

# WRITING UP THE RESEARCH PROJECT



Along with further information covering issues associated with a number of aspects of writing up the research the Companion Website ([study.sagepub.com/brotherton](http://study.sagepub.com/brotherton)) also contains links to video material focusing specifically on the introduction and conclusions parts of the final report or dissertation.

## Technique Tip



## Summarising and Paraphrasing

A summary is obviously a shortened version of the original but summarising does not mean simply cutting out certain words, phrases or sentences from the original and using what remains. When you summarise something it will obviously be shorter than the original but it is also transformed into your own words. This raises some issues.

Accuracy is one. When you transform the original into a shorter version and state this in your own words it is critical that you do this accurately. Your ability to achieve this depends upon your understanding and interpretation of the original so you must make sure that you understand what the original is saying and reproduce this accurately in your summarised interpretation.

Attribution is another. Although you are converting the original into your own words you were not the originator of the ideas or results you are summarising. This was someone else and therefore you have to recognise this by attributing these things to their originator by using an appropriate citation.

Paraphrasing is similar to summarising but the latter tends to be more general in providing an overall view or stance on the topic, whereas the former tends to be more specific dealing with a more limited and particular aspect that is to be explored in greater detail. The same principles of converting the original to your own words and providing suitable attribution apply equally to paraphrasing.



The video material on writing a methodology chapter, available via the Companion Website ([study.sagepub.com/brotherton](http://study.sagepub.com/brotherton)), may help you to get a firmer understanding of these issues and how to deal with them.



The use of tables, charts and diagrams is invariably a good strategy because in producing these you will be demonstrating that you have not simply decided to present the raw data but have engaged with it to analyse and summarise what it says. Furthermore, presenting your results, when appropriate, using contemporary data visualisation techniques and software can further indicate that your analysis has been conducted in a more extensive and thoughtful manner. In this respect the web link to the 'Flowing Data' website in the Companion Website ([study.sagepub.com/brotherton](http://study.sagepub.com/brotherton)) would be particularly helpful to obtain ideas of how you could do this.

### Technique Tip



### Writing Better Conclusions

Firstly, make sure that your 'conclusions' really do conclude the work that has been conducted and reported in the earlier sections or chapters of the piece. Striking out on a tangent, introducing new material not referred to before and/or deciding it is appropriate to have a personal rant are all strategies that will disadvantage you. So, make sure that your conclusions are based upon, and derived from, what you have said previously in your work because if you start making assertions that do not have an evidence base the marker is going to ask 'where has this come from – out of the blue?' – and will penalise you accordingly.

Secondly, ensure you summarise, without repeating large pieces of the prior text, the key aspects, the main themes and the most important, significant and interesting findings. You need to avoid the marker writing on your work – 'merely repetition'! This is your last chance to convince the reader that your work really does contain things that are valuable and, as not everything will be equally interesting or valuable, you need to pick out, and highlight, the aspects that have the greatest value. Think about someone trying to convince you that a certain product is the one you should buy: they are not going to tell you everything about this, they will focus on, and emphasise, the key aspects that they believe are going to be of greatest interest and relevance to you. This is how you should think about this aspect of your conclusions.

Thirdly, do not over-claim. Academics are going to be very sceptical of conclusions that claim the work has been perfect, that all the questions have been fully answered and that there are no further questions or issues to explore on the topic. Again, think about this. If someone tried to convince you that something is perfect you may well be a little sceptical, you may not believe them. Remember the old adage; if it sounds too good to be true it probably isn't!

Fourthly, you can be personal but don't go overboard. It is permissible in the conclusions to give your opinion/s *but* do not do this in a dogmatic manner.

Fifth, be honest but not suicidal. Academics know that research projects rarely, if ever, go entirely to plan. There are always limitations, expected or unexpected,

decisions can be made that, with the benefit of hindsight, may be seen to be mistaken. In my experience many students feel that it is a sign of weakness to admit any errors or limitations because they think this will count against them. This is rarely the case. In fact the reverse is more often than not the case. Recognising errors and limitations, and identifying their impacts and effects, is honesty. Going to town and over-emphasising these and their effects will be counterproductive. Honesty is a virtue but self-flagellation is foolishness, so take a balanced approach. The key thing to remember here is that, whatever else it might be, the research project is a learning exercise or vehicle. Looking back, recognising and reflecting upon the process you have gone through in terms of its success and failures is a very important part of the whole process. Doing this demonstrates that you have developed insight, reflexivity and have learned from the experience.

Finally, remember that the pursuit of knowledge does not end with your contribution. It is virtually certain that your work will not have fully answered all the questions it was designed to address and it is highly likely that new questions will have been generated by what you have done. Therefore, while you can, and should, make clear what your work has contributed to the topic, you also need to recognise and state what needs to be done from this point onwards. So, identifying fruitful areas, new issues, emergent questions and possibilities for future research is an important part of the research process. Just as reviewing the literature produced by previous research studies helped to inform the nature of your project, you should 'return the favour' by suggesting where the research agenda might go from this point onwards. Just as you stood on the shoulders of those who came before you – you need to provide a similar platform for those who are going to come after you.

### Technique Tip



### Direct and Indirect Text Citations Using the Harvard System

The information that should be included in a standard, indirect text citation is the author(s) surname(s) and the year of publication. All of this information or only the date may be contained within brackets, such as '(Brotherton, 2004)' or 'Brotherton (2004)', or with multiple authors, '(Brotherton and Wood, 2004)' or 'Brotherton and Wood (2004)'.

Often, the fully bracketed form is used where the citation appears at the end of a sentence and the other where it appears within the sentence because this tends to fit in well with the flow of the text. However, it is possible to use the bracketed form within a sentence where this is more appropriate. For example, 'some authors argue that hospitality is a multifaceted concept (Brotherton and Wood, 2004) but other authors disagree (Smith and Jones, 2003)'. If the sentence had been worded differently, then the non-bracketed form might have been more appropriate. For example, 'While Brotherton and Wood (2004) argue that hospitality is a multifaceted concept, Smith and Jones (2003) disagree'.

The same principles apply to direct quotations, but then the start and finish of the quotation must be indicated and the page number(s) where this appeared in the original source must be included. It is also sometimes regarded as good

practice to italicise the text of a quotation to make it even clearer where it begins and ends and to show that it is something other than your own words. For example, 'according to Brotherton and Wood (2004: 45) "*the research evidence clearly indicates that hospitality is a multifaceted concept that requires more sophisticated investigation than has hitherto been undertaken*".'

If the quotation is a long one – two to three sentences or a paragraph – then it is also often regarded as good practice to separate it from the main text by presenting it as a separate paragraph and possibly indenting it on the left and right sides.

Where you are producing a citation for a table, diagram or figure taken from an original source, the normal conventions and format for a direct quotation apply, but with one small difference. It is regarded as good practice to locate the citation under the table, diagram or figure and to include the word 'source'. For example, 'Source: Brotherton and Wood (2004: 52)'.

So, as we have seen above, normally the difference between a direct quotation and an indirect reference is quite obvious in terms of whose words are being used – yours or someone else's – but there can be something of a grey area between these two where most of the words used are your own but you want to quote one, two or a few words directly from the original source. In these circumstances, it is normal practice to use the standard, indirect form of citation – that is without including the page number(s). You simply indicate which of the words are not your own by using quotation marks around them. For example, 'Brotherton and Wood (2004) take a different view of hospitality from many other authors and suggest that it is "a multifaceted concept".'

### Technique Tip



### Solving Possible Citation Problems in the Harvard System

#### **More than one publication by the same author(s) published in the same year**

This is a problem because both the text and bibliographic citation use the year of publication as a differentiating indicator. However, this problem is easy to solve. All you need to do is place a suffix after the year to differentiate one publication from another. For example, 'Brotherton and Wood (2004a)' and 'Brotherton and Wood (2004b)' indicate that there are two separate publications produced by these authors in the same year and that there are two separate entries in the bibliography or references section for these two different publications.

#### **When can you use 'et al.'?**

Et al., an abbreviated version of the Latin *et alia*, simply means 'and others'. It is a form of shorthand to avoid having to cite all the authors' surnames in the text. For example, 'Brotherton, Wood, Smith and Jones (2004)' can become 'Brotherton et al. (2004)'. It cannot be used where there are fewer than three authors or in the corresponding entry in the bibliography or references section.

### **Dealing with quotations that flow over two pages or are discontinuous**

In some circumstances, you may wish to cite a quotation that begins on one page and ends on the next or you may wish to pick out and combine two or more pieces from different pages in the original text. The conventions for dealing with these are as follows. First, with a continuous quotation flowing over two pages, you cite the reference in the same way as you would for a normal quotation, but indicate the starting and finishing pages for the quote, inserting a dash between the two, such as 'Brotherton (2004: 19–20)'. Second, when the quotation is discontinuous, the page numbers the separate pieces of text appear on in the original are separated by commas, so for example it could read 'Brotherton (2004: 21, 25, 32)'. In the quotation itself, the pieces are separated by a series of dots (known as an ellipsis), such as, 'hospitality as a concept ... is multifaceted ... and one lacking sufficient explanation'.

### **Citing multiple works by one author or different authors in the text**

Where you wish to summarise evidence and/or ideas from more than one source, then it is normal practice to string these citations together. For example, in the case of multiple works by one author, you might say, 'All the work on this issue by Green (1998, 2000, 2004) has arrived at the same conclusion' or 'Green's work (1998, 2000, 2004) has arrived at the same conclusion' or 'Green has arrived at the same conclusion in all of his work (1998, 2000, 2004)'. In the case of multiple authors, you may say, 'All the work on this issue has come to the same conclusion (Blue, 2004; Brown, 1996; Green, 1994; Yellow, 2000)' or 'all the work conducted on this issue (Green, 1994; Brown, 1996; Yellow, 2000; Blue, 2004) has come to the same conclusion'. You may arrange the list of citations in either alphabetical (in the first example here) or ascending chronological (in the second example) order. If your institution does not specify, you may choose which you prefer but you *must be consistent* throughout the whole of your write-up. You may feel chronological order is more relevant should you wish to indicate how study in a particular field has developed over time.

### **What do I do when the source I've read cited another author but did not give the reference for this?**

This is known as secondary referencing and should be used sparingly as it may reduce the credibility of your writing or argument. However, in cases where you have no other option, the following formats should be used. For example, in the text, this may appear as, 'Wood (cited by Brotherton, 2003) contends that ...' or, in the case of a quotation, "'hospitality is a defunct concept" (Wood, cited by Brotherton, 2003: 45)'. In the bibliography, use the same format as for a chapter from an edited book.

## Technique Tip



## Bibliographic Citations Using the Harvard System

The first principle to apply when creating a bibliography using the Harvard system is to organise the entries in alphabetical order by the author(s) surname(s) and initial(s). This is the first detail given in references in the text so it is logical that this is the first piece of information given in the full bibliographic entry. Similarly, as the corresponding references in the text only have one more piece of information – the year of publication – it is also logical that this comes next. Hence, the text reference ‘Brotherton and Wood (2004)’ becomes ‘Brotherton, B. and Wood, R.C. (2004)’ in the bibliography.

What are now required are the remaining details about the publication to enable those viewing the citation to obtain the source if they so desire. The ways in which these details are recorded differ slightly according to the type of source – that is, whether it is a book, paper in a journal, article in a magazine or newspaper, a dissertation or thesis, a sound or video recording, a website – but all follow the same basic principle of containing sufficient information to enable the source to be identified and obtained. Hypothetical examples of each of these and a way of setting each one out are shown below.

### For books

Author(s) surname(s), initials (year of publication) title, place of publication, name of publisher. For example, ‘Brotherton, B. and Wood, R.C. (2004) *Hospitality: A radical view*. London, Sage.’

### For papers in journals

Author(s) surname(s), initials (year of publication) title of the paper, name of the journal, volume number, issue number, pages the paper appears on. For example, ‘Brotherton, B. and Wood, R.C. (2004) ‘Hospitality – a radical view’, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 22 (4), pp. 234–50.’

### For a chapter from an edited book

Chapter author(s) surname(s), initials (year of publication) title of the chapter, editor(s) initials and surname(s), title of the book, place of publication, name of publisher, pages the chapter appears on. For example, ‘Brotherton, B. and Wood, R.C. (2004) ‘Hospitality – a radical view’, in G. Hathaway (ed.), *Hospitality in the Twenty-first Century*. London, Sage, pp. 45–60.’

### For an article from a magazine or newspaper

This format described here applies to these types of publication, which do not have volume and issue numbers. Where magazines have such pieces of information, the format given above for papers in journals can be used. Author(s) surname(s), initials (year of publication), title of the article, name of the magazine or newspaper, date of publication, page(s) the article appears

on. An example from a newspaper would be 'Brotherton, B. and Wood, R.C. (2004) 'Hospitality – a radical view', *The Times*, 22 January, p. 6.' For an article from a magazine, an example would be, 'Brotherton, B. and Wood, R.C. (2004) 'Hospitality – a radical view', *Contemporary Hospitality*, January, pp. 6–8.'

#### **For work by an unidentifiable author**

In such cases, either the normal format for the type of publication is used and the word 'Anon.' or the title of the publication can be used in place of the author's name. For example, 'Tourism Today (2011) 'Who believes traditional destinations are dead?', *Tourism Today*, 4 (1), pp. 1–2'.

#### **For government publications**

Use the format given for books and, if there is no identifiable author, put the name of the organisation that commissioned the report. For example, 'Department of Culture (2002) *Reorganising the UK's Tourism Organisations*. London, TSO.'

#### **For theses or dissertations**

Follow the same basic procedure that you would for books, but here, of course, there will be no publisher or location information as these are unpublished works. However, the equivalent information exists in the form of the name of the institution that conferred the award and its location. For example, 'Jones, B. (1999) 'Service quality in UK restaurants', PhD thesis, Department of Hospitality Management, John Wrasse University, Boston, UK'.

#### **For electronic sources**

There are many different types of electronic sources for documents, but the general principles for citing them are the same as those for more conventional publications. What is required is for sufficient details to be provided to allow the source to be identified and accessed.

The general format for this type of source is author(s) surname(s), initial(s) (where there is no identifiable author, 'Anon.' or the website name can be used) (year of publication) title, location (that is, name of website), place (if applicable), URL (that is, website address), date accessed. For example, 'Hogg, T. (2012) 'Ruritania's tourism future', University of Ruritania, Real City. Available at: <http://ur.ac.ru/ruritania-tourism-research-institute/research-papers/july-2001/html> [accessed 30 September 2014]'.

## Research Action Checklist



## Checking Your Write-Up

### Introduction/Rationale

- ✓ Will the reader have a clear and unambiguous understanding of your research topic?
- ✓ Have you explicitly stated what the context and boundaries of the topic are?
- ✓ Is there a sound rationale and justification for researching this topic?
- ✓ Is the main research question or aim clearly stated?
- ✓ Are the subsidiary questions or objectives clear, achievable and directly related to the overall purpose of the research?
- ✓ Will the reader 'get' what you are proposing to do?

### The Literature Review

- ✓ Is your literature review structured and organised to ensure that your argument/analysis flows logically and clearly?
- ✓ Have you made clear how the literature you have reviewed is relevant and related to your research question/s and/or aim/objectives?
- ✓ Will your literature review, as a whole, convince the reader that you have sufficiently covered the existing knowledge relating to your topic?
- ✓ Is your literature review written in an analytical, critical manner, or is it merely a descriptive summary of what has gone before?
- ✓ Does your review have a clear 'end point', i.e. is there a synthesis or summary of the key points and issues?
- ✓ Will the review provide a sound basis for you to develop a conceptual model and hypotheses to link the secondary and primary research activities?

### The Methodology

- ✓ Have you developed an appropriate conceptual model, and associated hypotheses, to link the literature review and the design and conduct of the empirical research?
- ✓ Does this provide sufficient guidance for your empirical research design decisions?
- ✓ Have you used your model/hypotheses to explain and justify why you have chosen to design and structure your empirical research in the way you have done?



- ✓ Will the reader be convinced that your choice of design/approach is the most appropriate one?
- ✓ Are all the variables clearly stated and explained and are the relationships between these stated explicitly?
- ✓ Have you made clear what measures you used and why these are vital to achieve a successful outcome?
- ✓ Is your sampling strategy clear and have you adequately explained the procedures used to implement this?
- ✓ Have you detailed and justified the instruments and procedures used to collect the data?
- ✓ Are your data analysis choices clearly stated and justified?
- ✓ Are any ethical aspects dealt with appropriately?
- ✓ Were there any difficulties encountered in the research process and have you explained the implications of these and how you dealt with them?

#### **The Findings/Results and Discussion**

- ✓ Are your findings presented in a clear and parsimonious manner or do the key findings get lost amongst a lot of unnecessary detail?
- ✓ If there is too much data that is obscuring the main points could you remove some of this and place it in an appendix?
- ✓ Have you chosen the most appropriate formats to present your data?
- ✓ Are your results presented so that they relate directly to your research question/s, aim/objectives and hypotheses?
- ✓ Will the reader clearly see the main points you are trying to highlight in your results?
- ✓ Are your interpretations of the implications and significance of the results logical and consistent?
- ✓ Does your discussion connect the findings to your research question/s, aim/objectives and hypotheses?
- ✓ If you have made assertions and inferences on the basis of your results are these fully explained and justified by reference to the evidence that supports them?

#### **The Conclusions**

- ✓ Are your conclusions merely a summary of what you've said before?
- ✓ Do your conclusions make it clear which of your research questions, or aims/objectives, have been answered or achieved, and which have not, and why?
- ✓ Have you reflected on the process of your research and identified its successes, limitations and any failures?

- ✓ Do your conclusions 'close the circle' by making it clear how your research has added something to the existing body of knowledge relating to your topic?
- ✓ Is there a recognition, and statement, of the implications of your findings for further research on the topic, i.e. have you included a tentative future research agenda for those who follow you indicating where and how future research effort might usefully be focused?

### **General Style and Format Issues**

- ✓ Are your sentences and paragraphs a suitable length to make your message clear?
- ✓ Have you used appropriate chapter/section headings and sub-headings to signal changes in content and emphasis?
- ✓ Is your writing style appropriate?
- ✓ Have you included clear signposts in the text to guide the reader from one aspect to another?
- ✓ Have you avoided using any potentially racist or sexist language?
- ✓ Are all your figures, tables, charts and diagrams labelled appropriately, clearly and consistently?
- ✓ Spelling and grammar checkers are not foolproof, so have you carefully proofread your text to ensure that typos and other errors that would not be picked up by these checkers have been eliminated?
- ✓ Is your referencing accurate, complete and compliant with the referencing style you have been required to use?
- ✓ Have you ensured that everything that should have been attributed has been, so that you cannot be accused of poor attribution practice or plagiarism?
- ✓ Do the text and bibliographic citations match exactly?
- ✓ Is there a clear and logical structure to the work as a whole and does the text 'flow' from beginning to end?
- ✓ Have you made sure that your work complies with the guidance you have been given regarding things such as maximum word length, inclusion of a contents list, list/s of figures, tables etc., the layout of the title page, the line spacing and font size required, the type of binding that is acceptable?
- ✓ If you have included any appendices have you placed these at the end of the work, after any bibliography or reference list, and numbered them appropriately?