

PRECISION WRITING

Presented by Dr. Chris Holmes

WHY ARE THESE LESSONS IMPORTANT?

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- They can help students to be better writers.
- Communication has never been more important.
- Even sizeable problems can be simple to correct.
- They can improve performance and grade.
- Enough minor errors can sabotage even a good paper.
- The glory of God!

SESSION 1—RESEARCHING & ORGANIZING THE PAPER

RECEIVING THE ASSIGNMENT

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- When a paper is assigned, learn the instructor's expectations.
- If the students select their own topics, it will probably be advantageous to select your topic as quickly as possible.
- Do not procrastinate after receiving the assignment!

ASKING PERTINENT QUESTIONS

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- Ask relevant questions early in the research process.
 - Discover the specific context surrounding your subject.
 - Investigative questions are essential.
 - Do an Internet search for basic, initial information.

INTERNET OVERVIEW

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- The Internet can be very valuable, but it can also mislead.
- Discernment is essential when using the Internet.
- The Internet contains material that is both helpful and accurate, as well as irrelevant and incorrect.
- Some information is accurate but is out of date or biased.

ONLINE SEARCHES FOR SOURCES

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- Seek sources that are reputable and reviewed.
- Determine if you need to use primary source materials.
- Recall that secondary sources by nature are at least one step away from primary sources and may be contaminated with the author's own biases, views, and errors.
- Bibliographies can be of immense help.

READING AND TAKING NOTES

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- This is one of the most important aspects of preparing the paper. It is also one of the most time consuming.
 - Many type (or cut & paste) sentences into a document.
 - Document clearly and thoroughly where your material comes from.
 - Take more notes than you need.

THESIS STATEMENT

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- This is the declaration of what you intend to argue in your paper. It is what you contend to be true.
- Throughout the course of your paper, you will work to prove that your thesis is correct.
- The thesis statement needs to be refined and specific.
- The thesis is typically included near the beginning of the paper and toward the end.

OUTLINE & FLOW OF THE PAPER

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- The content of the paper should allow for a natural and logical flow from one area to another.
- Preparing an outline—even if it's not assigned—can be very helpful in both researching and writing the paper.
- Many papers follow a five-point arrangement: Introduction, 1st Point, 2nd Point, 3rd Point, Conclusion.
- Though it can be a time-consuming process, the hard work of organization will pay valuable dividends later.

RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH AND ORGANIZATION

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Printed Resources:

- *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading* by Mortimer Adler & Charles Van Doren (Revised edition, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972).
- *The Oxford Guide to Library Research* by Thomas Mann (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
- *The Craft of Research* by Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, & Joseph Williams (Third edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH AND ORGANIZATION

Online Resources:

- Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>
- Writing Center at the University of Kansas
<http://writing.ku.edu/>
