

Welcome to Writing in the Social Sciences!

When we decided to create a new textbook about Writing in the Social Sciences, we made one major goal: that it NOT be boring. (You're welcome. We hope you agree!) So we chose this interactive online venue with cool tech we thought you'd enjoy: embedded videos INSIDE the textbook, lots of images and graphics, embedded quiz and discussion questions, even live links so you don't have to leave the textbook to go to a web page. Plus, you can read it on a computer, tablet, and even your phone!



My majestic office view. #nofilter (Image by the author.)

But more importantly, we tried to talk to you like people. (We're assuming you're people.) We know a lot of textbooks can sound dry and boring and far away, but we wanted to teach

you like you're sitting right there in front of us. So we've added stories and analogies that come from our lives and tried to make connections to culture and experiences that you'll relate to. Because, you know, we're people, too. And isn't that why you're going into the Social Sciences? Because you dig people? So much so that you want to study them?

So to help you reach your goals, we're going to give you a window into the world of good writing. Here's the actual view from my office window as I write this. Can you believe those mountains? Well, we're going to be your guides as we climb the proverbial mountains to get the skills and knowledge you need to succeed as writers (cue song from *The Sound of Music*). We hope you'll do like our motto here at Brigham Young University:

Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve

We promise that if you will work hard in this course, your efforts will pay off as you emerge from this journey stronger and with a broader vision of how you can influence the world as a better writer, a better social scientist, and a better person.

Sincerely,

Cristie Cowles Charles, Editor

Check Out the Tech

Here's some of the cool tech you'll encounter in this book. Check it out so that you know what to do when you encounter these things later.

Embedded Videos

Videos are embedded into the text so you can just click on them inside the textbook and watch them there with no ads. Don't worry, these are simply fancy links, so the creators of the videos still get to count your click for their statistics. Here's a cool three-minute video about why these young men from inner-city Chicago choose to write. Try watching it by clicking on it.



Watch on Vimeo <https://edtechbooks.org/-wMe>

Embedded Websites

When we want you to go to a particular website, we'll always provide a [regular link](#) to it (and include the actual address: lib.byu.edu), but even better, we'll often put it in an iframe, which is a fancy embedded link. This is just like going to the actual website--you can access everything the same way you would normally--but you don't have to leave the textbook to do it. So convenient! Here's an iframe that connects to our BYU Library web page. Try scrolling on it and then look up your favorite book.

Spoiler Alerts

Previewing a book is a good way to get a feel for it and anticipate what's coming. In the old days, we would literally pick up our textbooks from the campus bookstore and physically leaf through the pages, but that's not possible online. So here are some spoiler alerts so you'll know what's coming in the rest of this book. We've divided this textbook into three main units: Writing Tools, Academic Audiences, and General Audiences.

[UNIT 1: WRITING TOOLS](#)

In **Unit 1: Writing Tools**, you'll get help understanding how writing in the Social Sciences differs from other types of writing and learn the tools you need to get your message across.

In **Chapter 1 Writing in the Social Sciences**, we'll talk about how writing specifically in

the social sciences represents a discourse community whose style, forms, and vocabulary you'll need to learn to be taken seriously. **Chapter 2 Writing Tools** deals with the rhetorical strategies you learned in your first-year writing class and how we will build on those strategies in this course. **Chapter 3 Writing Processes** addresses the steps involved in creating a piece of writing and how best to approach a writing assignment. **Chapter 4 Grammar & Mechanics** will review the most important grammar, spelling, and punctuation concepts that will convince your audience that you know what you're talking about. In **Chapter 5 Style**, we'll delve into the nuances of language that can take your writing from good to great. And finally, in **Chapter 6 Design**, you'll learn about visual design and how to use images, fonts, color, and other visual elements to best get your message across.

UNIT 2: ACADEMIC AUDIENCES

We've divided the rest of this book into two sections based on the two most common audiences social scientists write for: Academic Audiences and General Audiences. In **Unit 2: Academic Audiences**, we'll focus on what writing is like in university settings and how to create some of the most useful types of documents.

In **Chapter 7 Writing for Academic Audiences**, we'll talk about how best to write formally for an academic audience and what is valued in an academic discourse community. **Chapter 8 Finding and Evaluating Sources** will help you see how research and evidence are the main currency of academia and that you need certain skills to find as well as analyze sources. **Chapter 9 Talking About Sources** deals with the best ways to talk about your sources (summary, paraphrase, and quotation) and give credit to others' work (APA Format)--an essential skill that can also keep you out of trouble. In **Chapter 10 What Is a Literature Review?**, you'll learn the definition of a literature review, how it differs from a typical research paper, and how literature reviews are used in the social sciences. **Chapter 11 How to Write a Literature Review** will go through the steps for writing a literature review which will also hone your research and analysis skills. And finally, **Chapter 11 Proposals** will cover the genre of the proposal and the best ways to ask for anything--especially money.

UNIT 3: GENERAL AUDIENCES

The final unit, **Unit 3: General Audiences**, will deal with how to write for people not in your field because it turns out that more and more social scientists are spending time writing blog posts, social media posts, opinion editorials, infographics, and even tweets for general audiences. You'll learn how your writing style should shift when your audience changes from an academic audience to a more general, public audience. We'll also cover different types of public writing.

To that end, **Chapter 12 Writing for General Audiences** will cover strategies for getting your message across to a general audience and explain how that differs from academic

writing. **Chapter 13 Professional Portfolio** will delve into some specific genres for applying for jobs--namely, resumes and cover letters--and graduate schools. In **Chapter 14 Public Texts**, you'll learn about other typical genres for general audiences such as strategies for writing effective memos, emails, social media posts, blog posts, infographics, and opinion editorials. And finally, **Chapter 15 Presentations** will take you through the steps to creating a killer presentation--whether a traditional oral presentation or a poster presentation.

The end of the textbook will have two **Appendices**: one for **Student Examples** and one for an **Instructor's Guide**.

We hope this textbook will give you the skills you need to succeed in your future at the university and in your career.

End-of Chapter Surveys

How often do you get to tell textbook authors what you think? Now you can. And we can take it--we really want to know what you liked and didn't like or what was confusing or helpful. (Hey, if we talk the talk of seeking feedback, we should walk the walk, right?)

So please be sure to take the surveys at the end of each chapter so we can improve our own writing. It's for posterity! Here's what the surveys look like. We especially like comments about what you liked or didn't. Try right now to click on the questions and give us feedback about this chapter--it should only take a couple minutes.



Charles, C. C. (2019). *Writing in the Social Sciences*. EdTech Books. Retrieved from <https://edtechbooks.org/writing>



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