



Research Terms and Examples

Research Term	Definition	Examples	Research Value
Primary	“the literature or artifacts that are the focus of a paper.” ¹	The Bible, Book for a book review, Contemporary historical figures/writings, etc.	Your thesis and argument rests upon your interaction with primary sources. Primary sources should be regularly referenced in your paper.
Secondary	documents or artifacts that “points back to the object of your research.” ²	Commentaries, journal articles, later historical writings about a certain era/person, etc.	Your footnotes and Bibliography will be a mixture of primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources show you know the issues and key voices on your topic.
Tertiary	sources written “ <i>about</i> secondary sources” and often explain what other sources have argued about a particular issue. ³	Dictionary entries, Encyclopedias, Wikipedia, blog posts, etc.	A good starting place for research to familiarize yourself with the topic, issues, and key voices. It can also direct you to the primary and secondary sources for your research. Typically, these will not appear in your research paper. (Wikipedia should <i>never</i> appear in your paper!)
Peer-Reviewed	“scholars other than the author have read the work and, whether or not they share its perspective, have stated that the article is worth the paper it is printed on.” ⁴	Journal articles, Theses, Dissertations.	These are scholarly works and the best type of secondary resources for research papers. ATLA and JSTOR give you the option to search for sources that are peer-reviewed.

¹Daniel H. Zacharias and Benjamin K. Forrest, *Surviving and Thriving in Seminary: An Academic and Spiritual Handbook* (Lexham Press, 2017), 121.

²Michael Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic 2016), 37.

³Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis*, 38. (italics added)

⁴Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis*, 42.

General Formatting and Research Reminders

Paraphrasing: You are stating in your own words the ideas and argument of the source you are citing. At the end of your paraphrase, cite your paraphrase with a footnote referencing the source for this idea.

Quoting: Direct quotes are contained in quotation marks and should be cited in a footnote. It is often best to paraphrase when citing another person’s ideas or work. However, if a source is particularly well-worded or the quote is beneficial for your argument, quote the source and cite it appropriately.

Block Quotes: Quotations that are five or more lines in length should be set apart from the rest of the text as a block quotation (see the DTS Style Manual for more information on formatting block quotes). It is best to refrain from using such a large amount of quoted material unless it is necessary for your paper.

En Dash: This is a short dash (not a hyphen) used to mark a range of pages for a chapter in a book, journal article, or other resource. An en dash is: – and an em dash is: —.



Research Databases

Key Questions to ask of any source but particularly online sources (from Michael. J. Burer's RS5101 presentation)

1. Is it peer reviewed?
2. Who is the author? What are their credentials?
3. Does it handle sources properly/responsibly?

DTS Library (WorldCat and ATLA) – library.dts.edu

JSTOR – jstor.org

ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global

Academia.edu – www.academia.edu

Google Scholar – www.scholar.google.com

Other Online Tools for Writing and Research

Commentaries – www.bestcommentaries.com You can see the top-rated commentaries for each book of the Bible and different types of commentaries (Technical, Pastoral, etc.). Professors may have commentary recommendations specifically recommended for your paper or course.

Constable's Notes – <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/> Retired BE professor, Dr. Thomas L. Constable, has notes/commentary on every book of the Bible available for free.

Christian Classics Ethereal Library (CCEL) – ccel.org An online database of Christian works that are in the public domain. If a historical figure or work is your primary source, it is recommended to consult with a professor for a newer, critical edition for your research (e.g., Augustine's *City of God* or Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*).

The Chicago Manual of Style Online (Sample Citations) – https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) – https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

Grammarly.com – A website where you can set-up a free account to help with basic spelling and grammar. A premium option and annual is available for further style and grammar suggestions.