

Glossary

Q Find something...

Abstract

Found at the beginning of academic articles and books, gives a brief summary of the most important points and findings contained inside. May include a list of keywords to aid database searching.

Academic Audiences

Audiences whose focus is on scholarly research, logical arguments, convincing evidence, and a formal style.

Annotate

Write notes on, summarize, and/or evaluate a source such as an article or book.

Annotated Bibliography

A document that lists the bibliographic information for each source on a topic and also includes a summary and/or analysis of each source.

Appendix

Extra pages at the end of a paper for anything that is too big or complicated to be contained inside the paper such as Tables, Figures, and Data.

Argumentative Thesis Statement

A sentence that sums up the crux of a typical research paper where the author makes an argument such as proposing a new way to look at something or a change they'd like to see in the future.

Assumptions

An assumption is a value or belief that connects the claim and the reasons given to support that claim. Sometimes these are unspoken and subtle, other times we need to be explicit about them and perhaps even persuade our audience to accept the assumptions that underlie our argument.

Audience

The audience is the group of people to whom you intend to address your message. The better you know them and their values, the more effectively you can make choices in your writing to persuade or inform them.

Body

The body of the paper consists of all the inner paragraphs between the Introduction and Conclusion. The body is usually divided into sections and is where all your points will go (including evidence and commentary).

Character

The character of a speaker or writer describes how that author is perceived by an audience. Also known as authority or ethos.

Claim

A claim is an assertion you make, something you propose to be true. We use reasons (or evidence) to support our claims and convince or persuade others to change their views or feelings to match what we assert in our claim.

Commentary

Commentary means a writer's comments in a paper (as opposed to the claims, evidence, etc.). It usually involves analysis or interpretation and can also include opinion or explanation depending on the type of paper.

Common Knowledge

Knowledge that's generally agreed upon. This usually refers to things an average, educated audience would know like that water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit. This also refers to knowledge agreed upon by members of a certain group or field. For example, Agency Theory is a theory acknowledged in the field of economics. Things considered Common Knowledge do not have to be cited but you have to remember who your audience is. Agency Theory would not have to be cited for an audience of economists who know the term but would have to be cited for a general audience.

Conclusion

The Conclusion section of a paper comes at the end and usually sums up your main points, restates your position (thesis statement), and indicates the implications of your findings. Depending on the type of paper, you may also give recommendations for future research. Also known as the Discussion section.

Content-Exploration Outline

This type of outline involves idea-generating activities like brainstorming, mind mapping, grouping, and writing sentences and paragraphs. The point is to look for patterns and find the structure in your ideas but in a less formal manner. You can even write a rough draft and then create a more formal outline in reverse that can then be revised. Also known as an organic outline or an unstructured outline.

Context

Context is a catch-all term we use to describe all the factors that influence our writing, including the moment that inspires our writing, the timing with which we deliver our writing, and other external factors related to our writing.

Discourse Community

A group with shared knowledge, values, characteristics, genres, languages, and/or style.

Discussion

The Discussion section of a paper comes at the end and usually sums up your main points, restates your position (thesis statement), and indicates the implications of your findings. Depending on the type of paper, you may also give recommendations for future research. Also known as the Conclusion.

Empathy

Understanding, being aware of, or even feeling the feelings or experiences of others.

Evidence

This is a broad term that we might use to suggest all kinds of support for a claim, from scientific evidence to personal experience to appeals to emotions and shared values. Also known as reasons or logoi.

Exigence

The exigence is what prompts us to see change come about, and it inspires our decision to take up pen and paper (or set our fingers to the keyboard) and write.

Expository Thesis Statement

A statement that sums up the crux of a literature review (as opposed to an argumentative research paper) where the author exposes or announces their topic rather than taking a position or making an argument. It usually consists of two parts: main areas of inquiry about a topic and future research directions.

Figure

Any type of image, graph, or chart besides a table.

Gaps

In terms of research, gaps are the questions that haven't been answered or the areas where further research is needed. In business, gaps are the niches in the marketplace that haven't yet been filled.

General Audiences

People who are not members of your field and who have general knowledge about topics but not specific knowledge, also known as public audiences.

Genre

A genre is a kind or type or form of writing. It emerges from repeated situations in which we communicate in specific ways. We also talk about how a genre has certain conventions: An audience expects a specific genre to do things in specific ways (e.g., a letter will have a greeting and a farewell).

Global Revision

Global Revision in a paper is like looking at the foundation and framework of a house: the big ideas, the structure, the logical order you put things, the headings and bigger transitions such as from section to section, etc. Global Revision should generally come before Local Revision.

GRAPE

GRAPE is an acronym used in BYU's first-year writing classes to help you remember the main elements of the rhetorical situation. The G stands for genre (the form or type of writing we choose to use in the situation); the R for rhetor (the speaker or writer); the A for audience (to whom the speaker and writer is addressing their message); the P for purpose (what the rhetor or writer intends to accomplish with the message); and the E for exigence (the reason why this message needs to be given by this speaker to this audience at this moment).

Hedge

Hedging means adding conditional statements or qualifying a statement in order to allow for more possibilities. For example, the statement "All forests have pine trees" means no exceptions are allowed. But if you say "Most forests have pine trees," it's okay if there are exceptions.

IMRAD Format

The standard form for a research article consisting of Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion.

Introduction

An introduction is the first part of a paper where you introduce your topic, give background information, and usually delineate your thesis and suggest the organization of the rest of your paper.

Jargon

Specialized language that is used by a specific group of people but is not understood by the general public.

Literature Review

A literature review is a review or synthesis of all the research published on a certain topic. It shows the "state of the field." A literature review can be part of the introduction of a bigger paper or can be a longer stand-alone document.

Local Revision

Local Revision in a paper is like looking at the finish work on a house: the style, formatting, sentence-to-sentence transitions, grammar, language, etc. Local Revision should generally come after Global Revision.

Message

The message is, quite simply, what you have to say to other people through your writing or speaking. It's connected to our discussions about argument: The message often contains a claim supported by reasons (and underpinned by important assumptions).

Metacognition

the practice of monitoring and controlling your own process in order to improve; thinking about thinking

Metacommentary

Metacommentary is the words and phrases you use to comment on something you've written. Metacommentary helps with interpretation, clarification, and elaboration. Transition words can act as metacommentary as can phrases such as "In other words . . ." and even whole paragraphs.

Mindful Writing Cycle

A sequence of steps (plan, practice, revise, reflect) used when completing a writing task that improve performance and metacognitive abilities

Mindfulness

The state of being deliberate in how you approach writing tasks, using metacognition and a mindful writing cycle

Organization-Only Outline

A typical outline that organizes a paper into sections and subsections, often using Roman numerals and letters to indicate levels. Also known as a formal outline or a structured outline.

Passive Voice

A sentence structure that emphasizes the object rather than the subject of a sentence, i.e., the subject is acted upon rather than doing the action. The passive voice is appropriate when the subject is unknown or less important than the object. Otherwise, try to use active voice as much as possible.

Peer Review Process

The process whereby an article, book, or other piece of writing is formally evaluated by qualified scholars in the same field as the author. These reviewers evaluate the quality of the research and determine whether or not to recommend the work for publication. Peer review can also be done less formally with less formal writing as between classmates.

Plan

Assessing the writing task and setting goals

Practice

Using strategies to generate content, draft, and receive feedback from peers and instructors

Presentation

An address given verbally to a public audience, often with visual aids. Also known as an oral presentation.

Primary Research

Research you conduct yourself such as surveys, experiments, or observations (as opposed to secondary research involving the analysis of existing sources).

Public Audiences

People who are not members of your field and who have general knowledge about topics but not specific knowledge, also known as general audiences.

Purpose

Purpose is the driving reason why we're writing. It's what we hope to accomplish by writing to this audience.

Reasons

This is a broad term that we might use to suggest all kinds of support for a claim, from scientific evidence to personal experience to appeals to emotions and shared values. Also known as evidence or logos.

References

The References section is where you provide all the information necessary about your sources such as authors' names, year, title, publisher, etc. These are usually in alphabetical order and should follow the format of your chosen style guide.

Reflect

Looking back on a completed writing task to see what you've learned and what needs to change

Revise

Making mindful changes to a draft after receiving feedback.

Rhetoric

At its most basic level, rhetoric is the study of how we communicate effectively with people. It encompasses a study of the tools we might use as well as the way the context of our communication may impact the way we use those tools.

Rhetorical Situation

We use the term rhetorical situation to describe the context in which you engage an audience through writing or speaking. It can refer specifically to characteristics of the audience and your relationship to them as well as your purpose in communicating with them. We analyze a rhetorical situation in order to guide our decision-making as we compose a written or spoken message.

Rhetorical Triangle

An image that describes a rhetorical situation where the three connected points of the triangle are the Writer, the Speaker, and the Message. These surround a purpose and exist inside the context or the situation.

Running Head

A shortened version of a paper's title that runs across the top of the pages of a manuscript. According to the new APA Manual (2019), this is no longer needed in student papers.

Secondary Research

Research involving the analysis of existing sources (as opposed to primary research that you conduct yourself). Most undergraduate research papers are based on secondary research.

Shibboleth

A word, phrase, custom, or other indicator that someone is part of a particular group. It can also refer to jargon in a discipline. From Judges 12:5-6.

Style

Style in writing is the manner in which we communicate. It involves how we structure sentences, which words we choose, and other sentence-level choices that support the content of our message.

Table

A box with horizontal and vertical cells used to organize data.

Thesis Statement

The main point of a paper summed up as a brief statement. In a typical Research Paper, it's usually an argumentative thesis statement while in a Literature Review, it's usually an expository thesis statement

Third Person

Writing from the perspective of he/she/it/they rather than first person (I/we) or second person (you).

Transitions

Transitions are words or phrases that help link ideas together. Transitions can be one word, one sentence, or a whole paragraph.

Writer

The writer is you—the person composing the message. But don't be complacent and think you don't need to think critically about who you are as a writer. We should consider our own emotions, our biases and preferences, and our relationship with the audience when we consider our role as writers.



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