



Grounding Your Ideas in Expert Opinions

by Sophia Tutorial

2.1.1 Skills in this Unit

Communication Productivity

Skills in the Unit Focus on skills (and components of the skill) that are relevant to the unit Leverage any existing language you can but from WLP's or Learn pages but you may need to write in entirety (as in example below) Consider the value of the skill in the real world, its connection to the discipline/content topics, and considerations/questions for students in thinking about the application of the skill within the context of this unit. For the bullet points, look to topics of each lesson in the unit. Do not get too specific, but be sure to call attention to at least several unit concepts/sub-topics. Length of section will vary but should be more brief for unit 1 given the other content. We do not want length to be too much for any one lesson. Units after the first one....work to delve deeper into skills here as you connect to the content. This section will be the bulk of content for those unit 2 and beyond lessons.

Example from COMM 1010

As you begin with this first unit, you will explore these skills in relation to oral, written and non-verbal communication. You will begin to understand how you can use these skills to better communicate your ideas and to better listen to others. You will look deeper at how improving your skills can help you combat bias and see things from other points of view.

In particular we will focus on the following:

Productivity

Being a responsible communicator means having good time management skills

Self and Social Awareness

Audience and receiver matter when communicating in any form Culture and language can influence your communication Being aware of your own bias can help you improve your communication

Throughout the course, be on the lookout for various call outs to help you better see the connections between the skills and the course content. Media (This is not it's own section, but it is a placeholder for the media which is commonly found at the end of the lesson) Insert any media (video, MMA, etc) that is a good fit and speaks to the entire course for Unit 1. For subsequent units, any media should fit that unit content. Make sure you add some language to intro the media..consider it as a "send off" as students jump into the unit. Avoid media specific to one skill or one aspect Looking for a good "intro" media element If something would be a great fit with some edits, include it here and make notes about edits needed. Some edits are possible...some are not Sophia team can/will investigate

Example from COMM 1010

As you begin your journey in COMM 1010, this video will help better understand the importance of these skills. No matter where you work or what your career path.....these skills matter.

Video from Week 1 with edits/revisions

Summary This section provides a summary of what was covered in this unit. The basic format for this section:

In this lesson, you learned.....

Best of luck in your learning!

For the very 1st lesson of the 1st unit, use the following as a model: In this lesson, you learned that there are 10 essential employability skills. Employers seek individuals who possess these skills and continue to work to strengthen them. These skills cut across all professions and career paths. You learned how communication, technology, productivity, and self and social awareness will be incorporated into this course and why they are valuable.

For the 1st lesson in subsequent units, use the following as a model: In this lesson you learned.....(summary of what was covered)

Best of luck in your learning!

2.1.2 The Seven Steps of the Research Process

WHAT'S COVERED In this lesson, you will learn about the sequence of steps that writers go through during the research process. Specifically, this lesson will focus on: 1. Seven Steps of the Research Process a. Identify and Develop Your Topic b. Find Background Information c. Use Catalogs to Find Books and Media d. Use Indexes to Find Periodical Articles e. Find Internet Resources f. Evaluate What You Find g. Cite What You Find Using a Standard Format

1. Seven Steps of the Research Process The following seven steps outline a simple and effective strategy for finding information for a research paper and documenting the sources you find. Depending on your topic and your familiarity with the library or web resources, you may need to rearrange or recycle these steps.

1a. Identify and Develop Your Topic When you're starting a research project, it can be helpful to state your topic as a question. **EXAMPLE** If you are interested in finding out about the use of alcoholic beverages by college students, you might pose the question, "What effect does the use of alcoholic beverages have on the health of college students?"

Once you've phrased your topic as a question to be answered, you can identify the main concepts or keywords in that question.

1b. Find Background Information Before getting too deep into research, it's important to ensure you have solid background information on your topic. A great way of finding background information is looking up your keywords in the indexes of subject encyclopedias. Then you can read articles in these encyclopedias to set the context for your research. You can also note any relevant items in the bibliographies at the end of the encyclopedia articles, and look into those sources for further research.

1c. Use Catalogs to Find Books and Media If you go to a public or academic library to do your research, use guided keyword searching to find materials by topic or subject in the library catalogue. Print or write down the citation (author, title, etc.) and the location information (call number).

When you pull the book from the shelf, scan the bibliography for additional sources. Watch for book-length bibliographies and annual reviews on your subject because they list citations to hundreds of books and articles in one subject area. 1d. Use Indexes to Find Periodical Articles Next, you can use periodical indexes and abstracts to find citations to articles. The indexes and abstracts may be in print, in computer-based formats, or in both. Choose the indexes and format best suited to your particular topic; ask at the reference desk if you need help figuring out which index and format will be best. You can find periodical articles by the article author, title, or keyword using the periodical indexes in the library's catalogue. 1e. Find Internet Resources Using a search engine, such as Google, is often an efficient way to find web-based sources on your topic. If you are searching for material that includes key phrases, a good strategy is to use quotation marks around these phrases in the search box. This ensures that you will only be shown results in which the words in those phrases appear together. 1f. Evaluate What You Find You now need to evaluate the authority and quality of the books and articles you located. If you have found too many or too few sources, you may need to narrow or broaden your topic. When you're ready to write, keep an annotated list of books to help you organize, format, and draft your paper. 1g. Cite What You Find Using a Standard Format In order to give credit where credit is due, you must cite your sources. Citing or documenting the sources used in your research serves two purposes: It gives proper credit to the authors of the materials used. It allows readers to duplicate your research and locate the sources. Representing the work of others as your own is plagiarism, which we will discuss later in this course.

□ SUMMARY In this lesson, you learned that research is a process much like writing itself. The seven steps of the research process are identifying and developing your topic, finding background information, using catalogues to find books and media, using indexes to find periodical articles, finding internet resources, evaluating what you find, and citing what you find using a standard format. Depending on your topic and the amount of research experience you have, you may need to repeat or adjust some of these steps.

Best of luck in your learning! 2.1.3 Finding and Evaluating Research Sources

WHAT'S COVERED In this lesson, you'll learn how to find, evaluate, and use primary and secondary sources, both in print and online. Specifically, this lesson will cover: 1. Types of Research Sources a. Primary Sources b. Secondary Sources 2. Print and Electronic Sources 3. Determining Suitability

1. Types of Research Sources Writers who hope to influence their audiences need to know what research sources are available, where to find them, and how to use them.

In your research for this course, you will likely encounter two main types of sources: Primary Secondary

1a. Primary Sources A primary source is one that allows you to learn about your subject first-hand. Primary sources provide direct evidence about the topic under investigation, meaning that they offer you direct access to the events or phenomena you are studying.

EXAMPLE If you are researching the history of World War II and decide to study soldiers' letters home or maps of battlefields, you are working with primary sources. Similarly, if you are studying the history of your home town in a local archive that contains documents pertaining to that history, you are engaging in primary research. Among other first-hand investigative techniques, some common types of primary sources and

methods include: Interviews Surveys Polls Observations The fact that primary sources allow you direct access to the topic does not mean that they offer an objective and unbiased view of it. It is therefore important to consider primary sources critically and, if possible, gather multiple perspectives on the same event, time period, or questions, from multiple primary sources.

TERM TO KNOW Primary Source A direct, firsthand source of information or data.

1b. Secondary Sources A secondary source describes, discusses, and analyzes research obtained from a primary source or from another secondary source. **EXAMPLE** Using the previous example about World War II, if you read a historian's analysis of soldiers' letters, you are engaging in secondary research. Some types of secondary sources with which you are likely to work include: Books Academic journals Popular magazines and newspapers Websites and other electronic sources The same source can be both primary and secondary, depending on the nature and purpose of the project.

EXAMPLE If you study a culture or group of people by examining texts they produce, you are engaging in primary research. On the other hand, if that same group published a text analyzing some external event, person, or issue and if your focus is not on the text's authors but on their analysis, you would be doing secondary research. Secondary sources often contain descriptions and analyses of primary sources. Therefore, accounts, descriptions, and interpretations of research subjects found in secondary sources are at least one step further removed from what can be found in primary sources about the same subject.

While primary sources do not give us a completely objective view of reality, secondary sources inevitably add an extra layer of opinion and interpretation to the views and ideas found in primary sources. As a researcher, you need to understand that so that you don't rely on either primary or secondary sources without evaluating them.

TERM TO KNOW Secondary Source A discussion, interpretation, analysis, consolidation, or other reworking of information from a primary source or another secondary source.

2. Print and Electronic Sources Before the advent of the Internet, most research papers were written with the use of print sources only. Now researchers have both print and electronic sources at their disposal. In fact, it has become common practice for many student writers to limit themselves to online research and to ignore the library. While there are some cases when a modified version of such an approach to searching may be justifiable, using only online research sources will severely limit your options.

If you don't have access to a brick and mortar library, note that virtually all college and university libraries have a web space which is a gateway to more documents, resources, and information than any library building can house. From that website, you can not only conduct a search of your library collection, but also access millions of articles, electronic books, and other resources available on the Internet.

As a researching writer, you should realize that printed and electronic sources are not inherently bad or good.

Both kinds can be reliable and unreliable, although with printed materials, publishers and libraries take care of not letting utterly unreliable works through to readers. Both kinds can be appropriate and inappropriate for a specific research project.

It is up to researchers and writers to learn how to select both print and electronic sources judiciously and how to evaluate them for their reliability and appropriateness for specific research and writing purposes.

3. Determining Suitability To determine how suitable a particular source is for your current research project, consider the following factors. 1. Scope: What topics and subtopics does the source cover? Is it a general overview of your subject, or is it a specialized resource? 2. Audience: Who is the intended audience of the text? If the text itself is too basic or too specialized, it may not match the expectations and needs of your own target audience. 3. Timeliness: When was the source published? Does it represent the latest information, theories, and views on the subject? Bear in mind, though, that if you are conducting a historical investigation, you will probably need to consult older materials, too. 4. Authority: What are the credentials of the author or authors of the sources? This may be particularly important when you use Internet sources since a lot of materials by various authors are posted online. HINT As part of your evaluation of the source's authority, you should also pay attention to the kinds of external sources that were used during its creation. Look through the bibliography or list of works cited attached to the text. Not only will it help you determine how reliable and suitable the source is, but it may also provide you with further leads for your own research.

□ SUMMARY In this lesson, you learned that there are two types of research sources you will likely encounter during your research: primary sources and secondary sources. You also learned that both print and electronic sources are viable options for research material. Finally, you learned that determining suitability of sources involves asking questions about scope, audience, timeliness, and authority.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: This content has been adapted from Lumen Learning's "Finding and Evaluating Research Sources" tutorial.

TERM TO KNOW Primary Source A direct, firsthand source of information or data. Secondary Source A discussion, interpretation, analysis, consolidation, or other reworking of information from a primary source or another secondary source.

2.1.4 Distinguishing Scholarly Journals from Other Periodical Sources

WHAT'S COVERED In this lesson, you will learn about the difference between scholarly journals and other source material. Specifically, this lesson will focus on: 1. Scholarly Journals 2. Substantive News/General Interest Periodicals 3. Popular Periodicals 4. Sensational Periodicals

1. Scholarly Journals Scholarly journals are the type of periodicals you should use as source material in your academic research essay. It's thus important to differentiate these journals from other types of periodicals that are less suited for academic research. The main purpose of a scholarly journal is to report on original research or experimentation in order to make such information available to the rest of the scholarly world. Most scholarly journals are peer reviewed. When an article is submitted to a peer reviewed journal, the editors send it out to other scholars in the same field (the author's peers) to get their opinion on the quality of the scholarship, its relevance to the field, its appropriateness for the journal, etc. Publications that don't use peer review just rely on the judgement of the editors as to whether an article is up to snuff or not. That's why you can't count on them for solid, scientific scholarship. You can identify scholarly journals in the following ways. 1. Abstracts: Scholarly journal articles often have an abstract, or a descriptive summary of the article contents, before the main text of the article. 2. Visual layout: Scholarly journals have a sober, serious look. They often contain many graphs and charts, but few glossy pages or exciting pictures. 3. Citations: Scholarly journals always cite their sources in the form of footnotes or bibliographies. These bibliographies are generally lengthy and cite other scholarly writings. 4. Authors: Articles are written by a scholar in the field or by someone who has done research in the field. Some examples of scholarly journals include: American Economic Review

2. Substantive News/General Interest Periodicals The main purpose of periodicals in this category is to provide information, in a general manner, to a broad audience of concerned citizens. While these can be useful for gaining background information on a topic, they are not as useful for substantial research.

They are generally published by commercial enterprises or individuals, although some emanate from specific professional organizations. You can identify substantive news/general interest periodicals in the following ways. 1. Language: The language of these publications is geared toward any educated audience. There is no specialty assumed—only interest and a certain level of intelligence. 2. Visual layout: These periodicals may be quite attractive in appearance, although some are in newspaper format. Articles are often heavily illustrated, generally with photographs. 3. Citations: News and general interest periodicals sometimes cite sources, though more often do not. 4. Authors: Articles may be written by a member of the editorial staff, a scholar, or a freelance writer. Some examples of substantive news/general interest publications include: The Economist National Geographic New York Times Scientific American Vital Speeches of the Day

3. Popular Periodicals The main purpose of popular periodicals is to entertain the reader, to sell products (their own or their advertisers'), or to promote a viewpoint. Therefore, these periodicals are not suitable sources for academic research. You can identify popular periodicals in the following ways. 1. Language: Articles are usually very short and written in simple language. 2. Visual layout: Popular periodicals are often slick and attractive in appearance with lots of colorful graphics (photographs, drawings, etc.). 3. Citations: These publications do not cite sources in a bibliography. Information published in popular periodicals is often second or third hand, and the original source is rarely mentioned. Some examples of popular publications include: People Ebony Parents Sports Illustrated Vogue

4. Sensational Periodicals The main purpose of sensational magazines seems to be to arouse curiosity and to cater to popular superstitions. They often do so with flashy headlines designed to astonish. Clearly, you will not want to use these periodicals for your research. You can identify sensational periodicals in the following ways. 1. Language: The language is elementary, and occasionally inflammatory or sensational. 2. Visual layout: Sensational periodicals come in a variety of styles, but often use a newspaper format. Some examples of sensational periodicals include: Globe National Examiner Star Weekly World News

□ SUMMARY In this lesson, you learned about how scholarly journals are different from other types of periodical sources, such as substantive news/general interest periodicals, popular periodicals, and sensational periodicals. For an academic research paper, your periodical sources should be scholarly, peer reviewed journals to ensure you are getting articles that represent the best scholarship currently available.

Best of luck in your learning

2.1.5 Understanding Bias

WHAT'S COVERED In this lesson, you will learn where bias comes from, and how to recognize it in a source. Specifically, this lesson will cover: 1. Causes of Bias 2. Recognizing Bias

1. Causes of Bias Bias means presenting facts and arguments in a way that consciously favors one side or another in an argument. Bias can result from the way you have organized your experiences in your own mind. You have lumped some experiences into the "good" box and some experiences into the "bad" box. Just about everybody does this. If, through your own experiences and reflection on those experiences, you have a better

understanding of something, your bias can be a good thing.

EXAMPLE If you have been a traffic policeman, and have seen lots of disasters due to speed and alcohol, it is not "wrong" for you to be biased against fast cars and drinking at parties and bars. Your bias is due to your better understanding of the issue, but you still have to argue logically.

TERM TO KNOW Bias Presenting information in a way that favors one side over another in an argument.

2. Recognizing Bias Even writers who claim to be objective or neutral may still present their bias in subtle ways. 1. Placement of material: If the support for one side of the argument is mainly at the top of the article, and the reasons to support the opposite side of the issue are mainly at the bottom end of the article, that might be an example of subtle bias. 2. Quotation usage: Quotations from real people have more emotional weight than statements made by the writer. This is especially true if the person being quoted is an authority on the subject, or a celebrity. So if one side of the issue is being supported by lots of quotations while the other side isn't, that is a subtle form of bias. 3. Monetary gain: Common sense tells us that if someone is making money from something, the person will be biased in favor of it.

EXAMPLE A person who makes money out of building nuclear reactors in Europe or China could be expected to support a change in policy in Australia towards developing nuclear energy. On the other hand, a manufacturer of cigarettes is unlikely to be in favor of health warnings on cigarette packets or bans on smoking in bars.

Keep in mind, however, that you have to listen to arguments as they come up. You cannot just assume that someone is biased; rather, you have to show that someone is biased and use evidence to support your assertion.

□ SUMMARY In this lesson, you learned that writers' own experiences and beliefs are common causes of bias. Additionally, you learned that recognizing bias can be tricky when the bias is presented in subtle ways. Understanding bias will help you both evaluate it in your research sources and address it in your own writing.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: This content has been adapted from Lumen Learning's "Understanding Bias" tutorial.

TERMS TO KNOW Bias Presenting information in a way that favors one side over another in an argument.