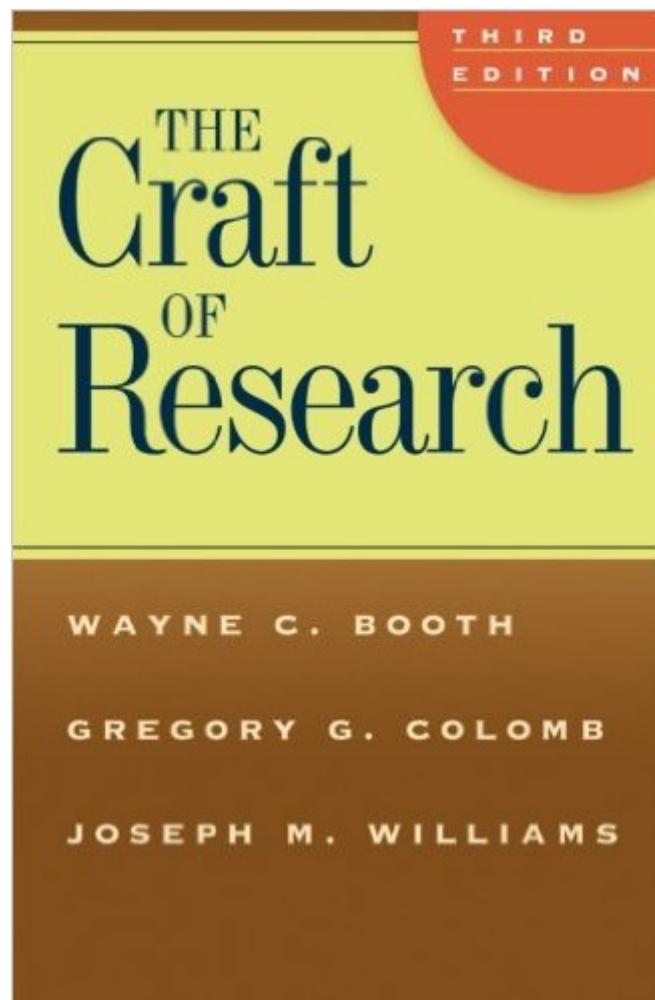


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The Craft Of Research, Third Edition (Chicago Guides To Writing, Editing, And Publishing)



Synopsis

With more than 400,000 copies now in print, *The Craft of Research* is the unrivaled resource for researchers at every level, from first-year undergraduates to research reporters at corporations and government offices. Seasoned researchers and educators Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams present an updated third edition of their classic handbook, whose first and second editions were written in collaboration with the late Wayne C. Booth. *The Craft of Research* explains how to build an argument that motivates readers to accept a claim; how to anticipate the reservations of readers and to respond to them appropriately; and how to create introductions and conclusions that answer that most demanding question, "So what?" The third edition includes an expanded discussion of the essential early stages of a research task: planning and drafting a paper. The authors have revised and fully updated their section on electronic research, emphasizing the need to distinguish between trustworthy sources (such as those found in libraries) and less reliable sources found with a quick Web search. A chapter on warrants has also been thoroughly reviewed to make this difficult subject easier for researchers. Throughout, the authors have preserved the amiable tone, the reliable voice, and the sense of directness that have made this book indispensable for anyone undertaking a research project.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although there are many books on writing research or term papers, I have not found anything else

which brings together material on planning, reasoning and writing the research paper as well as this book. Ignore any reviewers who make this book out to be a simplistic text. It is an excellent work on well reasoned writing that even most graduate students can benefit greatly from reading. As a professor of a graduate class on Research and Writing, I have recommended and required this book for several years. The book guides the reader from an idea of a topic, to defining a question, to formulating the conceptually significant research problem. It briefly covers finding, evaluating and using primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. Then a major portion of the book is devoted to understanding effective reasoning in the writing process. This is based quite a bit on professor Stephen Toulmin's practical approach to effective reasoning and argumentation. The Craft of Research diagrams and explains claims, reasons, evidence and warrants. It has detailed illustrations of warrants and when to use them, as well as how to challenge them. The book has other sections on organizing, drafting, and revising a paper. It also has a chapter on communicating information visually using tables, graphs and charts. Rather than focusing on the simple mechanics or obvious steps in writing a serious research paper, this book concentrates on the more difficult tasks of clearly defining the conceptual problem and addressing it with in depth, effective reasoning.

The third edition of this classic text pales when compared to the second edition. Many of the changes are cosmetic in nature and often blur what was clearly and succinctly stated in the second edition. For example, rearranging paragraphs within chapters often detract from what were logical sequences of ideas and information found in the second edition. Unfortunately, the authors, sans Booth, appear to abandon their own advice in order to create a new edition that will bolster sales. I hope the fourth edition, if there is a fourth edition, returns to the high standards one comes to expect from the University of Chicago and its press.

I used this book as the text for a freshman-sophomore course, Introduction to Christian Academics. It is very clearly written, and the information it presents will help anyone understand what they are reading. It is not just for people writing dissertations. To understand and to be able to analyze what you read, you need to know how arguments are constructed -- what constitutes evidence, what are the steps of reasoning, what is the role of the warrant of an argument. My students liked the book a lot. We later used it as a reference in a graduate course. It was worthwhile there, too. This book is one of the half dozen or so that belong on the desk of every person who is serious about what he reads and about what he writes.

This is a great book on writing a research report, useful for both beginners and seasoned researchers. It walks you through all the phases of your research project, starting from picking up your topic, through the actual research, note-taking, to writing up your findings, down to sentence level structure and style. For me a most useful part of the book was the beginning: finding a topic, defining your research problem, qualifying it, and determining your warrants; especially revealing was the relationship between your research problem and a wider body of theory, and how you must be explicit about your "warrants" to make a real contribution to "knowledge" or to "solving a practical problem." Even though I had read many other books on writing such as "The Clockwork Muse" or "Writing Your Dissertation in 15 Minutes a Day" none was as explicit as this one on how to combine both Research and Writing (the other books assume that writing a research project entails a progressive, smooth process: you pick a topic, you research it, and you write up your conclusions/findings), nothing farther from the truth; as I learned from painful experience and as was made explicit by this book, to my relief, a research project is a dynamic process in which research and writing go together; they complement and reinforce each other. This book teaches you just how to do this and it was the greatest lesson I learned.

I read this book about a month before I submitted my dissertation (in U.S. history) and it convinced me to completely rewrite my introduction. That experience left me kicking myself for thinking I was too advanced for these sorts of guides and for not consulting this book earlier. The sections on formulating a topic (how to turn a general interest into a question/problem to be researched) and warrants (how to match claims to evidence) are especially helpful. Make no mistake about it, this book can help researchers at all levels, and I have had many students, both undergraduate and graduate, tell me how happy they were that they took my advice to read this book.

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