use facts or information already available, and analyze these to make a critical evaluation of the material.

(ii) Applied vs. Fundamental:

Research can either be applied (or action) research or fundamental (to basic or pure) research. Applied research aims at finding a solution for an immediate problem facing a society or an industrial/business organisation, whereas fundamental research is mainly concerned with generalisations and with the formulation of a theory. "Gathering knowledge for knowledge's sake is termed 'pure' or 'basic' research.

Research concerning some natural phenomenon or relating to pure mathematics are examples of fundamental research. Similarly, research studies, concerning human behaviour carried on with a view to make generalisations about human behaviour, are also examples of fundamental research, but research aimed at certain conclusions (say, a solution) facing a concrete social or business problem is an example of applied research. Research to identify social, economic or political trends that may affect a particular institution or the copy research (research to find out whether certain communications will be read and understood) or the marketing research or evaluation research are examples of applied research.

Finally, the central aim of applied research is to discover a solution for some pressing practical problem, whereas basic research is directed towards finding information that has a broad base of applications and thus, adds to the already existing organized body of scientific knowledge.

(iii) Quantitative vs. Qualitative:

Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind. For instance, when we are interested in investigating the reasons for human behaviour (i.e., why people

think or do certain things), we quite often talk of 'Motivation Research', an important type of qualitative research.

This type of research aims at discovering the underlying motives and desires, using in depth interviews for the purpose. Other techniques of such research are word association tests, sentence completion tests, story completion tests and similar other projective techniques. Attitude or opinion research i.e., research designed to find out how people feel or what they think about a particular subject or institution is also qualitative research.

Qualitative research is specially important in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour. Through such research we can analyse the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner or which make people like or dislike a particular thing. It may be stated, however, that to apply qualitative research in 4 Pauline V. Young, Scientific Social Surveys and Research, p. 30. 4 Research Methodology practice is relatively a difficult job and therefore, while doing such research, one should seek guidance from experimental psychologists.

(iv) Conceptual vs. Empirical:

Conceptual research is that related to some abstract idea(s) or theory. It is generally used by philosophers and thinkers to develop new concepts or to reinterpret existing ones. On the other hand, empirical research relies on experience or observation alone, often without due regard for system and theory. It is data-based research, coming up with conclusions which are capable of being verified by observation or experiment. We can also call it as experimental type of research. In such a research it is necessary to get at facts firsthand, at their source, and actively to go about doing certain things to stimulate the production of desired information. In such a research, the researcher must first provide himself with a working hypothesis or guess as to the probable results. He then works to get enough facts (data) to prove or disprove his hypothesis. He then sets up experimental designs which he thinks will manipulate the persons or the materials concerned so as to bring forth the desired information.

Such research is thus characterised by the experimenter's control over the variables under study and his deliberate manipulation of one of them to study its effects. Empirical research is appropriate when proof is sought that certain variables affect other variables in some way. Evidence gathered through experiments or empirical studies is today considered to be the most powerful support possible for a given hypothesis.

(v) Some Other Types of Research:

All other types of research are variations of one or more of the above stated approaches, based on either the purpose of research, or the time required to accomplish research, on the environment in which research is done, or on the basis of some other similar factor. Form the point of view of time, we can think of research either as one-time research or longitudinal research. In the former case the research is confined to a single time-period, whereas in the latter case the research is carried on over several time-periods. Research can be field-setting research or laboratory research or simulation

research, depending upon the environment in which it is to be carried out. Research can as well be understood as clinical or diagnostic research.

Such research follow case-study methods or indepth approaches to reach the basic causal relations. Such studies usually go deep into the causes of things or events that interest us, using very small samples and very deep probing data gathering devices. The research may be exploratory or it may be formalized. The objective of exploratory research is the development of hypotheses rather than their testing, whereas formalized research studies are those with substantial structure and with specific hypotheses to be tested. Historical research is that which utilizes historical sources like documents, remains, etc. to study events or ideas of the past, including the philosophy of persons and groups at any remote point of time. Research can also be classified as conclusion-oriented and decision-oriented. While doing conclusion oriented research, a researcher is free to pick up a problem, redesign the enquiry as he proceeds and is prepared to conceptualize as he wishes. Decision-oriented research is always for the need of a decision maker and the researcher in this case is not free to embark upon research according to his own inclination. Operations research is an example of decision oriented research since it is a scientific method of providing executive departments with a quantitative basis for decisions regarding operations under their control.

SELECTING THE TOPIC

The research topic undertaken for study must be carefully selected. The task is a difficult one, although it may not appear to be so. Help may be taken from a research guide in this connection. Nevertheless, every researcher must find out his own salvation for choosing a topic cannot be borrowed. A topic must spring from the researcher's mind like a plant springing from its own seed. If our eyes need glasses, it is not the optician alone who decides about the number of the lens we require. We have to see ourselves and enable him to prescribe for us the right number by cooperating with him. Thus, a research guide can at the most only help a researcher choose a subject.

However, the following points may be observed by a researcher in selecting a research topic or a subject for research:

a)Subject which is overdone should not be normally chosen, for it will be a difficult task to throw any new light in such a case.
b)Controversial subject should not become the choice of an average researcher.
c) Too narrow or too vague topics should be avoided.
d) The subject selected for research should be familiar and feasible so that the related research material or sources of research are within one's reach.Even then it is quite difficult to supply definitive ideas concerning how a researcher should obtain ideas for his research. For this purpose, a researcher should contact an expert or a professor in the University who is already engaged in research. He may as well read articles published in current literature available on the subject and may think how the techniques and ideas discussed therein might be applied to the solution of other problems. He may discuss with others what he has in mind concerning a topic. In this way he should make all possible efforts in selecting a topic.

e) The importance of the subject, the qualifications and the training of a researcher, the costs involved, the time factor are few other criteria that must also be considered in selecting a topic.

In other words, before the final selection of a topic , a researcher should ask himself the following questions: (a) Whether he is well equipped in terms of his background to carry out the research? (b) Whether the study falls within the budget he can afford? (c) Whether the necessary cooperation can be obtained from those who must participate in research as subjects? If the answers to all these questions are in the affirmative, one may become sure so far as the practicability of the study is concerned.

f) The selection of a topic must be preceded by a preliminary study. This may not be necessary when the topic requires the conduct of a research closely similar to one that has already been done. But when the field of inquiry is relatively new and does not have available a set of well developed techniques, a brief feasibility study must always be undertaken. If the subject for research is selected properly by observing the above mentioned points, the research will not be a boring drudgery, rather it will be love's labour. In fact, zest for work is a must. The subject or the topic selected must involve the researcher and must have an upper most place in his mind so that he may undertake all pains needed for the study.

NOTE TAKING: It is an extremely important part of the **research** process as it can help you effectively use the material you find and make sure you credit the sources accurately.

Note-**taking** is the practice of writing down or otherwise recording key points of information. It's an important part of the **research** process. **Notes** taken on class lectures or discussions may serve as study aids, while **notes** taken during an interview may provide material for an essay, article, or book sources.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES:

Primary resources contain first-hand information, meaning that you are reading the author's own account on a specific topic or event that s/he participated in. Examples of primary resources include scholarly research articles, books, and diaries. Primary sources such as research articles often do not explain terminology and theoretical principles in detail. Thus, readers of primary scholarly research should have foundational knowledge of the subject area. Use primary resources to obtain a first-hand account to an actual event and identify original research done in a field. For many of your papers, use of primary resources will be a requirement.

Examples of a *primary source* are:

- Original documents such as diaries, speeches, manuscripts, letters, interviews, records, eyewitness accounts, autobiographies
- Empirical scholarly works such as research articles, clinical reports, case studies, dissertations
- Creative works such as poetry, music, video, photography

Secondary sources describe, summarize, or discuss information or details originally presented in another source; meaning the author, in most cases, did not participate in the event. This type of source is written for a broad audience and will include definitions of discipline specific terms, history relating to the topic, significant theories and principles, and summaries of major studies/events as related to the topic. Use

secondary sources to obtain an overview of a topic and/or identify primary resources. Refrain from including such resources in an annotated bibliography for doctoral level work unless there is a good reason.

Examples of a *secondary source* are:

- Publications such as textbooks, magazine articles, book reviews, commentaries, encyclopedias, almanacs

USE OF STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS:
Abbreviation is a shortening of a word or phrase to be used to report the full form' (World English Dictionary. 2009). To put such definition into one word it is possible to define the abbreviation as a 'reduction'. However, returning back to definitions, the common explanation for the term as abbreviation, which can be found in any useful dictionary, looks like this: 'Abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase' (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. 2005). To put it shorter abbreviation is a 'reduced form'.

Uppercase letter abbreviations
Do not use periods or spaces in abbreviations composed solely of capital letters, except in the case of proper names:
US, MA, CD, HTML

C. S. Lewis, P. D. James, E. B. White

unless the name is only composed of initials:
FDR, MLK

Lowercase letter abbreviations
Use a period if the abbreviation ends in a lowercase letter, unless referring to an Internet suffix, where the period should come before the abbreviation:
assn., conf., Eng., esp.

.com, .edu, .gov (URL suffixes)

Note: Degree names are a notable exception to the lowercase abbreviation rule.
PhD, EdD, PsyD

Use periods between letters without spacing if each letter represents a word in common lowercase abbreviations:
a.m., e.g., i.e.

Other notable exceptions:
mph, rpm, ns, lb

Abbreviations in citations
Condense citations as much as possible using abbreviations.
Time Designations
Remember to follow common trends in abbreviating time and location within citations. Month names longer than four letters used in journal and magazine citations should be abbreviated:
Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.

Geographic Names
Use geographic names of states and countries. Abbreviate country, province, and state names.
Logan, UT; Manchester, Eng.; Sherbrooke, QC

Scholarly Abbreviations
The MLA Handbook (8th ed.) encourages users to adhere to the common scholarly abbreviations for both in-text citations and in the works-cited page. Here is the list of common scholarly abbreviations from Section 1.6.2 of the MLA Handbook (8th ed.) with a few additions:

- anon. for anonymous
- c. or ca. for circa
- ch. for chapter
- dept. for department
- e.g. for example
- ed. for edition
- et al. for multiple names (translates to "and others")
- fwd. for foreword
- i.e. for that is
- jour. for journal
- lib. for library
- no. for number
- P for Press (used for academic presses)
- p. for page, pp. for pages
- par. for paragraph when page numbers are unavailable
- qtd. in for quoted in
- rev. for revised
- sec. or sect. for section
- ser. for series
- trans. for translation
- U for University (for example, Purdue U)
- UP for University Press (for example, Yale UP or U of California P)
- var. for variant
- vol. for volume

Publisher Names
Cite publishers' names in full as they appear on title or copyright pages. For example, cite the entire name for a publisher (e.g. W. W. Norton or Liveright Publishing).
Exceptions:

- Omit articles and business abbreviations (like Corp., Inc., Co., and Ltd.).
- Use the acronym of the publisher if the company is commonly known by that abbreviation (e.g. MLA, ERIC, GPO). For publishers who are not known by an abbreviation, write the entire name.
- Use only U and P when referring to university presses (e.g. Cambridge UP or U of Arkansas P)

For more information on scholarly abbreviations, see Section 1.6.3 of the *MLA Handbook* (8th ed.)*.* See also the following examples:
U of California P
MIT P

Utah State UP
Teachers College P
Chronicle Books
Vintage Books
McGraw-Hill
Little, Brown

Library & its uses

A Library is a communal place so adds to the importance of community in our lives. It offers us education, relaxation and access to all sorts of books, magazines, music and movies that we could never afford to buy. It is a safe place to meet friends, use the internet or get help with school assignments. It is a place where all walks of life may be present, including children, youth, and the aged. In an era where sustainability is becoming a necessity, a library is a provider. A library has a great importance of its own. For a person of average means, it is difficult to purchase more than one or two daily newspapers or monthly magazines, but it is the keen desire of educated people to know all possible shades of opinion as expressed in different newspapers. Also, it is not possible to buy every book that you are interested to read. Hence library provides an effective alternate where you need to pay in a small number of membership fees and you can get to access to a variety of books, newspapers and magazines etc.

Library at home is a great way to keep your favourite reads organized in one place, without them lying around the apartment in messy heaps but it is not possible to have a library at home and also not affordable. Technology has taken over our lives and everything seems to be attainable digitally and so is the information sources. The sad part about online books is that the realness of holding one in your hands is lost. Also, these may cause a great amount of strain on our eyes, though it may be of convenience to constant travellers, there's nothing like a great book that you can leaf through, as opposed to clicking through. It's a relief how libraries are still going strong among those who love good old books. Love for reading doesn't die so easily, even if you are a follower of technology.

Libraries play a very healthy role throughout our life. Libraries provide the students very healthy environment for learning as well as making notes or completing a project. Library provides a very calm and disciplined atmosphere which helps students to maintain a good concentration on their studies. Also, students can take reference books which can help them to make some quality notes. Libraries are the only place where we are free from all conventions because reading is absolutely a matter of personal choice. Readers are allowed to read what they like and also read the book according to their own manner. Nobody would check them or disturb them. Since everything is systematic and the atmosphere is calm so students can gain more in less time. One can save time and energy studying in libraries.

ORGANISATION OF THE MATERIAL:

When you're working for a project, keeping your research organized is a challenging task. Unfortunately, there isn't a "best" way to get yourself organized and there's not just one single answer. The bottom line is you have to choose a system that works for your learning style and your writing habits.
Do some preliminary reading. Get a sense of your overall topic before really getting into the "heavy" research.

Research with your final product in mind. As you research, think about what "subheadings" or chunks you may want to write about (even though you don't have all your information yet).

If you need help with identifying your topic chunks, you could try writing a concept map. For those of you unfamiliar with that term, concept mapping essentially involves writing down a term or idea (e.g. effect of exercise on mental health) and then brainstorming other concepts that come to mind within that topic (e.g. impact on self-esteem, exercise as treatment option).

Keep a journal/Write a research plan. Keep track of what databases you've tried, what keywords you've used, what didn't go well, your thoughts and ideas…

Once you start finding good stuff…

Organize by "subheading" or chunk. There were *lots* of different ideas for how to do this:

Write a working outline: what will each subheading or part of your essay include? What will your arguments be? What sources support that point?

Ignore the interesting-but-not-useful stuff: what are your essay's subheadings? What is your argument? Read for that information, make notes on that information, and then throw everything else out.

Colour code (who's surprised that librarians do this?): assign a different colour to each subheading. Then use highlighters, post-its, tabs, or font colour to organize your notes and articles.

Create different folders on your computer or different Word files for each subheading. Or if you like to print everything else, have a different folder or binder tab on each subheading. The bottom line is: keep related things together!

One of our librarians also organizes **chronologically** within each chunk, because "each article/book may have been influenced by those that preceded it; even in a very short time-frame" and you may find overarching themes or arguments that you may not have noticed otherwise.

Write notes, in your own words, on *why* your sources are helpful. Again, there were different ideas for how to do this. It's important to also note that these techniques can be done by hand or on a computer!

Use cue cards: with the citation at the top (including page numbers!), write down the general ideas or concepts you want to use from that source. You may have more than one cue card for each source, if you're organizing your notes by subheading.

Create annotations: again with the citation at the top (and, of course, with the page numbers!), create a summary for each article/book you want to use. Include the key parts/arguments/quotes that you liked from that source.

Write your notes in your own words: why is this source helpful for your essay? How does it support your thesis? Say it regular language in your research notes, rather than writing out word-for-word what the book says.

Save your research. You won't find it again.

Email your search results to yourself, print them, write them down by hand, use Zotero/Mendeley… anything but having to replicate your searches!

Create a working bibliography: add resources that you want to use to this bibliography as you research

When you're ready to write…

Write out of order. You don't need to write your introduction first and your conclusion last. You can fix transition sentences and weird phrases later*. (Additionally, don't be afraid to go back and change your intro at the end – sometimes your essay goes in a different direction. That's ok!)*

Write down ideas as they come to you.

a)As you finish up your research, full-sentence paragraphs may come to you. Write these down – even in your notes/working outline/cue cards, etc.

b)If you're working on the same project for a few days/weeks, you may get ideas as you try to fall asleep. Or in the shower.   Or when you're talking to your mom. Keep a notebook or your phone handy to write these down as they come to you (and then go back to sleep!).

UNIT II – DIFFERENT KINDS OF WRITING

EXPLANATIVE WRITING

Explanative writing's main purpose is to explain. It is a subject-oriented writing style, in which authors focus on telling about a given topic or subject without voicing their personal opinions. These types of writings or articles furnish with relevant facts and figures but do not include their opinions. This is one of the most common types of writing. We always see it in textbooks and how-to articles. The author just tells us about a given subject, such as how to do something.

It usually explains something in a process.

Is often equipped with facts and figures.

Is usually in a logical order and sequence.

It "exposes" or explains things about a subject. It is also sometimes called "information writing" because it gives information about a person, place, thing, relationship or idea. To accomplish that, it is best developed by the use of clear reasons, facts and statistical information, cause and effect relationships, or examples. Since expository paragraphs are factual, they are written without emotion and usually written in the third person. Nevertheless, we can use "I" in our expository writing if the focus is on external, neutral descriptions and explanations, rather than personal feelings (personal feelings move you into "descriptive writing").

 Indeed, expository paragraphs and essays are sometimes confused with descriptive writing, because both can spend a lot of time describing things. But again, the big difference is that expository description tends to focus on external objects, situations and processes, in order to explain something in a neutral, matter-of-fact manner. Descriptive paragraphs, on the other hand, tend to focus on our emotional responses as we perceive the world at one point in time.

We can Use Expository Writing in i)Textbook writing. ii)How-to articles. iii)Recipes. iv)News stories (not including opinion or editorial pieces). v)Business, technical, or scientific writing.

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

The argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner. It generally call for extensive research of literature or previously published material. It may also require empirical research where the collected data through interviews, surveys, observations, or experiments. Detailed research allows to learn about the topic and to understand different points of view regarding the topic so that we can choose a position and support it with the evidence collected during research. Regardless of the amount or type of research involved, argumentative writing must establish a clear thesis and follow sound reasoning.

The structure of the argumentative writing is held together by the following.

a) A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.

B) Clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion.

c) Body paragraphs that include evidential support.

d) Evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).

e)A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided.

NARRATIVE WRITING

The narrative writing or essay tells a story, just like a narrator in a play (though it should be a true story, unlike a short story or a play). Narrative writing is best used to illustrate the "personal developmental path" a person (often yourself) has taken to reach a particular point in his/her life. As a result, it is normally written in a first person point of view. True narrative writing is unusual, because it is demanding. A narrative must have a conflict that is overcome. This is the core of any narrative form of writing, be it a paragraph, an essay, or a story). In an essay, it usually means a single incident/anecdote, where the narrator experiences some brief challenge that is met and (hopefully) survived. This "overcoming" should in turn lead to some form of understanding. Simply describing or explaining one's surroundings is not a narrative. You need a (brief) establishment of setting, an explanation of the challenge, and the resolution of this challenge. In other words, you need a plot.

DESCRIPTIVE WRITING:

Descriptive writing paints a picture. In its pure form, nothing much happens. "Description" tells what something looks like, feels like, tastes like, sounds like or smells like - without action or events. It doesn't explain a relationship or a process beyond oneself; it focuses on one's immediate subjective perceptions. Thus, descriptive writing connects the outer world with our inner feelings.

It's main purpose is to describe. It is a style of writing that focuses on describing a character, an event, or a place in great detail. It can be poetic when the author takes the time to be very specific in his or her descriptions.

It is usually concerned with creating a verbal picture of what we experience and feel at one moment, and it will use many rich and vivid adjectives and adverbs. So, as a writer, you should make the reader long to smell the rich essence of the trees, the haunting call of the wolves, or the rank odour of the sewer... if that's what you're writing about! Descriptive paragraphs and essays are usually written in the first person point of view, and are much more emotional and personal than expository writing. It should be said that you will rarely write a purely descriptive passage. Normally speaking, descriptive writing is mixed in with other styles as a supplement.

Descriptive writing's main purpose is to describe. It is a style of writing that focuses on describing a character, an event, or a place in great detail. It can be poetic when the author takes the time to be very specific in his or her descriptions.
i)Descriptive writing is often poetic in nature
ii)It describes places, people, events, situations, or locations in a highly-detailed manner.
iii)The author visualizes what he or she sees, hears, tastes, smells, and feels.
We Use Descriptive Writing in i) Poetry ii) Journal or diary writing iii)Nature writing iv)Descriptive passages in fiction.

REFLECTIVE WRITING:

In a reflective writing, a writer primarily examines life experiences, hence the term 'reflective'. The purpose of writing is to provide a platform for the author to not only recount a particular life experience, but to also explore how one has changed or learned from those experiences. Reflective writing can be presented in various formats, but most often see it in a learning log format or diary entry. Diary entries in particular are used to convey how the author's thoughts have developed and evolved over the course of a particular period.

The format of a reflective essay may change depending on the target audience. Reflective essays can be academic, or may feature more broadly as a part of a general piece of writing for a magazine, for instance. For class assignments, while the presentation format can vary, the purpose generally remains the same: tutors aim to inspire students to think deeply and critically about a particular learning experience or set of experiences. Here are some typical examples of reflective essay formats that you may have to write:

A focus on personal growth:
A type of reflective writing often used by tutors as a strategy for helping students to learn how to analyse their personal life experiences to promote emotional growth and development. It gives the student a better understanding of both themselves and their behaviours.

A focus on the literature:
This kind of writing requires students to provide a summary of the literature, after which it is applied to the student's own life experiences.

As we go about deciding on the content of your essay, we need to keep in mind that a reflective essay is highly personal and aimed at engaging the reader or target audience. And there's much more to a reflective essay than just recounting a story. one need to be able to reflect (more on this later) on their experience by showing how it influenced their subsequent behaviours and how theirr life has been particularly changed as a result.

As a starting point, we might want to think about some important experiences in our life that have really impacted us, either positively, negatively, or both. Some typical reflection essay topics include: a real-life experience, an imagined experience, a special object or place, a person who had an influence on us, or something we have watched or read. Note also, that the aftermath of the experience is especially important in a reflective essay; miss this out and we will simply be storytelling.

Form and style of thesis writing

In form, the thesis is a lengthy experimental, design, or theoretical <u>report</u>, with a <u>problem</u>-<u>method</u>-<u>results</u>-<u>discussion</u> <u>structure</u>. This recurrent hypothetico-deductive pattern of developing a thesis to solve a problem and then constructing a methodology and testing for results is common in research writing. When you begin to write the first <u>draft</u> of your thesis, try to salvage useful material for <u>problem statements</u>, <u>methodologies</u>, and <u>bibliographies</u> from your <u>thesis proposal</u>. Make use of your laboratory <u>notebook</u> for detailed accounts of your procedures.

Front Matter

The front matter frames the thesis work. It includes these elements:

- **_Title_** *page.* The title should be informative, contain keywords, and reveal the topic of the thesis. Include the title, author, thesis supervisor, place, and date.
- **_Abstract_**_._ Briefly state the (1) research problem, (2) methodology, (3) key results, and (4) conclusion.
- *Table of contents.* List the key <u>subject headings and subheadings</u> of your <u>thesis</u> with their page numbers. Number the front-matter section in lowercase roman numerals. Be sure to list <u>acknowledgments</u>, <u>appendixes</u>, and <u>bibliography</u>.

- *List of figures.* Include the figure numbers, figure titles, and page numbers.
- *List of tables.* Include the table numbers, table titles, and page numbers.
- *Nomenclature (optional).* List unfamiliar <u>terms</u>, <u>symbols</u>, <u>acronyms</u> and their meanings.

Body

In the thesis body, you provide the introduction, narrative, and analysis of your work. The body includes these elements:

- <u>Introduction</u>. State (1) the <u>purpose</u> of the investigation, (2) the <u>problem</u> being investigated, (3) the <u>background</u> (context and importance) of the problem (<u>citing</u> previous work by others), (4) your thesis and general approach, and (5) the criteria for your study's success.
- <u>Discussion</u>. Discuss the meaning of the results, stating clearly what their significance is. Compare and contrast the descriptive material and account for anything unexpected.
- <u>Conclusions</u>. Review the results in relation to the original problem statement. Assess the success of the study in light of the criteria of success you gave in the introduction.
- <u>Recommendations</u>. If applicable, recommend directions for future work.

End Matter

The <u>end matter</u> is mainly referential material too detailed to fit well in the main narrative of work done. It includes these elements:

- <u>Acknowledgments</u>. Acknowledge assistance from advisors, sponsors, funding agencies, colleagues, technicians, and so on.
- <u>Appendixes</u>. Provide detailed calculations, procedures, data in separate appendixes. Give each appendix a title, a letter (Appendix A, B, C), and an introductory paragraph.
- <u>Bibliography</u>. List alphabetically any works referred to in your study. Follow the <u>bibliographical</u> and footnote <u>formats</u> of your department or of a prominent periodical published by a professional society in your field.

Paragraph Structure

A useful way of understanding paragraph structure is to think of it as a block that is divided into three sections: the beginning, the middle, and the end.

A basic paragraph follows this structure : 1) Topic Sentence (TS) - the beginning.Needs to state ONE idea clearly. Useful Tip: Always put the most important information first!. Supporting Sentences (SS) - the middle. Elaborates and explains the idea introduced in the topic sentence. Provides evidence and examples. Explains the evidence or example included - why is it relevant?. Concluding Sentence (CS) - the end. Makes links: back to the main idea of the paragraph; back to research question or topic of the assignment; to the next paragraph.

According to The Elements Of Style by Strunk and White, a paragraph is the "basic unit of composition." Any form of written work, from term papers to novels, are made up of paragraphs. These smaller chunks of texts make writing more clear, concise, and digestible.

But knowing when to start and stop a paragraph isn't always easy. There is no hard and fast rule for constructing a paragraph. There are, however, guidelines that can make writing a paragraph easier.

Paragraph Structure

A paragraph is a building block for our writing. we're not going to build a house out of a single massive piece of wood. The structural integrity would not be strong. The same applies to essays, stories, and books. Paragraphs make our work readable. Correct organization of our paragraphs also makes our points stronger.

The only prescriptive grammar rule for dividing paragraphs involves dialogue. Whenever a new person speaks, you must start a new paragraph. Other than that, where you divide your writing is up to you.

One helpful tip for constructing paragraphs is the acronym TiPToP. This stands for:**Ti**me, **P**lace, **To**pic, **P**erson.
Time can mean a time shift. In a work of fiction, memoir, or personal story, the time may shift by minutes, hours, days, or longer. Each time you do this, you can start a new paragraph. This also works for technical reports or studies. Whenever there has been a change in time, it's probably a good time to start a new paragraph. Time can also refer to different historical periods if you're writing an essay.

Place is exactly what it sounds like. Whenever there is a setting shift, switch paragraphs. This applies to fiction, nonfiction, and essays alike. If you are talking about a new location, hit that "enter" button.

Topic is broader than the others. How you define the topic is up to you. Sometimes, this rule might overrule the others. For instance, in an essay about the electoral college, you might reference two different elections where the popular vote winner lost the election. This is the same topic but different times. Depending on how much detail you are going into, you can leave these instances in the same paragraph.

Person is more than just dialogue. Just like with time, you can change paragraphs whenever you talk about a new person or use a new point-of-view.

A paragraph has three basic parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. The first sentence is the topic sentence, and it tells your readers what the paragraph is about. It serves as the glue for the entire paragraph.

The DBQ Project calls topic sentences "mini thesis" statements. This is a helpful way to think of it when you're writing an essay. Each topic sentence should support your overarching thesis statement. It should somehow tie into the overall topic of the essay.

Topic sentences also serve other functions. They present the main idea of that paragraph and give a sample of what the paragraph is going to be about. This is important for your readers, but it's also important for you as a writer. Your topic sentence keeps you "on topic." It makes sure that all of the information that follows fits in that paragraph.

For fiction writers, topic sentences still give an overview of the paragraph. They may introduce what a character is doing or feeling before you go into more detail, or they may introduce a specific setting that you plan to elaborate on.