



Writing the research proposal: EAS 493

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- wac
- c4w
- writing initiatives
- webmail
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I'm new to the University of Alberta, having come from the University of Western Ontario where I was Director of the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. In my new position here I'll be working with faculty and students across the university as part of the Writing Across the Curriculum initiative. I will also be working with students and faculty in the Department of English and Film Studies.

I am the author, co-author, or editor of five books and 29 articles, including Writing Instruction in Canadian Universities. My current research interests include the development of doctoral student writing, writing assignments across disciplinary fields, and rhetorical approaches to text encoding. Currently I serve as co-Vice-President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW) and a member of the Executive Board of the Canadian

Recent presentations
This page contains links to pdfs of slides displayed at presentations I've given.

Books
This page displays the covers and descriptions of books I've authored, co-authored, or co-edited.



Blog: Thinking About Writing
A new blog on writing-related issues

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~graves1/index.html>

Writing Across the Curriculum

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Today:
9/2/2009 10:31:23 AM

C4W
WRS Courses
Roger Graves
Blog
Academic Honesty

Would you like to improve the writing of your students? Improve their learning of your lecture material? Are you looking for new ways to engage your students in your course materials? If this interests you, contact [Roger Graves](#): or 492.2169

What can we do for individual instructors:

- meet to talk about ways to incorporate informal (short, impromptu) writing assignments into any class, small or large
- review via email any assignment you give students that has a writing component to help make it clearer for students and to help develop grading rubrics to improve the speed and accuracy of grading
- visit your class to help students get started on your writing assignments

What can we do for departments:

- hold workshops on creating good writing assignments
- host discussions of how to improve the writing of students in your programs
- conduct reviews of writing assignments in your departments courses to identify exactly what your students are being asked to write—and to ensure that they have access to resources on how to write (online and on-campus)

Upcoming Presentations and Workshops:

<http://www.humanities.ualberta.ca/WAC/>

The writing process

Getting started

- Explore the assignment
- Make rough notes
- Pick a tentative topic

Getting feedback

- Make an appointment at the writing centre for later in the week
- Get feedback on your draft/revise

Revising

- Work on style and lower order concerns
- Proofread, consult checklist for assignment

Getting organized

Organize paper sections similar to your proposal

- **Introduction and Context:** Identify the problem, issue; strong statement of aim [thesis]; briefly outline what you are going to do
- **Body of paper:** Identify your research methodology; main arguments, evidence to support any claims
- **Conclusions and Recommendations:** Summarize your findings; any suggestions for the next researcher?
- **References:** List all references you have cited in your text.

Proposal

1. What climate change topic will you study?
2. What is/are the scope/limitations on your topic?
3. What is the context for your study?
4. Citations

What are the limitations?

- Minimum 5 journal articles should be listed
- Summarize at least three (3) journal articles
- Inform the reader why they are important for your research

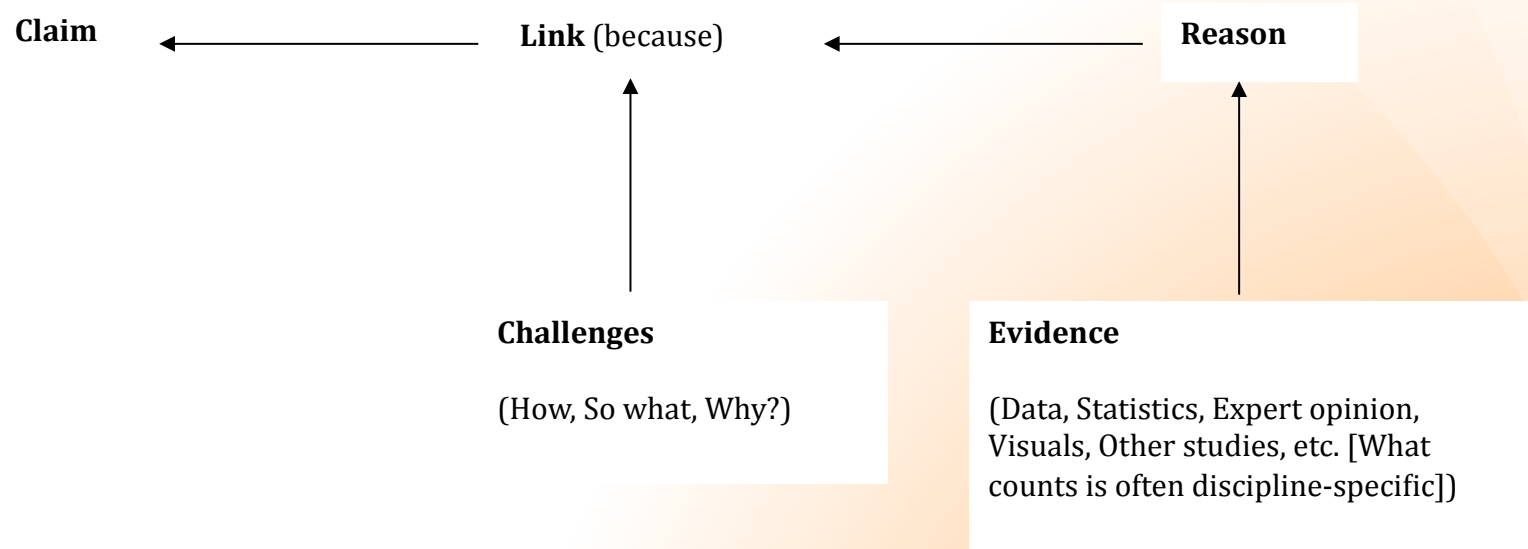
Possible topics

- Comparative study of northern communities in Canada and Russia
- Policies that governments in Canada and Russia adopt cause harm to native communities because they are not usually sensitive to
- The lack of policy development in Russia is the root cause
- Health policies in northern communities
- The ways each government funds northern communities—direct, episodic, insufficient--accounts for discrepancies in overall health levels in these communities.
- Ocean currents and how they will change in the arctic
- Territorial disputes over resources in the arctic circle

What topic will you study?

- Identify a topic of inquiry
- Translate that topic into a thesis by stating what your attitude is to that topic
- leisure and vice combined to form what have been called “sinful pleasures” in the boom-town gold rush economy of the Klondike. The absence of traditional social hierarchies in this time and place, combined with the fuel of easy money and masculinity, accounted for this new conception of leisure.

Informal Argument and Academic Writing




Ex. [this study] will be a unique scholarly contribution as very few studies genuinely combine oral history and the documentary record.

A claim in 3 parts

- By engaging in historical/archival research, by reviewing the vast amount of public information now available on [this topic], and by conducting interviews with policy makers, researchers, activists and industry representatives, my research will develop a systematic assessment of [topic] and the conditions in which it has become finalized.

Thesis statements

- Specific
 - Manageable
 - Interesting
- 

A sample thesis statement

According to new approaches in pain management, nurses must obtain **three kinds of knowledge** if they are to **respond effectively to a patient's pain: knowledge of self, knowledge of pain, and knowledge of standards of care.**

[original/passive voice] New approaches to pain management stress three kinds of knowledge for nurses to obtain if they are to respond effectively to a patient's pain: knowledge of self, knowledge of pain, and knowledge of standards of care.¹

Possible thesis/arguments

A decorative graphic element consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent orange and yellow curved shapes that create a gradient effect, located in the lower right portion of the slide.

Getting organized

- Thesis= main claim, argument
The absence of traditional social hierarchies in this time and place, combined with the fuel of easy money and masculinity, accounted for this new conception of leisure
- Body: subsidiary claims
 1. Free enterprise capitalism in the Klondike contributed to a dominant ideological stance that valued the free choice of the individual to pursue whatever leisure activities they wanted—including gambling, drinking to excess, and womanizing—with few, if any, restraints.
 2. Leisure in the Klondike boomtown created and enforced a particular kind of masculinity in contrast to the “rational recreation” of more established cities and towns in the Northwest.

3. Analytical/critical annotations

An objective evaluation of a work's contents, quality, and limitations. Length is typically between 100-200 words.

- Gives full bibliographic information for the work.
- Gives the authority and the point of view of the author.
- Evaluates the contents, scope, and quality.
- Points out the merits and deficiencies.

From <http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/annotations>

Annotations

- Summarizes the article (2-3 sentences; 45-60 words)
- Evaluates (“discuss the value”)

Sample summary

- In “Use of Physical Restraints and Psychotropic Medications in Alzheimer Special Care Units in Nursing Homes,” Phillips, Sprye, Sloane, and Hawes question whether or not Alzheimer’s patients are less likely to be restrained or medicated as a result of residing in Special Care Units (SCU) in nursing homes. They found, however, that these patients were no less likely to be restrained and, in fact, they were more likely to receive psychotropic medication. (72 words)

Hints for summarizing

- Previous summary took 5 pages of article and turned it into 2 sentences
- Look in the article's Introduction for the question they are asking (in this case, paragraph 2)
- Look in the Results for the findings (in this case, the last paragraph of the Results)

Sample Evaluation

- This study looked at a large amount of data (1100 residents in 48 SCUs) from a small geographical area—only four U.S. states. The extent to which the findings of this study apply to Alberta are unclear, particularly since these standards vary considerably from state to state. Nevertheless, the authors speculate that SCUs led something of a revolution in Alzheimer’s patient care—these units demonstrated that the use of physical restraints could be avoided, and that may account for the similarity in use in both SCUs and regular units. (89 words)