

4 Workshops
**Research &
Writing in
Anthropology**

Created by
Janita Van Dyk



Contents

01



Research &
Reading

02



Crafting a
Thesis

03



Drafting &
Revising

04



Quoting,
Paraphrasing,
& Citing



Workshop 1: Research & Reading

1. Brainstorming
2. Planning
3. Researching
4. Defining Scope

1. Brainstorming



Brainstorming a Topic



Focus on Interest

Which paper topic, if provided in an assignment outline, initially sounds most interesting?

Strategize

Why are you drawn to this topic?

Based on lectures and readings, is there something this topic has overlooked? Why might this be important?

A Questioning Mindset

Which article or course topic completely shifted the way you thought about the world or a specific topic? Could you apply this change in thinking to question another area of social and cultural life?

Brainstorming Exercise #1



In small groups, start brainstorming ideas together.

Answer the following questions:

1. Which paper topic most interested you?
2. Why is this topic interesting? (Was it recently featured in a news article? Do you notice the dynamics it addresses in your everyday life? Do you feel like it has personally affected you? Etc.)
3. Are there course articles and chapters that already help you think about the topic?

***Don't forget to take notes on your brainstorming session!**

Brainstorming Exercise #2

As a large group, divide the potential topics on a Whiteboard or large sheet of paper. Students then break off and write down sub-topics and subjects that might be relevant. Once students are finished, discuss the connections and relevance of ideas as a group.

TOPIC #1

TOPIC #2

TOPIC #3

TOPIC #4

What makes a topic "anthropological"?

Anthropological Research

An anthropology research paper often contextualizes history and area-specific literature, but it ultimately focuses on how people produce meaning and navigate their wider social world.

People, Meaning, & Power

An anthropologist might ask:
How do people as creative agents navigate powerful arrangements of power? What kinds of dynamics do they reproduce? What do they challenge? Why do they do these things?

***Reminder: Even global systems and institutions are cultural!**

More Strategies

Thematize

As you continue brainstorming, continue gathering themes. What are some shared themes among the examples that come to mind for this topic?

Compare & Contrast

What is shared by these themes or literature explored in class? What makes them differ?

2. Planning



Library & Database Research



Generate Keywords

Find keywords that relate to your research topic. Keywords are general terms, such as concepts, topics, and locations, that help you find research articles in a database.

Find a Database

Instead of going straight for Google, use your library or a discipline-specific database. Databases sort journal articles based on discipline or field-related periodicals.

[AnthroSource](#)

[Anthropology Plus](#)

[Oxford Bibliographies \(Anthropology\)](#)

Keyword Exercise



Generate Your Own Keywords

Based on your topic, join a small group and start generating keywords. Together, try to complete each of the following:

- 1 Examine 2–3 journal articles from the course syllabus. What keywords did the authors use? Are there commonalities in the types of keywords these authors used?
2. Using these themes, generate your own keywords. Focus on two kinds of keywords: general and specific.
3. Group keywords. Which keywords might you combine in a database search? What other combinations could you use?

3. Researching



Library Research



Look Up Books

Use your university or college library website. Often times databases don't have books or book chapters listed. Libraries will have these listed, and in anthropology, finding a helpful edited volume with collected discussions on a specific topic, or an ethnography, will be invaluable for your research.

Ask a Librarian!

University librarians are happy to assist with student research projects. Book an appointment with a librarian or use your library info-desk. Come prepared with specific topic ideas and your assignment instructions.

Research Exercise #1



Library Research in Action!

Together, log-in to an institutional or discipline-specific research database displayed on the projector.

Generate a hypothetical research topic and some general keywords.

Enter the keywords (and adjust as necessary) and discuss the following questions once you receive a list:

1. Did the keywords search generate helpful or relevant results?
2. What makes these articles useful or not?
3. What happens when you change the keywords used (using more or less keywords or different terms?)

Research Exercise #2



Mine a Bibliography

Select one of the helpful articles found in the first exercise or one from the course syllabus that relates to a hypothetical topic.

Display the journal article bibliography on a projector. Navigate to the bibliography and collectively go through the list, looking for additional resources.

Discuss together how "mining" another's bibliography might be both helpful and limiting.

Grey Literature



Non-Library Research

Searching for "grey literature" can help supplement academic resources. Finding supplemental resources as potential cultural "data" is especially helpful in anthropology papers.

Grey literature can include materials like:

- policy reports
- news articles
- popular literature (i.e. cookbooks, non-fiction, trade publications)
- patents
- newsletters
- conference proceedings
- data & statistics

You can also search for examples of your topic in other locations, such as:

- archives
- social media (Instagram, Reddit, TikTok)

4. Defining Scope



Problems of Scope



Anthropology & Culture

Defining a feasible scope for an anthropology research paper can be difficult because of the broad subject area of the discipline: people and culture. Your topic could potentially connect to many aspects of social and cultural life (i.e. values, morality, labour, knowledge, political movements, etc.)

Depending on the page requirements of your assignment, defining the scope can be additionally challenging. For example, a 5–6 page research paper needs to be extremely specific, dealing with 2–3 well-connected examples.

Strategies of Scope



Narrowing the Topic

As you research, continually work to narrow the scope of your project. Focus on generating helpful limitations. Limitations are self-made "boundaries" that remind you throughout the research and writing process to stay focussed on what can be accomplished well.

1. What evidence and literature have you found so far? Is there too much or too little?
2. What do you have space to write about in the research paper? You should have space for an introduction, conclusion, several supporting examples, perhaps a brief discussion on historical and geographic context, guiding sentences or summaries that make connections between examples, analysis, and defining important terms.

Strategies of Scope



Questions to help create limitations:

What evidence is most persuasive?

Which research articles make the best and most interesting cases for why this topic is interesting and important?

What examples are easiest to describe?

What helps you answer a specific research question?

Which articles are most relevant (to the course or area of study)?

What can be reasonably argued in a relatively short research paper?



Workshop 2: Crafting a Thesis

1. Research Questions & Theses
2. Arguing
3. Takeaway

1. Research Question & Theses



The Research Question



What's a Research Question?

During your research and brainstorming, it is often helpful to motivate the research.

In order to do so, you should come up with a research question. This is a question related to your topic that you want to answer during your research and writing process.

Creating a Research Question

A research question often begins with HOW, WHY, or WHAT:

- What is the relationship between [this] and [that]?
- How has this phenomenon changed?
- Why do people do [this] instead of [that]?
- What are the causes of [this]? Why might this be?

The Research Question



Creating a Research Question (Cont'd)

A research question in anthropology generally can't be answered with a "Yes" or "No." In other words, the question is open-ended.

It should be **feasible** and **specific** (refer back to strategies on narrowing your research paper scope and what makes a research paper anthropological).

A research question is **relevant** to the topic.

Answering the Question



From Question to Thesis

Simply put, the answer to your research question is your thesis!

You'll have to do some tweaking to your thesis to get it into the form of an argument, but creating a research question early on can set you up to create a motivated argument.

You can even include your research question in your paper. For example, in the introduction, it can often be helpful to guide readers' attention to what bugged or bothered you about a situation, or what drew you to a topic. Then, by providing the argument, your reader gets a sense that the topic is meaningful!

Answering the Question



From Question to Thesis

Simply put, the answer to your research question is your thesis!

You'll have to do some tweaking to your thesis to get it into the form of an argument, but creating a research question early on can set you up to create a motivated argument.

You can even include your research question in your paper. For example, in the introduction, it can often be helpful to guide readers' attention to what bugged or bothered you about a situation, or what drew you to a topic. Then, by providing the argument, your reader gets a sense that the topic is meaningful!

2. Arguing



A Good Thesis



Key Elements of a Good Thesis

✓ Makes a claim

A good thesis makes a claim rather than states a fact. In other words, a thesis should be debatable.

✓ Argues rather than describes

A good thesis offers a perspective or takeaway, rather than a description of a topic.

✓ Uses metadiscourse

Theses should be easily recognizable. They are "signposted," i.e. use "metadiscourse" to signal to the reader that a statement is something more. For e.g., "I argue..." "Therefore..." "Ultimately..." are metadiscursive strategies or signposts for signalling a thesis.

A Good Thesis



Key Elements of a Good Thesis (cont'd)

✓ Uses active verbs

A good thesis usually uses direct, active verb structure (Subject-Verb-Object) and has a clearly defined subject.

✓ Avoids hedging

A thesis should avoid language that suggests that the author is not convinced of their own argument.

✓ Signals how it will be supported

A thesis statement should be supported. A good strategy for a paper is to follow the thesis statement with a "roadmap" for your reader of what evidence or discussions will support your argument.

A Good Thesis



Key Elements of a Good Thesis (cont'd)

✓ Uses clear language

Conceptual terms can sometimes muddle a thesis. Use lay terms and clear language. Use conceptual and technical terms when elaborating on the thesis.

✓ Communicates significance

A thesis should be grounded in a set of problems. In other words, it shouldn't be arbitrary, but offers instead a compelling takeaway for the reader that may challenge them to think differently on a topic or contributes to a wider conversation.

Exercise #1: A Thesis in Action!

Download a course article, or the following article:

Garth, Hanna. 2019. "Alimentary Dignity: Defining a Decent Meal in Post-Soviet Cuban Household Cooking." *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 24 (2): 424-442.

Exercise #1: A Thesis in Action!

- On your own, read the introduction of the chosen article.
- In small groups, locate and highlight or underline the following elements of the introduction:
 - Thesis statement
 - Supporting evidence, examples, or "premises"
 - Significance sentence
- In your groups, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the introduction based on your experience locating these elements.

Exercise #1: A Thesis in Action!

As a large group, collectively discuss our findings.

- Is there agreement about the thesis?
- How might we define the "evidence" or "examples" that anthropologists discuss?
- What makes the paper significant, i.e. what contributions is it trying to make?

Exercise #1: A Thesis in Action!

Let's recap with Hanna Garth:

THESIS: "I argue that longing for a "decent" meal becomes a way of clinging to a social ideal of well-rounded, culturally appropriate, and nutritionally adequate meals" (p. 426)."

This is a claim, i.e. not self-evident without research and supporting evidence.

Exercise #1: A Thesis in Action!

EVIDENCE #1: “...Cubans insist on categorizing food as ‘real’ and meals as decent to give meaning to their experience of the changing Cuban food system”... which “is a way of upholding a categorically distinct and ideal cuisine that is rarely experienced...” (p. 427)

Here we see the “longing” aspect, as well as proof that Cubans have a distinct social ideal for a “real” meal that they talk about.

Exercise #1: A Thesis in Action!

EVIDENCE #2: “Alimentary dignity is negotiated through this discursive practice of only categorizing particular foods as ‘real.’” (p. 427)

Cubans have to uphold, work out, negotiate what is a dignified meal by making categories. This supporting point connects to the thesis as these are practices through which people distinguish between ideal/real foods vs. foods that don't fit these criteria.

Exercise #1: A Thesis in Action!

EVIDENCE #3: “The categories of ‘real food’ and the decent meal often index larger, historical, social, political, and economic processes...and is enacted in the practice of food acquisition.” (p. 427)

Garth shows how the thesis is significant: alimentary dignity and the decent meal are connected to larger forces and processes that are felt and negotiated in daily Cuban life. This evidence also shows that researchers can find this active search for a decent meal in a specific practice that the author observed—food acquisition.

Exercise #1: A Thesis in Action!

Why is Hanna Garth's thesis strong?

1. It's argumentative
2. It is supported by a roadmap
3. She gives a sense of the thesis' significance
4. She includes both lay-terms ("a decent meal") in the thesis and conceptual terms ("alimentary dignity") in her explanation of evidence.
5. The thesis is feasible in scope (it is specific, while connected to larger forces).

Exercise #1: A Thesis in Action!

Course-Specific Recap:

3. Takeaway



On your own...



Draft a thesis

Try to see if you can model your introduction and thesis on the article from the exercise. Draft your introduction. You can update your intro and thesis throughout the writing process! Having an intro and preliminary thesis drafted will help streamline the writing process.

On your own...



Draft a thesis

Throughout the drafting process, check to see if your intro has addressed the following for your reader:

- What does your reader need to know before you make an argument? (Relevance/Context)
- What can you reasonably argue, space and time permitted? (Scope)
- What is the main takeaway for your reader? (Argument/Thesis)
- How are you going to support your thesis with specific examples? (Evidence)
- What terms, with defined technical and “lay” versions, are relevant to your research topic? (Emic/Etic Concepts)
- Why should someone care about your argument? (Significance)



Workshop 3: Drafting & Revising

1. The Three C's
2. Outlining
3. Drafting
4. Rewriting

1. The Three C's



The Three C's



The Three C's of Good Writing & Effective Communication

Clarity, Coherency, and Concision.

CLARITY: Generally, if you're clear about what your argument is, then your reader should too!

Terms are defined and you've logically structured your essay. A leads to B leads to C. You are leading your reader through these steps and not assuming they are going to be making logical leaps on your behalf.

The Three C's



The Three C's of Writing (cont'd)

Clarity, Coherency, and Concision.

COHERENCY: Terms, concepts, and arguments are all operating consistently. They are not shifting or changing as the text develops, unless you want them to and you signal to your reader that you are introducing a change in meaning or approach.

Your reader can assume that when you introduce a thought that guides the piece, it is going to be consistent throughout and that your premises and evidence will all help in some fashion support the "big picture."

The Three C's



The Three C's of Writing (cont'd)

Clarity, Coherency, and Concision.

CONCISION: You've endeavored to locate the most succinct and specific way to write a statement. You generally avoid unneeded repetition or redundancy.

2. Outlining



Methods



Outlining Methods

Outlining helps to expedite the research paper writing process.

Depending on your preferences, there are several strategies for outlining, including but not limited to:

- Linear/List (most common)
- Columns (comparing and contrasting)
- Circle Charts (connecting the dots)
- Implosion Charts (exploratory)

For the purpose of this workshop, we will explore linear or list outlines.

Linear Outline



Linear Outline Template & Components

1. Introduction

- a. Pull in your reader
- b. Bring forward a research question or problem
- c. Argue your thesis

2. Supporting Point A

- a. Each paragraph begins with a Topic Sentence

3. Supporting Point B

4. Supporting Point C

5. Conclusion

- a. Summarize
- b. Restate argument
- c. Offer lingering points or questions

Linear Outline



Drafting Topic Sentences

Topic sentences are usually the first sentence of a paragraph. They tell your reader what you will discuss in that paragraph or section. They are kind of like a mini-thesis that reminds your reader of where they are going and how you are supporting your argument.

They also help you transition from the previous paragraph and give readers get a sense of the logical progression of your argument.

When writing your outline, draft some potential topic sentences. As you flesh out your draft, use these topic sentences to help you transition from paragraph to paragraph.

Topic Sentence Exercise #1



Topic Sentence Exercise

Using a course journal article, locate a short paragraph (5–6 sentences long). On your own or in a small group, read the paragraph in its entirety. Then, identify the topic sentence.

Map out the following:

1. Thesis Statement
2. Topic Sentence
3. Relationship between topic sentence and thesis
4. Paragraph concluding sentence
5. Relationship between the paragraph's concluding sentence and the topic sentence.

Together, discuss: What are the strengths and weakness of this topic sentence or paragraph?

Topic Sentence Exercise #2



Topic Sentence Exercise

Next, as a group, examine other topic sentences in the journal article. Divide up the article between one another to make this go faster.

Together, create a list of "transition techniques" that the author uses to help signpost the sentence and the logical progression of the article.

These can include questions, specific words (such as "However..."), bridging phrases, or pivoting statements.

Collectively discuss how these techniques expedite guiding your readers.

3. Drafting



Drafting



First Draft

1. Get all your thoughts down on paper, following your outline as best as possible
2. Focus on effectively describing evidence and examples
3. Include citations in the first draft. You don't want to forget where you found a piece of information!
4. Don't edit anything until the essay is completely drafted

Drafting



Using your "Evidence"

In your first draft, focus on organizing your evidence in compelling ways from paragraph to paragraph:

1. Put multiple sources into conversation with each around a common theme that will help support your thesis
2. Demonstrate that you know how different sources overlap or depart from one another, and why that is significant to make your point
3. Be able to demonstrate by the end of the paragraph that your evidence has addressed the topic for that paragraph, and gives weight to your thesis

Drafting



Second Draft

1. Finalize your sources
2. Contextualize your quotes
 - a. Give a lead up and explanation of a helpful quote
3. Make sure your paragraphs follow a logical order (based on the type of evidence, and flow)
 - a. Think of it as building to a climactic point! You're crafting a persuasive and engaging narrative
4. Make sure the content within your paragraphs also follows a logical order
5. Refine topic sentences
6. Eliminate redundancy
7. Define your terms

Drafting



Logical Order Exercise

In small groups or as a class, put the following sentence in the correct, or most logical, order.

"Hotels and transportation on trips can be expensive if you don't book them plenty of time in advance. When you go on a trip, you need to think about how much money to allot for things like transportation, food, and hotels. It is important to plan your trips carefully. Planning your trip carefully will allow you to have a more relaxed trip. Another thing to plan for is how much time you want to spend sightseeing and doing different sorts of activities. Even though you may want to do everything, you have to remember that there are only so many hours in the day!"

From Purdue Owl, "Order of Ideas."

Drafting



Third Draft & Further Revisions

1. Continue clarifying:
 - a. Send the essay to a friend, asking them to highlight sentences or words they don't understand. Add these definitions in your revision to clarify further
 - b. Ask your friend to identify your thesis for you, or ask them to sum up what they think your paper is about. If they identify a different thesis or can't locate it, revise accordingly
2. Bring paper to a campus Writing Center
3. Proofread for grammar and typos
4. Format Bibliography

4. Rewriting



Revising & Rewriting



Developing a Different Thesis

Sometimes during your writing process, you find yourself making a different argument at the end of the essay! If that's the case, then you should do the following:

1. Update your thesis
2. Make sure your topic sentences and evidence can still support your point; demonstrate that previous evidence you had relied on was perhaps misleading.

You could also describe in your introduction how you got to this new thesis (instead of your original idea, for example). Show your development!

Revising & Rewriting



Ensure you are completing the assignment!

1. Have you answered a question prompt or completed the assignment criteria?
2. Does your paper fall into the right theme?
3. Have you used sufficient sources requested by the outline?

Revising & Rewriting



Don't be discouraged!

It's easy to feel discouraged by revising and rewriting work. Cutting sentences or changing an argument can feel like a waste of time. However, rewriting can be a powerful way of developing your thinking. Sometimes you have to try different approaches or put on different hats. Every polished paper or book you've read has gone through extended periods of revision and rewriting.

As Richard Graves wrote, "There is no such thing as good writing, only good rewriting."

Making sure you schedule time for this essential process when completing research papers.



Workshop 4: Quoting, Paraphrasing, & Citing

1. General Citation Information
2. Quoting vs. Paraphrasing
3. Citations in Action
4. Types of Sources

1. General Citation Info



General Citation Info



Why Cite?

1. Giving credit where credit is due! You got your data from somewhere
2. Acknowledging your "family" of researchers
3. Showing that you're adding to a body of literature and knowledge
4. Demonstrating your familiarity with that body of knowledge or available data

When to Cite?

1. When you are writing about something that you wouldn't have known if not for a source
2. When you can't make a claim on your own without evidence

General Citation Info



When NOT to Cite?

1. When it was your idea!
2. When what you are writing is common knowledge

For example. “Food is a symbolic and material substance.” Many people have made this claim and no specific scholar has “ownership” over this claim.

Contrasting example: “Food symbolizes fundamental divisions in society between the raw and the cooked, or nature and culture.” You would need to cite Lévi-Strauss’ work on the Culinary Triangle for this example.

General Citation Info



Citation Styles

There's a reason why you might be asked to use a specific citation style for an assignment. For example, you might be asked to use APA, MLA, or Chicago Style for various papers in the humanities and social sciences.

Largely this is due to the ways that different disciplines discuss and feature their evidence.

Citation styles also have stylistic purposes:

- Do you need an uninterrupted flow of writing?
- Do your sources need a lot of explanation?
- Do you need to show your readers, as they are reading, who you are in conversation with?

General Citation Info



Common Citation Styles

In anthropology, the most common citation style used is Chicago Author-Date. This citation style uses in-text or bracketed citations, endnotes for clarity, and an alphabetized hanging paragraph style works cited list.

For more information on Chicago Author-Date, go to the following resources:

[The Chicago Manual of Style Online](#)

[Purdue OWL Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition](#)

2. Quoting vs Paraphrasing



Quoting vs Paraphrasing



Direct Quotes

Direct quotes are selections or passages copied directly from a source. They are contained in quotation marks.

When to use Direct Quotes

- To provide a specific definition that you cannot provide yourself
- To provide evidence of an author's claim
- When a turn of phrase or wording is striking
- To precisely capture the author's argument or stakes
- To analyze a specific passage

Quoting vs Paraphrasing



Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing a source means putting passages or arguments of the source material in your own words.

When to Paraphrase

- To summarize an argument or the findings of an author
- To simplify a passage in your own words and eliminate irrelevant data
- To communicate statistics or similar data
- To demonstrate your knowledge and expertise of the cited materials

Quoting vs Paraphrasing



When Quoting & Paraphrasing

When you are quoting or paraphrasing a specific passage, it's important to cite these sentences using page numbers! If you are merely paraphrasing general arguments from the source as a whole, you can omit page numbers.

The quote or paraphrased sentence may include technical or conceptual terms. It's important to still define these terms for your reader.

Furthermore, make sure you are not quoting or paraphrasing out of context. For example, the passage identified might be something that the author as a whole is working to contradict!

3. Citations in Action



In-Text Citations



In-Text Citations (Chicago Style)

In-text citations are bracketed lists of the sources used to support a statement, e.g. (Garth 2019).

While they can break up a sentence, it means that your reader knows immediately who you are using to support your evidence.

In-Text Citations in Action:

In her discussion, Douglas (1966, 33) demonstrates that “a distinction is made between cooked and uncooked food as carriers of pollution.”

Mary Douglas (1966) argues that classifications are manifestations of deeper social patterns and logics.

Works Cited



Works Cited, aka the Bibliography

A Works Cited list or bibliography is a list of all the sources used in a paper, including both scholarly and non-scholarly sources.

Works cited are organized according to the style-specific conventions. In the case of Chicago Author-Date, it is alphabetized with a hanging paragraph style.

Works Cited



Works Cited in Action

Citation styles usually require that different types of sources are formatted in particular ways. For example, journal articles and book chapters aren't italicized like books, but instead are contained in quotation marks.

Book Example:

Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Boston: Ark Paperbacks.

Journal Article Example:

Matejowsky, Ty. 2008. "Jolly Dogs and McSpaghetti: Anthropological Reflections on Global/Local Fast-Food Competition in the Philippines." *Journal of Asia-Pacific Business* 9 (4): 313–328.

4. Types of Sources



Scholarly Sources



What are scholarly sources?

Scholarly sources are peer-reviewed. That means that the article is anonymized during the review process, and reviewed by several established experts for accuracy and quality.

They are also published by scholarly presses or academic journals, e.g. Cultural Anthropology; Food, Culture & Society; Princeton University Press; Routledge.

These sources are written by experts in their fields, such as PhDs, graduate students, or a research team.

Finally, scholarly sources are held to higher standards of evidence and analytical/critical reasoning.

Scholarly Sources



How to use scholarly sources

- Help make a specific point, provide evidence, and give additional context and weight to your own argument
- Provide historical information, statistics, and other expert analyses.
- Offer explanation on "how things work"
- Used as tools to help build your paper and argument
 - They should ultimately be RELEVANT tools

Non-Scholarly Sources



What are non-scholarly resources?

Non-scholarly resources are those not published in a scholarly press or subject to expert peer review. They are rich sites of cultural information, but have little to no guaranteed fact-checking

This includes:

- "Grey Literature"
- News media, multimedia (YouTube videos, Twitter essays, Facebook posts), website pages for organizations or groups

Non-Scholarly Sources



How to use non-scholarly resources

These are cultural phenomena, conversations, and materials to analyze as an anthropologist for their wider social meanings

Treat these resources as anthropological sites; they are groups of people having specific conversations about a topic meaningful to them. As an anthropology student, you will demonstrate how these conversations fit into other patterns using your own reasoning and the support of your scholarly toolkit.

Campus Resources

Note to Instructors & Students

Questions or concerns about these materials and exercises? Email me at janita.vandyk@mail.utoronto.ca

If you use these slides and exercises, please ensure that the materials are credited to me. I've left template slides to add text boxes for in-class exercises and campus-specific resources.

If they were helpful, I'd also appreciate a shout-out on Twitter! My username is [@janitavandyk](https://twitter.com/janitavandyk)



Happy
Writing!