The Student's Practical Guide: Writing Term Papers for Anthropology (and Related Subjects)

by

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(as originally written in 1981,
with various updates since then...)

with occasional comments by
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(whose own two cents on this topic is summarized here)

CONTENTS:

Introduction

Imagine that it is now six weeks into the semester. You are taking a heavy course load: genetics, organic chemistry, math, and an anthropology class for which you are supposed to write a fifteen page term paper.

You have not even started the paper -- somehow you have not managed to find the time for it. Other things always seemed more important or more fun. But you can't put it off any longer. You have to start right now. You have to get it done as quickly and efficiently as possible -- and obviously you don't want to suffer any more than is necessary. Also, you don't want to take any chances with your GPA, so you want to write a good paper. But the whole project seems confusing, dreary, and a little overwhelming.

It doesn't have to be that bad. That is what this Guide is all about -- making the writing of anthropology term papers easier.

There are ways to save time and effort. There are procedures and strategies that enable you to negotiate the necessary -but often tedious- process of finding the material you need in the library quickly and effectively. After finding the material you need, it is important to know the best way of organizing it in your paper. Learning these techniques and skills frees you to concentrate on the quality of the paper--or maybe on the beach.

This Guide is no substitute for your own effort and commitment. (Obviously we are not about to recommend that you wait six weeks to begin your paper.) Certainly there is no way to guarantee success or scholarly ecstasy; writing a term paper may never be as much fun as mountain climbing, or reading Russian novels, or whatever your idea of fun is. And there is no final or definitive answer to the question of what a professor wants in a paper. But this Guide will inform you of some of the basic features of an anthropology paper which you can be sure your professor will want you to know. And it shows you how to make your paper a more polished and expert product.

What is an anthropology term paper? It is a library research paper, written from an anthropological perspective, on a topic approved by your instructor. The anthropology paper has a distinctive citation format, also used by several other social sciences, and requires that you use the anthropological "literature" in Geisel Library.[1]

You may already have taken a writing course. The skills learned there will be useful in writing papers for anthropology. The ability to organize ideas effectively and express them clearly is an important survival skill in the university environment. Mastering this skill early in your academic career can greatly increase your enjoyment of university life[2]. However, you probably did not learn the citation and bibliographic format used by anthropologists. One of the goals of the Guide is to introduce you to that format. A word of warning: you should set aside any ideas you have about using footnotes for documentation. (Documentation refers to methods of acknowledging the use of someone else's work.) You may also find that the writing style required for research papers is not the same as the style you learned in your writing classes. The style for research papers emphasizes the unambiguous, easily understood presentation of information and ideas, rather than the expressive use of evocative, complex, and richly ambiguous imagery and symbolism. In other words, research papers require an expository, not a literary, style.

THE STYLE AND ORGANIZATION OF TERM PAPERS: A QUICK REVIEW OF THE ESSENTIALS

A term paper is not a "report" of the kind often assigned in high schools, which meekly repeats information found in one or two sources. Nor is a library research paper similar to a lab report, or a report on the results of an experiment. It is never merely the presentation of a set of data[3]. Writing a term paper requires a good deal more intellectual involvement and commitment than writing a report does.

Then what is a term paper? Like a report, a library research paper presents data and ideas (which are, however, typically drawn from several sources). Unlike a report, a research paper presents your analysis and interpretation of the data and ideas found in a survey of the anthropological literature relevant to the topic of your paper. Analysis is the process of organizing and summarizing the data and ideas in order to answer a question. Interpretation refers to a discussion of the meaning and implications of your answers for the issues, ideas, and problems that your paper addresses.

Eight Magical and Wise Rules for Writing Term Papers

The style and organization of your paper have a single purpose: to help the reader understand what you have to say. So try to be as clear as possible. What you need to do in order to write clearly and coherently is to follow the eight magical rules listed here, and use them along with these books:

Kolb, Harold H.
      1980 <u>A Writer's Guide: The Essential Points</u>. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
Strunk, William, and E.B. White
      1979 <u>The Elements of Style</u>. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan.
Turabian, Kate
      1976 <u>Student's Guide for Writing College Papers</u>. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

You should be able to find them all at the University Bookstore.

Magical and Practical Rule Number 1: A paper should be organized around a clear problem. The problem is formulated in the course of exploratory reading in the anthropological literature.
First, you should choose an appropriate topic and check it for feasibility by doing some preliminary research in the library and by consulting with your TA or professor. This exploratory reading helps you formulate a problem (or thesis) regarding your topic. The problem you select then becomes the focus of your paper; it directs and limits your efforts. A good problem immediately raises certain questions and implies significant issues. You use your library know-how to find the data that answer these questions and to find the ideas of the scholars who have discussed these issues.

You should use only the data needed to answer your questions. Otherwise your paper will lack coherence and unity, and you will have done more work than you needed to. And, worst of all, you may not get your paper in on time. The professor may then never get a chance to read it, because he has flown off to some delectable Pacific island, and you may be stuck with an Incomplete.

So subordinate your reading and note taking to a clear, well defined problem (or controlling idea), formulated in your exploratory reading.

Magical and Logical Rule Number 2: After you have selected a problem and become acquainted with some of the literature on it, make a well thought out and fairly detailed *outline*.
As you reading progresses, ask yourself what ideas and information are necessary for understanding your problem, and in what order they have to be presented, in order to have a logical and coherent presentation. Start out with a crude outline. Then revise and elaborate it as needed.

A good outline is indispensable; it helps you figure out what information you need as you carry out your research and in what order that information should be presented. A few superstars can

juggle complex ideas and quantities of data in their heads, but for ordinary mortals the use of an outline makes sense. (It is wise to figure that you, like Socrates, are an ordinary mortal.)

Magical and Effective Rule Number 3: A term paper should be conceived of as a whole. It should have thematic unity and an integrated structure.
If you stick to your problem and your outline, you should have no trouble writing a unified paper; unity just means sticking to the central idea of your paper and your plan for discussing it.

Structure refers to the organization of the parts of your paper. A paper consists of three main parts: an opening or introduction, the body, and a conclusion. But these parts must be tied together, and subordinated to the main purpose of the paper, which is to tell someone about your analysis and interpretation of the problem you have formulated and researched. You want to make the paper as easy to understand as possible.

So first you tell them what you're going to say...

The introduction clarifies the nature of your topic; it states your research problem and your strategy for understanding this problem. Your opening ideally puts the reader in the mood for reading the paper; it serves to spark some interest. But mainly it prepares the reader intellectually for your main effort--the body of the paper. The best introductions are often written after the body of the paper is already drafted, so that they can lead to it as effectively as possible. Remember: one way to bomb on a paper is to promise one thing and deliver something else.

...and then you say it...

The body of the paper carries out your strategy or plan for analyzing and interpreting your material. This part of the paper goes into details: it lays out all the necessary information and ideas in a logical order (that is, in the sequence in which the reader needs to know them in order to understand you). The body is organized in terms of answers to questions, cause and effect, comparison and contrast; it supports generalizations with data, or derives generalizations from data.

...and then you tell them what you've said.

The conclusion wraps things up. It reminds the reader of the nature and significance of the problem you set out at the beginning, and sums up the meaning and implications of your analysis. It tells the reader what has actually been discovered and what it means. The conclusion concisely restates your intentions and plans, and tells the reader succinctly what happened when you carried out that plan. In other words, it summarizes and synthesizes the progression of your understanding from the opening statement of your problem through the detailed development of the problem in the body of the paper.

Magical and Essential Rule Number 4: Write with your readers in mind. Be clear and explicit so that they can follow your argument. Be concise and yet complete.
You are writing something that will be read and evaluated by someone. Keep in mind that all your readers can know of your thoughts is what you put down on paper. Telepathy is rare even

among anthropologists. So be explicit. Don't refer or allude to ideas or information not contained in your argument, unless you can reasonable expect the readers to be familiar with that material. Make sure that the readers have all the information they need in order to follow you from point A to point B in your discussion. If your roommate doesn't understand how you argued your way from point A to point B, your TA or professor probably won't either.

And choose your words with care. You don't want to obscure your reasoning by putting it into the wrong words. A brilliant logical argument can be lost for want of precise words[4].

Your outline will help you make the logical connections in your paper explicit. You may even want to use some subtitles in your paper (one or two per page) which serve up the points made on that page. These subtitles will correspond to your outline--or at least they will if you stick to it. Using subtitles can alert you when you start to stray from your plan. Subtitles also have the advantage of reminding the weary reader (who has just read 137 term papers before starting yours and has 79 yet to go) where he has got to in your argument. (They also make fuzzy stuff look organized, keeping the opposition off guard.) However, if you allude extensively to material not included in your paper, or ideas not explained in your paper, or do not choose your words with some care, then even subtitles won't save you.

You want to be clear, explicit and complete, but you don't want to bore your reader (or not *very* much anyway--not more than is necessary). So don't belabor the obvious. Put things in your paper because they're important in terms of your argument, not because you feel you should explain everything--twice. Be as concise as you can, while still being clear, explicit and complete.

So, it is important to be clear and complete, but on the other hand, it is important not to be boring or obvious. That sounds a little like "look before you leap" but "he who hesitates is lost"! And yet these points are not as contradictory as they may seem. It's a question of balance, which, in writing term papers, as in learning to ride a bicycle (and practically everything else), is only learned through practice--by doing it until you don't fall down. Too much explanation and qualification of your argument can distract the reader from the essential points you are trying to make. Too little explanation and elaboration makes a paper vague; the reader doesn't have enough information to judge the essential points of your argument, or see how they are connected--or even, sometimes, see what they are.

When in doubt, it is better to bore than to be vague. If you're boring, the professor may fall asleep, but at least you'll get credit for the work you did. If you are vague, on the other hand, you leave the reader with no way of knowing what you meant. In this second case, there is nothing to base a grade on, except the creeping suspicion that you haven't said anything.

Vagueness is generally pretty boring anyway. It is better to work on being both clear and interesting; with practice and commitment, it is possible to be both.

Magical and Reasonable Rule Number 5: The paper should reflect the theme of the course.
You should be sensitive to the point of view the professor is trying to present and to the scope of the course. A good paper should reflect the theme of the course in some way, even if you do not

agree with the professor's approach.[5] Consult your TA or professor before you invest a lot of time and energy investigating a topic that might not be appropriate.

For example, when you are writing for a class that focuses on some aspect of cultural symbolism, and you find yourself discussing astrology, King Tut, and holistic hang gliding, then you're stretching the boundaries of the course. You will probably find that you are stretching the boundaries of your GPA too.

More realistically, if your professor has been talking for weeks about political conflict, then a paper in which you marvel at the harmony and smooth integration of culture--and by implication deny the reality or significance of conflict--will probably raise some eyebrows, but not your grade. But a paper about the problems of political leadership in Arab villages in territory occupied by Israel, or about lineage feuding in classical China, would more appropriately reflect the theme of the course.

Magical and Indispensable Rule Number 6: Revise, Rewrite and Proofread.
You should always plan on doing some revision and rewriting. But how much? And how do you know when it is necessary? Here again, if a friend (or enemy) has trouble understanding your paper or any part of it, you need to do something about it.

You need to rewrite the foggy and fuzzy sections. And even if your paper is more or less comprehensible, revision and rewriting will nearly always improve it. Basically, a sense of when and what to revise, what to throw out, and what to rewrite is developed through the practice of writing and through receiving feedback on your papers.

With your research problem, outline and the limitations of readers firmly in mind, go through your outline with a certain ruthlessness. Cut out any jumbles of excess or imprecise words. Don't be afraid to throw away sentences and whole passages which don't do the job of communicating your ideas. Clean up the grammar. Rewrite as necessary.

Now you can type or print your final draft. And then you should proofread it. You don't want to leave any little but distracting errors or typos uncorrected. (A typo can change the comment "Kroeber's theory is not considered adequate" into "Kroeber's theory is now considered adequate." But any type can eb distracting.)[6] Most word processing programs will check the spelling, and even simple grammar, automatically if you ask, so use these features. However, always read the paper yourself before you print the final copy--the Kroeber typo cited above is neither misspelled nor grammatically incorrect, but it is a mistake that will be noted.

Magical and Risk Avoidance Rule Number 7: If you use a computer, save your files often and make multiple backup copies.
Nothing is so debilitating as following the first six rules and then losing the whole work to a cyber-space demon. Saying you lost your work to the computer, or that it will not print out, now runs well ahead of dogs eating homework in the excuse category. It may be true, but it is very difficult to prove and, if the TA or professor is on a tight schedule to turn in final grades, you may not get the benefit of the doubt. Save your files regularly, especially after making extensive

revisions, and when you are finished be sure to copy your files onto a separate disk that can be stored in a drawer and moved to another machine if disaster strikes.

Magical and Unwritten Rule Number 8: Make a rule to fit in this space.
This is a freebie. Experience is the best teacher, so develop your own.

Sound like a lot of work? You're right. But in grade points per hour the magical rules are the best term paper bargain going.

THE CITATION FORMAT OF ANTHROPOLOGY PAPERS

The seven magical rules of term paper writing apply to all research papers. But anthropology term papers are different from papers you may have written for other courses, or for a writing class. Anthropology, like sociology and psychology, uses a distinctive citation format.

I think this format is easier to use than other formats. Once you familiar with it, I think you'll agree

Anthropologists document the use of other people's work--the sources of ideas or data used in a paper--by placing citations in the text of the paper.

<u>Documentation</u>, for our purposes, means providing bibliographic references to sources. A <u>citation</u> is a bibliographic reference to a specific source--a book, an article, or other source of information. <u>In-text citation</u> simply means placing citations in the text of the paper, instead of in footnotes. In-text citation documents the use of sources of data and ideas, just as reference (bibliographic) footnotes do, but in-text citations are used instead of such footnotes in anthropology. You do not use reference footnotes or endnotes when you write a paper using the in-text citation format.

You were probably taught to use reference footnotes to document your use of sources, and the world is full of people who say "footnote" when they mean "citation." Hang in there; things will become clearer as we go along. For now, do the best you can to forget about using footnotes as a method of documentation.[7]

The important thing to understand, then, is that *in-text citation replaces reference footnotes*. Here's what in-text citation looks like:

> The evidence for this hypothesis is suspect (Burns 1969:32).

> Tonkinson (1978:27) notes that the Aborigines of the Western Desert...

As you can see, the in-text citation supplies, in parentheses, the name of the author, the year of publication, and the page(s) on which the material cited can be found [NOTE ADDED BY JM:

when citing journal articles in the natural sciences, page numbers are usually omitted unless it is a direct quotation--most articles are short and if the reader wants to find the item, s/he can read the article. Not true for a 300 page book...]. Note the punctuation: this is exactly how it should appear in all your anthropology papers. Also note that when the name of the author is used as part of the text, as in the second example, only the year of publication and page numbers are placed within the parentheses.

Now, if I'm your inscrutable TA and I'm interested in finding out more about something I read in your paper (because it is just so bizarre or wonderful that I have to know more about it), then I turn from your citation to your reference list at the end of your paper. This list of all the works cited in your paper provides information needed to locate sources in the bookstore or library. The citations and the reference list make it possible for the reader to track down material that may be useful. As your TA, I can find interesting stuff simply by tracing your citation back to your source. In that source are more citations, leading me back to your source's sources (squared as it were). These in turn have citations and reference lists leading to their sources (sources cubed?). Your paper becomes a link in a citation chain when you cite from publications connected in this way. (TAs have funny ideas about how to spend their time.)

The citation format used in anthropology is less work than the footnote format because you only have to type out the complete bibliographic information for a source once--in the reference list. (Complete bibliographic information includes titles, publisher, place of publication, and so on. We'll get to that.) In a paper using reference footnotes, you have to type that information twice-- once in the footnote itself, and then again in the reference list. This seems like extra work to me. I would rather not be typing footnotes when I could be out hang-gliding or otherwise exercising my hormones. I think in-text citations are quicker and easier than reference footnotes, and they do exactly the same thing in terms of documenting the use of a source and providing access to that source.

Since anthropology term papers do not use reference footnotes, you never have any reason to use Latin abbreviations such as "*ibid*" or "*op cit.*" In the footnote format, you use these expressions when you refer more than once to a single source. But when you use in-text citation, you give the same information every time that you refer to a source: the author's last name, year of publication of the work cited, and the page(s) on which the idea or data you use appears.

What if you refer to two different books or articles by the same author? How do you let the reader know that two different publications are being cited? You simply use the year of publication to distinguish them. They will be listed chronologically under the author's name in the reference list. What if they were published the same year? Then you can add lower case letters after the publication date.

(Stone 1979a) (Stone 1979b)

What happens if two authors have the same last names? In that case, you use the initials of their first names, or their full names if they have the same first names, so that it is clear in your text which author you mean. So, if you cite both Karl Marx and Groucho Marx, you would use the initials of the first names in the citations, even though the years of publication are different.

(K. Marx 1853:334) (G. Marx 1949:24)

If two sources have the same first and last names, then you may have to use middle initials, if available. The general rule is always to try to give enough information so that the reader will know exactly what individual or publication in the reference list you are referring to.

If there are two authors for a publication you wish to cite, you cite them this way:

(Stone & Burns 1956)

If there are more than two authors, then you can probably get away with using the name of the senior author--the one whose name appears first in an article, or under whose name a book is cataloged--followed by "*et al.*" which means "and others."

Smith, Burns, Garcia, and Sullivan 1980:87 can be cited as (Smith *et al.* 1980:87).

Smith is the senior author; do not use the alphabetical order of authors' names in deciding what names to use in a citation. (Note: *American Anthropologist*, a major journal, now prohibits the use of *et al.* in the text, because it is undemocratic. I recommend the use of *et al.* --not because I'm undemocratic, but because it seems to me that a citation with three or more names interferes with the ease of reading the text, and I do not believe many instructors would object to this use of *et al.* in term papers. In your reference list, you must use the names of all the authors. Unless <u>you</u> are undemocratic.)

An Exception to the Ban on Footnote: Multiple Citations
There is an exception to the rule against using reference footnotes for citing your sources. If you have many citations for one sentence (in other words, many sources for one piece of information), then you may use a footnote to avoid cluttering the text and disrupting the reader's attention to your reasoning.

Beagles are fond of bagels (Collins 1967:67; Crenshaw 1934:98; Morton 1978:81-89 & 1979:97). This means that...

becomes

Beagles are fond of bagels.[1] This means that.....
(rest of page)

_____
1. see Collins 1967:67; Crenshaw 1934:98; Morton 1978:81-89 & 1979:97.

Using the reference footnote makes this easier to read without losing the sense of the text. The idea is to avoid doing anything to distract the reader's attention from what you have to say.

Unless an idea is very complex or profound --like Beagle bagelphilia- or the data very technical or surprising, you rarely need to use many citations for one particular chunk of information. A

single citation will generally do. Sometimes you may wish to use several citations in order to direct the reader to a particular literature or to important examples of something. A footnote is appropriate in such cases. For example, for the statement "Beagles are fond of bagels," you might use this footnote:

_____
1. The best references on Beagles and
bagels are Collins 1967, Crenshaw 1934,
and Morton 1978 & 1979.

Footnotes should go at the bottom (foot) of the page. Some publishers put them at the end of the book. They claim this saves typesetting money (although with computerized typesetting that is no longer true). The real reason is that they hate readers. In any event, term paper footnotes should go at the bottom of the page. It not only keeps the professor from cursing your future posterity as he fumbles his way to the back in search of a note, it also improves the chances that he will actually pay attention to them. (Nothing is more infuriating, by the way, than to make one's way to the back of the book in search of footnote 73 from chapter fourteen only to find that it says "*op cit*" in reference to something last discussed six chapters earlier.)

Cite corporate authors (organizations or groups) by their corporate names.

(National Anthropological Institute 1989)

A very long corporate name may be abbreviated. The National Institute of Mental Health can be cited in the text as NIMH. However, the full corporate name must be used in the reference list. And you must be sure that you always provide enough information that a reader can find the source in the reference list without problems. If an individual can be identified as the author, the person rather than the organization should be cited.

Occasionally, you will run across a work that has neither a personal nor corporate author. In that case you can use a few identifying words from the title of the source, which are placed in the author position in the entry in the reference list.

There are as yet few employment opportunities in the field of Martian anthropology ("Martian Anthropology" 1986:569).

This citation corresponds to the following reference list entry:

Martian Anthropology: An Overview of a Non-field. 1986 Encyclopedia of the Inner Planets. Abridged. Space City L-5:L-5 Publishing Matrix.

What Needs To Be Cited?

You **must** document, by giving a citation, each and every case where you use someone else's ideas or information, except where it is reasonable to assume that the information or ideas are "common knowledge" in the field in which you are writing.

Quotations

Other people's exact words must be placed within quotation marks, or set off from the text by

indentation and single spacing. A citation must be placed near the beginning or at the end of the quotation, so that it is clear who is being quoted. You could acknowledge a quotation from Clifford Geertz as follows:

> "Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action; social structure is the form that action takes, the actually existing network of social relations" (Geertz 1957:533).

Here's another way to cite this quotation:

> In an article critical of functional analysis, Geertz (1957:533) distinguishes between culture and social structure: Culture is the fabric of meanings in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action; social structure is the form that action takes, the actually existing network of social relations.

Note that no citation is needed at the end of the quote. Finally you might choose to incorporate Geertz's works into your text in the following manner:

> According to Geertz, culture is the "fabric of meaning" by which people "interpret their experience and guide their action" (1957:533).

Note: when you put somebody's words inside quotation marks, be sure to quote exactly--spelling, grammatical errors--everything must be just as it is in the original.

Paraphrase or Summary
Even when you put other people's ideas or information into your own words, you must cite the source of the idea and date.

For example, suppose that for a paper on socialization or cultural transmission I want to use T.R. Williams' idea that children take an active part in their own socialization into society. Williams calls this the "generative function of socialization." He defines this as

> comprising all of the ways children reflect upon, think about, and sort out the content of culture, in order to develop for themselves a cognitive map of adult culture (Williams 1972:224).

I don't want to quote him, though, because I know using too many quotations is a cheap trick. It's *my* paper, after all, so I *paraphrase* him as follows:

> Williams (1972:224) notes that children are active agents in their own socialization. They do not merely absorb the norms and values of adult behavior in a passive manner. Rather, they think about their experience of cultural behavior, and develop their own theories about their position and roles in the system of social interactions that surround them.

Data and Specialized Knowledge

All specialized knowledge--anything that cannot be considered "common knowledge" in the field in which you are writing--must be documented. Data from a source must be cited.

> Naraun society is divided into three "status classes." The highest rank (temonibe) consists of descendants from the eldest daughter of the woman who founded the clan (Alkire 1972:44).

Data from an ethnography on a group is often specialized knowledge --anthropologists are "specialists" on the people they study.

Common Knowledge

How do you know if something is common knowledge?

There are fuzzy areas, of course. Generally, though, you can rely on common sense. You don't have to document the fact that the Plains Indians hunted buffalo on horseback in the nineteenth century. But if you describe the life of the Sioux before they got horses or moved onto the Great Plains, or describe a fight the Pawnee had with the Sioux while on a buffalo hunt in 1858, then you need to provide a citation referring the reader to the source of your information.

Common knowledge means common in the field in which you are writing. (That anthropologists are mostly geniuses is common knowledge--among anthropologists. Others may disagree--but they don't know the field.) Most anthropologists know what clans, lineages, cross cousin marriage, and classificatory kinship are, but only specialists can be expected to know the difference between Aluridja and Kariera type kinship systems, and so if you write a paper on how a particular group of Australian Aborigines combine features of both, a reference citation is called for, such as:

(Elkin 1954:49-79)

A pretty good rule of thumb is that if you knew it before you started your research, you probably don't need to provide a citation, unless you read about it recently. But if you learned it in the course of your research you'd better cite it.[8] When in doubt, go ahead and cite.

How Do You Use Citations?

How are citations related to sentences and passages in the text?

A citation must identify quotations. This can be done in several ways. Short quotations can be incorporated in a paragraph by using quotation marks and a citation. If you have more than a couple of lines, you can show that you are quoting by indenting and using single spacing. Here is an example of a longer quotation in a sample text:

> Language requires and reinforces "shared understandings." There has to be some level of
>
> agreement concerning the meanings and use of words and sentences in order for

communication to be possible. So it is reasonable to assume that language, in some sense,

standardizes the understandings of individuals.

However, language also differentiates individuals. In spite of the fact that language acts as a socializing and uniformizing force, it is at the same time the most potent single factor for the growth of individuality (Sapir 1933:27).

But you could quote Sapir in your text, if you wanted to. For example, you could do something like this:

Language requires and reinforces "shared understandings." There has to be some level of agreement concerning the meanings and use of words and sentences in order for communication to be possible. So it is reasonable to assume that language in some sense standardizes the understandings of individuals. However, Sapir, for one, notes in this context that although language "acts as a socializing and uniformizing force," it is, rather paradoxically, "at the same time the most potent single factor for the growth of individuality" (1933:27).

Remember, using citations is just like so many other things; it takes some practice. So don't worry if it doesn't feel right at first. You'll get the hang of it, and soon you will be doing it automatically.

Now what about paraphrases? A paraphrase is a rewording of someone's ideas or information. Suppose I want to use some information I find in *Tools for Thought* by C.H. Waddington, for a paper describing the impact of the "information explosion" on anthropological research. In a section of Waddington's book entitled "Complexity of Information in the Modern World," he discusses the number of scientific journals published as an index of complexity. Here is the passage I'm interested in.

The first two journals wholly devoted to science-- *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* and the French *Journale des Savants*--were both started in 1665. A number more were started at regular intervals during the next century. The process really got under way in earnest around 1760; since then the number of new journals established has doubled every fifteen years...By now well over 100,000 scientific journals have been founded. Not all have persisted, and nobody knows quite how many journals are being published at the present time. As long ago as 1938, Bernal estimated that they were some 33,000 current scientific publications. Another estimate in the late 1960's put the number at 50,000, containing about 1 million separate scientific papers per year.

One attempt to handle this mass of material has been the foundation of secondary journals, whose function it is to summarize and abstract the papers published in the primary journals. The first of these appeared as long ago as 1714 in Germany. By the time there were enough of them to form a representative sample, they also started to multiply, at the same exponential rate as the primary journals, doubling in numbers every fifteen years, and reaching a total of 1,900 by the mid 1960's. By this time there had been developed a tertiary level of periodical publications, giving information about the abstracting journals (Waddington 1977:32- 33).

I want to use some of these facts in a paper on how this flood of information affects anthropological research. First I make a point and then I paraphrase Waddington in support of that point. Then I go on to cite another source.

> The library is a sophisticated information retrieval system. It is designed to give us access to the information we need. But we have to learn how to use it strategically, not haphazardly. This is especially true in anthropology, where the literatures used are both extensive and diverse. The general need for sophisticated library research strategies becomes apparent when we consider the volume of information that confronts us. Waddington reports that the first scientific journals were established in 1665. Since 1760 over 100,000 journals have been established; it was estimated in the 1960's that as many as half of that number were still being published. These 50,000 surviving journals publishsomething on the order of one million papers a year. Efforts to manage this flood of information include the use of secondary journals to condense and make accessible the contents of the primary journals. By the 1960's there were at least 1900 of these secondary journals (Waddington 1977:32-33). The situation in anthropology is the same. In 1875- 76, the library of the Peabody Museum, perhaps the first specialized anthropological library in the United States, had less than 1000 publications in its collection; by 1975 it had 130,000 (Currier 1976:16). The third edition of Murdoch's *Ethnographic Bibliography of North America,* published in 1960, contained 17,3000 entries for books and articles; the fourth edition, published in 1976, contains an additional 28,000 entries for books and articles published between 1959 and 1972 (Currier 1976:27).

Note how the citations identify the source of the information. A citation is not needed for every sentence; a series of sentences (or passages) may only require a single citation, as in the paraphrase of Waddington above, if it is clear that the information contained in the entire passage is from a single source (and from only a few pages of the source). If you pull together information from different places in a book or long article (as I did from the article by Currier), then you need to use a citation within the paraphrase to indicate the different pages in the source where the material you used can be found. *Transitions* from one source to another obviously require you to position a citation in such a way that the reader can see that you have switched from one source to another. The crucial thing is that it must always be clear what ideas came from where. If it is not clear, then it is wrong.

When discussing a single book at length, you do not have to acknowledge the general concepts, concerns, or themes in it each time you mention one. But it must be clear to the readers that you are in fact discussing an idea or theme from that particular book. You must, of course, cite the pages where more specific data or concepts are found, when you use them, so that the reader can find them.

For example, you don't have to cite page numbers every time you state or imply that Frederik Barth, in his book *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans*, is interested in political leadership and authority, because that is the grand theme of the book. It runs all through it. Therefore, you don't have to cite specific pages when you say something non-specific about Barth's book.

Barth shares this concern about the problem of political leadership. His study of the Swat Pathans (1959) is a good early example of an approach to politics developed within social anthropology.

Once you have clearly established that you are discussing Barth's 1959 study of the Swat Pathans, you can drop the (1959) --as long as the reader knows you are referring to Barth's general theme or conceptuali- zation. But as soon as you go on to discuss Barth's specific formulations, then you have to provide the reader with page numbers.

Barth states that among the Swat Pathans, "Politically corporate groups are created by the actions of leaders" (Barth 1959:72). These "corporate" groups are person-centered. The leader is the focus of the group; the group only exists in terms of and by virtue of his authority. The group includes anyone the leader can get to join him in collective action in response to threat, crisis, or conflict.

Note that since the quotation and paraphrase come from the same page, one citation is adequate to identity both. Compare the paraphrase with the original:

Politically corporate groups are created by the actions of leaders. Any such group consists of all the persons whom a leader is able to mobilize in the event of conflict. Its limits are undefined except in relation to the leader, and its solidarity derives from the latter's authority (Barth 1959:72).

In theory, if you are not indebted to someone for an idea or date, you do not have to cite him or her, even if you come across their statement of that concept or information. However, in practice, it is usually better to go ahead and cite such a source, if the material is pertinent. If nothing else, you strengthen your argument by indicating that reputable scholars have made the same point. Besides, citing a source entitles you to list it in your bibliography and shows the professor how hard you worked. You don't want the professor to think you have done a slap dash job of research because you have failed to use a significant source. Also, you don't want to risk an unfair suspicion of plagiarism--more on that in the next section.

PLAGIARISM: THE BIG "P"

Plagiarism is bad news. It is morally wrong. Thus it makes professors angry and gets students into trouble, even when it is done unintentionally. There are harsh but justifiable penalties for plagiarism. This section will tell you what is and how to avoid it.

Plagiarism is the use of someone's work without acknowledgment, as if it were your own. If in your term paper you were to use someone's dates, ideas, or words without documenting that use with a citation, then you would be guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is cheating. The penalties for plagiarism include an "F" on a paper, failing the class, and probation or suspension from the university.

To avoid plagiarism, you have to know how to document your use of other people's work. This is what we went over in the last section; in-text citation is the system of documentation used in anthropology. Documentation is more than a good thing to know--it is your responsibility to know how to document your use of sources, and to make sure that you do so in every paper that

you write, whether you use in-text citation for an anthropology paper, or reference footnotes for a literature paper.

It is pretty easy to tell when a student has plagiarized. Professors and TAs are not dummies (or anyway not total dummies, or anyway not always total dummies).[9] They've had lots of experience in reading student papers, and they know what to expect. It is not always easy to tell whether a student *meant* to cheat (although some cases are so outrageous that there can be no doubt) but most professors and TAs can tell whether he *did* cheat.

Read this section and the section on the use of citations with care, so that you never unintentionally fail to document the source of material you use in your papers. It is not all that hard to avoid plagiarism once you know what is involved. I'll advise you on how to avoid unintentional plagiarism. The main thing is to know how to document any use of sources correctly.

A quotation, the use of someone's words, not only requires a citation, but must be set off from your writing by quotation marks or by indentation and single spacing. This is true of phrases as well as of whole sen- tences and passages. Consider the following example from *African Religions of Brazil* by Robert Bastide. The original is:

> All religion is a tradition --a dual tradition of stereotyped actions and rites and of mental images and myths. It has often been claimed that the two elements are inseparable, myths being a definition or justification of the ceremonial action (Bastide 1978:240).

And here is the same passage plagiarized almost word for word in student paper. (The paper is hypothetical. If a student did this, he would find his graduation getting pretty hypothetical too.)

> This religion is a dual tradition, like any other; a tradition both of stereotyped actions and rites and of psychological images and myths. The two elements are inseparable, with myth being the definition of ceremonial action.

Only a few, very minor, changes have been made; essentially it consists of Bastide's words. Here is an example of how to use this passage properly:

> According to Bastide, "all religion is a tradition" and as such consists "of stereotyped actions and rites and mental images and myths." He notes that it is possible to view ritual and myth as a unitary phenomenon in which myth is a statement of the purpose or meaning of ritual (Bastide 1978:240).

It is clear that Bastide is being quoted, so a single citation at the end of the passage does the trick. Remember: it is still plagiarism even if you put someone's thoughts or data into your own words (in a paraphrase or summary) and do not acknowledge that use with a citation. Plagiarism occurs whenever a citation is required, but is not given, whether for quotes or paraphrases, ideas or data.

Besides confusion about the purposes and methods of documentation, the major cause of unconscious plagiarism is probably lousy note taking. Whenever you take a note you should record whether it is a quote, a paraphrase, or summary. You should also immediately take down all the bibliographic information you will need, should you later decide to incorporate that material into your paper. If you don't do this, and you need to use that material, you'll have to haul yourself kicking and screaming back to the library to get this information. That will look pretty silly. (You would be wise if you also wrote down the call numbers of library materials you

use, so that you can find that stuff again without having to look it up in the computer card catalog.) If you photocopy pages from something, you should immediately write down complete bibliographic information on the copy or, better yet, photocopy the title page. Otherwise in a couple of weeks you may want to use it, but have only a vague notion of where it came from. And so you won't be able to use it, until you go back to the library and get the information you need to document your use of it.[10]

The Bibliographic Format of Anthropology Papers: THE REFERENCE LIST

A reference list--sometimes known as a reference bibliography, or even just a bibliography--provides the information needed to find any source used in a paper. You must give this bibliographic information for every source you cite in your paper. But you should not include sources that you did not cite in the text of the paper.

A reference list is not a real "bibliography" in the sense of seeking either to cover a subject comprehensively, or to identify sources which share certain special qualities (as in a select bibliography). A reference list is less ambitious; it is an inventory of sources actually used rather than of all sources or selected sources. (Some people refer to reference lists as bibliographies, and others don't. Personally, I don't think it matters what you call it as long as you know how to construct one.)

A reference list gives the necessary bibliographic information in a particular format. The bibliographic format presented here is derived, for the most part, from the journal *American Anthropologist* and from the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. The format may be somewhat different in other journals, and still more different in other disciplines.

The reference list follows the text of the paper. It can be headed at the top of the page "References Cited" or "Works Cited."

The entries in the list are organized alphabetically by the last names of the authors. Here is what an entry for a book looks like:

Geertz, Clifford. 1973 The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books.

and for a journal article:

Keesing, Roger 1979 Linguistic Knowledge and Cultural Knowledge: Some Doubts and Speculations. *American Anthropologist* **81**:14- 36.

The above examples give the general form for entering sources in a reference list. You should use the same layout and punctuation. Start typing from the regular margin.

Notice what bibliographic information is required:

1. Last name of author, then first name (and middle initial).
[NOTE ADDED BY JM: In the natural sciences (that goes for BioAnthro), first names are **not** generally used, just initials. There are about a gazillion nuances and styles; in general, use the style that is used by most of the sources you are citing--i.e., **pay attention to your sources and do like they do**.]
2. Date of publication.
3. Title.
4. Information about the publisher or periodical, or other information about the source of the publication.
a. If a book, then the city of publication and name of the publisher.
b. If an article, then the name of the periodical, volume number, and pages on which the article appears. (Note: if the journal or periodical does not number pages consecutively for the entire year, you also need to give the issue number. See point 7 below.)

The above form will work for most entries. But there are a variety of little details and special problems that you will encounter from time to time. Let's consider these one by one.

1. Book, single author.
Include complete subtitles.

Tonkinson, Robert. 1978 <u>The Mardujara Aborigines: Living the Dream in Australia's Desert</u>. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

2. Book or article, more than one author.
Only the name of the first author is reversed

Berger, Peter, and Thomas Luckmann. 1966 <u>The Social Construction of Reality</u>. New York: Doubleday.

Harrison, G.A., J.S.Weiner, J.M.Tanner and N.A. Barnicot. 1977 <u>Human Biology: An Introduction to Human Evolution, Variation, Growth, and Ecology</u>. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Remember that it is (usually) acceptable, in a reference such as the one above, to use the principal author's name followed by et al in your in-text citation, but that you must give all of the authors' names in the reference list entry.

3. More than one publication by same author.
In this case, you list the works chronologically (by date of publication). The earliest work is cited first.

Bailey, F.G. 1963 <u>Politics and Social Change</u>. Berkeley: University of California Press.

1969 <u>Stratagems and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics</u>. Oxford: Blackwell.

If more than one work was published in the same year, list them alphabetically and use lower case letters to distinguish them, as in the in-text citation (1963a, 1963b).

4. City and State of Publication.
If a book was published in some little known city or town--Tuba City, Arizona, or Weed, California, for example--then you should note the state, as well as the city, of publication.

Rosenberg, G. and D. Anspach 1973 Working Class Kinship. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books.

Place of publication is not required for periodicals, except to avoid confusion, as when journals with the same of similar names are published in different places.

5. Editor or compiler.
Use "ed." or "comp."

Hunt, Robert, ed. 1967 Personalities and Cultures: Readings in Psychological Anthropology. Austin: University of Texas Press.

6. Chapter or article in book.

Williams, T.R. 1972 The Socialization Process: A Theoretical Perspective. *In* Primate Socialization. Frank E. Poirer, ed. Pp. 207-260. New York: Random House.

Notice that "in" is underlined (or italicized in print). This is to make sure that no one thinks it is part of the title of the book. Also, note that the name of an editor, when not in the author position, is not inverted.

7. Journal Articles.
If the periodical has continuous pagination, you omit the issue numbers.

Singer, M. 1980 Signs of the Self: An Exploration in Semiotic Anthropology. *American Anthropologist* **82**: 485-507.

Nowadays, most scholarly journals do not start off each issue with new pagination; rather, pagination is continuous throughout a volume, so providing an issue number would be superfluous. However, some periodicals start each issue with page one, in which case you must give the issue number in your entry. Whenever you are not sure whether pagination is continuous, provide the issue number, in parentheses, after the volume number.

Washburn, Sherwood L. 1978 The Evolution of Man. *Scientific American* **239(3)** :194-211.

8. Translator.
If you read Helen Sebba's translation of a book by Roger Bastide, the complete entry would be as follows:

Bastide, Roger 1978 <u>The African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpenetration of Civilizations</u>. Helen Sebba, trans. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. (Original: Les Religions Afro-Brasiliennes: Contributions a une Sociologie des Interpenetrations de Civilisations, Paris, 1960).

All of the above information is not always available, in which case you have to make do with what is available. There are also variations in what is done. For example, sometimes the language of the original is given: "Translated from the Nahuatl by...".

9. Corporate Author.
Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition 1978 Cognition as a Residual Category in Anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* **7**:51-69.

10. Reprints of Older Works.
You should give the original publication date in brackets, if available, as well as the date of the reprint.

Smith, Arthur H. 1971 [1899] <u>Village Life in China</u>. Boston: Little, Brown.

You probably should cite this in the text by both dates, at least on its first use, so the reader will be aware of the historical context of the source. Your page citation should be to the edition you used.

A Sample Bibliography

Works Cited

Blom, Frans and Oliver LaFarge 1926 <u>Tribes and Temples</u>. New Orleans: Tulane University Press.

Collier, Jane F. 1973 <u>Law and Social Change in Zinacantan</u>. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

1974 Women in Politics. In <u>Women, Culture and Society</u>. M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds. Pp. 89-96. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

1977 Political Leadership and Legal Change in Zincantan. *Law and Society Review* **11**:131-163.

Emerson, Richard 1962 Power-dependence Relations. *American Sociological Review* **27(1)**:31-40.

Levi-Strauss, Claude 1975 <u>La Voie Des Masgues</u>. 2 vol. Geneva: Editions Albert Skira.

Strickmann, Michel 1974 Taoism, history of. <u>The New Encyclopaedia Britannica</u>. 15th ed. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britanica. Vol. 17. Pp. 1044- 1050.

LIBRARY RESEARCH

We used to include a list of reference works as part of the Guide. But as reference works evolved into databases and went on line, it got to be hard to keep up. (Professors and TAs are overworked, maybe even more than students.) We have left in a few thoughts about the library—it can start out being a mystifying place but can end up enlarging your intellectual horizons, which is what a university is all about. But for practical tips for your research project you should check with the library.

You might want to begin familiarizing yourself with resources for library research in anthropology by clicking in this link to the library's site on anthropology http://libraries.ucsd.edu/sage/subject?subject=33

You might also want to visit the library's "Get Started" site if you are not already familiar with the library.

The library can be a mystifying place. Well, okay--the library *is* a mystifying place. It's bad enough when you know how to use it. Not knowing how to use it is time consuming and frustrating.

Part of what makes a library confusing is the fact that it has to organize tons of different kinds of stuff-- books, magazines and journals, government publications--from all over the world, about everything from the anthropology of art to zymurgy, in a way that can be used efficiently by everyone from anthropology students to zymurgists.

Anthropology uses an extremely wide range of library materials. If you go into the library "blind," you won't find most of them. To use the library effectively for anthropological research, you have to know the functional relationship between critical reference works (that is, various databases, indexes and bibliographies) and the anthropological literature. And, of course, you have to know how to use each individual reference work, when you find it. Using a reference work, such as the *Social Sciences Citation Index*, is not simple. But with practice it becomes automatic. Librarians are not uniquely gifted superstars; they have simply taken the time to learn how the library works. If you take a little time, you can become "fluent" at using the library too (not as good as the librarians, but pretty good).[11] This Guide will get you started, and will, we hope, be something you can refer to as needed, whenever you do research in the University Library, for anthropology or allied disciplines.

The Library: How to Get Started
So you walk into the library. What do you do first?

Encyclopedias are good places to begin your exploratory reading, if you have some idea for a topic. (But term papers are never based solely on encyclopedia articles.) I suggest you go either

to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, or the Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences online. You can find links to these and others on the page for the library's online resources for anthropology (http://libraries.ucsd.edu/sage/subject?subject=33). You could also got to a specialized area or subject encyclopedia, if one is available for your topic. (These also appear on the library site.) Encyclopedias and handbooks are the best way to get a quick introduction to a topic--to see if it really interests you and to check it for feasibility. And you can use their reference lists to identify good sources.

Once you lay your hands on one good source, you can use its citations and reference list to identify additional sources. These sources will lead you on to their sources, and so on--this is the method of pursuing a citation chain, which was mentioned earlier, in the section on the use of citations. (Incidentally, many sources will use old fashioned reference footnotes instead of in-text citations, and may omit a reference list on the theory that the information was already given in footnotes. That is a pain, and we are inclined to think dark thoughts about their ancestry, but we're not so prejudiced that we'd pass up a good source on that account.)

MELVYL, ROGER, and the web

(this section by Jim Moore, 1998 [also see Jim's update, 2001, below; but since "updates" in the area of information technology become out-dated quickly you should check with the library for current information about MELVYL, ROGER, and the web; smp, 2009)

Return to contents

Nowadays a fair amount of your library research can be done without ever entering the library (not all of it; after you identify sources using an online catalog, you still need to **get** them--with some nifty exceptions!). This brief section on electronic searching is NOT intended to cover the topic in as much detail as the rest of this document; it merely points out a couple of things I find many UCSD students are not aware of.

ROGER seems to be where most students begin their online research; this is a great resource and has an easy-to-use interface, but has a critical limitation: it only covers BOOKS.

Now, at first you might think, well, duh--libraries house books, I'm *looking* for books, so like what's the limitation line all about? It's about periodicals. Using ROGER, you can locate which library subscribes to which journal, which is useful, but **now** what? To find an article on a particular topic, what do you do? You bag ROGER, that's what.

[Jan. 2001 update: The new millennium has brought changes to the system, and the rate of change is increasing. Much of the following is based on the "old" 1998 MELVYL interface (which is still available); resources today are vastly greater. Start your online library search for journals at the California Digital Library (http://www.dbs.cdlib.org/. The pull-down menu asks you to select a database. If you are looking for a book, choose MELVYL; for a bioanthro article my suggestion is start with Current Contents. Experiment! The Really Cool Thing is that if you are logging on from a campus computer, for many journals you can read/download the entire article online! Save yourself that trip over to BioMed or SIO... **DO** skim through the rest of this, though; the exact commands and interfaces change, but the search strategies do not.

Instead, use MELVYL and get into one of the periodical databases: CC, MED, or MAGS (by typing CC, MED, or MAGS at the MELVYL prompt--not difficult!) The search syntax is a little different in each but each has a complete users guide--type "help" or "e med" [or "e mags" etc; "e" is for "explain"]--and it is worth learning because with these you can locate any article written by a particular author or that contains a given word (or words) in the title. For example, say you found an interesting article by Richard Wrangham that he wrote in 1980, and you want to see if he's written anything else since then. Tell CC (the Current Contents database) to **f**ind all articles by the **p**ersonal **a**uthor R. Wrangham:

      CC: f pa wrangham, r.
and you'll get a list.

Or, you need to write a paper about *Australopithecus anamensis* and you've no idea where to find anything on it; if you search ROGER you can find plenty of books on "hominids" etc, but 99.9% of that will say nothing about *anamensis*, a recently-described species that won't even be in any older books. So -- ask CC to find all articles with "anamensis" in the **t**itle **w**ords:

      CC: f tw anamensis
and you're away. Note that this will miss an article about *anamensis* that happens to be titled "A new hominid from Kanapoi, Kenya"; hey, no single system is perfect (once you know who discovered the fossil, you can do an author search to get everything else by that person...).

Now--what's the difference between CC, MED, and MAGS? CC covers a wide variety of scientific journals across many fields; MED is more specialized to journals that carry articles related in some fashion to medicine (this covers a surprising number of topics that might seem fairly peripheral to medical topics). Finally, MAGS covers--surprise--magazines (like *Discover* or *Time*).

OK, what's the difference between scientific journals and magazines? **PEER REVIEW**. When an article is submitted to a peer-reviewed journal, the editor sends it to from 2-8 (supposed) experts on the topic, who tear it apart and let the editor know if there is any merit to the article. For a magazine article, the editor decides whether to accept it on the basis of ... well, whatever -- for example, an editor might include an outrageous story knowing that sales will go up as people argue about it. (The same can apply for books.)

This doesn't mean everything in peer-reviewed journals is true and correct, but it's at least plausible, most of the time.

Finally, a nifty feature of MED and MAGS is that for some articles you can access the abstract and (in MAGS), sometimes even the whole article online. In response to a search, output looks like:

3. Evans, Dylan.

The arbitrary ape. (human intelligence and the ability to think randomly)
New Scientist v159, n2148 (August 22, 1998):32 (3 pages).
Type D 3 AB to see abstract.
AT: UCSD S & E Q 1 N5496 Current Journals Bound in Stacks

which is pretty self-explanatory (I've highlighted the relevant bit, the display won't be in color!). This can be an immense timesaver.

The WEB

I'm not going to attempt to "cover" research on the web; just want to make two points:

First, refer back to the difference between peer-reviewed journals and popular magazines, and remember: at least with those, <u>at least one person other than the author read it before accepting it</u>. Surprise: you can't trust everything you read on the web.

Second, while the web has everything on it, you may not be able to find it. I recently wanted statistics on timber exports from Gabon, and figured it was a natural for a web search. Two frustrating hours later, nothing. On a whim, I tried MELVYL and within 3 minutes had the call number of a recent book on African timber trade, that had everything I could ask for and more on the subject. (A week later, an expert I'd contacted finally got around to emailing me with a couple of urls to websites with superb statistics on worldwide logging--like I said, it's <u>there</u>, just need to find it...) **No single search strategy will get everything, and failure to find information using one resource means try another one--<u>not</u> "but there's nothing on my topic!"**

Back to contents

FOOTNOTES

[1] Literature as used here refers to the body of published material on some subject or topic--not to Russian novels. For example, there is a "literature" on medical anthropology, on Afro-American religions, on the kinship systems of Australian Aborigines, on witchcraft and magic and so forth. back

[2] Writing skills are also useful in the world at large, of course. One of the practical aspects of anthropology courses is their frequent emphasis on writing. You will find the writing and research skills as taught in anthropology useful in the REAL WORLD--more useful than an ability to ace multiple choice exams. And research and writing are not really so hard, once you've had enough practice. back

[3] Data are pieces of information that can be used in analysis. Technically, "data" is the plural of "datum", that is, of one of the pieces of information. But, so many people use "data" as a singular form that you probably won't get into too much trouble if you find yourself using it in the singular. Other common singular/plural confusions: criteria (pl.)/criterion (sing.); phenomena (pl.)/phenomenon (sing.) -- if you mix these up someone may accuse you of illiteracy. So when in doubt, consult a dictionary or a writing handbook on word usage and words commonly misused. back

4 That may sound trite, but it is significant, and worth working on. A professor once remarked that he found some kind of wrongheadedness in the first sentence of almost every paper. If that's true--and who am I to argue with a professor? [Steve wrote this while still a grad student, *now* he can argue]--then there is probably an awful lot of poor word choice going on. If *you* are careful to pick the best words for the ideas you want to express, you will probably be one of the few who do--that doesn't guarantee an A, but it comes closer to guaranteeing it than any other writing habit I can think of.back

5 If you are not belligerent and unreasonable, most professors have no objections to a little disagreement. (A lot of them are flattered anyone was paying attention!) You probably have a reason for disagreeing, after all, and if it is a good reason it might work into the basis of a good term paper.back

6 That's an on porpoise typo.back

7 You can still use *content* footnotes, if you like. Content footnotes discuss ideas, issues, or details that are pertinent (or, occasionally, important) but not a necessary or direct part of the exposition or argument of the paper. This type of footnote is for discussion and elaboration. Unlike reference footnotes, content footnotes do not (usually) provide bibliographic information.back

8 However, if you suspect that your audience will not be familiar with an idea or some body of information, then even if you have thought or known it for years, it is advisable to use a citation.back

9 You can get pretty dummy-like after reading 100 term papers in a row.back

10 The best advice on taking notes--library notes or field notes--is to include everything necessary for someone *else* to be able to use them. Figure that by the time you actually use them you'll be older and wiser (or will have forgotten enough) that for all practical purposes you *will be* someone else. Making notes self explanatory is never a bad policy. back

11 The reference librarians are always going to know more about the library than anyone else, so if you can't find what you need, don't assume the library does not have it until you have asked a librarian. back

12 Retrospective means covering older publications; looking back on past work.back

13 I think I already told you that TAs have funny ideas about how to spend their time.back

One of the big buzzwords (OK, concept more than words) in primatology/cognitive science these days is "theory of mind" (TOM). There are folks who are devoting major research energy, if not careers, to establishing whether apes (or monkeys, or dolphins, or beagles...) "have TOM" -- i.e., are they capable of thinking about other individuals as separate social actors with their own separate knowledge, motives, desires, or do they simply respond to stimuli without being able to take account of another's viewpoint? The classic experiment is what Christine Johnson calls the

"Sally - Anne test". Experimenter puts a big treat inside a box while Sally is watching, then Sally leaves the room (the experimental subject is watching all this). Anne comes in and switches the treat for something nasty, then leaves. Sally returns. Now: ask the subject "What does Sally think is in the box?"

Small children answer "something nasty!", being unable to distinguish between **their own** knowledge and that of Sally. Older humans "have TOM" and know that Sally incorrectly expects a treat. Monkeys don't seem to ever get it, and people argue about apes...

The interesting thing to me is that while normal adult humans are all <u>capable</u> of employing TOM, they do not always <u>do</u> it. When writing papers, remember that the reader is another person, who may or may not know all the things you know, and almost certainly has not organized them in the same way you have. You need to develop logic, present data, *explain* ideas. If you've read this far, you are almost certainly human and capable of employing TOM. Do it on papers (and in seminar presentations!!!) and you will earn delighted surprise (and points) from your audience.

For further Moore's meanderings on the topic of research papers (including a set of "classic errors" in paper types), click [here for the Research Paper handout](#) (in a new window).

[back to top](#)

[Back to course handout menu](#)

[Back to Moore's home page](#)

[Jump to overview of BioAnthro at UCSD & elsewhere](#)