

The Craft of Research, by Booth, Colomb & Williams (2008)

Notes by Gregory Russell

- Chapter title
 - First-order bullets = notes handwritten in margin
 - Second-order bullets = revisited lists that were summarized for notes

- **Chapter 1 – Thinking in Print**
 - Write to think and organize relationships and patterns
 - Think about the questions others will have
- **Chapter 2 – Connecting with your reader**
 - What is your role as author?
 - Understand your audience!
 - Demonstrate why piece is important and interesting
 - What is the problem the piece addresses?
 - How can you help experts better understand ____?
 - “just tell me something that I don’t know”
- **Chapter 3 – From topics to questions**
 - Write, write, write!
 - Organize, organize, organize!
 - Reflect, reflect, reflect!
 - Elevator pitch = question + answer + evidence + READERS
 - Can you become an expert on the topic?
 - Question drives everything
 - Questions should drive your literature review
 - Ask the opposite *negative* question to spur thought
 - Build off of the questions of other researchers
- **Chapter 4 – From questions to a problem**
 - Why should others care?
 - Problem = condition + consequences
 - What do we do about it?
 - Make connections to demonstrate importance
 - See the world in a new way
- **Chapter 5 – From problems to sources**
- **Chapter 6 – Engaging sources**
 - Keep track of sources!
 - Present problem situated in previous research
 - Introduce connections to previous research and then move on to yours
 - Take notes in your own words
 - Quote when:

- Evidence/authority that backs up your work
 - Words are strikingly original
 - They state a view you disagree with and you want to be fair to it
 - Don't quote out of context
- **Chapter 7 – Making good arguments**
 - Will your research change what people think?
 - Spend time imagining counter points
 - Evidence still needs explanation
- **Chapter 8 – Making claims**
 - Don't assume!
 - Pose the opposite claim to test for significance
 - Ideas need not be huge, they just need to be new
 - Work within limits of your reasons and evidence
 - Hedge arguments with qualifying phrases
- **Chapter 9 – Assembling reasons and evidence**
 - Evidence should be shared public fact
 - Readers demand to know data is accurate
 - NEVER make mistakes with evidence
 - Be precise and specific
 - Data should be representative of the range available
- **Chapter 10 – Acknowledgements and responses**
 - Question your problem & solution
 - Test your argument as a reader would
 - Prioritize counterarguments
 - If you can't answer a question, address it another way!
 - Use the 'language of acknowledgements'
 - 'although, while, even though, despite, regardless of, notwithstanding, may, could, seem, appear, plausibly, justifiably, reasonably, surprisingly, certainly'
 - Attribute to an unnamed source or no source at all
 - Attribute an alternative to a more specific source
 - Acknowledge in your own voice w/ passive verb or 'admittedly, granted, to be sure'
- **Chapter 11 – Warrants**
 - Warrant is an explanation for how a reason supports a claim
 - When to use warrants
 - Is it true? Limited? Trumped by a competing warrant? Appropriate to the field of research? Are the reason and claim good instances of the warrant?
 - State warrants to outsiders, or when readers are unprepared for the truth
- **Chapter 12 – Planning**
 - Prepare for drafting by writing summaries, analysis, and critiques
 - Reports are not narratives of your process

- Focus on major/important sources
- Write a sketchy introduction to start from
- State hypothesis in intro as a frame (preferable) or in conclusion as a climax
- After hypothesis -> need transition
- Utilize principles of reading
 - Short to long, simple to complex
 - More familiar to less familiar
 - Less contestable to more contestable
 - More important to less important (or vice versa)
 - Earlier understanding to prepare for later understanding
 - General analysis followed by specific application
- Use phrases to signify order of important, etc.
- Sketch a working/draft conclusion
- **Chapter 13 – Drafting your report**
 - Much of early drafts will not make it to final draft
 - Writers discover ideas during drafting
 - Don't be limited by your outline
 - Quote only when it adds value beyond paraphrasing
 - Explain evidence in terms of your research/thoughts
- **Chapter 14 – Revising your organization and argument**
 - Revise to draw readers in amiable conversation
 - Revise for 1) organization, 2) parts, 3) clarity
 - Evidence and explanation should be > 1/3 total writing
 - Read top level parts to revise
- **Chapter 15 – Communicating Evidence Visually**
 - **skipped*
- **Chapter 16 – Introductions and conclusions**
 - Intro = intriguing problem + solution
 - 3 parts of an intro – contextualizing background, statement of problem, response
 - Connect to research that is counter (if available)
 - Intro should include costs or benefits
 - Ways to start a conclusion
 - Striking quotation
 - Striking relevant fact
 - Relevant anecdote
 - Others...
- **Chapter 17 – Revising style: Telling your story clearly**
 - Write as if to a colleague
 - Always consider audience!
 - Get beginning and end of sentences right, and the rest will fall in line
 - Begin sentences by building upon prior ones

- Summary of tips – p. 268
 - Highlight first 5-6 words in sentence
 - Check to see if you highlighted consistent set of related words
 - The should name a character and a verb that is important action
 - Identify characters and make them subjects of verbs
 - Look for verbs turned into nouns and change them back into verbs
 - Each sentence should begin with the familiar and move toward complex
 - Underline the last 4-5 words in every sentence
 - Should be technical, new, emphatic, concepts that following sentences will develop