



SHERIDAN
INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

RS292 Research Methods

Research Reports

Lecturer: Dr Maya Krayneva

Textbook: Textbook: Gray, D. (2018). *Doing research in the real world* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage. (Chapter 15)

Keys to Report Writing



- **Engaging**
- **Coherent**
- **Accessible**

Planning the Report

- The main headings and subheadings
- Terms of references (given or write your own):
 - Purpose
 - Scope
 - Type
 - Readership





Considering Your Audience

- Are all the readers alike?
- What do they **already know** about the subject?
- What do they **need to know**?
- What are **their attitudes** to the subject, to the writer, and to the writer's objectives?
- What are the **psychological and physical contexts** within which the report will be received?

Getting started

Be careful of displacement activities

- Endless reading, but no writing
- Endless calculating, but no writing
- Endless work on formatting, but no writing
- Endless work on the presentation, but no writing
- Other?





Making and Using Time

- Allocate blocks of time for different tasks: set **challenging but realistic goals**
- Write **when you're fresh** and in a **non-distracting place**
- Have access to needed **resources**
- **Reward** yourself when you reach certain milestones

A vibrant sunset over a body of water, with reeds in the foreground. The sky is filled with streaks of orange, yellow, and blue, reflecting in the water. The reeds are dark and silhouetted against the bright sky.

Being Reflective & Asking Feedback

Give the audience information quickly and in an accessible way. It must compete for their limited time and attention.

Step back to view your work from the perspective of others. Be critical.

- Does the writing follow a **logical structure**?
- Does the argument **flow**?
- Does the report **meet its aims**?

A vibrant sunset over a body of water, with reeds in the foreground. The sky is filled with streaks of orange, yellow, and blue, reflecting in the calm water. The reeds are dark and silhouetted against the bright sky.

Being Reflective & Asking Feedback

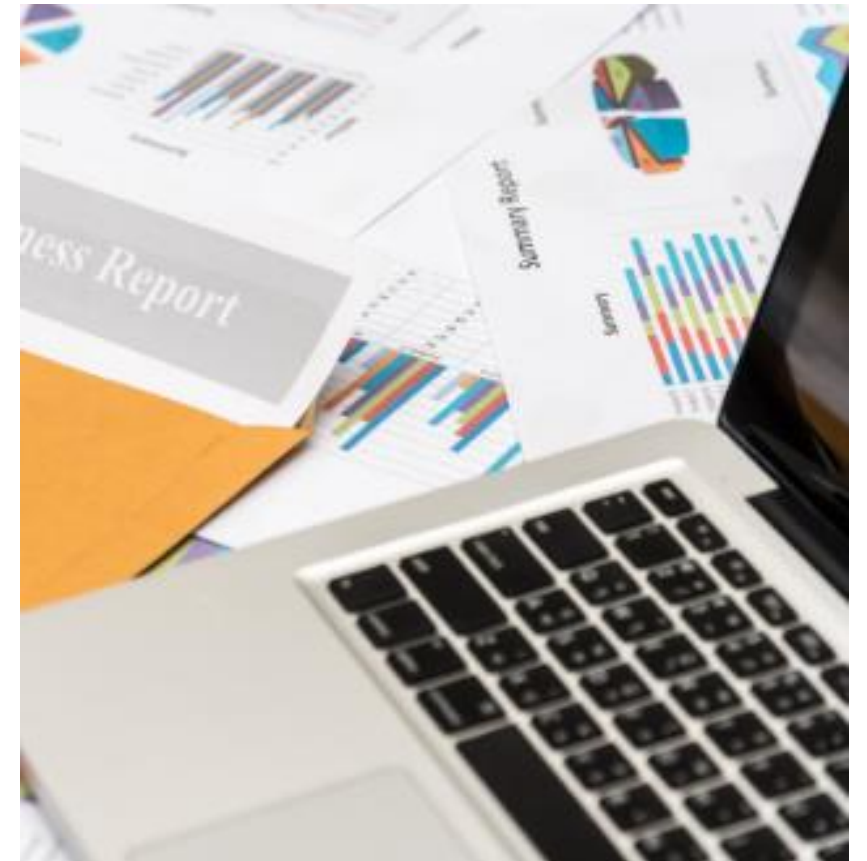
Reflection:

- The **title** – does this sound **relevant or interesting**?
- Do the **contents** of the report **match** the title?
- How **long** is the report? What is my investment of time going to be and is it worthwhile?
- How well **presented** is the report? How confident am I in the abilities of the writer?

Structure: Organisational Reports (Business and Technical Reports)

'to the point'

- Cover; Title page
- Abstract/executive summary (200-500 words)
- Table of contents; List of symbols, abbreviations, definitions
- Introductory material (nature of problem, why research was undertaken, resource limits, scope, previous work)
- Report of work done (new product/service, give a general framework before detailed information)
- Results/findings (summaries that focus on main findings, tables and graphs)
- Discussion and analysis (draw inferences, relationships, causes)
- Conclusions ('round off' the report)
- Recommendations
- Acknowledgements, References & Bibliography, and Appendices



Structure: Academic Report (1/2)

- Title page
- Abstract (300 words): provide a brief summary of the research study, including the main findings
- Contents; Acknowledgments
- Introduction: provide a brief statement explaining what you are researching (research question) and why (aim, objectives and justification of the study)
- Literature review (including theoretical issues and arguments): fit your research into the context of existing knowledge
-



Structure: Academic Report (2/2)

- ...
- Methodology: explain the study design (what you did) and execution (how you did it), including information about participants, sampling methods, the sample size, ethical considerations, the data collection method, data collection instruments and data analysis method
- Results/Findings: unbiased presentation of your findings (but no interpretation yet)
- Analysis and Discussion, Conclusion, Recommendations: provide a summary of the most significant findings, the relevance/significance of your findings, how this fits with existing research from your literature review, recommendations or implications, acknowledge limitations of your study and make suggestions for future research
- References (APA style)



Proportion of Words in a Research Report

| Element | Proportion of words (approx.) | In an undergraduate thesis of 6,000 words | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------|
| | | Words | Pages |
| Introduction | 5% | 300 | 1 |
| Literature review | 30% | 1,800 | 6 |
| Design and methodology | 15% | 900 | 3 |
| Findings | 15% | 900 | 3 |
| Analysis and Discussion | 30% | 1,800 | 6 |
| Conclusion | 5% | 300 | 2 |
| Total | 100% | 6,000 | 20 |

Structure: Academic Journals

- Title page: short, specify exactly what the article is about
- Abstract (150-200 words): important as sometimes the only part read; hypothesis; synopsis of the methods used, subjects and materials; major findings, conclusions
- Introduction: background information, purpose of the study, rationale, research questions and hypotheses
- Literature review: why the study is being undertaken and how it adds to the existing body of knowledge (authentic title)
- Methodology: research context, sample selection, description of the sample, research procedure, duration and timing of data gathering, data analysis
- Results: descriptive text, tables, figures
- Discussion: answers to original research questions and hypotheses
- References



Ethical and Legal Considerations



UNETHICAL REPORTING OF RESULTS:
SPECULATION, EXAGGERATION,
NEGLECT, FABRICATION, PLAGIARISM



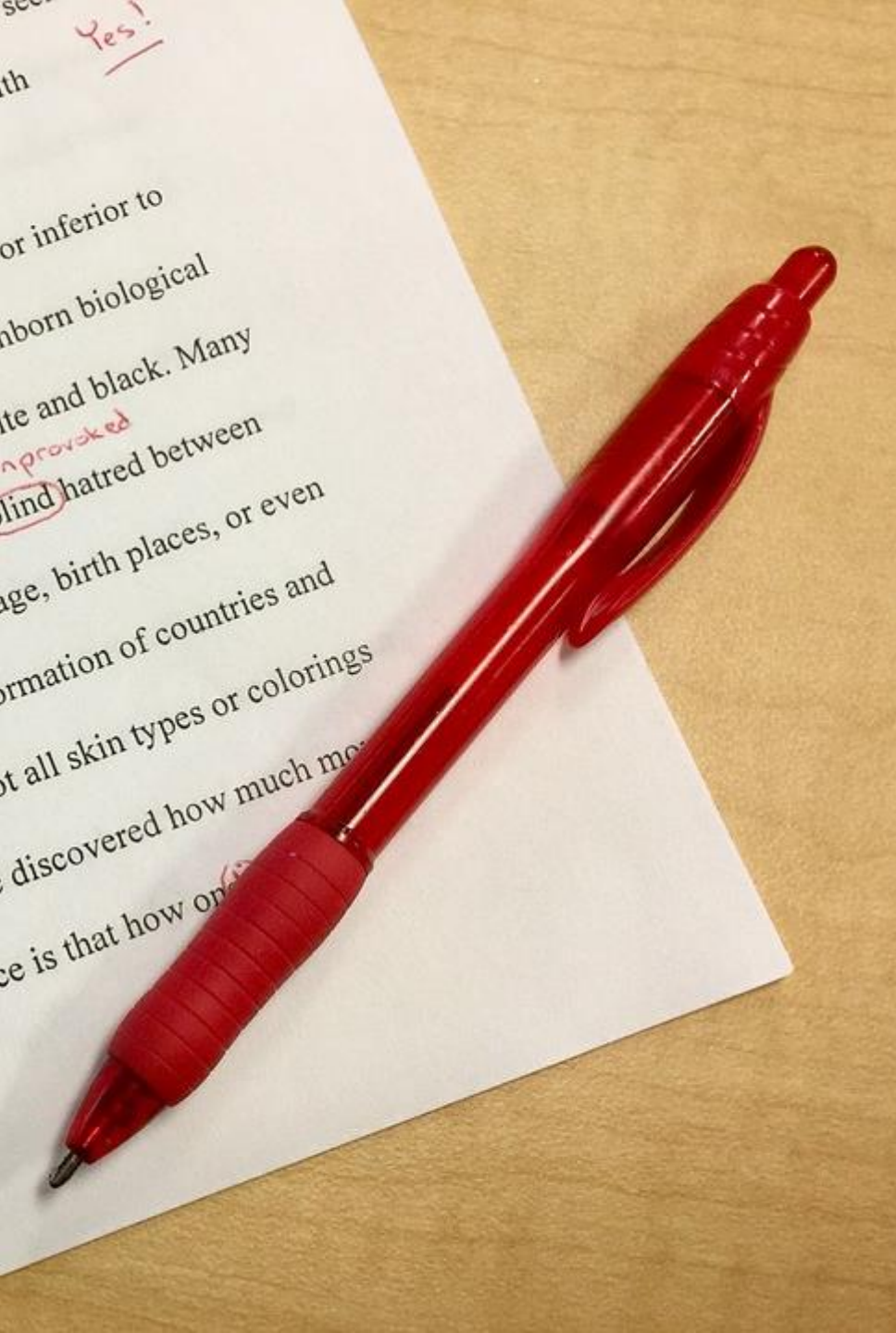
BREACH OF LAW



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND
COPYRIGHT ISSUES

Developing a Writing Style and Tone

- **Fluent, concise** and engaging writing style
- **Functional** (use signposting (use of phrases and words to guide the reader), appropriate and unbiased language, logical layout, consider motivations and attitudes of your reader)
- **Concise**
- Balance between the use of **long and short sentences**
- Avoid nominalization (turning verbs into nouns)
 - e.g. the survey collected data on customer attitudes, showing that... → collection of the data through the survey revealed customer attitudes, which showed that...
- **Tone** of the report to reflect the nature of its message



Reviewing the Report

After 'completing' your report, regard it as a first draft. Leave it for a few days so you can forget thoughts behind the report.

Then read without stopping but mark passages that require further work. Evaluate general flow.

Then come back to the marked passages and continue working on them.

Reviews should check on . . .

- Content
- Argument
- Organisation
- Language
- Grammar

Assessment 4: Research Report

Format: Research Report

Length: 6,000 words

Weighting: 40%

Each student will undertake a small-scale, original research project. The topic may be of the student's own choosing, although academic staff will provide guidance to ensure that topics are suitable and achievable within the time and with the resources available. You will have to agree to follow Sheridan's undergraduate research ethics protocols in all stages of the research process and demonstrate ethical behaviour, personal integrity and respect for others in a research environment. Students can undertake the research project individually or in small teams. Each student must submit their own written report covering the following points:

- Assignment Cover Page (having the title of the research project, your name, your student number and submission date)
- Contents Page
- Abstract
- Introduction (including the research question(s), aim, objectives and justification of the study)
- Literature review
- Methodology (including participants, sampling methods, ethical considerations data collection instruments and data analysis method)
- Research findings
- Summary and conclusion (including key findings, recommendations, implications that could be drawn from your findings, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research)
- Personal Reflection (what you have learnt through undertaking this assignment)
- References

All pages must be numbered and the document has to be prepared with 12 font size and single space format.

Research Report Rubric

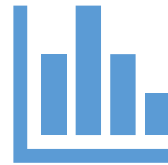
| Criteria /Grade | High Distinction (80-100%) | Distinction (70-79%) | Credit (60-69%) | Pass (50-59%) | Fail (0-49%) |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| Research Literacy | Evidences a pronounced grasp of research methods and demonstrates pronounced ability to justify selection | Evidences a strong grasp of research methods and demonstrates ability to justify selection | Evidences a sound grasp of the main research methods and demonstrates some ability to justify selection | Evidences basic grasp of the main research methods and attempts to justify selection | Has not grasped or justified the main research methods |
| Engagement with a Range of Scholarly Viewpoints | Shows very strong evidence of engagement with a range of scholarly viewpoints | Shows strong evidence of engagement with a range of scholarly viewpoints | Shows evidence of engagement with a range of scholarly viewpoints | Shows awareness of relevant scholarly viewpoints | No evidence of awareness and or engagement with scholarly viewpoints |
| Methodology | Topic is thoroughly investigated; highly appropriate method employed with high level of research ethics evidenced | Topic is very well investigated; appropriate method employed with a very well-developed level of research ethics evidenced | Topic is well investigated; appropriate method employed with a well-developed level of research ethics evidenced | Topic is investigated; adequate method employed with an acceptable level of research ethics evidenced | Investigation incomplete; method inappropriate and research ethics lacking |
| Data Collection | Shows sound ability to make use of quantitative and/or qualitative data collection instruments | Shows ability to make use of quantitative and/or qualitative data collection instruments | Evidences engagement with of quantitative and/or qualitative data collection instruments | Attempts to make use of quantitative and/or qualitative data collection instruments | Has not made use of either quantitative or qualitative data collection instruments |
| Data Analysis & Findings | Shows promise in task of analysing and interpreting a wide range of data | Shows promise in task of analysing and interpreting data | Evidences analysis and interpretation of data | Demonstrates awareness of data analysis and/or interpretation | Has made no attempt to analyse or interpret data |
| Organisation and Coherence | Demonstrates excellent ability to organise very logical arguments and structure | Demonstrates sound ability to organise very logical arguments and structure | Demonstrates ability to organise logical arguments and structure but some paragraphs lack internal coherence. | Attempts to organise logical arguments and structure | No defined organisation structure and lacks transitions and coherence. |
| Language conventions | Uses appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, paragraph construction, and presentation (80% or more of the time) | Uses appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, paragraph construction, and presentation (70-79% of the time) | Uses appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, paragraph construction, and presentation (60-69% of the time) | Uses appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, paragraph construction, and presentation (50-59% of the time) | Uses appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, paragraph construction, and presentation (less than 50% of the time) |
| APA conventions | Uses correct APA headings and referencing (in-text & final page) 80% or more of the time | Uses correct APA headings and referencing (in-text & final page) 70-79% of the time | Uses correct APA headings and referencing (in-text & final page) 60-69% of the time | Uses correct APA headings and referencing (in-text & final page) 50-59% of the time | Uses correct APA headings and referencing (in-text & final page) less than 50% of the time |

Homework



Readings

Textbook Chapter 28



Conduct Data Analysis



Topic for next week

Presenting Research