

WRITING AND
PUBLISHING
QUALITATIVE
RESEARCH



PATRICIA LEAVY



GUILFORD PRESS

e-book

Writing and Publishing Qualitative Research

Also from Patricia Leavy

Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods,
Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory
Research Approaches, Second Edition
Patricia Leavy

Re/Invention: Methods of Social Fiction
Patricia Leavy

Method Meets Art:
Arts-Based Research Practice, Third Edition
Patricia Leavy

Spark
Patricia Leavy

Contemporary Feminist Research from Theory to Practice
Patricia Leavy and Daniel X. Harris

Handbook of Arts-Based Research
Edited by Patricia Leavy

Handbook of Emergent Methods
Edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy

WRITING AND PUBLISHING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH



Patricia Leavy



THE GUILFORD PRESS
New York London

Copyright © 2024 The Guilford Press
A Division of Guilford Publications, Inc.
370 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1200, New York, NY 10001
www.guilford.com

All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Last digit is print number: 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Leavy, Patricia, 1975– author.

Title: Writing and publishing qualitative research / Patricia Leavy.

Description: New York, NY : The Guilford Press, [2024] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023058709 | ISBN 9781462539758 (paperback) | ISBN 9781462554140 (hardcover)

Subjects: LCSH: Social sciences—Research. | Qualitative research.

Classification: LCC H62 .L398 2024 | DDC 808.06/6001—dc23/eng/20240131

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023058709>

Guilford Press is a registered trademark of Guilford Publications, Inc.

To Miss Mercer, my fifth-grade English teacher

Preface



For more than a decade, students and colleagues have sought me out at conferences, on social media, and by email for publishing advice. I receive inquiries about writing and publishing daily. The queries vary, but typical questions have been: What’s your writing routine? How do you fit writing into your schedule? How do you get started writing? How do I find a publisher? How did you get your publisher? How do I write a successful book proposal? What should I do when a journal editor wants revisions I don’t agree with? What should I do when an editor won’t respond to me? How do I publish my research as fiction? Do I need an agent? How does trade publishing work? How do I submit an article to a newspaper or magazine? How do I promote my work so people will actually read it? How long should a book be? Can you negotiate book contract terms? What does X mean in my book contract? What are normal royalty rates? The list goes on and on. You may be thinking that most of these questions come from students. That’s not true. I receive these requests from undergraduate and graduate students, as well as scholars at *all* career levels—truly.

John Creswell is one of the best-known authors of research methods books in the world. Recently he sent me a direct message on Facebook asking me for advice about writing for popular audiences and trade publishing. Now Professor Emerita, Laurel Richardson is a highly accomplished and respected qualitative sociologist and a pioneer of incorporating creativity into scholarly reporting. She has contacted me for extensive advice publishing her last several books. Many full professors tell me they are “tortured” by writing, others ask for repeated extensions on projects, some have ghosted me in my role as editor when they’re unable to deliver content, and others complain they are stuck in bad publishing deals (which they

also don't properly understand). I could go on and on with examples. What I've gleaned from the daily onslaught of questions is that there isn't enough useful instruction out there about how to write and publish our work, and that it is something all scholars can benefit from, regardless of where they are in their educations or careers. This is why I wanted to write this book.

I've been writing and publishing qualitative research for more than 20 years. During this time, I've published more than 40 books of various types—textbooks, monographs, anthologies, handbooks, novels, and short story collections—and with various types of publishers—academic, trade, and hybrid, as well as self-publishing. Moreover, the publishers I've worked with over the years have ranged in size from small independent presses to midsize presses to some of the largest and oldest global academic publishers. Add to this the fact that I've served as creator and editor for 10 book series with four different publishers, vetting thousands of book proposals over the years and providing feedback on hundreds of manuscripts. As a believer in public scholarship, I've also published many blogs and op-eds and have an active online presence. I also cofounded a peer-reviewed journal and have served on the editorial boards of many others, in addition to publishing many of my own journal articles. This is not an attempt to share my resume, but rather a way of providing you with some context for how I've come to write this book and why I get so many requests for guidance. Through all these varied publishing experiences, some good, some not so good, I've learned a great deal about writing and publishing. It's my hope to share what I've learned in this book. The truth is, I was taught how to do research but wasn't really taught how to write about it or publish it. I had to learn through trial and error. As you can imagine, I made a lot of mistakes. By sharing what I've learned, I hope to make the road easier for you. Everything I've learned that has proven useful to me is included in this book. I'm not holding anything back.

It's important to let you know what this book is and what it is not. This book is different from other texts on writing qualitative research. For starters, there's significant coverage of the basics of writing and developing a writing practice. This is critical for all writers regardless of previous experience. Next, the book covers four primary formats for representing qualitative research—two are traditional and aimed at academic audiences, and two are contemporary and aimed at popular audiences. In this regard, this book teaches how to write for both academic and public audiences. Additionally, there's ample publishing instruction, including everything from pitching your work to understanding your contract. Finally, there's coverage of what it means to build a body of work and an identity as a scholar, rather than simply writing one piece.

This book is not a book about what qualitative research is, how to do it, or how to analyze and interpret data. There are many wonderful books and articles available on these subjects, a few of which are suggested in the appendix. This book is intended for readers who have already conducted qualitative research and are ready to write it up and publish it.

Why This Book Is Needed



Today, only some undergraduate students learn about qualitative research, often briefly in a survey of methods course. That said, most graduate students learn how to do qualitative research. No longer relegated to anthropology and sociology, students across the social sciences, education, health studies, and marketing may take one or more courses that cover qualitative inquiry. Many go on to conduct qualitative research in their professional lives, whether as academic researchers or practitioners.

It's not surprising that the market is inundated with textbooks about conducting qualitative research. Nor is it surprising that there are many texts focused on analyzing qualitative data. What is genuinely baffling is how little instruction is available on writing and publishing qualitative research. There are only a handful of books about writing qualitative research, none of which cover both traditional academic formats for writing and formats aimed at reaching nonacademic readers. Moreover, there's usually little to no mention of the publishing process, which is a uniquely mystifying subject for even many advanced scholars. Most scholars get the totality of their writing instruction from general qualitative methods texts, not books about writing. The problem is that the majority of general textbooks offer at most a single chapter on writing, usually without a word about publishing.

It's remarkable how little writing and publishing instruction is available relative to how much guidance exists on conducting qualitative research. Yet, without writing and publishing, there's no record of the research at all. In the end, the representation of research is what we're left with, what we share, what we put into the world in the hopes of doing some good. The research write-up represents the entire study. Writing is integral to qualitative research. Arguably, it's the most important part of conducting research. Publishing is also integral to research. A write-up sitting in your desk drawer doesn't do anyone much good. For research to be useful, it needs to be published.

I wrote this book to give qualitative researchers at any level—students as well as novice and even highly experienced researchers—a concise but comprehensive guide to effectively write up and publish their research.

Finally, I wrote this book to help scholars think about how to build a career as a researcher. It's unlikely that you're going to conduct only one study and write one article or book. Much more likely, you'll be conducting research for decades, publishing multiple works, and ultimately creating *a body of work*. Yet this again is an area in which there is almost no guidance, despite the fact that all researchers need to contend with building a body of work. The little writing instruction available usually focuses on teaching readers to write an individual representation of a project, without paying attention to the bigger picture of how the many representations we create are linked and come to create a public record of our contribution to knowledge building.

In short, I wrote this book because I believe it is needed. I hope you find it useful.

Organization of This Book



This book is divided into two parts. Part I includes Chapters 1–4, which cover how to get started writing (e.g., drawing on the experience you already have, developing a writing discipline, engaging in all the phases of writing), how to write qualitatively (e.g., why you write qualitatively, how to organize data, how to select formats and approaches to writing), how to work with literature and theory (e.g., how to compile a literature review, how to use literature at different phases of a project, how to use theory and build a conceptual framework), and how to cultivate your voice (e.g., working with literary tools). In Part II, Chapters 5–8 offer guidance on writing and publishing in different formats: peer-reviewed journal articles, books (primarily monographs), literary works (e.g., novels, short stories, plays), and blogs or op-eds. Chapter 9 offers advice on building a career and going public with your research, including coverage of the contemporary academic landscape, public scholarship, presenting research in more than one format, and building a profile as a scholar (e.g., via an online presence, professional websites, social media, research-sharing sites).

The book also contains pedagogical features. Every chapter includes quick writing activities designed to take 5–15 minutes, dos and don'ts sections with reminders about what has just been learned, end-of-chapter checklists of considerations as a review of the chapter, and end-of-chapter writing activities. Once you've completed all the end-of-chapter writing activities, you'll be able to successfully write and publish your research. There are also robust examples of published work throughout the book,

as well as figures and tables. Finally, at the end of the book, you'll find an appendix with suggested readings and indexes for easy referencing.

Alternative Ways of Reading This Book

■ ■ ■

Although this book can be read in order from beginning to end, it need not be. Chapters can be read out of order, and chapters that are not of interest can be omitted. If you do skip chapters, I encourage you to hang on to the book in the event that down the road you become interested in writing in a different format. For instance, I was writing journal articles, books, and op-eds long before I was writing blogs and novels. Our interests change over time, as does our comfort level in trying out new things. It can also be helpful to reread chapters at different points in your career. The words on the page won't change, but you will. As you become a more experienced researcher and stronger writer, the way you absorb and use the advice in these pages will transform, and so will your writing.

A Note about Citations and Examples

■ ■ ■

As I discuss in Chapter 3, I endorse an intentional citations practice. This is a critical part of ethical research practice. To cite with intention means, in part, not citing “landmark studies” or “central figures” in a field simply because others have done so. Rather, those studies and people should be cited only if they add uniquely to what you are writing. I have modeled an intentional citations practice throughout this text. Therefore, there are many important scholars in the field of qualitative research who are not cited in this book, because it was not necessary to do so given the specific focus of this text. This is in no way a slight against them, and, I assure you, in other texts I have cited them extensively when appropriate. Moreover, the best writing flows. Citations break up flow. Again, in the spirit of modeling writing techniques, I have chosen to cite only as necessary.

As you will also see in this book, I have drawn extensively on my own published work as examples. This was simply a pragmatic decision. I have access to my own book proposals, op-eds, and the like, and I have the legal right to reprint them. In no way am I suggesting this is the best or only good work out there. For the sake of offering you robust examples, I used my own work simply because it's available to me. Fortunately, unlike most scholars, I have published extensively in each of the formats reviewed in

this text, so I was able to offer these examples. I strongly encourage you to seek out full-length examples by a diverse range of researchers.

Audience for This Book and Level of Readership



This book is accessibly written for diverse audiences, including undergraduates, graduates, researchers, and practitioners interested in writing and publishing qualitative research. My hope is that this book will be a go-to reference for researchers over the course of their careers—something you can pull off your bookshelf time and again to help guide you through the process of writing and publication. I truly believe this book is for both beginners and highly advanced scholars. If you are a more experienced graduate student or a mid- to late-career researcher, I encourage you to read and engage with the book in its entirety and not assume some lessons or activities are useful only for beginners. The reality is that we can all benefit from reevaluating our daily writing experience, refining our writing discipline, and so on. I know many full professors who have been able to publish enough to advance in their careers but who still do not have an effective writing discipline and thus waste huge amounts of time and battle stress and anxiety over writing and meeting publication deadlines. As noted earlier, some accomplished scholars secretly view writing as torture. This is because they have not mastered the basics. Others repeat their work over and over again, because it's all they know how to do. Still others have published a great deal but have still not found an audience for their work and are locked into bad contracts they do not understand. I see this firsthand every day. I could go on and on with examples.

There's a quick writing exercise in Chapter 1 that asks you to write an effective email. Unless you are an undergraduate student, you may look at that and think it's too rudimentary for you. It's not. This is an activity everyone can benefit from—myself included. As series editor for 10 book series over the years, I can tell you I've received thousands of emails from scholars at all levels. Often, the emails are not well written. They are too long, they are unfocused, they are missing vital information, they are tone deaf, and so on. Please know, there is no lesson or activity in this book that I would not engage with myself to strengthen my own practice. It's only as we become better at the basics that we become better writers. Moreover, writers get better over time, and so refreshers are always needed. If I were going to write this book a year from now, I hope it would be better than it is today. Ten years from now, I hope it would be much better. The skills

reviewed in this book—beginning with the foundational basics—are useful for every writer, myself included.

In terms of teaching, this book includes extensive pedagogical features and can be used in methodology courses such as qualitative research, research methods surveys, emergent research practices, narrative inquiry, and critical approaches to research. It can also be used in a range of other courses across the disciplines in fields including communications, cultural studies, education, health studies, social work, sociology, psychology, women's studies, gender studies, and sexuality studies to help students learn how to write up their work. Finally, it can be used in a range of writing or thesis courses.

Acknowledgments



First and foremost, heartfelt thanks to my extraordinary editor and dear friend, C. Deborah Laughton. You are a gift! Thank you for putting up with me. Your wisdom is reflected on every page. Any errors are all my own. A spirited thank-you to Seymour Weingarten, the late Bob Matloff, Tim Stookesberry, Laurie Rosatone, Anna Brackett, Judith Grauman, Katherine Lieber, Paul Gordon, Andrea Sargent, and the entire Guilford Press team. I am also grateful to the formerly anonymous reviewers for their invaluable feedback: Vaselina Lambre, Department of Education, University of South Florida; Eileen Boswell, Department of Child and Family Studies, University of Nebraska, Lincoln; James Christopher Head, Department of Psychology, University of West Georgia; Season Ellison, Honors Education Program Director, Bemidji State University, Minnesota; and Holly Anthony, Department of Education, Tennessee Technical University. Shalen Lowell, you are the world's best assistant.

My deep gratitude to my friends and colleagues, especially Tony Adams, Vanessa Alssid, Melissa Anyiwo, Keith Berry, Celine Boyle, Sandra Faulkner, Ally Field, Jessica Smartt Gullion, Alexandra Lasczik, Pamela Martin, Xan Nowakowski, Laurel Richardson, Barry Shuman, Eve Spangler, and J. E. Sumerau.

Thanks as always to my family. Mark, I appreciate your support more than I can say. Madeline, you are my heart and a beautiful writer in your own right.

Finally, I have dedicated this book to my fifth-grade English teacher, Miss Mercer. I was a shy and awkward kid who always sat in the back and was terrified to raise my hand, but I loved to write. Miss Mercer, you saw that. Thank you boundlessly for telling me that I had a talent for writing and making space for me to learn. I've written this book in the spirit in which you nurtured me, hoping to give readers a feeling that they can do it, and a few tools to help them along the way.

Contents



PART I

Getting Started Writing

CHAPTER 1	How We Get Started Writing	3
	<i>Creating a Writing Discipline, 5; The Phases of Writing, 9; Writing Tricks: Busting the Myth of Writer's Block, 17; Conclusion, 19</i>	
CHAPTER 2	Writing Qualitatively	20
	<i>Why Write Qualitatively?, 21; Qualitative Data, 22; Formats for Qualitative Writing, 25; Approaches to Qualitative Writing, 26; Narrative Structure and Narrator Point of View, 33; Conclusion, 34</i>	
CHAPTER 3	Writing with Literature and Theory	37
	<i>Literature, 38; Theory, 49; Conclusion, 51</i>	
CHAPTER 4	Cultivating Your Voice	53
	<i>Writing Artfully with Data: Literary Tools for Qualitative Researchers, 55; Conclusion, 70</i>	

PART II

Writing and Publishing in Different Formats

CHAPTER 5	Writing and Publishing Academic Journal Articles	75
	<i>The Components of Research Articles, 76; Organizing Research Articles, 78; Publication, 87; Conclusion, 92</i>	

CHAPTER 6	Writing and Publishing Academic Books	94
	<i>Monographs, Textbooks, and Anthologies, 95; Focusing on Monographs, 98; The Production Process, 125; Marketing, 127; Conclusion, 127</i>	
CHAPTER 7	Writing and Publishing in Literary Forms	130
	<i>Building a Structure for Fiction, 134; Style, 140; Characterization, 142; Literary Tools, 149; Front and Back Matter, 153; Titles, 154; Publishing Literary Works (Novels), 154; Conclusion, 162</i>	
CHAPTER 8	Writing and Publishing Blogs and Op-Eds	164
	<i>Blogs versus Op-Eds, 165; Crafting a Blog or Op-Ed, 166; Publishing Blogs and Op-Eds, 174; Postpublication, 177; Conclusion, 178</i>	
CHAPTER 9	Building a Career, Creating a Body of Work, and Going Public	180
	<i>The Contemporary Academic Landscape, 181; Public Scholarship, 184; Publishing Research in Multiple Formats, 189; Online Presence, 199; Conclusion: Now You're a Writer, and Writers Write, 202</i>	
APPENDIX	Suggested Print and Online Resources	205
	<i>Suggested Books about Specific Genres of Qualitative Writing, 205; A Few Suggested Books about Qualitative Research, 205; A Few Suggested Readings about Interpreting and Analyzing Qualitative Data, 206; Suggested Qualitative Journals, 206; Online Zines, 208</i>	
REFERENCES		209
AUTHOR INDEX		219
SUBJECT INDEX		222
ABOUT THE AUTHOR		231

PART I

Getting Started Writing

■ ■ ■

CHAPTER 1

How We Get Started Writing



Writers write.

—RONALD J. PELIAS (2019, p. 150)

This book is about writing qualitative research. Let's not worry about the qualitative part yet. We'll get to that in subsequent chapters. For now, let's start with the more general basics of writing.

Although some students and researchers love writing, many fear it. After all, what's more intimidating than staring at a blank page? Rest assured, whether you come to the task of writing with great enthusiasm, deep dread, or somewhere in between, you can learn to write. Furthermore, you can learn to write well. You've got this.

For starters, you write all the time. To have made it through your education, from elementary school on, you learned to write. You learned to write effectively, too. For example, in high school you learned how to structure an essay to get a passing grade. Your experience with writing extends far beyond learning to leap over formal hurdles. In daily life, you may write grocery lists, to-do lists, emails, text messages, social media posts, special occasion cards, and much more. Before we even get into what we've learned during higher education and doing research, you've got loads of writing experience. The problem is that you don't value it. You don't even think about those tasks as writing. Each possibility I listed is in fact writing. Moreover, writing these things well matters and can affect your life in important ways. Take the humble grocery list. Let's say I send my partner to the store with one of the following lists, with the secret hope of making shepherd's pie (see Table 1.1).

List A is much better than List B. Why? Because it is more specific—and

TABLE 1.1. Grocery Lists	
List A	List B
2 pounds ground beef	2 pounds beef
Frozen peas	Peas
1 bag russet potatoes	Potatoes
1 box beef broth	Broth
Worcestershire sauce	That brown sauce

specificity is a hallmark of good writing. With List B in hand, my poor partner could end up buying steak and barbecue sauce, among other errors. That certainly changes dinner. List A better communicates my intention, and therefore my partner is more likely to understand it. Writing is simply a way of communicating through written language. We do it all the time.

Now imagine some of the other daily writing examples I mentioned. What happens if you send an unintelligible email to your professor or employer? What about a vague or cryptic text message to someone you’re dating? What about a poorly worded social media post about a controversial topic? In all of these instances, we do our best to write clearly, because there are immediate consequences for not doing so. Most of the time, you probably don’t even think about any of this. You don’t need to think about it because you already have basic writing skills, and you understand the importance of communicating effectively.

If someone asked you whether you wrote today, unless you had a school or work project, you’d probably say that you have not written, even though, as just discussed, you may have written quite a bit. This bears striking similarities to how we think about writing qualitatively. We often think about writing as a totally distinct phase of qualitative research and thus something we don’t yet have experience with. However, if you’re at the point at which you’ve generated and analyzed qualitative data, then you’ve already been writing a lot. You may have already written many of the following: a research proposal, an institutional review board application, a literature review, recruitment letters, informed consent documents, research instruments (e.g., an interview guide), field notes, memo notes, jottings, interpretation and analysis notes, and many other things. Qualitative researchers write all the time, converting research experiences into language so that we, and others, may access them later (Weaver-Hightower, 2019). By writing everything down as it’s occurring, as well as our reflections after the fact, we transform a lived research experience into an “account”

of research (Geertz, 1973, p. 19). So by the time you're ready to enter the phase of writing up your research, you've amassed considerable experience writing—from schoolwork throughout the years, from daily life, and from research design and data generation. Now it's time to hone your skills by developing a writing discipline.



Quick Writing Activity

Here's a hypothetical situation: Mary is going to miss the deadline to submit her final sociology paper because she has the flu. She needs to notify Professor Brown. As the assignment is necessary for completion of the course, she wants to make sure to communicate politely, clearly, and effectively, including offering possibilities for course completion. Spend 5–10 minutes writing an effective email from Mary to her professor.

We all have to email professors, colleagues, or publishers. So you needn't be an undergraduate student to benefit from the preceding email activity. Let's consider a more advanced exercise that researchers at all levels are likely to encounter—and one that my experience as an editor shows me we can all benefit from practicing.



Quick Writing Activity

You see an open call to submit a chapter for an edited book. The topic of the book aligns well with your research. At this initial stage, the editor has requested a brief email stating your interest. You must include (1) a brief paragraph on your proposed chapter (topic, research, relevance to the book's scope) and (2) a brief paragraph about you (your education, research background, and qualifications to write the chapter). Spend 15 minutes drafting this email. Revise the email at least twice.

Creating a Writing Discipline



The prospect of formal writing is intimidating to many students and researchers. Writing for publication may seem like too big a task, and it's one that some feel ill prepared for. The problem in part stems from cultural ideas that espouse that “talented” writers receive lightning bolts of inspiration that the rest of us aren't privy to. Magic is needed to produce great writing. I'd love to tell you this isn't true, that there's some formula you can follow and presto, you'll be a great writer, no magic needed. The truth is that inspiration and magic are very much a part of the writing process.

However, they are available to us all. Writing isn't a skill one is born with; it's something any of us can learn to do well. H. L. Goodall, Jr. (2008), explained this as follows: "Writing is a skill before it becomes a craft or an art. As is true with any other skill, it requires regular disciplined practice. As with any other skill set that you want to be good at, you'll get better at it *faster* if you practice every day" (p. 60).

The best writers don't sit around waiting for some kind of divine inspiration. They plod away, word by word, line by line. When things start to come together and inspiration strikes, it's the result of this rigorous practice. **Writing is a craft** that must be learned and practiced. This is how we develop skills and talent.

Many days will be spent plodding away, forcing yourself to do the work, even when it isn't particularly fun. But there's magic, too. It can't be planned. The reason is that writing is a process of discovery and creation. How does magic come to us? Discipline brings it on and allows us to take full advantage of it when the moment presents itself. By learning the tools of our craft, honing our writing skills through rigorous practice, and even forcing ourselves to write when it's hard, understanding that we can edit later, when the magical bits happen, we're ready. Sometimes writing really is hard work, and we just go word by word, line by line. Other times we're so swept up we may forget to eat lunch. It's coming together, and we're going with it. Both the discipline and the magic it will bring are available to us all—to you just as they are to me. The key is practicing, developing a writing routine, and plodding away. The more we do this, even when it's like pulling teeth, the better we become, and the more chances there are for the thoughts and words to begin flowing, you know, like magic.

Three things are need in order to develop a writing discipline: time, space, and something to get you started.

Time and Space

Writing doesn't just happen. We need to make time for it, prioritize it. **Create a writing schedule.** Set specific blocks of time designated for writing each week. As with anything else in life, whether it's exercising or time spent at our jobs, if we want to develop a discipline, we need to carve out time. A problem some researchers face is not maintaining their writing time. If you were taking a class on certain days at certain times, you would show up. If you were scheduled to work at your job on certain days at certain times, you would show up. As a qualitative researcher, writing is a part of your job. You may not have a professor or employer to hold you accountable, so you need to learn to do this for yourself. Write down

your writing schedule and stick to it. Protect your writing time. Consider it sacred.

Setting up a writing space with all the materials you need for your project will save you time and allow you to more easily slip in and out of writing. It also aids in organization. Given the vast amounts of data and literature qualitative researchers are often working with, keeping things organized is paramount. Leave all the materials you need for your project neatly arranged wherever you work—a desk, a table, an office. Keep your computer files organized and accessible. For example, when working on a new project, you may have one folder for the project right on your desktop so you can easily access your documents. If you work primarily outside your home or office (e.g., at the library, at a coffee shop), then have your work bag ready to go at all times, organized with what you need for your project. Make it easy for yourself to start working and to maximize writing time. As you create your workspace, consider other things you might need as well. For example, Harry Wolcott (2009) even suggested keeping snacks nearby. First, you might get hungry. Second, if your snacks are already where you are working, you'll have no excuse to waste time getting something.

Bear in mind that time and space aren't just about hours passing and a physical location—they're also about bracketing off everything else and mentally giving yourself time and space to concentrate only on writing. Put your smartphone away, don't open social media tabs, close your email. It's easy to become distracted or to continually stop to scroll away online. Developing an effective writing discipline means that we write without distraction, and we write when it's difficult. Be fully present and committed. In order to open yourself up to true inspiration and, yes, magic, you need to first do the work. When you set aside your writing time, schedule in breaks. For example, maybe you write for 45–50 minutes and then take a 10-minute break. But during the actual writing time, eliminate all other distractions. For real.

Writing Prompts

You've set aside time to write, but you don't know how to start. Try a writing prompt. Simon Kewin (2010) explains: "A writing prompt is simply a topic around which you start jotting down ideas. The prompt could be a single word, a short phrase, a complete paragraph or even a picture, with the idea being to give you something to focus upon as you write. You may stick very closely to the original prompt, or you may wander off on a tangent." Writing prompts are commonly used by commercial authors to exercise the writer's muscle. Academic researchers are rarely taught

to use writing prompts; however, they can be quite useful for novice and experienced writers alike. There are three primary reasons for qualitative researchers to work with prompts: (1) sparking creativity, (2) learning to use literary tools, and (3) discipline/practice.

Writing prompts are tools to jump-start your writing and do not typically result in a part of your final project. Prompts may be based on your research topic, but they need not be and often are not. The idea is to get comfortable writing, to learn to be creative, and to develop a habit.

If you want to stay away from your research topic for the time being, just to have a way of practicing writing, you can use any of the following sources to develop a writing prompt: a headline from a newspaper or magazine; the opening sentence of a book or story; a post from social media; a photograph or image from a magazine or online source; or an object in your home, office, or somewhere else. Here are examples of how to use the prompts:

- Take a headline from a newspaper or magazine and use it as the title of an essay. Just start writing.
- Use the opening sentence of a book or story and keep writing your own story.
- Use a post from social media as a title for an op-ed and start writing.
- Take a photograph or an image from a magazine or online source and describe it in detail.
- Take an object in your home, office, or somewhere else and describe it in detail so that someone who isn't present can envision it. As an alternative, create a story about where the object came from, who uses it, and why.

If you want to use a prompt that directly relates to your research topic, Sandra Faulkner (2019) suggests using an interview transcript, literature review source, or photo from field research. You can also simply take your general topic and develop opening sentences related to it.

For example, if your topic is *body image*, your prompts might be:

- The mirror was her enemy.
- He had wanted to be bigger since high school.
- They went to the bathroom together every day after lunch.
- The images in the magazines mocked them.
- No matter what she did, her hair would never look like the models she so admired.

Or, for another example, if your topic is *domestic violence*, your prompts might be:

- He was in a rage again.
- She cowered in the corner.
- She quickly threw their clothes into a garbage bag.
- They didn't believe her when she reported it.
- The shelter couldn't accommodate children.

Or, for a final example, if your topic is *elementary school education*, your prompts might be:

- The kids complain about group projects.
- She felt sick to her stomach when the teacher called on her.
- He followed the school district's third-grade lesson plan despite reservations.
- She prepared a social studies module drawing on current events.
- He was sent to the principal again for bullying a classmate.

Whether you're using prompts unrelated to your research or directly related to it, the idea is to free write, without censoring yourself. Just write. There's no "good" or "bad" writing when responding to a prompt. There simply is writing or there isn't. Just write.



Quick Writing Activity

Generate a writing prompt on the topic of your research, or any topic, using one of the strategies reviewed. Use the prompt as your jumping-off point and free write for 10 minutes.

The Phases of Writing



People don't just sit at their computers and magically produce an article or book. There are phases to the writing process: mulling, outlining, drafting, revising, seeking feedback, and more revising. Figure 1.1 illustrates this process.

In practice, there will be many more rounds of revising. To end up with

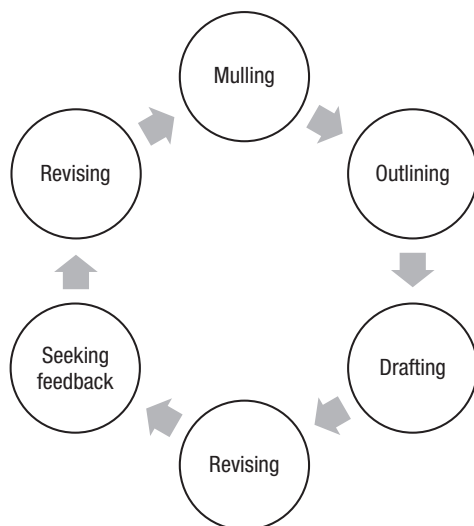


FIGURE 1.1. The phases of writing.

a polished piece of writing, we revise many times, sometimes dozens of times. Furthermore, mulling—or stewing on our ideas—is something that occurs throughout the process (see Figure 1.2).

Let’s look in more detail at what occurs during each of the phases of writing.

Mulling

Mulling is the process of stewing on ideas, mentally batting around alternatives, and conceptualizing your final write-up. It is *purposeful thinking*. Think about your data, think about how to organize and present the data, think about your findings and what it all means, think about how to put the pieces together for someone reading it. Although it may seem like this part of the writing process doesn’t get you anywhere, nothing could be further from the truth. Thinking about your research and how to write it up is necessary and productive. This time allows you to start to see how pieces of the puzzle might fit together, how they might be arranged, what they mean, and how best to communicate that meaning. Sholem Asch said, “Writing comes more easily if you have something to say” (as quoted in Wolcott, 2009, p. 9). The more you mentally immerse yourself in your research, the more you will develop ideas, and thus the more you will have to say. This process will ready you for developing an outline. However, as indicated

in Figure 1.2, this is not simply an isolated phase of writing. Rather, it is a part of the process you will return to time and again. In fact, the more writing you do and feedback you solicit, the more it will spark ideas, which you will stew on.

Outlining

You've mulled over your data. Now it's time to write an outline. An outline organizes your thoughts and becomes the plan for your write-up. An outline is a sequential list of the topics you plan to cover. The more detailed the outline, the easier the writing process. Investing time in this part of the process pays dividends down the line. The nature of your outline depends on what you are writing—the form of your representation. Is it a journal article? A monograph? A literary work? An op-ed or blog? These different forms are explored at length in later chapters; however, for now I briefly review what an outline might include, depending on the form of the

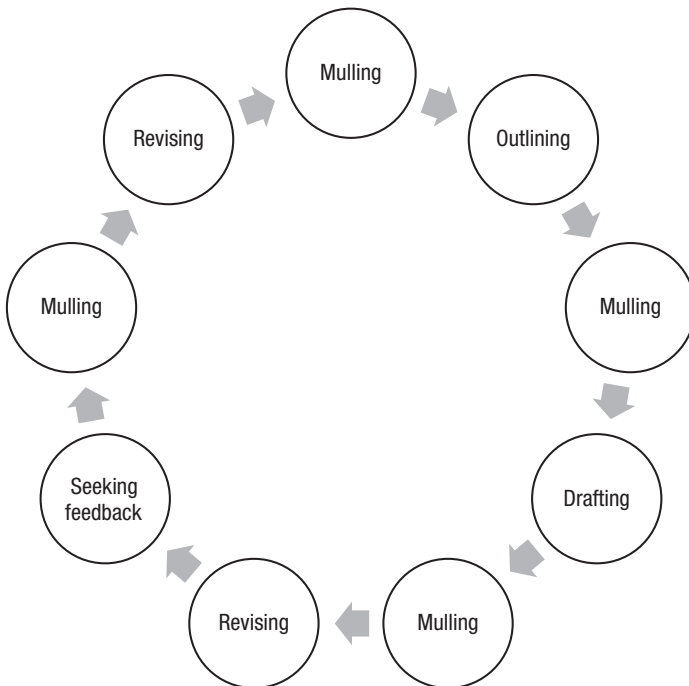


FIGURE 1.2. The phases of writing in practice.

writing. Remember, in each instance the outline should be sequential, that is, organized in the order in which it will be written.

- *Journal article*: A list of each section in the article that includes the main assertions that will be made, examples of data that will be featured, and literature sources that will be referred to.
- *Monograph*: A detailed table of contents that includes the topic of each chapter and the main assertions that will be made, examples of data that will be featured, and literature sources that will be referred to.
- *Literary work*: A detailed plot and storyline that includes what will happen at each major plot point and a list of the specific scenes that will get you from one plot point to the next.
- *Blog or op-ed*: A list of the main point covered in each paragraph that includes any references to the data, quotes, or other sources that will be featured.

Although it is true that the more effort you put into the outline, the more payoff you will get from it, also bear in mind that it's not a static document. Rather, think of it as a “*living* document” (Weaver-Hightower, 2019, p. 20). Don't be bound by the outline. It's a tool, not a prison. As you move from the outline to writing and later rewriting, you will undoubtedly find that some parts of your plan work better than others. You may need to reorganize the order of topics to best crystallize the information and any arguments being presented. You may also need to add or eliminate topics or other specific ideas. In Chapter 6 I share the original proposal for this book. You'll see that the table of contents differs from what you are now reading. I revised it many times while writing this book and learning what did and did not work well.

Drafting

Now it's time to write your first draft. When it comes to writing, there's a lot of advice out there, some of which is in this book; but there's only one hard and fast rule: write. Just write. You can edit later and will do so many times. Author Anne Lamott (1995) urges you to remember that everyone writes bad first drafts. Everyone. What's important is getting your ideas down on the page. Remember, you've already gotten this far. You designed a study, carried out the research, analyzed the data, and came up with a plan to write up your findings. Each of those phases involved writing. Now,

you're exclusively writing. Ronald Pelias (2019) eloquently says, "Writers write. It's what they do. They do their work of putting words on the page" (p. 150). Now you're a writer.

Where to start? Lamott (1995) suggests that if we think about an entire piece, we may feel overwhelmed and end up staring at a blank page or screen. She advises breaking down the story we wish to tell. In other words, it's helpful to work in manageable bits. This is where your outline will come in handy. Work on one section at a time. You do not need to write in order. In fact, when writing an article or book, it's usually best to save the introduction for last. Did you ever notice how a well-written journal article or book flows seamlessly—the introduction perfectly setting up everything that follows? Well, chances are it's because the author wrote the beginning last. You can start anywhere. Some researchers may find it useful to begin with the methodology section. As the research has already occurred, the methodology is pretty straightforward to report. Other researchers may find it useful to start somewhere in the middle, in the discussion of the data. It's likely you have a lot to say about the data—illustrations of the data, what you learned, and what it means. Writing is easier when you have a lot you want to communicate. Again, you can start from anywhere; these are just examples.

When you're writing in a literary format, such as a short story, novel, or play, you can begin with any scene (and remember, scenes were broken down in your storyline). Again, you can write these out of order. I've written novels beginning with the last scene and others beginning with the first. If you're stuck, you may want to start with the scene in which either (1) your two main characters meet each other or (2) the two main characters appear together. This will help you get into the mindset of the central characters, flesh them out, and "hear" their voices.

Drafting and rewriting are at the heart of this book. In this chapter, I'm merely laying out the phases of writing. However, *how* we draft, which translates to *how* we write, depends on many factors—the format in which we're writing, the kinds of data we're using, our approach to storytelling, our use of different theoretical lenses and literature, and how we draw on the primary tools of writing to develop our own style. All these elements of writing are reviewed in subsequent chapters.

Revising, Seeking Feedback, Revising

Once you've completed a full draft, it's time to engage in cycles of revisions and feedback seeking. I suggest at least one or two rounds of your own revisions before soliciting the input of others. That way, you'll have

a more coherent work when you seek feedback, allowing readers to focus on more fully formed ideas with probably far fewer typos and other minor distractions that are bound to be prevalent in the first draft. For qualitative researchers, rewriting is an act of analysis and interpretation. As you write, new meanings may emerge—links you didn’t expect, themes you underestimated, connections you failed to see. Writing is thus a critical time for strengthening our ideas. Be ruthless when you revise. Use red pen on every unnecessary word. Be specific with your language. Look for and weed out repetition. Use repetition purposefully. Reorganize the order, playing with what you have until you’re satisfied. Look for spaces to elaborate and spaces to pare down. Define jargon. Any academic (or other) term that readers may not be familiar with or that you’re using in a specific way should be defined the first time it appears. I suggest going through your first draft and highlighting all key terms, concepts, and theories. Then make sure they are clearly defined.

Finally, pay attention to sentence structures, aiming to vary not just what you say but *how* you say it. Construct different types of sentences. Consider the length of sentences and the placement of longer and shorter sentences in relation to each other. Short sentences are powerful. They punctuate ideas. Vary your use of punctuation. For instance, commas change pacing (Weaver-Hightower, 2019).

Remember, revising is about both *what* you’re saying and *how* you’re saying it. Revising helps you put your best foot forward. Good writing allows your ideas to shine.

Let’s look at an example of what revision looks like. In the box on pages 15–16 is a scene from my novel *Hollyland*. The novel has undertones of my two-decades-long research into the arts, and specifically arts-based research. In the following scene, arts researcher Dee Schwartz is out to dinner with her new boyfriend, Hollywood star Ryder Field. Ryder and several movie star colleagues and their spouses are at a restaurant for a meeting with British director Oliver Spence, whom they are trying to woo to direct their next film. This scene had been revised more than a dozen times before the following version. I share this final revision to illustrate how much can still be strengthened, even after many rounds of rewriting (inserts are shown in bold, deletions with strikethrough). Just imagine how much red ink there was on the first draft!

With respect to seeking feedback, how do we go about this? What kind of feedback is useful? Depending on the nature of your project, you may solicit feedback from professors/mentors, peers (fellow students or colleagues), and your research participants. You do not need to ask all these people, so you’ll need to make choices based on your project. I also suggest

Hollyland Sample Revision

“Hello, hello, sorry I’m late. The LA traffic never ceases,” Oliver said, as he shook ~~everyone’s~~ hands **and greeted each member of the group**. “My wife sends regrets. Our youngest wasn’t feeling well so she decided to stay home.” He then turned his attention to Dee. “You look familiar, but I don’t believe we’ve had the pleasure.”

“This is my girlfriend, Dee Schwartz,” Rye said.

Dee looked at him, a little surprised. “**Good evening**, ~~Hi~~, it’s nice to meet you,” she said to Oliver, extending her hand.

“Likewise. Hmm. You do look awfully familiar,” he **repeated said**, studying her face.

“Oliver, what can we get you to drink?” Grey asked.

“Gin and tonic with a piece of lime.”

Grey signaled the bartender who promptly served the cocktail. After making small talk for a few minutes, Grey **cut to the chase**~~said~~, “So Oliver, what did you think of the script?”

“It’s compelling. Meaty roles for **each all** of you,” he replied.

“We fell in love with it,” Billy said.

“It’s the perfect mix of drama and heart,” Rye added.

“You Americans don’t waste any time,” Oliver said with a laugh. “Straight away to business.”

“It is rather boorish of them, **isn’t it?**” Sloane said, with an effortlessly charming expression on her face.

They all smiled and chuckled.

Grey jumped back in. “The financing is in place, we’re all producing and starring in it, **and** the studio is **one** hundred percent behind this for major distribution. You know **that** the right director can make or break a film. We want you. You’re our guy. What will it take?”

“I’m interested, obviously it’s tempting, but I’m quite careful about **which** ~~what~~ projects to tackle these days. I . . .” he trailed off, staring at Dee. “I’m sorry, **forgive my staring**. I’m just desperately trying to place you. Do you work in the industry?”

“Me?, ~~No~~. I’m an arts researcher, and a writer.”

He looked at her quizzically for a moment, **and then a flash of recognition swept across his face**~~before saying~~, “Dee Schwartz. Wait, you’re not *Deanna Schwartz*? *Dr. Deanna Schwartz*?”

“Yes,” she replied.

“Holy shit,” he said, his eyes popping out of his head. “This is an

honor, truly. I'm speechless. I've never met an actual legend before." Dee looked down, as if searching for a way to respond while the famous **movie** stars looked on, utterly confused. "You're absolutely brilliant, a genius," Oliver continued.

"I assure you, I'm not."

"You most certainly are. I'm in awe of your work. I have so many questions to ask you. I could talk to you all night."

Rye looked at her curiously and squeezed her hand.

Oliver turned to the group. "Well, ~~isn't this an~~ ~~this is a real~~ unexpected treat? Here I thought it was just going to be another night of Hollywood schmoozing. Shall we head to the table to chat?"

"Uh, sure," Grey stuttered, looking **blankly** at Billy and Rye, and then at Dee.

"Splendid. Dee, I have so much to discuss with you," Oliver said. Rye motioned for Oliver and Dee to ~~step ahead of the group~~ **lead the way**.

Grey looked at his friends inquisitively, furrowing his brow, and he and Sloane headed to the table.

Billy ~~whispered quietly said~~ to Rye, "Seymour Peretz? Oliver Spence? Who the hell is this girl?"

He ~~chuckled~~ ~~shook his head~~. "She's the girl who stole my heart."

joining or creating a writing group or finding a writing buddy with whom to share your work. Writing groups and buddies work well when there is an atmosphere of noncompetition and everyone is committed to helping one another best achieve their vision. Sometimes it takes a while to find the right fit, much like finding a romantic partner or therapist. It's also important to set expectations from the beginning. Be clear about what kind of atmosphere you are all trying to create and what each person's commitment is with respect to sharing work and offering feedback. Go over examples of the kinds of feedback that are helpful (e.g., specific things that worked well or did not work well, rather than just saying "I loved it" or "I didn't understand it"). Once you've solicited ample feedback and you're done revising, it's time to get a professional copyeditor. Some publishers will provide copyediting, so check in advance, whether it's a journal, book publisher, or newspaper. The best copyeditors do more than "fix" grammar and the like—they point out things that are or are not working well,

they make note of tonal issues, and they offer alternatives to trouble spots. When you're sharing your work with those you trust, take in their comments with gratitude and without defensiveness, consider them carefully, stew on them, try out their suggestions. In the end, you'll need to sort through the feedback you get, to accept those suggestions you find helpful, and to let go of others. Although input is important, you don't want to get mired down with too many different ideas, either.

Writing Tricks: Busting the Myth of Writer's Block

■ ■ ■

No one expects you to sit in front of a blank computer screen and have your thesis, article, or book magically unfurl itself before you. As much as popular culture at times presents writing that way, as reviewed in this chapter, it's a process with distinct phases. Take one thing at a time.

Don't buy into the idea that writing is "too hard" or you're "not good at it." The skills needed to write, and to write well, are available to everyone, to you just as they are to me. One of the reasons so many researchers struggle with the task of writing is that they've bought into the notion of so-called writer's block and fear staring at blank pages, at a loss for how to proceed. Writer's block is a myth. I'll say it again: Writer's block is a myth. Sure, there will be times that you don't feel inspired and that you feel unable to write what you desire. But you can always write *something*. Often the process is word by word. You must commit to doing the work—the daily grind of writing, even when it's hard, even when it's not going well. Remember, you can't edit a blank page. Here are some tricks for those times when you're struggling.

- **Try using voice-activated software (e.g., Dragon).** We speak differently than we write, usually quicker, and it's less intimidating. This can be a good strategy for talking out your ideas, coming up with examples, and getting a lot of words down on the page. Remember, you can always edit later. If you've never used voice-activated software before, bear in mind that when you begin, there may be a lot of errors. However, once the program acclimates to your voice and speech patterns, the errors will be greatly reduced, and the program will even become familiar with discipline-specific jargon you may use. So don't allow frustration over typos to derail you. Stick with it. Use your real voice at a normal speaking volume. You want to train the software to be effective. Also, learn the command instructions for indentations, paragraphs, and the like. Again, in the long run, you'll avoid

more errors if you invest some time up front. This can be an effective tool that greatly reduces the time spent writing.

- **Go somewhere else to write.** If your dorm, home, or office is too isolated and simply isn't working, change your environment. Go to a coffee shop, the library, or the computer center at your school. Sometimes the combination of a change of scenery and being around other people will give you new energy.

- **Get a writing buddy or join a writing group.** Sometimes writing is like exercising: We're not motivated enough to do it on our own, but if we've made plans to go for a run with a friend, we show up. Success in writing is ultimately about showing up. Use whatever strategies work for you to create accountability or to motivate you. When in-person meetings aren't possible, meet your writing buddy or group over Zoom or the like. You can use breakout rooms to create a "coffee house" vibe.

- **Try collaborative writing.** For some, writing alone may be a challenge. Make your project collaborative and work with one or more coauthors. Assign one another parts of the project to work on, create deadlines, inspire each other, and hold one another accountable.

- **Switch tasks.** If you've tried working on whatever your goal is for a specific writing block and you just can't make any headway, put it aside and work on another part of your project. For example, go back and edit what you've already written, skip ahead and try working on writing a different section of your project, or just write down notes with your ideas. Even when you can't seem to write what you'd most like to write, you can always work on something. Keep moving it forward.

- **Take a break.** Sometimes a short break or change of scenery is needed. Take a walk in your neighborhood, go for a short bike ride, or listen to some music. Don't abandon writing; simply take 10–30 minutes to clear your head, then get back to it.

✔⊗ Dos and Don'ts: When You're Stuck

- ✓ Do try a new strategy.
- ✓ Do remember that you can always edit later, but you can't edit a blank page.
- ✓ Do take a short break.
- ✗ Don't buy into the idea of writer's block.
- ✗ Don't panic.
- ✗ Don't abandon your writing altogether.

Conclusion

■ ■ ■

Although writing up your research may feel intimidating, remember, you already have ample writing experience. Now it's time to develop a writing discipline. Carve out space and time for writing. Make it a habit. Write when it's fun and flowing and write when it's hard. Remember, it's a process. Go step by step, day by day. If you put in the time and practice, you will become a skilled writer. Who knows? There may even be some magic, too.

Checklist of Considerations

- ☑ Recognize that you already have valuable writing experience.
- ☑ Develop a writing discipline.
 - Set up a writing schedule.
 - Create a workspace with all the materials you need for your project.
 - Create mental space for writing—avoid distractions and write even when it is hard.
 - Use writing prompts.
- ☑ Engage in all the phases of writing.
 - Mulling
 - Outlining
 - Drafting
 - Revising and seeking feedback—repeat multiple times
- ☑ Recognize that you can always write. Don't buy into the myth of writer's block. When you're having difficulty, try different strategies to jump-start your writing.

Writing Activities

1. Write a detailed letter to your professor, an external reviewer, a committee member, or a possible research partner telling them about your proposed research project and asking for their support. Consider how to do this successfully. Be polite and professional and provide a detailed but succinct description of your project. Revise the letter at least twice.
2. Develop a writing prompt grounded in your research. To do so, use a snippet of your data (e.g., a sentence from an interview or field note) or use a snippet from your literature review. Write for 45–50 minutes without stopping.

CHAPTER 2

Writing Qualitatively



*Every story, every incident, every bit
of conversation is raw material for me.*

—SYLVIA PLATH, *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*

You’ve conducted qualitative research. Maybe you did an ethnographic study, observing people in their natural environments. Or maybe you conducted in-depth interviews with participants, gently guiding a conversation about their experiences and perspectives on your topic. Perhaps you conducted focus group interviews with multiple participants at once to gain insight about their individual experiences and perspectives, as well as the group dynamic. Or perhaps you conducted multiple oral history interviews with one participant to learn about the person’s life. Or maybe you conducted a content analysis of the media images on your topic. Or maybe you conducted case study research, autoethnographic research, narrative inquiry, evaluation research, community-based research, visual research, or any other method of qualitative research. The point is that you’ve generated, analyzed, and interpreted qualitative data. You’ve learned a lot, and you can’t keep it to yourself. It’s time to write it up and share it with audiences.

Many researchers find the task of writing daunting. Rest assured, as reviewed in the last chapter, you already have plenty of valuable writing experience. That experience coupled with the strategies you’ll learn in this book will give you everything you need not only to write but to write well. To begin, it’s important to understand why we write qualitatively, the fundamental role of data in qualitative research, and the general formats and approaches that give shape to our writing.

Why Write Qualitatively?

■ ■ ■

Developing skills as a writer is important for any qualitative researcher. However, skills on their own are not enough. You need to understand *why* you are writing qualitative research. It's difficult to do anything well unless we understand why we are doing it. For example, think back to the grocery list presented in Chapter 1. Yes, it's important to write a clear and specific list. However, it would also be helpful to tell the person shopping that you intend to make shepherd's pie. A well-written list coupled with an understanding of the intended outcome would result in success.

Qualitative research is a diverse terrain, so project goals and approaches vary widely. At the core, qualitative research aims to generate contextualized knowledge about human experience (Bhattacharya, 2017; Denzin, Lincoln, Giardina, & Cannella, 2024; Leavy, 2020a; Ravitch & Mittenfelner Carl, 2021). Qualitative researchers seek to understand individuals, groups, and phenomena as situated within their contexts (Ravitch & Mittenfelner Carl, 2021). This is a **meaning-centered** approach to research. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (2016) writes, "Qualitative researchers are after meaning. The social meaning people attribute to their experiences, circumstances, and situations, as well as the meaning people embed into texts, images, and other objects, are the focus of qualitative research" (p. 4). We *conduct* qualitative research to generate situated knowledge that illuminates some aspect of the human experience.

We *write* qualitatively to tell the story or stories of our research. Writing allows us to **document** our research and **communicate** what we have learned. Because qualitative researchers value depth over breadth, qualitative research generally produces a wealth of detailed data. It's not uncommon to have hundreds of pages of field notes, interview transcripts, and other forms of data. Writing qualitatively allows us to distill our findings, create a narrative, focus on what's most important, persuade readers with data and logic, and tap into the gestalt of our research.

So when you think about why you are writing, ask yourself: Why is it important to document what I have learned? Who might benefit from this research? What is the main story or stories? What is the overall essence of the research findings, and how do specific pieces of data fit into that larger puzzle? How can I communicate the research?

Now that you have a sense of why we write qualitatively, how do we begin? In the next two chapters I review in much more detail the specifics of qualitative writing—incorporating literature and theory and using literary tools to develop a persuasive narrative. For now, I focus on data (where it all begins), formats, and general approaches to qualitative writing.

Qualitative Data

■ ■ ■

It all begins and ends with data. Qualitative research is grounded in data. Marcus Weaver-Hightower (2019) writes, “Qualitative studies live or die by data . . . really, the data *are* your study. If readers don’t believe your data—don’t think them sufficient, relevant, or explanatory—they won’t believe the conclusion and theories based on them either” (p. 107). As you know, there are different types of data you may be working with—interview transcripts, ethnographic field and memo notes, catalogued document analysis records, autoethnographic notes, and so forth. A write-up is meant to present your data and findings, clearly conveying how you reached your conclusions.

In order to be able to select which data to highlight and how to structure the presentation of your findings, it’s vital to organize your analyzed data. It’s important to organize your data for two reasons. First, it makes them easier to work with (e.g., pull quotes). Second, organizing your analyzed data is a key step in your thinking—how you develop your findings and any assertions about them. By delineating your thought process in this way, grounded directly in the data, you determine how to organize the heart of your write-up. Put differently, your write-up will likely mirror how you have organized your data, which organizes your thinking (see Figure 2.1). For example, if you’ve organized your data thematically (and thus focused your interpretation on how themes are illustrated and how they relate to one another), you will likely organize your write-up in the same way.

When we talk about organizing data, we’re really referring to grouping data that are similar. This allows us to see patterns, similarities, connections, and differences. It also allows us to make assertions based on aggregates of data. Analyzed data may be organized in myriad ways. By the time you’re reading this book, you’ve likely already made these decisions. However, as the organization of data bears directly on structuring a write-up, I briefly review some common ways of organizing data. It’s also never

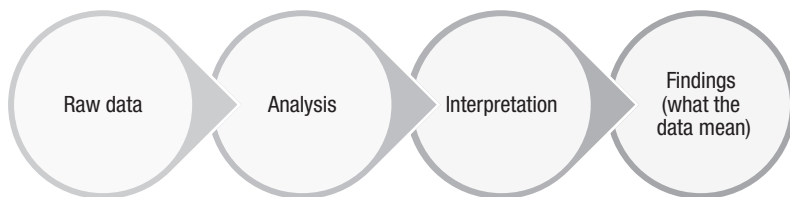


FIGURE 2.1. Data to findings.

too late to change the way you arrange your data, if you believe a different way to look at them will better serve the project.

Themes or **typologies** are two common ways of coding and ultimately organizing qualitative data. They are similar, but distinct. Themes categorize data based on similarities or patterns. Typologies categorize data based on types of things. For example, let's say you conduct research about drinking on college campuses. Organizing the data thematically may result in themes centered on the circumstances of drinking (e.g., locations, getting alcohol, dealing with campus police and school policies, situations that occur when drinking). Organizing the data based on typologies might result in categorizing types of drinkers (e.g., social drinkers, binge drinkers). Qualitative data are most frequently organized based on themes. As a result, a large proportion of journal articles are also organized thematically.

Chronological narratives rely on storytelling. This approach involves telling the story of your research in order, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Data are organized as a narrative. The perspective of the narrative—yours or your participants'—depends on the type of data you have collected and your goals relaying them. For example, an ethnographic study may be told chronologically from your point of view as the researcher, beginning either with how you developed the project or your first visit to the field site. However, it may also be told chronologically from the point of view of one or more central participants. An oral history interview may be told chronologically from the perspective of the participant, as the person's life story. These are just examples.

Episodic or **fragmented narratives** rely on storytelling. This approach involves telling the story or stories of your research out of order, as episodes, vignettes, or pieces of narratives. Data are organized as a set of interlinking and/or juxtaposed narratives. This approach is useful when analysis leads you to a narrative approach, but there are multiple narratives, best presented out of order. This approach is also useful when research produces episodic or segmented storytelling. Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis (1991) analyzed Black women's oral history narratives and found three narrative styles: unified, conversational, and segmented. She defines *segmented* as "Contiguous parts of a narrative characterized by a diverse assortment of seemingly unrelated utterances" (p. 46). For example, in any kind of interview project that deals with trauma, abuse, or violence, participants may tell their stories out of order. Data organization can thus mirror how the data were experienced and, in turn, how you create a narrative of the research for others.

Cases can be used most effectively when you've garnered data from a manageable number of participants, field sites, organizations, and so forth.

For example, if you've conducted field research at three sites, you may organize your data around each of those three sites.

Researchers (in collaborative research) can also be used to organize data. If you've conducted research with one or more researchers, you may separate the data yielded by each researcher and later organize your findings around each researcher's data. This approach is commonly used in collaborative ethnographic and autoethnographic research. Really, it is a version of organizing by cases. In this circumstance, the researchers are the cases.

Research questions guide your entire project and can be a way of organizing your data and ultimately your report. Questions can be presented in the order in which they were asked with the data that address the question.

Methods (in multimethod or mixed methods research) can also be used to organize data. When more than one method is used, it results in more than one type of data. For example, if you conduct multimethod research using focus groups and content analysis, you may organize the data based on those two types, and that may lead to presenting the types of data separately. If you conduct mixed methods research with in-depth interviews and surveys, you may organize the data based on type (qualitative and quantitative), as well as what the mixed methods approach yielded (integrating the qualitative and quantitative findings).

It's common to combine organizational strategies, too. For example, this often occurs in education research that occurs in schools, as well as in health research that occurs in hospitals or other medical facilities. Data may be organized both by cases (e.g., specific school, specific hospitals) and themes. Examples of this kind of mixing of strategies are presented later in the book.

As you immerse yourself in the data during analysis and interpretation, and later as you're mulling over your project and beginning the outlining process, carefully consider the organization of the data. They will start to lead you down particular pathways of thinking and writing. The examples I've reviewed are by no means exhaustive. I suggest reading extensively about analyzing and interpreting qualitative data so that you're armed with ideas and strategies. If you need assistance analyzing and interpreting qualitative research, please see the suggested resources in the appendix.

Quick Writing Activity

Reimagine the organization of your data. If you organized them thematically, what would another viable approach be? As you consider your data organized in this alternative way, what do you see differently? Jot down everything you see or think about

differently. (If you have not generated data yet, then just think about your proposed research and select two possible ways you might organize the data. Jot down the advantages of each approach.)

Formats for Qualitative Writing



With any research project, once you're ready to write it up, the most basic decision you'll need to make is the format. There are four primary formats qualitative researchers use: journal articles, monographs (books), literary works (e.g., novel, short story, play), and blogs or op-eds.¹ Journal articles are by far the most common format, followed by monographs. Select a format based on what and how much needs to be communicated and your intended audience. In other words, ask yourself: What do I need to say? Who do I want to say it to?

Peer-reviewed journal articles are widely considered the gold standard in academic writing. Most qualitative research results in a journal article. Given space constraints, you sacrifice some depth for breadth and need to learn to write with intention. The audience for journal articles is solely academic. **Monographs (books)** are also a popular format for representing qualitative research, especially longer or more involved projects that require more space to relay. A book-length treatment allows for greater depth. Despite the fantasies some academics have, most monographs have purely academic audiences. **Literary formats** are considered innovative for researchers, and thus are less common.² They follow a narrative structure and present your research as an imaginative story. Regardless of the specific format, they tend to offer depth of meaning (although there is great variation between a short story and a novel, for example). Literary works are accessible to public or popular audiences. Finally, **blogs** and **op-eds** are the most succinct format and thus achieve breadth over depth. They are accessible to public or popular audiences. See Table 2.1 for an overview of these formats.³ Each of the four primary formats is reviewed in detail in Chapters 5–8.

To be clear, with the exception of op-eds, which are generally quite short, you may be able to achieve both your desired depth and breadth with any of these formats. Table 2.1 merely highlights which way things tilt. It's also important to note that research often yields more than one outcome. For example, one study may result in a book, as well as a series of op-eds. Or a study may result in a journal article and a blog. These are just examples. The advantages of representing your research in more than one format are reviewed in Chapter 9.

TABLE 2.1. Overview of Formats		
Format	Depth/breadth	Audience
Journal article	Breadth	Academic
Monograph (book)	Depth	Academic
Literary work	Depth	Public or popular
Blog, op-ed	Breadth	Public or popular

✓✗ Dos and Don'ts: Selecting a Format

- ✓ Do consider your intended audience.
- ✓ Do consider what and how much you want to communicate.
- ✓ Do consider the balance of breadth and depth.
- ✗ Don't forget your audience.
- ✗ Don't lose track of the data and findings.
- ✗ Don't have unrealistic expectations about readership given the format you select.

Approaches to Qualitative Writing

You're ready to tell the story or stories of your research and have selected an appropriate format to do so. Now it's time to consider *how* you're going to write the stories you aim to tell. It's entirely possible that you'll create your own approach to writing or that you'll combine elements of more than one existing approach. With that said, there are some standard approaches to qualitative writing.

Drawing on the earlier work of John Van Maanen (1988) and Harry Wolcott (1990), Johnny Saldaña (2011) outlines seven approaches to qualitative writing: (1) writing descriptively and realistically, (2) writing confessionally, (3) writing impressionistically, (4) writing literarily, 5) writing analytically and formally, (6) writing critically, and (7) writing collaboratively. He makes it clear that styles may be combined, and I suggest that they usually are, to varying degrees.

Writing descriptively and realistically has long been a popular approach to representing qualitative research with a rich history in ethnography. Van Maanen (1988) suggested that "realist tales" require the researcher to use third-person voice and to dispassionately report the findings as the authoritative expert. Researchers accomplish this by thoroughly relaying detailed

observations, including the mundane details of daily life recorded in the field. This approach corresponds with Wolcott's (1990) emphasis on using rich description as a method of reporting. In short, this way of writing relies on a straightforward, detailed account of what was directly observed or otherwise learned (Saldaña, 2011).

Saldaña (1997) used this approach in his ethnographic study of teaching drama in an underresourced elementary school. Here's an excerpt in which he describes the area surrounding the school:

■ Abandoned warehouses and storage yards for construction and machinery parts are scattered within a five block radius of the school. ■ A United Way community center lies directly west and provides residents with immigration information, translation services, and classes in basic job skills and literacy. Directly north is a branch office of a local Hispanic social service agency, *La causa*, which provides credit and loans to those in need. Most houses around the periphery of the school were originally constructed in the 1930s–1940s. The exteriors ■ now exhibit peeling paint and rotted wood. (Saldaña, 1997, p. 28)

As you can see, Saldaña uses simple language to convey seemingly mundane details in order to build a clear (realist) description that is matter-of-fact and dispassionate.

Writing confessionally has become increasingly popular as more and more researchers choose to actively account for their positions within the research and practice reflexivity in their writing. Van Maanen (1988) posed that “confessional tales” allow researchers to report their findings in highly personal ways, offering their points of view and empathetic understandings, and ultimately suggesting that the findings are valid because the researchers have shown they were there, have firsthand knowledge, and understand the data. This approach requires first-person narration of the researcher's subjective experience throughout the project (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). In other words, it is a “backstage account that includes the researcher's emotional experience, biases, and ethical dilemmas” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 150).

Adilur Rahaman and Shuvo Saha (2020) used this approach to report on their research into the experiences that English as foreign language researchers had during their fieldwork in Bangladesh. One of the researchers explains that he visited Bangladesh to collect data for his dissertation. He had safety concerns that prompted him to stay near his relatives and collect data at a secondary school in a remote village instead of in the city. He battled feelings of guilt over these decisions. Here is a brief excerpt about his experience beginning field research at the school:

There I first met the head teacher and informed him about my purpose of collecting data. The head introduced me to the English language teachers—the potential participants of the study. My initial conversations with them were full of anxiety. I was feeling uncomfortable as the socioeconomic hierarchy between me and the participants was conspicuous. I was a teacher at a reputed university in Bangladesh as well as a PhD candidate in London, whereas my participants were teachers in a rural school. Many did not have a university education. However, to efface this socioeconomic gap I purchased some low-priced clothes and “sandel” (a kind of local shoe) before the next visit. I also started carrying a cheaper bag instead of a polished leather bag. I wanted to look like a regular person in the site as much as possible so that my appearance did not distance me from my participants. In a word, I became extremely self-conscious. (p. 4191)

The researcher is taking you into the research project through his firsthand, subjective experience, riddled with his anxieties.

Writing impressionistically and **writing literarily** both turn our attention to the poetic and aesthetic nature of writing. Although Saldaña separates these two approaches, they use the same set of tools, so therefore I review them together, not as totally distinct but rather as existing on a continuum. Van Maanen (1988) created the term “impressionist tales” based on the idea of impressionist painting, in which there is a poetic dimension to representation (in this case, a poetic dimension to the representation of qualitative research). This is a figurative and highly personalized approach to writing dependent on how a researcher sees something *and* translates what they see. To do so, they draw on literary tools and literary standards for storytelling, using metaphors, symbolism, dramatic tension, characterization, and so on. Van Maanen (2011) writes, “Artistic nerve is required of the teller” (p. 105). Likewise, Saldaña notes that writing literarily is “an aesthetic approach to writing” (2011, p. 156). Many scholars have long used such approaches. For example, sociologist Laurel Richardson has created a body of qualitative sociological writing that draws on storytelling that has been referred to as a form of creative nonfiction. Richardson (2000) has called this approach “writing-stories.” Once again, researchers draw on literary tools to tell a story.

I used a literary approach to write a novel based on years of in-depth interview research with women about their relationships and identities, content analysis of gendered visual and audiovisual media, and related auto-ethnographic observations. The project centered on a concept I called “low-fat love,” which refers to settling for less than one wants, trying to pretend

it's better than it is, and seeking the approval of others. Although the novel of the same name was originally published in 2011, here is an excerpt from *Low-Fat Love: 10th Anniversary Edition* (Leavy, 2021d) which follows the protagonist, Prilly Greene, a composite character I created.

She spent her nights curled up on her couch eating, drinking, and watching TV. The entertainment tabloid shows and movies of the week that she usually relied on immediately brought Pete to mind, and she knew she wasn't equipped to think about him without tumbling down a dark hole. So instead, she turned to the home shopping networks for comfort. Eventually, she started to feel as if the "home shopping ladies" were all members of a community that she belonged to. She knew the hosts; she knew their styles and senses of humor; she knew when they were exaggerating or even lying (although she didn't care); and she knew that they were always there, smiling and complimenting their viewers. She could count on them. Although routinely tempted, she only bought a couple of items: a new set of sheets for her bed that promised to be as soft as a favorite old T-shirt, and a beige patent leather work bag that gave her a rush in her heart as she opened the box and tore away the bubble wrap. The sheets turned out to be thin and cheap feeling, but she kept them and tried to convince herself that they were better than they were. She loved the bag, which she felt paid for itself when Janice called it "very cool" during one of their lunches at Nico's. Mostly, she just liked watching the programming. It gave her somewhere to go at the end of the day, somewhere she wasn't alone. (pp. 143–144)

The character's home shopping purchases serve as a metaphor for the overarching concept of "low-fat love." One purchase doesn't meet expectation, but she tries to pretend it's better than it is. The second purchase is a win because she receives external validation for it. As you can see, literary tools are used to relay these dimensions of the primary concept in an artistic way.

Writing analytically and formally is a strategy for systematically relaying the data and findings, showing how data are connected, what it all means, and how you arrive at your conclusions (Saldaña, 2011). Qualitative researchers often engage in a systematic data analysis process during which codes are created and themes are generated. When writing analytically, the report may be organized around different codes and/or themes. These kinds of write-ups are generally written with third-person narration, but that's not a hard-and-fast rule.

Elin A. Björling and Narayan B. Singh (2017) conducted an in-depth

interview study about teenage girls and stress. They interviewed 31 girls between the ages of 14 and 18 about their personal experiences with stress. They broke the data down into four categories: the experience of stress, the response to stress, the stressors, and the adaptation. Each category was then further broken down into multiple primary themes. For example, the category “the experience of stress” comprised three themes: the mind of stress, the feeling of stress, the body of stress. The article details each category with its constituent themes. Here is an excerpt from the section on the feeling of stress:

The primary theme, the feeling of stress, included the four supporting themes, expressions of anger, I get frustrated, sad/depressed, and freaking out. When asked about the emotional experience of stress, study participants described only negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and sadness. As one teen described, many of these negatives were experienced simultaneously or within a short time frame. Additionally, the building up of negative emotions was also stressful. Within the feeling of stress, anger was the most commonly reported. The supporting theme expressions of anger was a common and somewhat unexpected thematic finding as almost all of the girls in the study endorsed the feeling of anger in relation to stress. Anger was described for some as happening commonly during stress:

I get angry at . . . like . . . when people ask me if I can do more stuff, to add into the schedule, and then I get angry at . . . like having to do that, and then I don’t want to do it, and you know I have to, so . . . that’s when I get angry. (16-year-old)

Anger was not just described as a passive, internal feeling, but also as an outward aggressive feeling.

(Björling & Singh, 2017, p. 2588)

This discussion continued with additional examples from the data.

Writing critically is increasingly popular for social justice-oriented scholars. This is an engaged, political approach to writing. Researchers highlight injustice, inequality, and oppression (Bhattacharya, 2017; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022; Saldaña, 2011). To do so, intersectional and decolonizing frameworks are often employed (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022). The representation of research is not removed from its real-world implications to both expose and remedy social injustices.

Sadie Goddard-Durant and Stavroula Kyriakakis (2022) used this approach in their research on the daily living conditions that negatively

shape the well-being of women sex workers in Barbados. They situate their project in the research on the mental health of women sex workers in the Global South, research that largely fails to consider the social and structural injustices that influence the women's experiences. Goddard-Durant and Kyriakakis partnered with a community-based organization and conducted interviews and field research with 30 Black women engaged in sex work. They identified a range of factors beyond the women's control that negatively affect their lives, all of which are grounded in colonialism, neo-colonialism, and neoliberalism. Based on their findings, they advocate for the development of numerous policies and programs. Here is an excerpt from the section on how poverty is linked to barriers the women face establishing small businesses:

Some of the participants reported that they in fact possessed training and marketable skills. However, they were unable to convert these skills into a way to sustain themselves and their children long term. They described a need for funds to start a business. This is unsurprising given the way in which neoliberal policies have shaped the economic context in Barbados. As a condition of aid for educational development from multilateral institutions such as the IDB [Inter-American Development Bank], UNESCO and the European Union at the turn of the last century, Barbados instituted a curriculum focused on developing workers for specific sectors as employees and entrepreneurs to help citizens meet the demands of globalization and free trade (MEYC, 2001). However, at the same time, Barbados was required by conditions of aid, this time by the IMF [International Monetary Fund], to reduce involvement in developing the infrastructure required for an economy built on these same sectors such as regulating commercial banks and securing funding for programs such as those supporting small and medium sized businesses (Hinds & Stephen, 2017).

(Goddard-Durant & Kyriakakis, 2022, p. 190)

This section concludes with a quote from a participant who tried to register to start her own business but ultimately was unsuccessful because of finances. As you can see, this approach to writing explicitly highlights injustices, their causes, and consequences.

Writing collaboratively involves coauthoring in order to allow two or more voices and perspectives to be represented. Sometimes qualitative researchers write collaboratively with their research participants, particularly in community-based research (CBR) or participatory action research (PAR). In other instances, multiple researchers may write together. Finally,

in some larger CBR and PAR projects, coauthoring may involve participants and more than one researcher, at times a team. Regardless of who is involved in the collaboration, it's vital to negotiate and clarify how the collaboration will occur, to set expectations, to agree on roles/tasks, and to determine final outcomes, including how credit will be assigned and plans for publication and distribution (Mulvihill & Swaminathan, 2023). These discussions should occur at multiple phases throughout the process. When writing with participants, any potential power differentials must be addressed and dealt with equitably. It's also necessary to consider different writing abilities and styles. This approach requires giving up authoritative control over the write-up.

Ajali Dutt and colleagues (2022) used collaborative writing in their participatory action and interview research on refugees and civic engagement. Research shows that refugees face significant barriers to civic participation. Dutt and colleagues sought to describe the development and work of Civic Action for Refugee Empowerment in Cincinnati (CARE: Cincinnati) as a model for community-based participatory research (CBPR) with refugees. The research team included 12 refugees, each from a different country, ranging in age from 16 to 75; researchers; and members of CARE (a community-based organization). The final write-up lists 16 coauthors. Here is an excerpt from their conclusions:

■ In an era in which even those most concerned about the wellbeing of
 ■ refugees tend to use a deficit lens, our team was designed to affirm the
 ■ agency of refugees and have them drive the research and action process.
 ■ Our team is living out civic engagement among community members
 ■ largely neglected in these processes. In doing so, our city is creating
 ■ space for refugee-led initiatives toward civic transformation. (p. 357)

Although the collaborative approach reduced researcher control and authority, it empowered the entire research team, mirroring the very goals of the project.

Bear in mind, as noted earlier, that in practice various approaches may be merged in a single write-up, and they generally are. For example, the Goddard-Durant and Kyriakakis (2022) example of research into the living conditions of women who engage in sex work in Barbados, which I presented as an example of writing critically, is also an example of writing analytically and formally. Their article is divided into sections based on two major themes and their subthemes. The theme of poverty is introduced and then broken down into sections on the following: sex work as nonlucrative, lack of parental support for children, barriers to mainstream

employment, limited education, barriers to establishing small businesses, and barriers to welfare. Next, the theme of gender-based violence is introduced and then broken down into sections on the following: (1) violence in personal life (childhood sexual abuse), (2) violence in personal life (intimate partner violence), (3) violence while working (preventing sexually transmitted infection [STI] from male customers), (4) violence while working (physical attacks from male customers), and (5) violence while working (police violence). So, you see, just in this example alone, the write-up is at once critical and analytical. There are innumerable ways the approaches to writing may be combined. Table 2.2 recaps the approaches reviewed.

Narrative Structure and Narrator Point of View



The choice of an approach to writing influences how you structure your write-up, but they are not the same. Stories have a beginning, middle, and end. However, they are not always told chronologically. The structure you employ is based on how you have organized your research findings coupled with your approach to writing. For example, you may structure the write-up thematically, as a series of vignettes, or chronologically, just to name a few options. You may begin with a review of the literature on your topic, describing the methodology of your study, or a snippet of data—again,

TABLE 2.2. Approaches to Qualitative Writing

Approach	Focus
Writing descriptively and realistically	Third-person narration, detailed and descriptive reporting of what was directly observed or otherwise learned
Writing confessionally	First-person narration, the researcher's subjective experience in the project, including biases and/or dilemmas
Writing impressionistically and literarily	Aesthetic rendering for robust storytelling, using literary tools such as metaphor, symbolism, and characterization
Writing analytically and formally	Systematic reporting of data and findings spelling out connections between data, what it all means, and how conclusions were drawn
Writing critically	Engaged, social justice–oriented, political writing, highlighting injustice, inequality, and oppression
Writing collaboratively	Coauthoring with participants, other researchers, or participants and other researchers in order to highlight multiple voices and perspectives

just to name a few options. There are numerous possibilities, which are reviewed in Chapters 5 and 6 during the review of journal articles and monographs, as well as additional literary structures reviewed in Chapter 7. For now, bear in mind that certain approaches to writing lend themselves to certain narrative structures. Analytical and formal writing, for instance, align well with organizing the findings thematically. This does not mean that this is the only way to structure your findings, simply that one choice may lead you to another.

Likewise, you'll also need to determine whether you're using first- or third-person narration.⁴ **First-person narration** positions you inside the story, as the narrator sharing a firsthand account. **Third-person narration** presents you outside the story, as the narrator sharing a bird's-eye view of the research. Here's a quick example:

First-person narration: I entered the prison's cold, concrete building.

Third-person narration: The prison was a cold, concrete building.

As with narrative structures, your approach to writing will often lead you to a narration choice. Writing confessionally requires first-person narration, whereas writing analytically and formally generally dictate third-person narration. The other approaches to writing can use either narration point of view.

Quick Writing Activity

Write a brief description (one paragraph) of something from your research (e.g., the setting, a participant, a document). Write the same description twice, using both first-person and third-person narration.

Conclusion

■ ■ ■

We've reviewed data, formats, and approaches to writing in representing qualitative research. Let's put it together using the analogy of architecture. Say you are building a house. The data provide your foundation. A format and an approach combine to coalesce, giving shape to your writing. These dimensions of writing, in concert, give you the structure for the house—the size, floor, walls, ceiling, style. They also start to point you in the direction of interior design choices, although those have yet to be made. In Chapters 3 and 4, respectively, I review other dimensions of writing

qualitatively—literature and theory and literary tools. Those aspects help you reinforce the foundation of your home and design its interior.

Earlier in this chapter I posed two questions: What do I need to say? Who do I want to say it to? By focusing on your research findings and the audiences you want to reach with those findings, you can determine an appropriate format and approach to writing.

To do anything well, we need to understand why we're doing it. We write qualitatively to document our research and share our findings. We write to home in on the driving story or stories of our research. We write to affect others. We write to illuminate. How you combine a format and an approach helps gives shape to your writing. Remember, it's always about the data. Next, it's time to learn how to use literature and theory to support your data.

Checklist of Considerations

- ☒ Consider why you write qualitatively.
 - The distillation of data
 - Focus on the story or stories you want to tell
- ☒ Organize your analyzed data in order to organize your thinking and give structure to your write-up.
 - Themes or typologies
 - Chronological narratives
 - Episodic or fragmented narratives
 - Cases
 - Methods (in multimethod or mixed methods research)
 - Researchers (in collaborative research)
 - Research questions
- ☒ Select a format based on what you want to say, how much you have to say, and the audience you want to reach.
 - Journal article
 - Monograph
 - Literary work
 - Blog or op-ed
- ☒ Select an approach to writing based on how you want to tell the story or stories of your research (note that you can combine approaches or create your own).
 - Writing descriptively and realistically
 - Writing confessionally

- Writing impressionistically and literarily
 - Writing analytically and formally
 - Writing critically
 - Writing collaboratively
- ☒ Consider narrative structure and narrator point of view.

Writing Activities

1. Read a qualitative journal article on the topic of your research. Imagine presenting this research as an op-ed. Jot down the basics of what the study is about, three main points, and the main conclusion. Put each of these five items in clear, nonacademic language without jargon. The result should be the outline for an op-ed.
2. Find two articles on the same topic but written with different approaches and/or ways of organizing the data. Read both articles and compare and contrast them (1–2 pages).

Notes

1. Of course, there are additional formats for writing, such as book chapters or essays. There are also numerous creative ways to represent research outside of textual writing (e.g., visual representations, performances). This text focuses on written forms of representation, highlighting the two most common formats, articles and monographs, as well as two formats that are more accessible to the public, literary works and blogs or op-eds. The skills learned in this book should assist you even with other representational formats. The suggested readings in the appendix also cover creative formats not reviewed at length in this text.
2. Nevertheless, there is a long history of scholars across the disciplines writing stories, novels, and plays based on their research. In fact, some of the most acclaimed scholars in the world penned many literary works, including Simone de Beauvoir (philosophy), Jean-Paul Sartre (philosophy), Zora Neale Hurston (anthropology), and W. E. B. Du Bois (sociology). So, although literary forms are a less common format for researchers, there certainly is precedent, and the practice has increased in recent years.
3. There are examples of published journal articles and monographs that have found popular audiences. However, these are anomalies. It is extremely rare. It's important to be up front about this, as many researchers end up disappointed by the readership for their work. Setting realistic expectations is important, so I'm focusing on norms. Literary works and blogs or op-eds are also read in the academy. Table 2.1 is meant to convey that they are *also* read by public or popular audiences.
4. It's not advisable to use second-person narration, which is most often used in instructional books.

CHAPTER 3

Writing with Literature and Theory



Writing is researching.

—KARSTEN JONSEN, JACQUELINE FENDT,
AND SÉBASTIEN POINT (2018, p. 32)

Did you ever write a social media post asking for advice? It could be about anything—whether you should cut your hair short, a book recommendation, a travel recommendation, which topic to pick for your dissertation, advice on how to retile your bathroom on the cheap. Whatever. In my experience, these things pretty much always go the same way. First, you get some suggestions that you find useful. Then, you get more and more suggestions. Friends are commenting to each other, in agreement or disagreement. Side discussions off topic begin. Suddenly, you're inundated with ideas and differing opinions. It's made your predicament more confusing. What started out helpful eventually mired you down. Soon, you wish you had never posted.

The process I just described is similar to using literature and theory in your research write-up. Literature and theory are extremely useful when they are relevant and strategically used to help contextualize your findings, add layers of meaning, and point to how your findings may be transferred to other research contexts. Literature and theory become unhelpful when

Parts of this chapter are adapted from my book *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches, Second Edition* (2023, Guilford Press).

there's simply too much of them, they're too unfocused, and you lose sight of how they relate specifically to *your* project. It's like getting too many suggestions and too many off-topic comments to your social media query. All that does is get you off track and make you feel overwhelmed.

Despite the potential pitfalls of falling down a literature rabbit hole, the thoughtful use of literature and theory is an important part of conducting worthwhile research and ultimately producing a compelling write-up. The reason is that knowledge building is never a solo act. Even in cases in which you are the lone researcher, conducting content analysis on nonliving documents, and there are no participants, you still are not alone. Researchers are always in conversation.

As noted in Chapter 2, qualitative research is grounded in data. Each project is unique in that way. No two qualitative datasets are the same, any more than two researchers are the same. However, research is not entirely individualized or isolated, either. The goal is to contribute to a larger body of knowledge about our topic. Therefore, we participate in a larger, ongoing conversation about the topic. To do so, we ground our research in a review of the literature and draw on key concepts and theories as a framework for our projects.

Literature



A **literature review** is a comprehensive overview of the relevant literature on your topic. If you're at the point of writing up your research, you've already compiled literature, and it has guided your project, starting with your research purpose and questions. It is likely that you put together a literature review at the start of your project and perhaps continued to read additional sources throughout data collection and analysis. What you need to know now is how to use your literature in your write-up. However, to do so most effectively, it's important to make sure you're using *the best* literature and that you've synthesized it in a way that allows you to see connections. So before reviewing how to use literature in your write-up, I review how to compile a literature review. It's important to do this well. Bear in mind, even if you've already undertaken this process, it's advisable to continue to read and gather relevant literature throughout your study, including as you develop your findings. As you glean new insights grounded in your data, you may seek additional literature. Perhaps the following section will give you some new strategies or serve as a refresher.

Selecting Literature

Literature puts you in conversation with other researchers in your field. Peer-reviewed articles and scholarly books become the basis of your literature review. To help frame your thinking about the topic, you can use newspaper articles, essays, blogs, or other forms of conceptual or popular literature, but they should *not* be the primary component of your literature review (Creswell, 2014). The majority of the literature review should consist of scholarly work.

When you are conducting your literature review, select relevant **databases** and enter **keywords** to search for and filter through the existing literature on your topic. Some databases are free to use, whereas others charge fees; however, you should be able to access those through your university library, which likely has subscriptions. When selecting databases, use those that provide access to full-length articles, not just abstracts (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This will save you time later. Your reference librarian can help direct you to the best databases for your particular project, but here is a partial list of those most commonly used:

General databases:

- Google Scholar
- Web of Science
- ProQuest
- JSTOR
- EBSCO

Discipline-specific databases:

- ERIC (education)
- Sociofile (sociology)
- Social Sciences Citation Index (multidisciplinary social sciences)
- PsycINFO (psychology)
- PubMed (health sciences)

In order to effectively search databases, you will need to do keyword searches. Keywords typically come from the phrase you have used to describe the topic. If your topic is “bullying between peers in the workplace,” then

your keyword search will include the words *bullying*, *peers*, and *workplace*. If those search words don't yield the results you're hoping for, you could try changing one or more of the words. For example, replace the word *peers* with the word *coworkers* or *colleagues* and see what comes up. You may need to play around with the keywords, trying synonyms until you get the right combination of words. Arlene Fink (2019) suggests asking experts to review your databases and search terms. For example, ask a couple of professors or colleagues. You can also brainstorm keywords with your peers.

Quick Writing Activity

Write a list of all the words you can think of to describe your topic. Consider synonyms and word combinations, too.

Typically, there will be an abundance of literature on your topic. In the case of exploratory research on an underresearched topic, you can likely still find a wealth of literature on closely related topics that will be vital as you think through your project and then later situate the project within the larger research landscape. Here's an example. Let's say you're interested in researching teen bullying on image-heavy forms of social media such as Instagram and Snapchat. You conduct a literature review using the keywords *teens*, *bullying*, *social media*, *Instagram*, and *Snapchat*, and you come up short. You can't find any articles that deal specifically with bullying among teens on those forms of social media, or you find a few articles but not enough for a literature review. You may need to broaden your search. So, are there studies about teen bullying on Facebook or other social media forums? If so, do any of those focus on pictures/images? What about studies on the internet and bullying among teens more broadly? Use the literature that is *closest* to your topic, and if there aren't any studies or many studies specifically on your topic, you can make a case that your research will contribute to a gap in the literature.

If your search efforts are producing too many or too few possible sources, you will need to **expand or limit your search**. Advanced search options allow you to do so. For example, if you need to expand your search, you can use the modifier "or" (Efron & Ravid, 2019). In other words, search for term A OR term B. You can also use your search term in a truncated form, by adding an asterisk (Efron & Ravid, 2019). Sara Efrat Efron and Ruth Ravid illustrate this with the following example: "if you are interested in the subject of performing arts, the truncated search word 'perform*' may generate references for topics such as performance, performing,

and performer” (2019, p. 67). On the other hand, if you need to limit your search, you can try running an advanced search with the words “and” or “not” (Efron & Ravid, 2019). In other words, search for Term A AND Term B or search for Term A NOT Term B. Once you see the initial results your search generates, you will better be able to determine how to modify the search to narrow down to those results you are seeking.

As you search the literature, you will need to engage in a **sorting process**. You won’t be able to use everything you find. For example, if you pick a widely studied topic such as *body image among athletes*, you will likely find thousands of possible sources. You will need to continue narrowing down your keyword search and the disciplinary repositories in which you search. Establish a set of priorities for the areas about which you want to find literature (Ling Pan, 2008), knowing that you may need to modify the areas based on what is available. You will need to quickly evaluate the relevance of articles and books for your project. To do so, first read the **abstracts**. Good abstracts provide an overview of the research objectives, methodology, relevant theories or bodies of scholarship, and major findings. You can usually tell from the abstract how relevant the study is for your project. Second, **scan** the source. This will help you hone in on how relevant the study is for your project, as well as the overall quality of the piece (e.g., whether it is well written, clear, thorough, supports or challenges other sources, contributes to your learning).

The specific literature we choose to engage with thus has a tremendous impact on how we make sense of our findings and situate our research in a larger body of scholarship. It’s standard practice for a literature review to focus on **recent research** and **landmark studies**. This is important; however, as you are reviewing your sources, also consider with whom you are in conversation and how that may be shaping your study. Develop an **ethics of citation**.

As a result of an insular citation practice, across academic fields, women and Black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) are undercited (Eidinger, 2019; Ray, 2018). It’s important to note that while women’s contributions to knowledge are not properly accounted for, this is amplified for women of color (Ahmed, 2013). This results from “a closed circle of citation” (Ray, 2018). A primary source of this problem is reliance on citing so-called landmark studies and the central figures in our fields, which create a canon others later respond to. Across the disciplines these works have typically been created at a time when the contributions of women and BIPOC scholars were excluded, ignored, or deemed less important. It is not sufficient to simply say, “That’s just the way it is.” There is nothing natural about how a canon develops in any discipline—rather, it results from the

systematic processes of inclusion and exclusion in our publication and citational practices (Eidinger, 2019). Therefore, the decision to continue to cite these studies is not neutral or inevitable but, rather, a choice that reinforces “these texts and authors as a part of our canon” (Eidinger, 2019).

There are thus political and ethical dimensions to our citation practices. These practices carry power. To make sure the best and most interesting scholarship makes it into your literature review, develop what Andrea Eidinger (2019) calls a “conscientious citations practice.” In other words, be mindful of your citation practices. How do we do this? What do we do if the leading thinkers in our field are predominantly white men? The Rockefeller Inclusive Science Initiative offers suggestions, a few of which I summarize here:

- If the most notable studies in your field were conducted by white men, critically reflect on the importance of that work to your own. Are you citing it simply because others do, or is it uniquely relevant to your work?
- Look for sources outside of those most commonly cited.
- Seek out scholarship by women and BIPOC scholars.
- Consider adding a diversity statement to your project.

Does this mean you should not cite landmark studies if they have been conducted by white males? Certainly not. I’m not suggesting you don’t cite landmark or contemporary research by white males, only that you do so mindfully, and only as it’s directly relevant to your specific project. Don’t just do it because everyone else has. *Cite with intention*. The more diversity of thought you expose yourself to, the greater the likelihood that more good ideas will shape your thinking, and your research will simply be better. This is not just an issue of inclusion. You should always cite with intention because it strengthens your research.



Dos and Don’ts: Selecting Literature Sources

- ✓ Do engage in a sorting process to select the best sources.
- ✓ Do develop an ethics around your citation practices.
- ✓ Do cite with intention.
- X Don’t cite landmark studies just because others have.
- X Don’t cite everything in the field just to do so.
- X Don’t get mired down with too much irrelevant literature.

Synthesizing Literature

The process of synthesizing the literature involves providing an overview of the research on your topic and drawing connections between the different pieces of research. For example, group the studies that make a particular claim, noting similarities and differences. Look for synergies or dissonances across the literature. You may also look at the literature chronologically to narrate the historical development of perspectives on the topic over time.

Synthesizing involves connecting and integrating the different sources you have compiled. The boxes on pages 44 and 45 offer examples of a standard summary of a piece of literature and a synthesis, respectively. These examples illustrate the process of going from summaries of each source to a synthesis. These examples are derived from a 2010 study I worked on with Lisa Hastings, titled “Body image and sexual identity: An interview study with lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual college-age women.”

Think of a synthesis as creating an overview of the forest that is composed of particular trees. What is the big picture and what are the details that create that big picture?

One method for fleshing out these connections between sources is to create a visual representation, such as a **literature map** (Creswell, 2014) or **concept map** (Hunter, Lusardi, Zucker, Jacelon, & Chandler, 2002; Manders & Chilton, 2013; Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012). These visual mapping strategies illustrate how all of the literature is connected. You begin with your topic or a central term, concept, or idea from the study, and you visually show how the different pieces of literature relate to the primary topic or concept. Different relationships can be denoted by linking words or with lines or arrows or by overlapping circles (Ahloranta & Ahlberg, 2004; Umoquit, Tso, Varga-Atkins, O’Brien, & Wheeldon, 2013). In the previous chapter we reviewed different ways to group data. Now you are grouping your literature. How you do so will influence your thinking and ultimately your write-up. Figure 3.1 offers a brief example.

For a more concrete example at an advanced stage in the literature review process, consider Figure 3.2. In this figure, I returned to the same literature on heterosexual and homosexual women’s body image discussed in the sample synthesis. Figure 3.2 illustrates how you can visually connect your literature.

Now that you’ve taken measures to ensure you have the best literature available to you and you understand how it is all connected, you’re ready to use your literature in the write-up.

Sample Summary

Citation information: Beren, S. E., Hayden, H. A., Wilfley, D. E., & Grilo, C. M. (1996). The influence of sexual orientation on body image in adult men and women. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 20(2), 135–141.

Purpose: To compare body dissatisfaction for heterosexual and homosexual men and for heterosexual and homosexual women. The researchers hypothesized that homosexual men's affiliation with gay subculture would increase their body dissatisfaction, whereas affiliation with lesbian subculture may protect against body dissatisfaction in women.

Method and participants: Beren, Hayden, Wilfley, and Grilo (1996) administered self-report tests to 257 participants: 72 heterosexual women, 69 homosexual women, 58 heterosexual men, and 58 homosexual men. The tests focused on these dimensions: Body Dissatisfaction, Psychosocial Factors, and Affiliation with the Gay/Lesbian Community.

Findings: The Body Dissatisfaction test scores were not significantly different between heterosexual and homosexual women, and the psychosocial factors, such as dieting and weight concern, also were similar. The Body Dissatisfaction test scores were significantly higher for homosexual men than for the heterosexual men. The homosexual men reported significantly more body dissatisfaction and more distress in many of the psychosocial areas related to body dissatisfaction. Homosexual men's affiliation with gay subculture did increase their body dissatisfaction. Homosexual women's affiliation with lesbian subculture was not related positively or negatively to body dissatisfaction.

The Purposes of a Literature Review and Using Literature in the Write-Up

Although compiling a literature review is a fairly straightforward, albeit involved, process, the role of literature in a qualitative research project is often confused. In fact, confusion over how to use literature in the final write-up is one of the big causes of poor writing. Don't worry, once you

Sample Synthesis

Beren, Hayden, Wilfley, and Grilo (1996) administered tests to 72 heterosexual and 69 homosexual women that explored Body Dissatisfaction, Psychosocial Factors, and Affiliation with the Gay/Lesbian Community. The Body Dissatisfaction test scores were not significantly different between heterosexual and homosexual women, and the psychosocial factors, such as dieting and weight concern, also were similar. These findings are replicated in other recent research (Cogan, 2001; Epel, Spanakos, Kasl-Godley, & Brownell, 1996; Pitman, 2000; Share & Mintz, 2002). Researchers have hypothesized that heterosexual and homosexual women may be prone to different types of eating disorders and for different reasons (Cogan, 2001; Lakkis, Ricciardelli, & Williams, 1999; Siever, 1994). The reason is that lesbians, more so than heterosexual women, are affected by and vulnerable to different relevant social factors that influence the development of eating disorders (French, Story, Remafedi, Resnick, & Blum, 1996; Lakkis et al, 1999; Lancelot & Kaslow, 1994; Pitman, 2000; Siever, 1994; Striegel-Moore, Tucker, & Hsu, 1990). A meta-analytic review of the literature on sexual orientation and body image suggests that, overall, lesbians have higher body satisfaction but comparable levels of awareness of societal standards, which lesbians do not reject outright (Morrison, Morrison, & Sager, 2004).

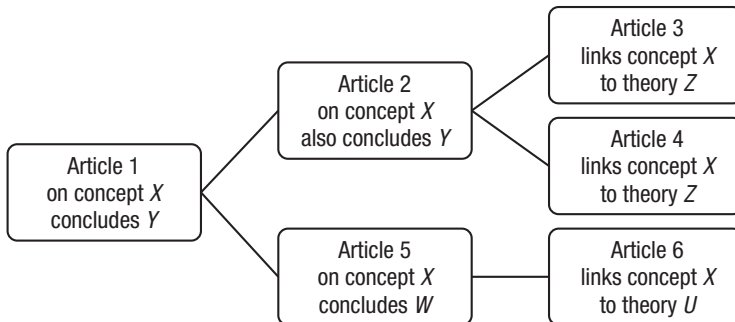


FIGURE 3.1. A literature map (in abstract).

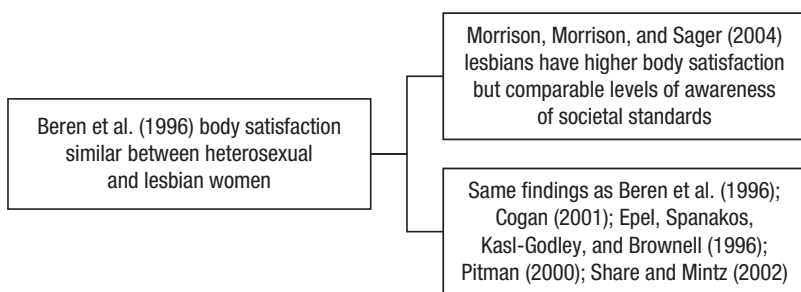


FIGURE 3.2. A concrete example of a literature map.

understand the function of literature over the course of a project, you can avoid this pitfall.

New researchers often think they have to read everything about their topic, know everything about their topic, become “experts” in the literature, and constantly prove their expert status to others. It’s easy to understand how this happens. After all, a literature review is meant to be a *comprehensive* overview. However, the role of the literature review changes over the course of a research project.

During topic selection and formulation, literature plays a primary role. Basically, it’s all you’ve got, beyond some general idea about what you’re interested in studying. You want to read as much as you can so you can develop an understanding of what is already known about your topic and what your study might contribute. Through this process, you’re able to develop a research purpose statement and research questions that guide the entire project, as well as your methodology (including any data collection instruments, such as an interview guide).

Once you know what you’d like to study, there will be formal hurdles to leap over, which may include an institutional review board (IRB) application, a thesis or dissertation proposal, or a grant application. The literature review plays a primary role during the successful completion of these documents. The literature helps you contextualize your proposed project and cite precedent. These are places where you want to cite as much as possible.

Next comes data generation. At this point, the literature takes a back seat. Literature takes a more substantial role again during data analysis and interpretation, helping you to figure out what the data mean. This process helps you move from data to findings. However, literature isn’t all you’ve got at your disposal. You may be using any number of coding and analysis

strategies as well. (Please note that if you're engaged in a recursive process of data generation, analysis, generation, analysis—such as in a grounded theory project—you'll certainly refer to the literature during the process in order to help you make sense of your data.)

Finally, there's the write-up. This is where things become tricky. What's the role of literature? Do readers actually want or need to read your literature review? How much literature is enough?

Many authors include a robust literature review in their final write-up. In an article, this usually appears right in the introduction or as its own section, often immediately following the introduction. Monographs can be even worse, as researchers may devote an entire chapter to the literature, often after the introduction. Or, worse yet, some devote an entire chapter and weave literature throughout the rest of the book, hardly able to say a word without a citation. The problem is that this doesn't make for good or engaging writing. Readers don't necessarily want to slog through the history of the field to get to the present study—to get to the story you are telling. Too much literature takes focus away from your study—the data and findings.

Consider how I began this book in Chapter 1 on the topic of writing and *your* experience. I did not start with my resume or a list of all my publications to prove my expert status. Why? Because you're interested in how you can learn to write up your research and probably assume I have some qualifications for writing this book. Imagine how boring, off-putting, and useless the opening of this book would have been had I started by detailing my publication record. Now you get it. People who read your research are interested in, well, *your* research. They don't necessarily want to wade through a dense literature review in order to get to the present study.

Harry Wolcott (2009) explained that literature should be used on a “when-and-as-needed basis” to support *your* research (p. 68). In other words, use literature only when it is necessary to contextualize your research. Despite common practices of frontloading, often literature is most helpful near the end of a write-up, during the discussion about implications of your research, at which time you may want to link it to existing research (Wolcott, 2009). Wolcott explains the problem with frontloading literature as follows:

■ My feeling is that readers want to be and ought to be engaged immediately with a sense of the problem you are addressing, rather than
 ■ first be subjected to a testimonial demonstrating how learned you have
 ■ become. They will assume you have rationale for undertaking your

research and will reveal it in time. They are not likely to insist that you plow through the entire history of research in your field before you dare take a step of your own. Readers come to their task ready to join you in a search for what you have to contribute. One of the things that makes all academic teaching and writing so boring . . . is the practice of approaching every topic with a backward look at where and how it all began. Origins are important, but things don't necessarily need to be presented in the order in which they happened. (p. 68)

Qualitative research is about data. The goal of a write-up is to tell the story or stories of the data. Literature plays a supporting role in helping us to do so persuasively. This can be especially challenging for graduate students, who are usually forced to include an entire chapter devoted to literature in their theses or dissertations. Remember, this is a part of school-work. A thesis is not an article or even a book. No dissertation in the world should be published as is (only archived). To turn it into an article, series of articles, or book, substantial rewrites are necessary. A big part of this process is letting go of the literature in order to find the narrative and then incorporating literature strategically and judiciously.

The reality is there are numerous ways to use literature in your final write-up. If my goal were to teach you how to do qualitative research, get it published, and secure a line on your curriculum vitae, I'd probably encourage you to do what many have done and frontload your literature review in a section of a journal article or chapter of a book. If you just want to "tick the box" of having used literature, you'll certainly be able to get your work published going this route, and honestly, that's okay if it's what you're comfortable with. However, my goal is to teach you how to write, and, moreover, to write well. So my advice follows Wolcott. Weave literature into your write-up where it is needed. Instead of beginning by writing up your literature, focus on writing the story of your research on its own. Then incorporate literature. This will help you discern where it is needed. If it turns out you do feel a section devoted to literature is best, that's perfectly fine. Just don't allow it to overshadow your data.

To recap, let's use the analogy of actors in a play. During topic selection and project design, literature is the star of the show. Literature remains the lead actor as you create a research plan for approval. Once you begin data generation, literature becomes a bit player. During analysis and interpretation, literature becomes a lead again, but not the star. Finally, in the write-up, literature is meant to be a supporting actor; the data are the stars. Shine your spotlight on the data.

✓✗ Dos and Don'ts: The Purposes of Literature

- ✓ Do use literature strategically in the write-up.
- ✓ Do use literature to support your findings.
- ✓ Do use literature as needed to contextualize your research.
- ✗ Don't inundate readers with literature.
- ✗ Don't frontload all the literature.
- ✗ Don't be afraid to say something without a citation.

Theory

At the end of the day, literature helps you make sense of your findings and situate them within a larger body of knowledge. Theory can help you frame your project and illustrate the relevance of your findings to other real-world contexts. There are numerous theoretical perspectives that may guide the research process; you may discover them during the literature review process and later use them in your write-up, as well as theories you may develop based on your data.

A **theory** is an account of social reality that is grounded in data but extends beyond that data (Adler & Clark, 2015). Theories are formulated in terms of concepts. A **concept** is a term that is used to symbolize an idea (Saldaña, 2015). Symbolic of an idea, a concept cannot physically be touched (Saldaña, 2015). Johnny Saldaña offers numerous examples of concepts, comparing them with objects that can be touched in order to illustrate the difference (2015, p. 67).

Object	Concept
Wristwatch	Time
Church	Religion
Phone	Technology
Red rose	Romance

In qualitative research, relevant concepts need to be identified and defined, and literature helps you do so. Looking at the preceding list, let's take the example of religion. If you're conducting a study on religiosity and another topic (e.g., something expected, such as religiosity and political

beliefs, or something unexpected, such as religiosity and body image), you'll need to define the concept of religiosity within the confines of your study. To do so, you'll draw on previous research that suggests dimensions of religiosity (e.g., belief in God, attendance at religious services). Concepts are used to develop theories. Using our hypothetical example, there may be a theory that purports that religiosity influences body image.

Quick Writing Activity

Select one concept that has nothing to do with your research (e.g., love, space, progress) and free write everything that you think the concept means. Include a list of concrete objects or actions that signify the presence of the concept. Don't worry, in your research project you'll be able to draw on literature to help you define concepts. This is only an exercise to sensitize you to thinking conceptually, which is a vital skill for qualitative researchers.

There are three **levels of theory**: (1) small-scale theories that researchers suggest based on their data (theory with a small *t*), (2) middle-level theories (also called mid-level, mid-range, and middle-range) that researchers develop out of an inductive, recursive methodology, such as grounded theory, and (3) large-scale theories that are widely legitimated based on prior research and that may be used to predict new data or frame new studies (Theory with a big *T*).

Let's say you're conducting a study on children's media consumption and their self-esteem. You might begin with small-scale theories. Based on your data, you may develop a theory about how children's internalization of media affects their self-esteem in this specific context. The theory is directly based on the data you collected for your study. Notice that the theory is formulated in terms of two concepts: children's internalization of media and self-esteem.

Middle-level theories develop out of methodological practices aimed at generating theory (most commonly, grounded theory). Data are collected and analyzed, data generation procedures are refined based on new insights, more data are collected and analyzed, and so on. Theories develop directly out of the data but can be applied to other instances, including future instances (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021; Morse, 2009; Priya, 2016). In the example we're using, based on your data you may develop a theory that contributes to understanding the relationship between children's

internalization of media and self-esteem. That theory can be applied to other contexts.

Theories with a big *T* have already been rigorously tested and applied. For example, during your literature review, you may find a widely used theory about children's media consumption and self-esteem that you then use to frame your project and make sense of your findings.

In your write-up, theory helps you to build a **conceptual framework** for your study, allowing you to make sense of your data and frame your findings. This means you can both tie it all together and suggest how it can be applied elsewhere to other individuals, groups, or settings. To understand how a conceptual frame works, consider the analogy to concept albums. Since the 1950s, many musicians have put out concept albums. *The Wall* by Pink Floyd, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* by the Beatles, *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* by David Bowie, *Lemonade* by Beyoncé, *Cry Baby* by Melanie Martinez, and *Midnights* by Taylor Swift are just a few examples with which you may be familiar. Concept albums are held together or *framed* by a central idea. The central idea can vary from a character (e.g., David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust) to a process (e.g., Beyoncé's emotional journey after infidelity) to a series of experiences held together by a common thread (e.g., Taylor Swift's sleepless nights). Similarly, research is held together or framed by one or more central ideas—concepts.

Conclusion



Literature and theory are vital throughout the research process and play different roles at different phases. They are also useful writing lenses—they help us develop meaning, define central concepts or ideas, situate our research, and transfer our findings to other contexts. However, when it comes to writing, it's a balancing act. Being in conversation with a community of researchers is important. It's also important to stay focused on the present study, ground yourself in the data, and tell the story or stories of the research in compelling ways. Specific options for how to incorporate literature into your write-up are revisited in Chapters 5 and 6, which focus on writing journal articles and monographs. Before we get to that, the preceding two chapters have covered a lot of ground in terms of the *qualitative* aspect of qualitative writing—from data to literature and theory. Now it's time to address the *writing* aspect of qualitative writing.

Checklist of Considerations

- ☒ Compile a literature review.
 - Conduct a keyword search in relevant databases.
 - Expand or limit search as needed.
 - Engage in a sorting process by reading abstracts and scanning sources.
 - Seek recent research and landmark studies.
 - Engage in an ethical and intentional citation process; seek research by women and BIPOC scholars.
 - Select sources.
 - Synthesize the literature (create groupings).
 - Create a visual representation of the literature (a literature or concept map) if you feel it will be helpful.
- ☒ Understand that literature has different purposes throughout the research process.
- ☒ Use literature as needed in the write-up to support your research (you do not have to frontload the literature).
- ☒ Integrate theory in your write-up to build a conceptual framework for your research.
 - Define all concepts (use literature).

Writing Activities

1. Take your research topic and conduct a small literature review (8–10 peer-reviewed sources). If you have already conducted a literature review, go back and edit out irrelevant sources and add new ones, based on what you learned during data generation and analysis, as well as what you learned in this chapter.
 - a. Seek out at least one landmark study and at least two studies by BIPOC, women, or otherwise underrepresented scholars.
 - b. Read, annotate, and summarize each source.
 - c. Synthesize the literature.
 - d. Create a sample literature map (only use four to five sources for this exercise).
2. Read through your analyzed data. Immerse yourself in it. Once you've read through all the data, select one central concept from your project and free write about it for 30–45 minutes. Just focus on what you've learned about that concept that you want to communicate. What do your data teach us about this concept? The point is to focus on the story of the data on its own. Once you have a draft, read through it. Then consult your literature review and look for places where literature or theory can be inserted. Where is it needed? Where is contextual support useful? Where would it help frame data? Where would it help persuade readers? Make note of the places where literature or theory might be used (and do so discerningly, allowing the narrative to shine).

CHAPTER 4

Cultivating Your Voice



All writing is creative writing.

—KIM M. MITCHELL AND
ALEXANDER M. CLARK (2018, p. 2)

Do you have a favorite novelist? Screenplay writer? Playwright? Songwriter? Blogger? Journalist? Most likely, you have writers you particularly enjoy. Think about one of them. Why do you prefer that person's writing over that of others in the same field? It's not just the subjects or themes the writer covers, as likely many others cover the same ones. It's not just the format someone writes in, again as many others do. For example, if you're thinking of a female singer-songwriter who writes pop songs about her relationships, many others do that, as well. If you're thinking about a blogger who writes about current events, again, many others do, too. You don't respond to them all equally. What is it about someone's writing that we're drawn to? The person's voice.

Quick Writing Activity

Jot down a list of the things you like about the writer you've been thinking of. Select a favorite piece of writing (e.g., a novel, a song, an op-ed) and focus on the specific aspects of the person's writing that you like. Note anything you can think of about the writer's style.

Good writing has a **voice**. It bears the author's fingerprint. In other words, good writing has personality, style, creativity, and originality. The

author's voice cuts through and makes the work compelling. Cultivating your voice is an essential part of developing your writing style. Do you write in third person or first person? How formal or informal is your writing? How do you approach sentence structure? Do you use rhetorical devices? These are just examples of the kinds of decisions that help create your unique fingerprint. Sandra Faulkner and Sheila Squillante (2020) note that different writers sound different on the page. They explain that voice “refers to an aggregate of qualities which create on the page, an idiosyncratic sense of the writer’s self. We sometimes use this interchangeably with *style*. Voice is that thing that helps identify one author from another” (2020, p. 1040). They note that the elements that create that *sound* include “dictation and word choice, sentence or line structure, punctuation, tone, use of dialogue, figurative language (or lack of), and even subject matter” (2020, p. 1040). Cadence refers to the rhythm and pace of writing (Mitchell & Clark, 2018). As writers develop their voices, or how they *sound* on the page, it’s important to pay attention to rhythm, pace, and flow (what the writing sounds like in the reader’s mind). Faulkner and Squillante (2020) also note that although we often talk about finding our voice, in fact, we each have many voices and need to consciously decide which to use in each piece of writing. For example, if you have conducted a study about racial inequality in education, it is possible you will represent that research in an article for an academic journal, as well as an op-ed for a local newspaper. Surely you will write each in a different *voice*, but both will represent you as an author.

Quick Writing Activity

Draft two hypothetical emails about the fact that you’re learning about writing and publishing qualitative research and how you feel about it, however that may be. Draft one email as if you were going to send it to your professor or mentor. Draft the other as if you were going to send it to your best friend. Look at how your voice differs across the two emails, simply because of the intended audience.

Voice is also related to the approach to writing you select. As noted in Chapter 2 and illustrated by the examples provided, each approach leads you to write from a specific narrator point of view and in a specific manner. Table 4.1 summarizes the approaches to writing and the style of writing—author voice—they lend themselves to (although many variations exist).

To develop your voice and, indeed, voices, you need to learn the basic features and tools that influence style and strengthen writing. The literary

TABLE 4.1. Approaches to Writing and Voice

Approach	Voice
Writing descriptively and realistically	Third-person narration, straight shooting, dispassionate description and detail
Writing confessionally	First-person narration, personal, insider writing, invitational
Writing impressionistically and literarily	First- or third-person narration, lyrical, storytelling
Writing analytically and formally	Third-person narration, formal tone, reporting grounded in analysis
Writing critically	First- or third-person narration, impassioned, curated arguments grounded in data and literature
Writing collaboratively	First- or third-person narration, multiple viewpoints, stories, and styles

tools reviewed in this chapter are revisited in Chapter 7 in the specific context of writing a literary work. Here, they are reviewed as general components of narrative that can be applied in any type of qualitative write-up.

Writing Artfully with Data: Literary Tools for Qualitative Researchers



You may be thinking “I’m a researcher, not a writer,” or you may be wondering what literary skills have to do with accurately recounting your research. Sometimes researchers fail to consider the importance of literary tools unless they are writing in a literary format. This is a missed opportunity. Literary tools strengthen *all* writing. Understanding how they work and the different ways you may employ them allows you to expand your vocabulary as a writer. The ways in which you use these tools determines your style or voice. Don’t worry, whether you’re experienced or new to the craft of writing, you can learn how to use these tools.

Qualitative research is a long haul. Designing a project, setting it up, carrying out data generation and analysis, and determining the findings—this all takes time and energy. By the time you’re ready to write up your research, you may just want to be done. There may be a strong temptation to rush through the representation stage. This is one of the reasons there’s so much published research that is at best lackluster. Don’t forget, in the end, the write-up is all that’s left from the project. The write-up comes to

stand for the research. It's what you put out into the world to document the project, what it means, and how it might be applied. Give this phase of the process the attention it deserves. Writing well matters.

What does writing well mean with respect to qualitative research? What makes it good?

Many scholars agree that at the end of the day a qualitative write-up can be assessed based on its ability to **convince or persuade** (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993; Jonsen, Fendt, & Point, 2018; Mitchell & Clark, 2018). How can we make our write-up persuasive? Scholars note different features that coalesce to produce a convincing text. Karen Golden-Biddle and Karen Locke (1993) suggest convincing has three dimensions: authenticity, plausibility, and criticality. Kim Mitchell and Alexander Clark (2018) note that writers should also write with their audience in mind to cultivate a connection between writers and readers. They further suggest that “connection and persuasion are indispensable and interdependent” (2018, p. 2). Karsten Jonsen, Jacqueline Fendt, and Sébastien Point (2018) conducted a content analysis study of qualitative research published in leading journals to determine the features that make for a convincing write-up. They conclude that persuasiveness emerges not only from what message a representation conveys but *how* it does so. Furthermore, their study suggests that there are five features that, together, to varying degrees in different projects, combine to make a persuasive write-up: rhetoric, craftsmanship, authenticity, reflexivity, and imagination.

To this I would add the importance of **coherence**, a benchmark by which qualitative research is often evaluated. *Coherence* (Barone & Eisner, 2012), *congruence* (Leavy, 2011a), or *internal consistency* (Cole & Knowles, 2008) refer to how well the components of the project, including the final representation, fit together. In other words, these terms refer to the *strength of the form* (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Narrative coherence means the representation makes sense—the pieces fit together and can be clearly followed and understood (Leavy, 2023a).

The goal of the representation stage is to document the research and share it with audiences. In other words, your goal as a researcher is not simply to tell any story but, rather, to tell the story of the research and to do so convincingly. Therefore, the way you employ literary tools differs from how fiction authors use them. In fiction, these techniques may be used to set a scene in an aesthetically engaging or evocative way. Put differently, they make for richness of writing. This is true in research as well; however, here they also have another role. In qualitative research, these techniques are used to present your data and findings and *convey their meaning*. They are used to persuade. Representing research is an act of persuasion. Literary

tools help you present your research in compelling ways and thus achieve this end.

The specific ways you choose to employ literary tools for their artifice and persuasive value depends on four primary factors. First is the **format** in which you're writing and, by extension, your intended audience. Second is your selected **approach to writing**. In addition to dictating conventions, as reviewed in Chapter 2, the selection of both a format and a writing approach affect the *tone* of a write-up. A journal article and a blog will have a different tone. An analytical approach to writing will have a different tone than a confessional approach. So, as you select a format and writing approach, you begin to address the issue of tone. Tone further develops based on the use of literary tools.

Third, the **type of data** you have generated and analyzed—interview transcripts, ethnographic field notes and memo notes, autoethnographic notes, catalogued document analysis—drives your writing process. Qualitative research is always about the data. You may elect to use literary tools differently depending on the type of data you are working with. I review this in more detail later in the chapter.

The fourth factor is **personal preferences**. This final factor is somewhat intangible but, in the end, it makes all the difference. Every writer develops their own signature style. Mitchell and Clark refer to creativity as the “*je ne sais quoi*” element of scholarly writing (2018, p. 2). Two researchers could be given the same data, told to write a journal article, and assigned a writing approach to use. Yet you can bet that each researcher would write a unique article. Why? Personal style. At the beginning of this chapter, I asked you to think of a writer you enjoy. Returning to the example of a female singer-songwriter who writes pop songs about her relationships—we've got the format (songs), the approach (confessional), and the data, or in this case topic (personal relationship experiences), covered. I could think of hundreds who fit this description. Yet no two write the same songs, and that's why we have those we prefer over others. Personal style. Voice. The remainder of this chapter reviews how you can employ literary tools as you cultivate your voice in order to make your research compelling.

Language and Specificity

Language is the tool with which writers work. Good writing requires rigorous attention to language. This means writers must use language precisely. **Specificity** makes writing compelling. Is the house run down, in disrepair, or dilapidated? Is she sad, melancholy, or depressed? Is the object old, vintage, or junk? Is the policy unfair, biased, or unjust? Be specific.

BOX 4.1. 10 Secret Habits of Writers, or Maybe Just Me

1. Eavesdropping. When we're at the café, our headphones aren't really on.
2. We wear the same sweatpants every day. Like, every day.
3. We spend way too much time on social media, but sometimes we're just creeping, so you don't know we're there.
4. We're incredibly insecure.
5. We're incredibly confident.
6. Our characters are real to us. Or at least we wish they were. We talk to them.
7. We dance in our offices.
8. We cry in front of our computer screens at our own writing, whispering things like, "Oh my God, that's good."
9. We eat random snacks to procrastinate. Like, anything. A tub of peanut butter, a few olives, a handful of dried figs. Whatever.
10. We live vicariously through our characters.

Let's look at a fun example that has nothing to do with research, just to sensitize you to how writers use language. I wrote the guest post in Box 4.1 for a fiction website called *Novels Alive* (posted on September 27, 2022). The list was intended to be funny and garnered many responses on social media. Writers could relate to it. Number 9 received the most comments, many calling it hilarious. Let's look at a rewrite of number 9. Is it as funny?

We eat random snacks to procrastinate. Like, anything. Pretzels, chips, nuts. Whatever.

It's not as funny. The food items listed are too commonplace and the very kinds of things people tend to snack on. They don't live up to the description of "random." The original items are random and highly specific, from the oddball nature of the foods to the quantities listed. That's what makes it work.

Use language clearly, crisply, and effectively. Words carry meaning(s), histories, emotion, tenor, and lyrical qualities. Qualitative writers are

particularly attentive to the ways that words shape our perceptions of the world and the people in it. There are many specific literary tools that help shape our use of language.

Working with Data: Description, Details, and Dialogue

Show, don't tell is standard writing advice. You've probably heard it many times. Now it's important to really think about what it means, why it's important for qualitative researchers, and how to do it. Showing is important in qualitative research for two interconnected reasons. First, showing is a strategy for engaging readers—drawing them in. Second, showing is an act of persuasion. By showing instead of telling, you can lead readers to the conclusions. Jessica Smartt Gullion explains this as follows.

In telling, it is easier for your critics to pelt you with accusations of bias, particularly when your colorful adjectives read like your personal opinion rather than based on your research. For example, if I write “The conditions at the county jail are deplorable,” that sounds like my opinion, like I personally believe the conditions at the jail are deplorable, but that an objective observer might not draw the same conclusion. And while it may in fact be my opinion, my argument becomes much stronger when I *show* you the deplorable conditions at the county jail, when I give you enough information to enable you to reach my conclusion on your own:

Joan wakes with a start—someone is pulling her hair. She reaches through the darkness to find a warm furry mass. She leaps from her bunk, squealing, disgusted. It's the third night in a row she's woken to rats chewing on her hair. Her bunkmates scream at her: “Shut the fuck up, bitch!” She lays back down on the concrete platform, puts her arm under her head as a pillow, and cries.

The details of Joan's story are gathered from interview transcripts and observations conducted at the jail. I put them into a narrative form to tell the story of the deplorable conditions at the jail. Readers do not have to rely on me to tell them that the conditions are deplorable—they can see that for themselves. Rats chewing your hair? Concrete bunks with no pillow? People cursing at you? Yeah, that sounds pretty deplorable to me. There are additional details that the writer could include to further round out the story. The room smells like sewage because the toilet backs up nearly every day. A glob of rotten milk goes in Joan's mouth when she takes a sip from her carton. Show the reader

■ this slice of the social world. Lead them through your theoretical argu-
 ■ ment with your words. Give them pieces of information to help draw
 ■ them to the conclusions you found.

(Gullion, 2016, p. 75)

Achieving verisimilitude is a standard goal in qualitative research and one of the benchmarks against which ethnographies, for instance, are evaluated. **Verisimilitude** refers to the creation of a realistic, authentic, resonant, and lifelike portrayal of people and settings. In other words, verisimilitude centers on truthfully portraying human experience. It rings true. Engaging readers with details, descriptions, and dialogue to illustrate our assertions are tools of persuasion and help us achieve verisimilitude.

Now that you have a sense of why it's important to show, not tell, let's look more concretely at how to do so. It starts with your data. As noted in Chapter 2, qualitative research is grounded in data. The type of data you are working with (e.g., interview transcripts, field and memo notes, documents) influences how you use it and constitutes what description or detail might look like and whether you'll use dialogue. Let's look at a few examples, which are by no means exhaustive.

Ethnographic research is observation-driven. This kind of research results in a wealth of field and memo notes, which are analyzed. Ethnographic research often involves methods in addition to observation, such as formal or informal interview and/or document analysis. Regardless of the specific approach to writing, ethnographers generally try to present what Clifford Geertz (1973) called a “thick description of social life.” They do so by using language richly to present their data. In other words, they use language to paint a picture, if you will.

The following is an excerpt from Jessica Smartt Gullion's (2015) ethnographic study on fracking in a Texas neighborhood, in which she employed observation, interview, and document analysis. These are the opening words of her monograph.

■ I drive down the narrow tree-lined road to Joyce's house. Rounding
 ■ a bend, I encounter an industrial scene. Behind a chain-link fence, a
 ■ natural gas drilling rig extends about 200 feet up into the aquamarine
 ■ sky. There are tanks, compressors, pipes, and diesel trucks spilling
 ■ black smoke, all fenced in with barbed wire. Joyce has left the gate
 ■ open for me.

■ The modest house is set back from the road . . .

■ We sit at Joyce's kitchen table. Through a large bay window I

can see a tree-surrounded pond at the bottom of a hill. A pipe siphons water from the pond and carries it up a slight hill on the opposite side of the pond to the pad site (that is, the entire site of operation) of a natural gas well. I can hear the mumble of a compressor through the glass. A soft rattle comes from the pane as the compressor sucks gas through the steel pipes. The window over the sink is filled with the sight of the drilling rig I drove by on my way in.

(Gullion, 2015, p. 1)

As you can see, Gullion wrote a first-person narrative, bringing you into the research community and her participant's home through her personal experience. She relayed numerous details of what she saw and heard in order to set the scene.

Interview research is dialogue-driven. Whether the research is in depth, an oral history, or with a focus group, interview research produces transcripts, which are analyzed. The words of the participants serve as a source of description and detail. Interview data can be presented in different ways. For example, transcripts can be excerpted or written up in story form. I've conducted several interview studies about body image, using various interview methods and different approaches to writing. Here are a couple of examples.

The following is an excerpt from a journal article in which my coauthors and I employed third-person narration and summarized findings followed by excerpts of transcripts—data—that supported our claims. This is a common way of presenting interview data and findings.

When prompted with the question: "what do you dislike about your body?" the female participants were quick to respond with specific examples. They uniformly expressed dissatisfaction with numerous parts of their bodies. Almost all of the participants shared the common frustrations encompassed in the following excerpt:

"Well my midsection is one and I think that's a lot, I think a lot of females have that problem with their midsection. Definitely my thighs and my butt and my abs are definitely areas I would improve if possible, if at all possible."

Nearly all of the participants stressed frustrations with *specific* parts of their bodies that they identified as areas of concern, dissatisfaction, and insecurity. Each body part the participants noted were the same parts that they continuously attempt to make *smaller*.

“Ugh . . . My thighs! Because I have fat thighs! I hate it! And I think, I feel like no matter how long I go to the gym, I’m never going to have skinny thighs. That just pisses me off.”

Another participant noted:

“If I’m going to be wearing a shirt that shows my stomach or something I should exercise a little or work on my abs.”

Even participants who did not point out specific parts of their bodies admitted to the desirability of being thinner and smaller:

“We have a thin mirror in our room and my roommate and I stare at ourselves and analyze ourselves in the mirror, and I definitely love it when I can look in the mirror and like what I see . . . when I can it makes me feel like everything I’ve done is totally worth it and like it doesn’t even matter that I haven’t eaten macaroni and cheese in months.”

Another participant contributed:

“And I mean I still . . . like being thin, I do it (work out) to stay in shape and to look decent.”

(Stiman, Leavy, & Garland, 2009)

As you can see, we used an analytical approach to writing, as reviewed in Chapter 2. The details shared by the participants regarding specific parts of their bodies with which they are dissatisfied produce a description of how these women experience their bodies and how they feel. This is a common way to build description with interview data, but it’s not the only way.

The following is an excerpt from another interview study on body image, which was published as part of a book. In this instance, my coauthor and I drew directly on the interview data to present a first-person narration from the point of view of the participant, a 28-year-old woman given the pseudonym Jane. Italics are used to present interior dialogue.

You’re naturally pretty.

If you’re not skinny you can’t be successful.

You can be thin, too, on our diet program.

No one wants to sleep with the fat girl, but she’s good for a laugh.

You have skinny legs.

Thank you for losing weight.

I just want my thighs not to touch.

Pretty.

Skinny.

Thin.

Fat.

Thighs.

Pretty.

Skinny.

Thin.

Fat.

Thighs.

Ahhhhhhhhhh! The voices in my head: my father, my students, television, my friends. They're all in a loud rumble every time in look in the mirror. I can't get their voices out of my head. I'm tortured by them.

I hate the way I look. I hate myself like this. It's all I can think about, as if hating myself enough will make it better. When I looked in the mirror for the tenth time this morning I was horrified. My biggest problem is back fat. I especially noticed how bad it is when I turned around and peered back at the mirror. Awful. I can't stop looking at it, like looking in a refrigerator hoping a chocolate cake will suddenly appear. I keep hoping for my back fat to disappear. But it's not just back fat that I find disgusting, but my entire stomach, hip, and thigh area. It's gross. I'm gross.

It would be awesome if I was really skinny. I used to be skinny. Back then I always wished I could be skinnier. I thought that if I were skinnier it would all be better. Life would be better. Compared to how I am now, I guess I used to be skinny. Believe it or not, my dominant identity was as the hot girl. That's how people thought of me and it made me feel like I was someone. My appearance has always been one of the most important parts of me. Even though I was an honor student in high school and a great athlete, I always thought that if I didn't look the way I did, that I wouldn't have anything. That hasn't changed. Even now, having excelled in college and graduate school,

and building a career as an academic, none of it matters. I just want my thighs not to touch.

During college and graduate school it all went to pot. My eating and exercise habits changed. I was under a lot of stress. Maybe it was age and my metabolism, too. I gained so much weight. I remember in my senior year of college my roommate and I decided to try the Weight Watchers points system. We wrote our weights on the fridge and I was 133 pounds. I remember thinking it would be so great if I could weigh 125 pounds. Looking back now, at 150 pounds, I would KILL to weigh 133. Throughout graduate school I gained about 20 pounds. This fall, I lost 10 pounds, but it's not nearly enough.

I look in the mirror and I feel disgusting, gross, and embarrassed. Sometimes I think the glass will shatter before my eyes, broken by my reflection. I go to great lengths to avoid letting people from high school see me; I'm fearful that they will see me and say, "Wow, she really let herself go," or "She really got fat after high school." They will wonder, "What happened to her?" I don't want any pictures taken of me and posted on Facebook for the same reason. I just want to stay in the house and not let anyone from my past see me. I even avoid my college friends. They always commented on my skinny limbs, so when those went away, it was like I had nothing left. I'm afraid of what people will say about me. I'm in a weird paradox, because my weight has made me feel like a spectacle and almost invisible at the same time. I have nothing to offer.

(Leavy & Scotti, 2017, pp. 36–37)

As you can see, we used a literary approach to writing, as reviewed in Chapter 2.

Notice both the similarities and the differences between how data are presented in these two studies. Both studies are on the topic of body image, and both draw on interview data. Furthermore, the data bear striking similarities. In both cases, participants offer specific examples of body dissatisfaction and a desire to be thin. Yet, the way those details are shared—written up—varies dramatically. Neither is necessarily better or worse. They're different. The differences were driven by the format (journal article vs. book), the intended audience (academic vs. public), and the approach (analytical vs. literary) and by researcher choices about how to use the data and the tools of writing.

There are more examples of working with different kinds of data to write descriptions, detail, and dialogue in Chapters 5–8. For now, the take-away is: show, don't tell.

✓✗ Dos and Don'ts: Using Language to Show, Not Tell

- ✓ Do use language with specificity.
- ✓ Do use examples of rich description.
- ✓ Do use language rigorously.
- X Don't write in sweeping generalizations.
- X Don't tell readers what to think.
- X Don't be lazy with language.

Rhetorical Devices

How do we make writing sparkle? How do we make it engaging? How do we build and communicate layers of meaning? How do we present our research in both literal and poetic ways? We use literary tools.

There are many rhetorical devices, not all of which can be reviewed or have equal applicability for qualitative researchers (although I encourage you to draw on any literary tools that help you best represent a specific project). Here I review five common rhetorical devices that can benefit qualitative researchers and suggest how they can be incorporated into a write-up: metaphor, simile, juxtaposition, symbolism, and foreshadowing. I review metaphor at greater length because it is often a critical part of qualitative analysis and writing (with metaphor analysis being a practice in its own right). (For an abbreviated guide to these devices and their functions, see Table 4.2.)

TABLE 4.2. Rhetorical Devices

Rhetorical device	Main function
Metaphor	A figure of speech that compares an abstract concept with something concrete; creates a comparison or link between two ideas
Simile	A figure of speech used to directly compare two ideas by highlighting their similarity to each other, using words such as <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>
Juxtaposition	Placing two subjects side by side in order to highlight their differences; creates contrast
Symbolism	A figure of speech whereby one thing is used to represent something else; conveys meaning poetically
Foreshadowing	A way to hint at what is coming up later in the narrative; builds dramatic tension; can be a signpost

Metaphor is a figure of speech that compares an abstract concept with something concrete—“an object we can see, hear, feel, taste, or smell” (Caulley, 2008, p. 440). Metaphors are used to create a link or comparison between two ideas. Metaphors can be used in a variety of ways, including to establish micro–macro connections, to challenge or subvert taken-for-granted assumptions, and to develop additional layers of meaning. Ash Watson explains that metaphors “allow writers both to interpret and construct meanings” (2016, p. 12). Sometimes research exposes and challenges existing metaphors (Charmaz, 2007). This might be an outcome of content or document analysis. For example, Emily Martin (1999) uncovered “sleeping metaphors in science” that favor males. This kind of work is important. However, I’m focusing on researchers writing original metaphors or adapting existing metaphors. Let’s look at a few examples.

Let’s say you’re studying how different types of families structure home life and relate to one another. You’ve conducted focus group research with a dozen families (blended, nuclear, LGBTQIA parents, adopted children). Your data show that regardless of family type, family members feel deep interconnections with one another and a belief that their family makes sense. You may develop a metaphor comparing a family with a constellation. A constellation is a cluster of stars near each other by happenstance, but they recall something familiar to us, so we see a pattern in the randomness.¹ You may create a metaphor that the families in your study are like constellations.

Perhaps you conducted ethnographic research in a hospital in 2022 to study the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on hospital staff postvaccine. You discover a series of policies that were implemented during the height of the pandemic that are still in effect but that are no longer serving staff and that, indeed, are making their jobs more difficult. You may create a metaphor of a cobweb to illustrate the connections between these policies, but a cobweb, differing from a spiderweb, is abandoned. Only the remnants remain, but they are still in the way. Let’s slightly change this example. Perhaps you’re a consultant and you’ve been hired to conduct evaluation research in an insurance company on the effects of COVID-19 and how the business runs, and you’ve used a mix of ethnographic observations, focus group interviews, and document analysis. In this instance, you also discover a series of policies that were implemented during the height of the pandemic that are still in effect but are no longer serving staff and making it harder for them to reintegrate after everyone was working at home for so long. You again may use the metaphor of the cobweb.

There are a range of widely used metaphors in the research community that you may also find strengthen your writing, some of which are even

used in daily life. I'm sure you're familiar with the phrase "coming out of the closet" to describe an LGBTQIA person disclosing their sexual orientation. "The closet" is a metaphor. Although it's difficult to trace the origins, the phrase dates back to the 1930s (Berry, Gillotti, & Adams, 2020). This metaphor continues to be commonly used in qualitative research on sexuality. In 1983, Marilyn Frye (2007) developed a birdcage metaphor to illustrate that oppression is a macroscopic phenomenon. If we look only at one wire, we cannot understand why the bird does not escape. It is only by looking at the interconnection of the wires that we see the bird is trapped. Peggy McIntosh (1989) created a metaphor of an invisible knapsack to illustrate the unearned privileges white people enjoy, without even recognizing them. Both the birdcage and knapsack metaphors have been applied to many research contexts. For instance, Robin M. Boylorn (2023) used the knapsack metaphor to situate her autoethnographic research on racism in the form of "color-blindness" she has experienced. Of course, when using a preexisting metaphor, always cite the original source when possible.

You may also develop a metaphor directly out of participants' language. In the body image study I conducted with Victoria Scotti, mentioned earlier in the story about Jane, two 59-year-old participants talked at length about mirrors—how they feel when they see their reflections, how they imagine others see them, and how they avoid mirrors. Out of their words, we created a metaphor of mirrors as a way to look at internal struggle.

Marcy Meyer (2017) conducted semistructured interviews with eight single mothers of children and young adults with mental illness. She then conducted metaphor analysis of the interview data. This resulted in a series of metaphors used to describe the mothers' experiences. One participant, Elisabeth, a 45-year-old mother to a 22-year-old son with schizoaffective disorder, used the metaphor of a juggler.

■ She generated the metaphor of juggling in response to a question about
 ■ the biggest challenges of being a single mother of a young man with
 ■ mental illness. The juggling metaphor suggests a performance that
 ■ involves a difficult balancing act: Her references to work, caretaking,
 ■ domestic labor, and relationships convey a work–life imbalance that
 ■ prevents her from succeeding in any arena because she is so overex-
 ■ tended. (2017, p. 42)

The juggling metaphor has been used in other types of qualitative research as well. For example, the teacher as a "juggler" is a common metaphor in education research (Saldaña, 2015).

Quick Writing Activity

Take one central concept from your research and brainstorm a potential metaphor. If you can't decide what to pick from your research, use the concept you selected for the activity at the end of Chapter 3. The metaphor may be original or something you read about during your literature review. Write 1–2 paragraphs about how this metaphor could be applicable to your project.

A **simile** is a figure of speech used to directly compare two ideas by highlighting their similarity to each other, using words such as *like* or *as*. For example, in an interview study with women recovering from eating disorders, you may describe a participant as *eating like a bird*. For another example, in an ethnographic study of bullying in elementary school, you may describe the behavior of a bully on the playground about to target a child by saying *he moved like a shark circling his prey*.

Metaphors and similes may emerge directly from something one or more participants has said or may be developed based on your analysis and interpretation of the data in your project. With respect to the former, take the interview study of women recovering from eating disorders. It's possible that one or more of the participants described their own eating as "like a bird." During data analysis and interpretation, you may decide to use that simile in the final write-up.

Juxtaposition involves placing two subjects side by side in order to highlight their differences. Writers use juxtaposition to create contrast. Any kind of subjects may be used—people, places, objects, concepts. Following are a few hypothetical research scenarios.

Returning to the example of an ethnographic study of bullying in elementary school, you may develop ample data about lunchtime cafeteria behavior. Your data show that the cafeteria is divided into sections for popular kids and unpopular kids. The data may show clear differences in how each group occupies their space. For example, the popular kids sit by the windows, they spread out more, some sit with their legs hanging off the tables drawing a crowd of their friends, and they're louder. By contrast, the unpopular kids are seated by the garbage barrels, they take up less space, are seated only in seats, and they're quieter. By describing each group side by side, the contrasts between them are highlighted.

Let's say you're conducting ethnographic research at two public high schools about the experience of school for students as a place to learn. The sites are a central urban school with a diverse student population and a suburban school with a predominantly white student population. You observe stark contrasts in the physical buildings. These differences, you believe,

affect students' experiences. By describing the two settings side by side, you can highlight those differences, taking readers into each place so they can "see" them for themselves.

Symbolism is a figure of speech whereby one thing is used to represent something else. Symbolism is always contextual; the same "thing" can be used to symbolize different ideas in different contexts (Saldaña, 2015). Johnny Saldaña observes, "The white rose, for example, means something different depending on whether it's used at a wedding, at a funeral, on Mother's Day, in *The Hunger Games* films, or as a Valentine's Day gift" (2015, p. 66). There are many variations in how symbolism is created, but typically, a person, object, physical space, or situation is used to represent an idea or concept. You're probably familiar with some examples of symbolism from classic literature. For example, colors carry meaning in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Gold and yellow are used to symbolize old wealth and prestige versus new money. The letter *A* in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is used to symbolize adultery. Emily Brontë used the landscape of the moors in England to create symbolism for *Wuthering Heights*—the moors represent wildness and danger. Symbolism allows writers to convey meaning in an artistic way, as opposed to a literal way. It is also used to help establish mood or emotion. However, this isn't just a tool for making writing more poetic. Symbolism can also impart deeper layers of meaning, which is important in qualitative research.

Let's say you've conducted oral history research with several domestic abuse survivors. One woman's story centers on what she describes as a fiery and passionate relationship that became toxic. She shares stories about intense passion turning to great sexual connection in some instances and exploding into rage, anger, and violence in other instances. To build up this layered theme about passion, you may use the color red for its symbolism, or you may use the idea of fire, or both. Here are some words and phrases that might be woven into your recounting: *red, fire, roaring fire, playing with fire, red hot, scarlet, burning, burning red, red passion, red-blooded, blood red, red roses with thorns, crimson, from red to passion, burned brightly, burned intensely, flames, fanned the flames, engulfed by flames, blazing flames, blazing fire, embers*. These are just examples to get you thinking. Symbolism is best achieved by strategic and repeated use.

Foreshadowing is a way to hint at what is coming up later in the narrative. It can be used to build dramatic tension in the narrative, but it can also be used simply as a method of signposting. It's a technique for dropping clues of what's to come. Although this tool can be used in any kind of write-up, it's particularly effective in longer pieces, such as monographs or full-length literary works. In these instances, foreshadowing can be used (1)

to keep readers engaged and (2) as a trail of breadcrumbs so readers don't lose sight of the big picture. For example, in an oral history project with genocide survivors, you may include ample background about participants' lives before the traumatic event, but you may drop clues as to what's to come.

Conclusion



Strong writing has a voice. This is the reason we are each drawn to certain writers over others. Even when the subject matter and genre are the same, the style differs. The ways in which you enact the basics of good writing and use literary tools to build and convey meanings influences how audiences respond. Qualitative research is an act of persuasion. We represent our research to make it available to external audiences and persuade them that our findings are legitimate. Literary tools help us achieve those ends.

Let's return to the architecture analogy from Chapter 2 and say we are building a house. The data make up the foundation. The format and approach to writing determine the structure. Literature and theory reinforce the foundation and make the structure sturdy. The cultivation of our voice through the use of literary tools determines the interior design. What is the style (midcentury modern, farmhouse, New England colonial)? How does it make you feel when you enter it? Is it inviting? Does it speak to you? Does the inside match the outside? Does it all make sense as a unified house?

The best interior designers don't fight the structure; they work with it. But they add their own flair, a few surprises, a little something special, like an unexpected splash of color. The best qualitative researchers do the same.



Checklist of Considerations

- ☑ Apply the basics of good writing.
 - Show, don't tell.
 - Use language rigorously with specificity.
 - Cultivate your voice for the specific piece you are writing.
- ☑ Achieve verisimilitude by adding description and details (examples of data).
- ☑ Use rhetorical devices to enrich writing and add layers of meaning.
 - Metaphors
 - Similes

- Juxtaposition
- Symbolism
- Foreshadowing



Writing Activities

1. Read a qualitative journal article on the topic of your research. Write a response focusing on the quality and style of the writing. What did the author do well? Why did you think some elements were effective? What could the author improve? Why? Did you feel like you learned a lot about the study? Was it engaging? How so? Be specific. Up to one page.
2. Take a sample of analyzed data from your project (an interview transcript, a few pages of field notes, etc.) and write it up. Show, don't tell. Use data to illustrate your points. Use language rigorously and with specificity. Don't worry, you're not publishing this. It's an exercise. Up to two pages. (If you don't have any data, download an oral history transcript from an online repository and use the first few pages.)

Note

1. I used the metaphor of constellations to describe families in my novel, *Constellations*.

PART II

Writing and Publishing in Different Formats



CHAPTER 5

Writing and Publishing Academic Journal Articles



*We make culture visible
through our writing practices.*

—NORMAN K. DENZIN (2018, p. 673)

Peer-reviewed journal articles are the primary format in which qualitative researchers publish their work. Many scholars consider peer-reviewed journal articles the gold standard in academic publishing. Regardless of the other formats in which you might represent your research, it's vital to learn how to produce a well-written journal article and to successfully navigate the review and publication process.

The good news about learning to write journal articles is that there's a prescribed formula—a template—that you can follow. So although novices may find writing of any kind daunting, this is a format that is arguably easier to learn than others. Once your literature review is complete and your data are analyzed and organized, there's a “plug-and-play” dimension to writing articles. In other words, there are preset sections in which you can plug in the information. I add the word *play* because all writing, regardless of format, offers the chance for some creativity, trying things out, and “playing.”

When I say there are prescribed formulas for writing journal articles, I in no way mean there is only one way to write an article. I'm merely stating that there is a standard way to write a journal article. However, qualitative researchers may modify or bypass the standard template altogether to produce many different kinds of compelling accounts of their research, and

they often do. So the goals of this chapter are both to teach you the standard way to write a journal article *and* to help you consider alternatives. There are the myriad ways you might reimagine how to structure an article in ways that best service your specific research project.

The Components of Research Articles

■ ■ ■

Box 5.1 lists the general components of research articles. Now, when I say the components, it does not mean that all these necessarily appear as separate sections in a research article but, rather, that information on these areas is usually included.

Let's review each of these components in brief. Then we can consider how articles may be structured based on these components. Please bear in mind that you should always follow the guidelines for the specific journal you are submitting to, and therefore some details may differ (e.g., suggested word count for abstracts).

BOX 5.1. The Components of Research Articles

Title

Abstract

Keywords

Introduction to the project: the topic investigated (including the significance of studying this topic)

Research purpose statement and research questions

Literature review

Theoretical or philosophical perspective guiding the project

The methodology (what research method or methods were used and how)

Participants (including the sampling strategy used to find them)

Data analysis and interpretation procedures

Discussion of the findings

Conclusion (may include strengths and weaknesses of the study and ideas for future research)

References (following the style guidelines of the journal)

- **Title:** Qualitative titles clearly state the main topic (and may include the primary phenomenon, the method, and the approach to design being used). To make your title creative, try to find a clever turn of phrase from the data (e.g., interview, field note) and use it as a hook.

- **Abstract:** This 150- to 200-word overview should be composed after you've written the article. Include the phenomenon you are studying; the research purpose; basic information about the method(s) and methodology, participants, and setting; and why the study is needed.

- **Keywords:** Provide five to six words a reader would search for to find your project, including the main problem or phenomenon, theoretical framework, research methods, and any main concepts guiding the project.

- **Introduction to the project (the topic investigated):** Describe the phenomenon investigated in your study; personal and pragmatic reasons for it; and the significance, value, or worth (e.g., timeliness, ethical call) of the study.

- **Research purpose statement and research questions:** The research purpose statement outlines the primary purpose of your study, the methods employed, the participants, and the rationale. Research questions are the open-ended questions your project aims to answer (most qualitative projects have 1–3 questions, but there may be more, and/or primary questions may have associated secondary questions).

- **Literature review:** A synthesis of the most relevant research on your topic, demonstrating how your project contributes to the existing literature.

- **Theoretical or philosophical perspective guiding the project:** A discussion of the paradigm or worldview guiding the research project, typically focusing on the selected theoretical school of thought (theoretical framework).

- **The method(s) and methodology:** Describe the strategies used to generate data—the method or methods used and the methodology (the research plan and how the methods were employed).

- **Participants:** Describe your participants (demographics and particular experiences), the sampling strategy used, and recruitment procedures. Note attention to ethical practice (e.g., institutional review board [IRB] approval).

- **Data analysis and interpretation procedures:** Describe the strategies used to analyze and interpret your data (e.g., coding and memo-writing process, use of theory and literature to make sense of your data).

- **Findings:** A discussion of the data—what was learned, with examples.

- **Discussion/conclusion:** Review what the findings mean, how they relate to what is already known about the topic, how the findings might be applied, strengths and weaknesses of the study, and ideas for future research.

- **References:** Include a full list of citations, properly crediting all those from whom you’ve borrowed ideas, summarized ideas, or quoted. Follow the style guidelines of the journal.

It probably seems like an article includes a lot of information for a relatively short piece of writing. Once we break down the general sections of an article and look at how the aforementioned components fit into them, it will be easier to see how it all works. Bear in mind that all articles include a title, keywords, and abstract—requirements of journals that appear before the article begins. These issues are not revisited in the following discussion about how to organize a research article (which focuses on the article itself).

Organizing Research Articles

■ ■ ■

Jane Gilgun (2020) notes that qualitative journal articles typically include the following sections:

- Introduction
- Methods
- Findings
- Discussion

These sections are often broken down into subsections and generally include the components reviewed earlier. A common way to organize these sections is as follows:

- **Introduction:** This provides an introduction to the topic investigated (including the significance of studying this topic), a research purpose statement and research questions, a discussion of relevant literature, and, at times, the theoretical or philosophical perspective guiding the project.

■ **Methods:** This section describes the strategies used to generate data—the method or methods used and the overall methodology. It also describes your participants (demographics and particular experiences), as well as the sampling strategy used and recruitment procedures (including ethical considerations). Finally, there is a discussion of data analysis and interpretation procedures, including strategies used to analyze and interpret your data (e.g., coding and memo-writing process, use of theory and literature to make sense of your data).

■ **Findings:** This is where you discuss the data—what was learned, with examples.

■ **Discussion:** This section covers what the findings mean, how they relate to what is already known about the topic, how the findings might be applied, strengths and weaknesses of the study, and ideas for future research.

There are three main benefits of using this format. First, it's widely recognized by journal editors and the research community. This can assist you during the review process. Second, following this format will help ensure that you've included all relevant information. There is an element of “plugging” information in, as noted earlier. Third, it's also useful after publication, as other scholars read and cite your research. An article that follows this prescribed format will be easy for them to scan to seek the information they're looking for.

Notwithstanding the benefits of using this structure, there are also advantages to writing in more creative formats. For example, many qualitative researchers, and especially those using methods such as ethnography and autoethnography, prefer to write in a narrative structure, in which they are telling the story of the research. Articles that follow a narrative approach can be structured in numerous ways. Two common approaches are to (1) include a traditional introduction that reviews methods, methodology, and literature and then present the narrative, or (2) write the entire article as a narrative, weaving in information about the methods, methodology, and literature as needed (sometimes as footnotes and endnotes).

There are myriad ways journal articles may be written. There are three main factors that you need to consider as you decide how to organize and write your article:

1. The type of data
2. The organization of the data
3. Your approach to writing

These three factors in concert will lead you to the best way to structure your article (see Figure 5.1). These dimensions of research were reviewed in Chapter 2, but let's revisit them here in the context of determining how to write up your research as an article.

The type of data you're working with may include one or more of the following, and this is not an exhaustive list: ethnographic field notes, interview transcripts, coded document analysis, personal narratives, photographs or other visual images.

The organization of the data may be based on any of the following: themes, typologies, chronological narratives, episodic or fragmented narratives, cases, researchers, research questions, methods.

The approach to writing may be any one or more of the following: descriptive and realistic, confessional, impressionist and literary, analytical, formal, critical, collaborative.

By the time you're writing an article, you've already made most of these decisions. You've already selected a data generation method, generated and analyzed the data, and then chosen a way to organize those data. Although you may not have yet officially selected an approach to writing, in reality, previous decisions have probably already led you to a writing approach. For example, the kinds of research questions you've asked, the methods and methodology you've used, and the way you've made sense of the data all lend themselves to specific approaches to writing.

Let's consider a few hypothetical research scenarios to show the interconnection of these factors and how they assist with the organization of an article.

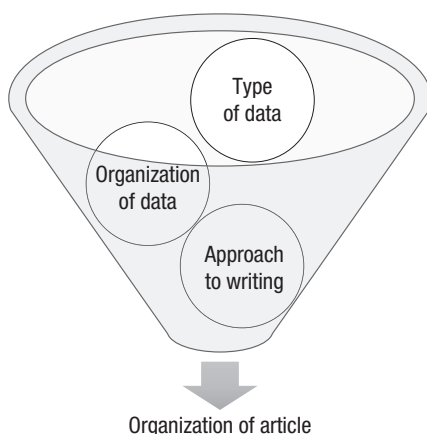


FIGURE 5.1. Factors that lead to organization of research articles.

A researcher has conducted interview research (interview data) and organized the data thematically. The purpose is to provide an analysis of the topic (analytical approach to writing). The Discussion and Findings sections of the researcher's article will likely be organized based on themes—with each theme making up a subsection of the article. It will most likely be written in third-person narration.

A researcher has conducted an ethnographic field study (ethnographic notes) in three different locations (cases) and aims to describe the cases (descriptive and realistic approach to writing). The Discussion and Findings sections of the article will likely be organized based on cases—with each case making up a subsection of the article. The researcher will most likely use first-person narration.

A researcher has conducted an autoethnographic study (autoethnographic notes) and organized the data narratively. The purpose is to write a personal, insider account of the researcher's experience with the topic situated in a cultural frame (confessional approach to writing). The article will likely be organized around chronological or episodic stories. The researcher will use first-person narration.

A researcher has conducted evaluation research (ethnographic notes, interview data, documents) and organized the data by research questions. The purpose is to write a comprehensive response to each of the research questions grounded in the data (descriptive and realistic approach to writing). The article will likely be organized around research questions and will use third-person narration.

These are just examples.

Regardless of how you structure your article—in the standard format, as a narrative, or in some other manner—you will need to thoughtfully, logically, and persuasively **present the data**. Remember, qualitative research is all about the data. This is the heart of a journal article. Notwithstanding the four general sections of an article and all the components within the introduction and methods, the Findings and Discussion sections are the primary part of any article, however they are written. Again, qualitative research is all about the data—what do the data reveal, what do they mean, what do they teach us. There are two important topics in this regard: quoting and moving from findings to the discussion.

Quoting Data

Researchers often quote data as evidence. Depending on the type of data you've collected, you may quote an interview transcript, a field note, and so forth. The typical model for doing so is referred to as the SQC model, in

which you (1) set up the quote, (2) provide the quotation, and (3) comment on the quote (Weaver-Hightower, 2019, p. 114). There are different ways to set up and then comment on a quoted piece of data. For example, you may note the research context in which the data emerged; you may review a theme in the research, citing literature; or you may share your reaction as the researcher when the data were unearthed. Pat Thomson (2023) rightfully notes that data do not speak for themselves—they need to be contextualized and explained.

Quick Writing Activity

Take a quotation from your research and apply the SQC model. Set up the quote, provide the quotation, and comment on the quote.

One mistake beginning researchers often make is to quote to excess. It's easy to understand how this happens. You've spent a lot of time generating and analyzing data, and you want to use them. Moreover, qualitative research is about the data, so the data should be the stars. Reasons for overquoting abound. You want to be true to the data, you want to persuade readers with evidence, you don't know how to say it better yourself. Incidentally, the reasons that novice researchers may overquote are the same reasons they may overcite literature. At the end of the day, your article should not be a series of lengthy block quotes, whether from data or the literature. As Thomson advises, quote wisely (2023, p. 132). She explains that you want to quote and cite to "steer" the argument. As the author, you are guiding readers through the body of knowledge on the topic and what your data contribute. Any good guide chooses a path and leads others, pointing out some things along the way. That's your role as the author. Don't be afraid to lead.

Quick Writing Activity

"One mistake beginning researchers often make is to quote to excess. It's easy to understand how this happens. You've spent a lot of time generating and analyzing data, and you want to use them. Moreover, qualitative research is about the data, so the data should be the stars. Reasons for overquoting abound. You want to be true to the data, you want to persuade readers with evidence, you don't know how to say it better yourself." This is a lengthy quotation from the preceding paragraph. Summarize the quote in your own words. Try to capture the main point. Transform these five sentences into one sentence.

When you write and revise your article, Thomson (2023) offers the following suggestions to avoid “quote dumping”:

- Summarize when possible.
- Only use quotes when they are truly needed.
- Eliminate or minimize the use of lengthy block quotes.

Let’s look at an example of an alternative to a block quote. Joakim Strindberg (2022) conducted an ethnographic study of loneliness and bullying in a Swedish elementary school. The data were garnered through group interviews with three students, as well as ethnographic observations in two classes, aimed at providing context for the interview data. There are instances in the Findings section of the article in which the author directly quotes from interview transcripts and field notes. These are used sparingly and therefore feel important, or weighty, when they appear. In other instances, Stringberg summarized interview findings instead of resorting to block quotes. Here’s an example:

As Liam explained to me, he had repeatedly felt left out in his class, sometimes even bullied. Sometimes he did not want to go to school at all. Liam also explained that he was considered “the wimp” by the boys in his class and he was called “wimp” by classmates because he did not like to play football. He was also called a “nerd” because he liked school and sometimes a “sissy” because he wore sweatpants. He also told me his classmates sometimes threw pencils at him during lessons and threw his bag into the girls’ toilet after physical education lessons. In turn, Isabella explained that she was sometimes teased by classmates and called a “nerd” because she wore glasses, and she also told me that she and Ava were perceived as low-status girls in the class because they, unlike the popular girls in class, did not wear trendy clothes or nice shoes, and because they did not wear make-up. In the classroom, I observed that Ava sometimes got comments from her classmates about things she either did or did not do, such as having too-loud music in her headphones. Ava was described by teachers and classmates as someone who was often alone in school, but who chose to be alone and to withdraw from her classmates. While Ava told me that she did often choose to withdraw, she also explained that she sometimes did not want to be alone, that she sometimes felt left out, and that she then did not dare to ask classmates whether she could join in. (p. 883)

In my estimation, this article, which more or less follows the standard format, is extremely well written. Stringberg achieves a good balance between the use of direct quotes and summary, both of which are ways of presenting the data; by balancing the two, the article achieves flow and readability, while remaining persuasive.

Findings to Discussion

Sometimes there's confusion between what constitutes findings versus your discussion. **Findings** are centered on claims about the data. **Discussion** is centered on claims about the entire study. Therefore, in the Findings section of an article, you focus on chunks of data based on how you have analyzed and organized the data (e.g., themes, typologies, cases). You review the data, with examples, explaining what each chunk means, using theory and literature as needed. When you move into the Discussion section of the article, you refer back to the findings to provide arguments, comments, claims, and ideas about the findings as a whole.

Visual Representations

There are various types of visual elements that qualitative researchers may add to their write-ups (Weaver-Hightower, 2019). For example, instead of quoting data, you may visually represent an excerpt of data—an interview transcript excerpt, a field note, a memo note, a segment of coded data. There are also the kinds of visual elements you may create to summarize data or to show processes. These may include figures, diagrams, and tables. Finally, you may include photographs or visual art.

How you place these elements depends on whether they are data points and are thus being used the way a quotation might be used, whether they are summary information about the data or findings, or whether they are visual supplements. Place these features strategically. Of course, these features are entirely optional and may be omitted.

Photographs are the most obvious and intuitive, a couple examples of the other ways qualitative researchers may include visual elements follow.

Table 5.1 was created by Sharlene Hesse-Biber (2010) to link the qualitative and quantitative data in a study about eating disorders. Figure 5.2 is an illustration Harris and Holman Jones (2016) created for a qualitative project that resulted in an ethnodrama. The illustration is meant to show readers how the performance venue was set up.

TABLE 5.1. Linking Qualitative and Quantitative Data in a Bivariate Table

EATDIS	PPSC	
	No	Yes
Yes	12.8 (5)	56.3 (9)
No	87.2 (34)	43.8 (7)
TOTAL	100% (39)	100% (16)

Note. $n = 55$. PPSC, parents or peers or siblings critical; EATDIS, eating disorder. From *Mixed Methods Research: Merging Theory with Practice* by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. Copyright © 2010 The Guilford Press. Reprinted by permission.



Quick Writing Activity

Take a small chunk of analyzed data. For example, one or two pages of your analyzed interview data on a specific theme, one or two pages of your analyzed ethnographic notes centered on one case, or one analyzed story from your autoethnographic research. Create a visual representation of these data. You could use a figure, table, piece of visual art, or something else. This is only an exercise. Play around.

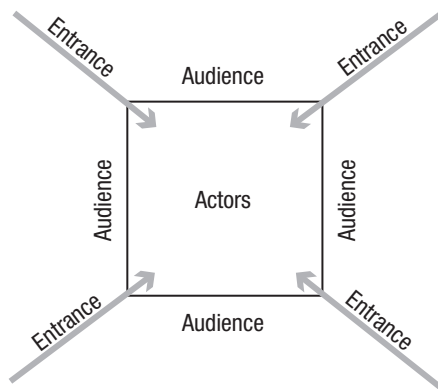


FIGURE 5.2. Arena or in-the-round stage. From *Writing for Performance* by Harris and Holman Jones. Copyright © 2016 Sense Publishers. Reprinted by permission.

Quantitative Data in Mixed Methods Research

In the case of mixed methods research, you will need to deal with both the qualitative and quantitative data in your Findings and Discussion sections (or whatever sections in which that information appears). You may choose to discuss both sets of findings together (e.g., side by side or back to back), or you may choose to place the findings in separate sections. Likewise, your Discussion section may provide an integrated discussion of what the findings mean—based on both sets of data—or you may discuss the two datasets separately. One tip: The best mixed methods research always addresses the mixed methods nature of the project—how the datasets are related to each other and what was learned by the mixed approach. This is an integrated approach to mixed methods research (Hesse-Biber, 2010; Leavy, 2017a, 2023a).

Quantitative research is generally visually depicted in tables or graphs. There are four primary ways of visually depicting statistical data (Fallon, 2016, pp. 91–96):

1. **Tables:** good for clearly presenting data on any number of variables and can be used for descriptive or inferential statistics
2. **Histograms:** good for presenting distributions for a single variable
3. **Scatterplots:** illustrate the relationship between two continuous variables to help you see
 - a. whether the relationship is linear.
 - b. the direction of the relationship (upward left to right indicates a positive relationship and downward left to right indicates a negative relationship).
 - c. the strength of the relationship.
 - d. outlying points.
 - e. whether you have an intervening (moderating) variable.
4. **Bar and line graphs:** good for illustrating one or more categorical variables that are the independent variables and one continuous variable that is the dependent variable. Typically, the independent variable(s) is on the x -axis (horizontal) and the dependent variable is on the y -axis (vertical).

Please note that qualitative researchers may also use tables and graphs; however, they are more common in quantitative or mixed methods research.

Publication

■ ■ ■

Once your article is complete, do your best to make it as tight as possible before submission to a journal. Engage in rounds of revisions. Seek feedback from peers or mentors. Check carefully for typos and grammatical errors. Look at the big picture—logic, flow, ideas, inferences, all the components of the project—and the small picture—each section, paragraph, and sentence. In short, make it the best it can be.

Finding and Submitting to Journals

When your article is ready for submission, the first thing you'll need to do is select a journal. You may have known from the start your dream journal for the article (e.g., a top journal in your field, a journal you read), or you may need to determine where to submit. Journal selection is critically important and complicated, a balancing act of sorts. **Simultaneous submissions are not permitted**, and the review process can be long. In other words, you can only submit to one journal at a time and will likely wait several months, and at times longer, to receive a response. Likewise, journal articles must be up-to-date when published (e.g., current references). So, if you submit to a journal that's unlikely to publish your article, you could delay publication significantly, causing the need to revise the article to keep it "current." On the other hand, you may have the incentive, for any number of reasons, to seek one of the top-tier journals, which are highly competitive. For example, the tenure and promotion requirements at your academic institution may consider journal ranking and favor prestige journals. In a different circumstance, your institution may not consider journal rankings but may look at the number of downloads and/or citations your work receives. In this circumstance, you may seek an **open-access journal**, an online journal that provides download information or a well-read or, dare I say, popular journal.

Naturally, you'll want to consider the pragmatic issues raised, especially if your job security is attached to these publications. Also, consider what may simply be the best journal for your article, or the scholarly merit of publishing in the journal. Which journals publish similar articles in a substantive area or methodology? Which journals are well read in your field? What journals do you regularly peruse? Where were the articles you most cited published?

Bear in mind that journals have different foci. There are journals that are discipline-specific, topic-centered, teaching-focused, and methods-focused. So, you need to consider the thrust of your article and which community of scholars you are most in conversation with.

It's important to consider not only the substantive content of your article but also the structure. Journal editors often have preferred formats. Familiarize yourself with journals before submitting your work. If you have written an article structured as a series of vignettes, without a specific section devoted to methods, and you're looking at a journal in which most articles follow a traditional introduction, methods, findings, discussion structure, it is probably not the right journal. In this instance, seek out a journal that regularly publishes narrative-style articles.

As you select an appropriate journal, try to create a balance between pragmatic concerns and scholarly concerns. Be realistic about acceptance rates. Look carefully at recently published issues and consider how well your article resembles what the journal has already published in content and form. Make sure your article clearly falls inside the scope of what the journal publishes and follow their guidelines for suggested length, writing style, and formatting. I suggest you make a list of three possible journals and order them from your first to third choice. This way, if your work is rejected, you can quickly turn it around to the next on the list.

Most journals have online submission portals. Follow instructions carefully. Journals usually have specific requirements about **anonymizing the submission** so that reviewers do not know the author's identity. Be sure to do this. The more you have published, and therefore the more you are citing your own work and the more known you are in your field, the more difficult true anonymity becomes. Do your best to ensure a fair review that meets journal requirements. Likewise, be sure to follow the journal style guidelines. You should receive confirmation of your submission (if you don't, email the journal editor). Make a note in your calendar of the time frame they provide as to when you can expect a decision. If you do not hear back from them by the date they give, send the editor a brief and courteous email checking on the status of your submission. To make it easy for the editor to locate your submission, be sure to include your full name, the title of your article, and the date of submission in your email.

The Review Process, Dealing with Reviewer Feedback, and Revising

Once a journal receives your article, it will be sent out for anonymous review. Journals have different requirements as to how many reviews they must have in hand to make an editorial decision, but most require two to four reviews. The review process is a waiting game. You may feel relieved to have the article off your desk so you can put it out of your mind for a while, or you may feel anxious and eager for a response. Regardless, you

can't rush the review process. If an editor has difficulty securing appropriate reviewers, it can extend the process.

When you hear back from the journal, you will receive the editor's decision, along with the anonymous reviews, usually labeled "Review A," "Review B," and so forth. Reviews generally include specific comments and suggestions regarding what the reviewers thought did and did not work well, as well as their recommendation. Editors' decisions generally fall into one of four categories: accepted, accepted with minor revisions, revise and resubmit, rejected.

If your article is accepted or accepted with minor revisions, congratulations, that's awesome. It's also quite rare. It's much more likely you'll receive a revise-and-resubmit or a rejection.

If you receive a rejection, avoid the pitfall of assuming the reviewers are wrong, the deck was stacked, and the process was a waste of time. Instead, carefully read the reviews and consider whether you ought to make changes before submitting to the next journal on your list. Use the same strategies for dealing with reviewer feedback that I detail in the discussion of revise-and-resubmit (a process you are likely to go through many times over the course of your career).

Dealing with reviewer feedback and going through the **revise-and-resubmit** process is challenging, especially for emerging scholars. Dealing with critical feedback is part of the process. Let's be honest, most people have a tough time with criticism. Therefore, I encourage you to reframe the notion of "critique" or "criticism" into *constructive feedback*. The goal is to make your work stronger. When you look at reviews in this light, it's easier to see how they may be helpful and to even feel grateful for them. Starting from a place of gratitude instead of a place of defensiveness makes for a much better process.

These are my suggestions for how to read and respond to reviews, and revise your article:

- Read all the reviews through once. Don't take notes, just read them.
- Take a few breaths. Read the reviews a second time and annotate them (e.g., take notes in the margins, underline or circle key parts). Focus on critical remarks and suggestions for revision.
- Look at your notes on the reviews and determine synergies. In other words, what did the reviewers agree on? Did more than one reviewer suggest a specific change? If more than one reviewer has suggested a change, it is most likely needed.
- Look at your notes on the reviews and determine whether there are

any dissonances. In other words, what did the reviewers disagree on? Did one reviewer love one part whereas another did not? (Conflicting reviews are challenging. Ultimately, you will have to decide what you agree with and make note of that in your resubmission letter to the editor.)

- Stick the reviews in a drawer for between 1 and 7 days. (This will help you absorb the reviews, give you some distance from your first emotional response, and allow you to see the reviews with fresher eyes.)

- Read through the reviews again, as well as your notes. Make additional notes as needed.

- Write a plan—outline—for how you will respond to the reviews. (I suggest using bullet points when making your plan for revision—that way it is easy to go through them one by one, and cross them off the list.)

- Read the annotated reviews again and compare them with your revision plan to make sure you didn't miss anything.

- Revise your article, using your revision outline as a guide.

- Reread your article and make additional revisions (e.g., for flow, language choice).

- Look over your revision plan one more time. Reread your article again, to make certain you made all the changes you intended to make.

Once your article is revised, **resubmit** it to the journal per their instructions. Typically, they will ask for a brief cover letter indicating how you have addressed the reviewer comments. As you've already gone through the work of creating a revision outline, you can simply cut and paste this into your letter. If there are reviewer comments you did not respond to, briefly note those as well. If there were conflicting remarks, you may note that as well, and how you addressed it. Things to avoid in your letter to the editor are defensiveness, critiquing the reviewers, and complaining about the review process. Instead, consider thanking the editor for supplying helpful reviews, if you feel the reviews strengthened your work.

The box on page 91 shows a template you can use for this email.

✓ⓧ Dos and Don'ts: Revise and Resubmit

- ✓ Do reframe critique as constructive feedback.
- ✓ Do remember the goal is to help you strengthen your research write-up.
- ✓ Do read the reviews multiple times, annotate them, and make and follow a revision plan.

- X Don't be defensive.
- X Don't dismiss reviewer feedback right off the bat.
- X Don't complain to the editor about the reviewers.

I do want to build a caveat into the advice I've just given. There may be times when you receive a totally inappropriate review, one that is overly critical without offering any constructive feedback. The reviewer is mean-spirited and unhelpful. The feedback is so minimal and general that it's not even clear whether the reviewer read the entire piece. It seems like they are bashing your work just to bash it. Or perhaps worse, they are bashing your work for any number of inappropriate reasons, such as that you didn't cite them, you have different opinions, or you use a writing style they don't care for. In even worse situations, they may be unfairly critical because they have different political viewpoints, do not understand the paradigm or theoretical perspective you are working from (e.g., decolonizing theory), or are not familiar with your methodology (e.g., arts-based research). You may receive comments that are sexist, racist, ageist, homophobic, transphobic, colonialist, or otherwise offensive. It happens. In these instances, it is appropriate to make note of this in your response to the editor.

Most reviews are not mean-spirited or inappropriate, even those that focus extensively on what can be improved. It's important to distinguish

Sample Email Template to a Journal Editor

Dear Dr. X,

Thank you for your feedback on my article "[Title]." The reviewer comments were helpful. I have undergone the following revisions. Reviewers A and C noted X. I have addressed this by X. Reviewer B noted X. I have addressed this by X. Reviewers C and B were conflicted regarding X. I found reviewer B's comments most helpful and did X. In addition to these substantive changes, I generally revised and polished the piece. I believe the article has been greatly strengthened.

Thank you again for the helpful reviews and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

[Name]

between a highly critical review that you may or may not agree with (fairly common) and one that is unprofessional. You have tools for dealing with the former. I hope you never have to deal with the latter, but if you do, please know that it isn't acceptable and that you are justified in however you may be feeling.

The Publication Process

Once your article is accepted for publication, the editor will give you a timetable. If you're publishing with a print journal, it's common these days for there to be an earlier online version of the article, before the print issue is released, so you may be given two publication dates. Be advised—journals often have backlogs of accepted manuscripts, so it's possible your article won't come out for 6 months to a year, sometimes longer. Between acceptance and publication, you'll be given typeset and likely copyedited pages. It's vital to review these proofs carefully, to respond to any outstanding queries, and to give the piece a final read for typos and the like.

Conclusion

■ ■ ■

Peer-reviewed research articles are considered the gold standard in academic publishing. Although it may feel daunting to write an article, the widely used standard structure can help you learn how to organize a study into a write-up. Explain to readers what you did, why, what you learned, and how that contributes to our knowledge on your topic. Write one section at a time. Don't lose sight of the data. Lead readers. Persuade them.

Checklist of Considerations

- ☑ Write an outline for your article.
 - Consider how you will address all the standard components of a research article.
- ☑ Consider the factors that lead to organizing the article.
 - The type of data
 - The organization of the data
 - Your approach to writing
- ☑ Determine how to present the data in order to persuade readers.
 - Avoid “quote dumping.”
 - Summarize when possible.

- Only use quotes when they are truly needed.
- Eliminate or minimize the use of lengthy block quotes.
- ☑ When using visual elements in the write-up, place them strategically.
- ☑ In mixed methods research, quantitative data may be represented visually.
 - Tables
 - Histograms
 - Scatterplots
 - Bar and line graphs
- ☑ Seek appropriate journals for submission.
 - Polish the piece before submission.
 - Make a list of three potential journals.
 - Submit to only one journal at a time.
 - Consider the benefits of open-access publishing.
 - Anonymize the article.
 - Follow all submission guidelines.
- ☑ Carefully consider reviewer feedback and methodically and strategically revise the article for resubmission as needed.
- ☑ Review all proofs before publication.

Writing Activities

1. Read two peer-reviewed journal articles on your topic and write a short comparison. Compare and contrast the organization of the article, the approach to writing, the presentation of data, and the use of quotations and citations. What did you like and not like about each style? What was engaging? What was informative? Up to one page.
2. Write an outline for a journal article based on your research. In addition to section headings, note what will be included in each part of the article.
3. Select five lengthy quotations from your data—excerpts that you feel are important and that you would potentially like to quote in your article. Now, work on each one to see if you can summarize it instead, or shorten it. Take your time. This will help you see when a quote is really needed and when it's excessive.

CHAPTER 6

Writing and Publishing Academic Books



*Write for your reader's understanding instead
of trying to prove how smart you are.*

—JOHNNY SALDAÑA (2018, p. 11)

Right about now you may be asking yourself, “Can I actually write a book?” It may seem like too big a task. It may feel overwhelming or even impossible. Or you may be really excited about it and already imagining it on library bookshelves but are unsure of how to actually do it. You may find it hard to imagine going from a blank computer screen to a published book. Where do you begin? How do you make sure to complete it? If somehow you manage to write it, how do you go about getting it published? Don’t worry. Yes, you can actually write a book. You’ve got this.

Bear a couple things in mind. First, you’ve already done most of the work. Conducting qualitative research is a major undertaking. Research design, data generation, analysis, and interpretation are labor-intensive processes. At this point you have everything you need to write a book about your project.

Second, don’t think about writing a whole book. To write a book, you’ll break it down into manageable sections, and you’ll work on those bit by bit. Focus on the task at hand. All you need is a detailed plan and discipline.

Monographs, Textbooks, and Anthologies

■ ■ ■

There are three types of academic nonfiction books: monographs, textbooks, and anthologies (see Table 6.1). Each type of book has a different primary purpose.

A **monograph** is intended to present a detailed account of original research on a specific topic. In other words, a monograph is a book-length treatment of original research. To determine whether you should present your research as a monograph versus a journal article or series of journal articles, bear in mind the amount of data you have collected, the depth to which you intend to present that data, and your intended audience. If you have conducted qualitative research over a lengthy period of time, you may choose to present it as a monograph. For example, if you have conducted field research for a period of 1 or more years, your data may best be expressed in book-length form. The middle chapters of a monograph are typically organized around major themes or cases to emerge from the research. Monographs are reviewed in detail later in this chapter.

A **textbook** is intended to present an overview of a specific topic for the purpose of teaching. Textbooks generally present a survey of the following aspects of a subject: the history of the field, major theories, major methods, and case studies or examples. Original qualitative research is not the focus of a textbook; however, it may be cited throughout. Qualitative researchers might draw on their experiences to write a textbook designed to teach qualitative research. Or, drawing on their expertise in a specific substantive area, qualitative researchers might write a textbook on a different subject area and cite qualitative research throughout. For example, if you have spent years conducting social science research about marriage and families, you might take your cumulative knowledge and interest in the topic to write a textbook intended for class use.

Here are some special tips when working on a textbook:

TABLE 6.1. The Primary Purpose of Each Type of Academic Nonfiction Book

Type of book	Primary purpose
Monograph	To present a detailed account of original research
Textbook	To teach a specific topic (usually an overview)
Anthology	To present multiple authors' perspectives/research on a topic

- If you have teaching experience, draw on it. Write in your teacher voice. As discussed in Chapter 4, we all have many voices. Textbooks are meant to teach. Further, they can be intimidating to students. Tone matters.

- Use levels of headings (and organize your table of contents or outline accordingly to make the writing process easier). Any nonfiction book may have levels of headings, but they are particularly important in textbooks. They help organize the information into manageable chunks for readers. Level A headings are the major headings, level B headings are for smaller sections, and level C headings mark smaller sections of level B headings.

- Incorporate pedagogical features, additional resources, and/or a companion website. These components should be designed to aid learning and make the book user-friendly. What features will help readers better understand the content?

An **anthology** is an edited book composed of chapters written by multiple authors. In qualitative research, the purpose of an anthology is to present multiple perspectives on a topic. Additionally, anthologies allow for different writing styles, which can make the book engaging for readers. They also allow for diverse examples (based on contributors' disciplines, professional expertise, and personal experiences). Contributors to an anthology might include leading scholars in the field, as well as new and emergent researchers. Although some editors privilege well-published scholars, personally I think the best anthologies offer a mix of voices and perspectives. I've often included graduate student work, as well as early career scholars, in the anthologies I have compiled, and I encourage you to do the same.

Here are some special tips when working on an anthology:

- If you are soliciting original contributions, be honest and up front with potential contributors about the status of the book proposal (e.g., whether or not you have a signed contract with a publisher, realistic tentative publication date).

- Provide contributors with enough information about the book so that they understand how their chapters fit into the larger whole. Provide clear instructions on page length or word count requirements, level and tone, and content, as you deem necessary. Keep instructions general enough that authors have leeway to determine the content and writing style so that they are invested in the project.

- Check in with contributors on a regular schedule. For example, if you are giving contributors 12 months to submit their chapters, check in with them 6 months before and 1 month before.
- Build a cushion into your schedule. There will always be contributors who need extensions for various reasons. Plan for this ahead of time. Make your contributor due date significantly earlier than you actually need the chapters in order to maintain the publication schedule you have agreed on with your publisher.
- Respect your contributors as experts in their areas. You have sought them out for their scholarly and writing chops. Don't get in their way with too many detailed instructions about content or style. Allow them to shine.

Contributing a Chapter to an Edited Volume

You may have an opportunity to write a chapter for an edited volume. These are the four primary types of edited academic books and what may be expected of you as a contributor.

- ***Anthology***: an edited book composed of chapters written by multiple authors. Anthologies are generally similar in length to a monograph. In qualitative research, the purpose of an anthology is to present multiple perspectives, research, or experiences on a topic. There is usually leeway on writing style, and informal writing is often preferred; however, this varies based on the specific book. Anthologies vary widely, so always follow editors' instructions.

- ***Handbook***: a large edited volume composed of chapters written by multiple authors. These large reference works aim to present a comprehensive retrospective and prospective overview of a field of study. They are more extensive than anthologies and generally have 30–40 contributors, most of whom are usually leaders in the field (although some editors make space to include emerging scholars). Chapters are generally organized in the following manner: providing some historical context for the topic, offering several robust examples from your research or other published research, and commenting on the future of the field.

- ***Encyclopedia***: a large reference work that compiles formal—encyclopedia-style—articles on a topic. These entries are generally relatively short in word count and provide definitions of terms or topics and relevant literature (with citations). Editors provide examples of entries you can use as a guide.

■ **Conference proceedings:** anthologies composed of conference presentations. These books are like other anthologies in that they generally vary in style. Chapters are based on presentations made at professional conferences. In some cases, you may be asked to submit your conference paper as it was originally presented. In other cases, you may be asked to write a chapter based on your conference presentation. For example, if you gave a PowerPoint presentation, you may be asked to write it up as prose.

When working on a book chapter, follow the advice offered earlier in this book. Begin by drafting an outline. Consider what context readers may need, the main points to be covered, examples used to illustrate those points, and the takeaway message. Based on the overall mission of the book and any guidelines you were given, consider tone and style. Edited volumes are meant to amplify multiple authors' perspectives. The best chapters have a strong voice. So, although you may have the opportunity to look at examples of what other authors are contributing, do not try to mirror them. Be you. The best chapters in edited volumes have a distinct voice—the authors are writing from their unique perspectives and experience.

Focusing on Monographs

■ ■ ■

For the remainder of this chapter, I focus primarily on monographs. Much of what was covered in Chapter 5 on writing a journal article applies here as well, so I won't repeat that content. There are two primary differences between a journal article and a book.

First, length. That may seem too obvious to mention, but it's important to understand in a practical sense. You're relaying information on the same topics (background on the topic, the project/methodology, the main findings and what they mean), and you're using the same qualitative tools (literature, theory) and the same literary tools (language, rhetorical devices) to do so. However, you can go much deeper on any or all subjects—generally, the data and what they mean. You can allow the data to breathe.

Second, reader expectation. Journal articles are written solely for academic audiences. This is also true of most monographs (although if you seek a trade publisher, as discussed later in this chapter, you may be able to reach a more general audience). Even when writing for the same academic audience, readers have different expectations for journal articles and books. In short, books need to keep a reader's interest much longer for them to make it through the whole thing. This requires keeping it engaging, which usually means less jargon and more "story."

Returning to the opening of this chapter, let's start with the basics of book writing. Where do you begin? How do you break the project down into manageable bits?

Organizing a Table of Contents

As discussed in Chapter 1, when writing a monograph, the outlining phase should result in a detailed table of contents that includes chapter titles, the topic of each chapter and the main assertions that will be made, examples of data that will be featured, and literature or other sources that will be referred to. This is a living document that may be revised as you go but that serves as your guide.

To write a strong table of contents, you'll need to make several important decisions that will shape the book. Here's where what you've learned throughout this book will come together.

First, you'll need to determine the **organization of the data/findings**. As reviewed in Chapter 2, common ways to organize data include:

- Themes/typologies
- Chronological narratives
- Episodic or fragmented narratives
- Cases
- Researchers (in collaborative research)
- Research questions
- Methods (in multimethod or mixed methods research)

Second, you'll need to determine the **flow of topics**. For example, let's say your organizational approach is thematic; you then need to decide the order in which themes are covered. How does one theme lead to the next? What will make sense for readers? Will readers be able to follow along with your train of thought? I strongly advise coming up with several different possibilities regarding the order of topics and then selecting the plan you think will work the best. You will also need to make decisions about how you're going to use literature and theory. Are you frontloading it or interspersing it throughout the book? This affects the organization and flow, but also ultimately the content and how it will be received by readers.

Third, linked to the flow of topics, is the issue of **pacing**. How many topics do you plan to cover? How much space will you devote to each topic?

How much supporting data will be highlighted? How much data will be excerpted verbatim and how much will be summarized? How will you transition from one topic to the next?

When you're considering flow and pacing, this is really about how you're going to parcel out the story.

Finally, you'll need to decide what **approach or approaches to writing** you're using. As reviewed in Chapter 2, common approaches include writing:

- Descriptively and realistically
- Confessionally
- Impressionistically and literarily
- Analytically and formally
- Critically
- Collaboratively

It will be impossible to write a useful table of contents—or outline for the book—if you have not considered writing style. Your approach to writing influences the flow of topics, from how readers will enter the story to the conclusion. Let's consider Jessica Smartt Gullion's ethnographic research on fracking excerpted in Chapter 4. Her book *Fracking the Neighborhood* (2015) opens with a personal story about entering the field, written in the first person, and detailing the setting. Gullion's approach to writing was both confessional and descriptive. Without knowing the approach she was going to use to write the book, she would not have been able to decide to begin with a story about entering the field site.

In the process of writing a monograph, I don't think there's anything more critical than the table of contents. Once you've created this document, you've created a structure for your book and a plan for how to proceed. This document allows you to see the forest and the trees—the big picture of your book and all the components that help you paint that picture. It's invaluable.

Now that you have a detailed plan, it's time to write your book.

Writing: Preface to Conclusion

What does it take to write a book from this point on? Discipline. Rely on the writing routine you developed, as discussed in Chapter 1. Put it to work. Forget about the big picture of your book for the time being. Focus

on manageable, bite-size pieces. Armed with your table of contents—or writing guide, as I think of it—allot segments of writing time to working on sections of your book. Don't worry about writing chronologically (even if you're writing a chronological narrative). If you know exactly how you want to start the book, great. But most likely you won't, and that's okay. Don't worry about the introduction. Select any section of your book and begin there. Work section by section. You can string them together later. It's also useful to have easy access to your materials—data and literature. Cutting and pasting directly into your document is a time saver. Make sure to keep a running reference list as you go. It's much easier to add references to the list as you use them rather than to search for them later on.

During the drafting process, play, experiment, try things out. For example, use different literary tools. Develop metaphors, weave symbolism into the story, juxtapose different ideas. It doesn't matter if these all work out. Many won't. The only way to find what works is to take chances. Remember, you'll go through many rounds of revising, seeking feedback, and revising some more.

Revising is about both the forest and the trees. In other words, it's the time to focus on the big picture and the details. When you read your first draft and all subsequent drafts, consider the overall story. Does the essence of your research come through? Is there a clear narrative that can be followed? Does it all hang together? Is it coherent?

Revising is also the time to look at all the details. Get ruthless with your red pen—deleting unnecessary words, weeding out repetition, paying rigorous attention to language choices, moving sentences and sections around, varying sentence structures.

The primary big picture question is: Did I say what I wanted to say?

The primary small picture question is: Did I say it well?

✓✗ Dos and Don'ts: Writing a Book

- ✓ Do create a detailed table of contents.
- ✓ Do create a writing discipline and work on a section at a time.
- ✓ Do experiment, play, and try things out during drafting.
- ✓ Do revise many times.
- ✗ Don't fly by the seat of your pants.
- ✗ Don't get overwhelmed thinking about writing an entire book.
- ✗ Don't be afraid to try things out with your writing.
- ✗ Don't mistake a first draft for a final draft.

Let's look at a couple of in-depth examples from published books to see how different researchers organize their data, structure their narratives, and approach writing. I'm using fairly lengthy examples because books are lengthy. There are pacing issues associated with different writing approaches that we cannot get a proper feel for in short excerpts.

The following is an excerpt from Judith Davidson's (2014) book *Sexing: Gender and Teens*. The data come from a larger study about how adolescents are socialized to become sexual beings in the digital era. Davidson was part of a team of researchers who conducted research in three states. The study employed a mixed methods approach, using surveys and focus groups. Davidson's book focuses on what was learned about "sexting" from the qualitative data. The results are organized around the perspectives of four groups: teen girls, teen boys, parents, and other adults. The book is structured as follows: two opening chapters provide background information about the topic and the study. The following four chapters focus on the data—each chapter designed around one of the four groups. The final chapter is a conclusion, offering summary, recommendations, and additional thoughts.

The following excerpt is taken from Chapter 3, "Teen Girls and the Phenomenon of Sexting" (pp. 23–24). Other chapters are similarly structured.

How Girls Define Sexting

AMANDA: Sexting—I don't—it's kind of vague to me, because, you know, I've heard a lot about it on TV and news and stuff. It kind of went through a trend for a while, like everything—everybody was talking about all of these charges and stuff coming up, and I guess I don't really have a definition. I don't really know. Inappropriate things being texted or sent via text message?

INTERVIEWER: OK. Like what type of things?

AMANDA: Body parts. Inappropriate language—sexual language.

INTERVIEWER: OK. All right. So that's like some of the specific actions, and stuff like that. It sounds like that comes to mind when you hear the term "sexting." What about you, Brandi?

BRANDI: I agree with Amanda. I mean, I don't really have a basic definition, to summarize the whole sexting thing, but I hear a lot about it.

This quotation from a discussion with girls in South Carolina presents the basic confusion young people expressed when they tried to define sexting. The passage illustrates the variety of associations that clustered together as participants began to think about the topic, ranging from news coverage to technology and connections to sexuality.

In definitional discussions about sexting, there were probably as many questions as there were statements, and much of this questioning related to the relationship of technologies to sexting. Is sexting a text or a photo? Can it be a video? Does it refer to the sending, receiving, forwarding, or accepting? Cell phones are definitely involved, but what about the internet? Below, three young women from Massachusetts illustrate the complexities young people raised as they thought through the issues of technology and its relationship to the act of sexting.

HALEY: I'll admit that I did a 4–5 page research paper on this so I think I might know but before that I'll admit I thought it was sending naked pictures. I thought that's what sexting was. But now I believe it's sending, receiving or viewing of any sexually explicit text or images via a—

INTERVIEWER: A mobile device?

HALEY: A media device or anything like that. That's what I wrote in my paper and I got an A. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: So you're saying that it could be on not only cell phones but also on like computers and—

HALEY: Whatever else people have . . . Skype videos, yeah.

GABRIELLE: I feel like sexting is a very general term and it's almost directed toward texting but there are so many other ways that you can be sexual with people not just texting them. Like you can have phone sex or you can send pictures emailing or you can even like webcam with other people, so.

BECKY: I think it's just transformed over time. Because it used to be like dirty letters and then it just turned into pictures. Because when we were younger it was pictures because no one texted or had Skype or anything. But now every [*sic*] more technology, that's kind of like the downfall of technology because now you are so accessible to everyone that you can do whatever you want with technology and people are using it to do whatever they want.

From our discussions with girls about the definition of sexting, we learned that they generally considered sexting to be a fairly common practice among teens, although participation may vary widely from individual to individual. Girls viewed sexting as something that happens across the lifespan. They indicated that sexting can be regarded as nasty or reasonable, depending upon the context. Overall, girls were reluctant to define sexting narrowly as a particular form of technology or a specific form of sexuality. They were also reluctant to define it too rigidly in terms of relationships, morality, or danger. Indeed, sexting, like sex and intimacy, was a fluid concern in girls' minds.

From *Sexting: Gender and Teens* (pp. 23–24) by Judith Davidson. Copyright © 2014 Sense Publishers. Reprinted by permission.

Let's look at Davidson's writing choices based on the major features of qualitative writing reviewed in Chapter 2. She used third-person narration and an analytical and formal approach to writing, and she organized the data thematically. Each section opened with participants' own words, thereby highlighting their perspectives, which was a goal of the project. Excerpts from transcripts were used extensively throughout to illustrate researcher findings.

Let's look at another example, to see a different way of presenting a qualitative study in a book-length treatment. The following is an excerpt from Scott Richardson's (2015) book *Gender Lessons: Patriarchy, Sextyping and Schools*. With the aid of three field research assistants, Richardson conducted a multimethod ethnographic study focused on how schools institutionalize gender. The research was conducted in three schools (elementary, middle school, and high school), and observations were made in 45 classes. A range of qualitative methods were employed, primarily ethnography and interview. Although the subject matter and methodology differ from Davidson's, I've intentionally selected another topic related to young people and gender. The similarities in subject matter between the Davidson and Richardson excerpts serve to highlight the different writing styles.

Similar to Davidson's, Richardson's book is organized with two introductory chapters on the topic, methods, and setting, followed by three data-rich chapters (each devoted to a different school), and finally a concluding chapter centered on strategies for deinstitutionalization. Despite these structural similarities, there are stark differences in writing style and tone, which in turn affect content.

The following excerpt is taken from Chapter 3 “Josie Fisk Elementary School: An Anchoring” (pp. 53–56).

“How would you describe your school?” I asked Marisa, a pensive looking second grader.

“Adorable.”

I laughed, “adorable?”

“Uh-huh. Can I go jump rope with my friends now?”

“Of course! See you later.”

Marisa and I met for the first time during recess. We were introduced by a small group of girls, Jess, Ashley, Emma, and Gillian. These girls were “popular” and did not want to talk to me that day. We had many conversations prior, but they pawned me off on Marisa, a quiet girl I had been watching for quite some time.

Marisa had one frenemy—half-friend, half-enemy—in Dana, another quiet kid. They were in a deep and tangled love/hate relationship. Marisa and Dana lacked self-confidence, so they said terribly hurtful things to one another causing weeks of heartache. They were always on the “outside” of other groups at school. They definitely did not fit in with the “popular kids” and they knew it. They did, however, enjoy several of the boys, particularly nice ones who retained a childish sense of humor. The kind of boys who, at lunch, dipped their fingers into bar-b-que sauce and smeared it across their upper lips to don silly yet distinguished looking mustaches. They laughed and flashed smiles with large gaps where their baby teeth used to be. The boys gave these serious girls some comic relief throughout their otherwise stress filled days. It seemed that the boys could do something that Marisa and Dana could not do, and that they envied; they could “let go,” be silly, act as kids should act. Marisa and Dana hovered around the boys during lunch, recess, and other informal times like in the hallway or at “free time.” The boys liked Marisa and Dana because these two provided them with a giggling audience. However, the boys never really included the girls in their play. That was, except for Ian. Ian was an extraordinarily nice kid and tried to include Marisa and Dana in on any jokes. This meant he would chase them around and try to give them bar-b-que mustaches too.

Marisa was right, Josie Fisk Elementary School was adorable. It was located on the fringe of Bonstead, the small town located in the eastern part of the school district. The school was built in 1957,

and went through several renovations. It held its old-school charm. Classrooms were spacious and bright thanks to the large crank windows that lined the length of each one. Some classrooms had relics of decades past. Ms. Ferguson, a fourth grade teacher proudly fought off the janitor from replacing her large wooden teacher desk with a new one. “This desk has been here forever,” she explained to me. “Can you believe it was just going to be thrown out?! I love it! Look, I don’t know how far this goes back, but there are eleven teachers’ names carved on the inside of this drawer.”

Josie Fisk Elementary School, named after the first public librarian in Bonstead, sat up on a small hill, pushed back and off the busy thoroughfare of Green Street. About one-third of all students were driven to school by their parents. Another one-third were piped in on school busses. These kids lived in the more “rural” parts of the school zone. The remaining children walked with their parents or rode their bikes. The crush of cars, busses, bikes and foot traffic made 8:25 A.M., the start of the school day, quite chaotic. But parents, teachers on duty, “safety patrol”—a group of fifth grade kids trained to help the younger kids cross streets and stay safe—and adult crossing guards made the transit run smoothly. The assistant principal, Rob Drake, stood outside with a walkie-talkie, and greeted parents.

Every now and again, a kid or two would be deep into play and not hear the bell signaling students to line-up and wait for their teachers. Rob would make a lap around the school, and find these stragglers innocently playing on the playground or sitting among the trees of a small grove tucked into the deep pocket of a large field behind the school. This patch of trees, mostly mature red oak and pine, served in the evening hours as a spot for older kids who lived close by to meet up and make out. It was nicknamed “Grabby Grove” by several teachers years ago. Rob and the groundskeeper swept the area for random cans of cheap beer on Monday mornings. Rob told me,

“Every so often we even find underwear, usually girls’, and condoms. I kind of wish there were more condoms. Maybe it’s a reflection of our awful sex ed program in [Monroe] Valley. I’m sure our Fisk kids, especially our fifth and fourth graders know what happens back there. They probably have brothers and sisters who go back there and fool around. But I don’t think the younger kids have much of an idea. I’m sorta mixed about how I feel about ‘Grabby Grove’—shit, I hate that name. On one hand, it’s a wonderland, a place for our little kids to climb trees and catch bugs.

But, on the other hand . . . I don't know. It's just gross. I wish the district would just cut it all down some days."

The field, the bright yellows, reds, and blues of the playground equipment, the charming exterior architecture of the school, the old brick walkway from Green Street to the front of the building, the small vegetable garden on the west side of the building, and even Grabby Grove, made this place charming.

Parents loved this school, in part, because many of them attended Fisk as children. Families lived in this community for generations. Fisk holds fond memories, which are shared with their kids and other parents, especially around special school functions.

"I remember our basketball team was the shortest around . . . we were terrible, but old Coach Morlin made it so much fun. I think we lost twelve games and won one."

"Every April Fool's Day, the principal, Mr. Hayes, would play a trick on the teachers. My fifth grade teacher, this beautiful young woman, got it bad. I should say, I don't even know if this is true, but this is the story we all heard. Mr. Hayes sent her a bouquet of flowers and it was signed, 'Love, You Know Who.' So she thought it was this married man she had been flirting with for weeks. She went to his work and made a complete fool of herself."

"I loved our annual Christmas concert. Everyone got dressed up. Each class would do a short skit and song. I remember all of the old people, grandparents and their friends, would come and cheer us on. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the community."

This school was fiercely loved.

From *Gender Lessons: Patriarchy, Sextyping and Schools* (pp. 53–56) by Scott Richardson. Copyright © 2015 Sense Publishers. Reprinted by permission.

Richardson used a confessional approach to writing, providing readers with a backstage rendering of his experience in the field, as a firsthand observer and participant, complete with his personal, emotional responses to people and situations. The data are organized by cases (schools). Participants' interview transcripts and Richardson's ethnographic observations are used throughout—the different forms of data woven together with Richardson's story about the site and what we can learn from it. Rich description is also interspersed to "set the scene" and give readers an impression of what it's like to be there, in this setting.

In short, although there are structural similarities between Davidson's and Richardson's books, there are also stark differences. Davidson's book

reads analytically. Richardson's book reads narratively. This results in different reading experiences, tone, and content. Writing choices affect both *how* we say something and *what* we end up saying.

Finding and Pitching Book Publishers

The first decision you'll need to make is whether you are seeking an academic or a trade publisher.¹ Most researchers work with academic publishers.

Academic publishers are set up to publish scholarly books. They typically market to academic audiences and libraries. You can pitch directly to academic publishers by submitting a book proposal (reviewed shortly). Your book does not need to be complete, but if you're a new author, they may request one or more sample chapters. Tip: If you're turning your dissertation into a book, rewrite your sample chapter before submission. A dissertation chapter is not a book chapter. Seriously. Rewrite it.

Trade publishers are set up to reach general readers. You will be able to locate some who accept unsolicited submissions; however, most do not, and authors need a literary agent. The world of trade publishing is extremely competitive, as is getting an agent. This process is reviewed in more detail in Chapter 7. For the remainder of this chapter, I focus on academic publishers, which is the norm, although much of the advice regarding contracts and production holds true for any type of publisher.

When seeking a publisher, it's useful to make a long list. Casting a wide net gives you options. The review process differs greatly across publishing houses. Sometimes you'll hear back in a matter of a couple of weeks or months. Other times, it could take over a year. Submitting to multiple publishers maximizes your chances of getting offers and puts you in a better position to speed up a slow review process with stragglers and negotiate better contract terms. The best way to find places where your work fits is to look at the reference list for your book—who published the books you cite? Scour your bookshelf—who published other books on your topic? Do an online search for competing books and those that you admire. When sorting through the long list of potential publishers to narrow it down to your first “wish list” group, consider the following:

- Are you familiar with other books by this publisher?
- What is the production like (e.g., typesetting, cover, endorsements)?
- Does this publisher attend the major professional conferences in your discipline and subject area?

- Do they publish paperback books and ebooks for widely used online vendors? (If they only publish hardback, that indicates they are only seeking library sales and may not engage in broader marketing.)
- What is the price point of similar books?

If you know any authors who have worked with this publisher, contact them and ask about their experience. Also, consult the tenure and promotion policies at your institution. Some schools favor university presses. If you work as a consultant or independent scholar, you don't need to consider these things, but other things may be more important to you than to a professor—for example, marketing—if you need to earn income from the book. That said, my advice is to find the best publisher for your specific book—a publisher committed to the knowledge area, with competitive pricing and good marketing, and a genuine interest in your work. If a publisher gets behind a book, they can help it succeed, and at the end of the day, you want your book to find readers and be of use in the world.

Book Proposals

Once you have your list of potential publishers, consult their websites for instructions. Many academic publishers list proposal guidelines or provide a proposal form. Be sure to tailor each proposal to the specific publisher. In other words, give them exactly what they are asking for. In some instances, you'll find an acquisitions editor to whom you can submit a proposal, but no guidelines for doing so. Box 6.1 outlines the general sections of an academic book proposal.

Over the course of my career, I've served as series editor for 10 book series with four different kinds of academic publishers (university, independent, publicly traded, midsize). I've reviewed thousands of proposals for various kinds of books (monographs, textbooks, anthologies, literary works). There are a few common mistakes prospective authors make, which the following advice addresses.

First, put in the time. Write a thorough, well-researched proposal. First impressions matter. Don't rush it.

Second, the overview should clearly explain the proposed book and situate it within a broader knowledge field, showing why it is needed. It's a sales pitch.

Third, the market and competing books are vitally important, and this is where most authors make mistakes. Make sure to do your homework and list all the major, recent competing texts with full publication

BOX 6.1. The Components of an Academic Book Proposal

Title
Author name
Publisher name
Overview
Table of contents
Special features (if applicable)
The market
Competing books
Length of proposed book
Timeline
Author bio (or CV)

information. Include landmark texts as well if they are still in print. Some authors may be under the impression that by claiming there are no or few competing books, they are making a case that their book is unique and fills a gap. This is not the case, and they are missing the point. The competing-book section is vital to show that there is in fact an existing market for your book. The publication of competing books is proof of that market. Furthermore, a thorough competing-book section demonstrates that you know the field and have done your research. You can't possibly write a book on a topic if you aren't aware of and have not read the other major books on the topic. Finally, it's also important to consider tone. The goal is not to critique other books—I've read many proposals like that, and it's unpleasant at best and raises concerns about the kind of author you'll be working with. The goal is, however, to demonstrate how your proposed book offers something different from existing books. Again, many authors' proposals fall short in this section, either because of a lack of understanding of the intent or because they simply have not put in the work. In sum, a good competing-books section demonstrates (1) that there is a market, (2) your competence to write the book, and (3) how your book offers something unique.

Fourth, your bio should highlight what is most relevant to the proposed book (e.g., publications, research experience). This is not a place to be modest. Any special credentials or honors you've received should be noted.

For years people have asked me to share my book proposals. I'm glad to do so in the hopes that it will be helpful as you craft your own. In the box on pages 112–119 you will find the proposal for this very book. I have not revised it in any way—this is the actual document I sent to Guilford Press that resulted in the contract for this book. As you'll see, parts of it are already outdated (e.g., competing books, my bio). I also sought a 2-year extension for the book, as the pandemic upended my life, as it did for us all. More importantly, you'll notice that the book you're reading is clearly grounded in the original pitch, yet there are also considerable differences. Chapters have been reordered, content has been reorganized, and some subjects have shifted. Remember, a proposal, like an outline or table of contents, is meant as a guide, not a prison. Finally, I'd like to note that I have deep respect for all the authors listed in the competing-books section. The books noted are among the best in the field, many of which are cited throughout this book. I would not hesitate to recommend any of the listed books. The purpose of the competing-book section, however, is not to detail all the wonderful features of these books, but rather to indicate how my proposed book offers content they do not offer.

✓✗ Dos and Don'ts: Book Proposals

- ✓ Do follow instructions and put in the time.
- ✓ Do create a thorough competing-books section.
- ✓ Do highlight your qualifications to write the book.
- ✗ Don't rush the process.
- ✗ Don't bash other books/authors.
- ✗ Don't list the entire world or something else that's unrealistic as your market.

✍ Quick Writing Activity

Write a two-paragraph overview section of a book proposal pitching your research as a book. The first paragraph should focus on the field/topic/subject and the second on your proposed book. You know more about your topic and your project than you may realize, so don't fret. Just write what you know. It's meant as an exercise, or a way to begin a proposal that will be revised many times.

Writing and Publishing Qualitative Research

Book Proposal Submitted to The Guilford Press

PATRICIA LEAVY, PhD

OVERVIEW

Over the past ten years, at conferences, on social media, and by email, students and colleagues alike have sought me out for publishing advice. There is hardly a day that passes that I'm not asked for writing or publishing advice, by scholars I've never met. The queries vary dramatically but typical questions have been: How do I find a publisher? How do I write a good book proposal? What do I do when a journal editor wants revisions I don't agree with? What do I do when an editor won't respond to me? How do I publish my research as fiction? Do I need an agent? How do you fit writing into your schedule? What's your writing routine? How do you get started writing? How do I submit an article to a newspaper or magazine? How do I promote my work so people will actually read it? What does X mean in my book contract? The list goes on and on. What I've gleaned from the daily onslaught of questions is that there isn't enough useful instruction out there about how to write and publish our work. This is why I want to write this book.

Writing and Publishing Qualitative Research will be a contemporary, comprehensive guide and one-stop-shop for writing and publishing qualitative research. All qualitative researchers need to write and publish. Research needs a form and needs to be made available to others in order to matter. However, despite a plethora of books on how to do qualitative research, there are only a small handful on how to write qualitative research. Each of these books has its own limitations. None address the possibilities for representation in today's world in which a qualitative researcher may be an academic author, a blogger, a social media personality, a playwright, a poet, or a novelist. Furthermore, none of the books on the market adequately address publishing. At most, they offer a short chapter or more often merely a few words about publishing. However, writing and publishing are ultimately interlinked and both are necessary parts of going from "data" that exist on our computer or in our desk drawer, to "findings" that benefit others. From finding appropriate publishers to crafting strong proposals to the art of the pitch to understanding

major terms in publishing contracts to developing relationships with publishers, students and researchers need guidance. With all of this in mind, *Writing and Publishing Qualitative Research* will be the first book to provide ample instruction on both writing and publishing.

TENTATIVE TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

Part I: The Basics of Why We Write and How to Begin

Chapter 1: Why We Write Qualitatively

(Coverage includes: why we tell stories, distinguishing qualitative from other forms of writing, the genres that use qualitative research from newspaper articles to academic journal articles, what makes for good writing)

Chapter 2: How We Get Started Writing

(Coverage includes: how to begin writing, writing prompts, scheduling writing time and developing a writing discipline, the phases of writing including outlining, drafting, rewriting and revising, when and how to seek feedback (e.g., writing with the door closed and rewriting with the door open, Stephen King)

Chapter 3: Writing Lenses: Paradigms, Theory, and Literature

(Coverage includes: how we deal with data collected from different research methods, how different paradigms influence the writing process, how to move from analysis and interpretation to writing about findings, different ways to incorporate theory and literature reviews)

Chapter 4: Determining Audience and Cultivating Our Voice

(Coverage includes: developing our own unique writing style, the specific features of writing that influence our style [e.g., tone, language, metaphors/similes, narrative structure], how to determine our goals and who we are writing for, how the audience influences the writing style and format)

Part II: Writing and Publishing Instruction

Chapter 5: Writing and Publishing Academic Journal Articles

(Coverage includes: how to organize an article, everything you

Writing and Publishing Qualitative Research (*cont.*)

need to know about writing a journal article from the keywords and abstract to the conclusion, how to tell the story in the required page length, how to deal with quantitative data in MMR [mixed methods research] studies, finding appropriate journals, what the typical publication process entails, how to deal with challenges including reviewer comments you don't agree with or a process that isn't timely)

Chapter 6: Writing and Publishing Academic Books

(Coverage includes: how to organize a table of contents, everything you need to know about writing an academic book from the preface to the conclusion, how to flesh out the story while maintaining a clear narrative, finding and pitching appropriate book publishers, what key terms and issues in book contracts to understand [e.g., copyright transference, right of first refusal, ebooks vs. epublishing], monetary terms in book contracts [e.g., flat or sliding-scale royalties, advances, grants, indexes, permissions fees], how to work well with your editor, the production process [including how to work well with your copyeditor], how to market your book)

Chapter 7: Writing and Publishing in Literary Forms

(Coverage includes: how to select a format [e.g., novel, short story, play], everything you need to know about writing a piece of literature beginning with developing the plot and storyline to completing a cohesive and incisive narrative, how to use literary tools to strengthen creative writing, what trade publishing means and entails, finding and pitching appropriate literary agents or book publishers [including when you need an agent], key terms and issues in trade contracts for fiction [will only include what differs in book contracts from previous chapter], how to work well with your agent and/or editor, the production process [including how to work well with your copyeditor], how to market your book)

Chapter 8: Writing and Publishing Blogs and Op-Eds

(Coverage includes: the promises and challenges of writing for public audiences, everything you need to know about writing a blog or op-ed for popular audiences including crafting your topic, creating a catchy title, organizing the article, voice and how one writes for the public, and what's important to include in each paragraph, how to

find appropriate online or print venues, the submission process [what to do and what to expect], how to make the most of your piece once it's published [including using social media])

Chapter 9: Building a Career and Going Public

(Coverage will include the structure and requirements of advancing in academia [tenure and promotion], the issue of “impact,” building a body of work and developing your profile as a writer [including advice about professional websites, social media, and use of sites such as academia.edu], how to take your research and write in multiple formats [e.g., how one study might become a peer reviewed article and an op-ed], the strengths and weaknesses of the different formats for writing and considerations one makes as they put their work in print, dealing with crossover work that has both academic and trade audiences, final advice about the joys of writing and the importance of developing your own relationship with your work)

PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES

This book will be written in a friendly, engaging tone, and will avoid unnecessary jargon. There will be robust examples of work published by leading qualitative researchers across the disciplines [including from academic texts, literary works, blogs and other popular forms of writing]. I will also draw on my personal experience as a book series creator and editor, journal co-editor, novelist, blogger, and academic author in order to provide useful tips and tools.

Each chapter will include “Dos and Don’ts” boxes that offer quick tips based on chapter coverage (e.g., dos and don’ts when pitching to an academic editor).

There will be “Quick Writing Activities” throughout each chapter, meant to take 5–10 minutes. These will be designed to review specific concepts as they arise and to help readers develop a practice around “jottings.”

Each chapter will conclude with a “Checklist of Considerations.”

At the end of each chapter there will be several robust writing activities designed to get readers practicing the areas reviewed in the chapter and to help them cultivate their voice and develop a discipline around writing.

Writing and Publishing Qualitative Research (cont.)

APPENDICES

The book will include a list of suggested print and online resources.

THE MARKET

Upper-level undergraduate courses and graduate courses in qualitative research or research methods in the social and behavioral sciences; individual students working on their thesis or dissertation; individual researchers at any career level; libraries; general readers interested in writing and publishing.

COMPETING BOOKS

Writing Up Qualitative Research (3rd ed.), Harry F. Wolcott, Sage Publications, 2009.

Unfortunately, this author is deceased and there will no longer be new editions of this text, which is already outdated.

Writing Qualitative Inquiry: Self, Stories, and Academic Life, H. L. Goodall, Jr., Left Coast Press, 2008.

Unfortunately, this author is deceased and there will no longer be new editions of this text, which is already outdated.

Writing Qualitatively: The Selected Works of Johnny Saldaña, Johnny Saldaña, Routledge, 2018.

This book is mostly a collection of reprinted works. Coverage does not include many of the topics I'm proposing such as publishing advice (books and journals), writing fiction, writing in popular forms, and social media.

Successful Academic Writing: A Complete Guide for Social and Behavioral Scientists, Anneliese A. Singh and Lauren Lukkarila, Guilford Press, 2017

This text offers significantly different coverage than my proposed text. This book does not focus exclusively on qualitative research and there is no instruction on publishing beyond academic journal articles nor any coverage of social media, writing in popular forms, or writing in artistic forms.

How to Write Qualitative Research, Marcus B. Weaver-Hightower, Routledge, expected September 24, 2018

This book has not yet been released but based on the table of contents online and the author's publishing experience, it does not seem this book will include coverage of many of the topics I'm proposing such as writing fiction, writing in popular forms, and social media.

Doing and Writing Qualitative Research (3rd ed.), Adrian Holliday, Sage Publications, 2016

This is a book both about conducting and writing qualitative research so the writing coverage is fairly limited. There is no instruction on publishing nor any coverage of social media, writing in popular forms, or writing in artistic forms.

Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography (2nd ed.), John Van Maanen, The University of Chicago Press, 2011

This is a classic text but it is highly limited in scope relative to the book I am proposing. This book focuses exclusively on academic writing in ethnography.

Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes (2nd ed.), Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw, The University of Chicago Press, 2011

This book is centered entirely on writing fieldnotes, with one chapter devoted to writing an ethnography. It's highly limited in scope relative to the book I am proposing, and in fact I would consider this a book about how to do ethnography, not a writing text.

Writing Ethnography, Jessica Smartt Gullion, Sense Publishers, 2016

This book is more limited in scope relative to the book I am proposing. This book focuses exclusively on academic writing in ethnography and is not a general book on writing or publishing qualitative research.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

My series editor contract with Brill/Sense allows me to reprint up to 2,500 words from any of the books in the five series I edit for Brill/Sense, without fees or obtaining permission (just citing the original source). This puts me in a unique position to write this book and include robust excerpts from leading texts about qualitative writing,

Writing and Publishing Qualitative Research (cont.)

exemplars of qualitative and arts-based research, and examples of public forms of writing. The series I created/edit include: *Teaching Writing*, *Personal/Public Scholarship*, and *Social Fictions*, in which leading qualitative researchers have published. The ability to liberally reprint without permissions fees will be an enormous value added.

Estimated Page Length: 275–325 manuscript pages

Delivery Date: June 1, 2021

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patricia Leavy, PhD, is an independent sociologist and methodology expert (formerly Associate Professor of Sociology, Chair of Sociology and Criminology, and Founding Director of Gender Studies at Stonehill College). She has published 25 books, including academic texts and novels. She has earned critical and commercial success in both nonfiction and fiction. Her work has been translated into numerous languages.

Relevant sole-authored and sole-edited books include: *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research* (first and second editions, Oxford University Press), *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice* (first and second editions, Guilford Press), *Fiction as Research Practice* (Routledge), *Essentials of Transdisciplinary Research: Using Problem-Centered Methodologies* (Routledge), *Oral History: Understanding Qualitative Research* (Oxford University Press), *Handbook of Arts-Based Research* (Guilford Press), and *Handbook of Methods for Public Scholarship* (in press, Oxford University Press) and the best-selling academic novels *Low-Fat Love* (first and second editions, Brill/Sense), *American Circumstance* (first and second editions, Brill/Sense), and *Blue* (Brill/Sense).

Relevant coauthored and coedited books include: *Contemporary Feminist Research from Theory to Practice* (Guilford Press), *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (first and second editions, Sage Publications), *Emergent Methods in Social Research* (Sage Publications),

Handbook of Emergent Methods (Guilford Press), *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer* (Sage Publications), *Approaches to Qualitative Research: A Reader on Theory and Practice* (Oxford University Press), and the research-based short story collection *Low-Fat Love Stories* (Brill/Sense).

She is the creator and editor for seven book series, including *Social Fictions*, *Personal/Public Scholarship*, *Teaching Gender*, *Teaching Race and Ethnicity* and *Teaching Writing* for Brill/Sense and *Understanding Qualitative Research* and *Research to the Point* for Oxford University Press. Known for her commitment to public scholarship, she is frequently called on by the national news media and has been quoted in over 200 newspapers (e.g., *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*), has appeared on radio and national television news programs, and has authored op-eds. She also maintains her own blog and has regular blogs for *The Huffington Post*, *The Creativity Post*, *Mogul*, and *We Are the Real Deal*. Her most popular pieces have more than 25,000 downloads and have been widely shared on social media. She has a dedicated social media following of over 13,000 distinct followers across social media platforms.

For her work advancing methodology and public scholarship, she has received the following awards: The New England Sociological Association 2010 New England Sociologist of the Year, the American Creativity Association 2014 Special Achievement Award, the Qualitative SIG of the American Educational Research Association 2015 Egon Guba Memorial Keynote Lecture and Award, the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry 2015 Special Career Award (she is the youngest recipient), the American Educational Research Association 2018 Division D Significant Contributions to Measurement and Research Methodology Award, the National Art Education Association 2018 Distinguished Service Outside the Profession Award. Her nonfiction and fiction books have also received numerous national and international awards. In 2016, *Mogul*, a global women's empowerment platform, named her an "Influencer." In 2018 she was honored by the National Women's Hall of Fame for her pioneering work in methodology. Also in 2018, the State University of New York at New Paltz established the annual "Patricia Leavy Award for Art and Social Justice."

Book Contracts

When a publisher tells you they are going to offer you a book contract, it's prudent to have an initial conversation about your expectations. This conversation may actually center on issues that won't appear in your contract. For example, you may want to know whether they plan to publish your book in paperback, hardback, and/or as an ebook. Sometimes authors are surprised when their academic book comes out only as an expensive hardcover (which means the publisher intends it primarily for library sales). These things should not come as a surprise, however, if you have these conversations up front. Likewise, if the price point is important to you (e.g., you want the book to be affordable for students), you should (1) do your homework and see how they have priced similar books and (2) ask them what they anticipate the price point will be.

Carefully review your book contracts. Don't sign anything you don't understand. If you ask your editor or anyone at the publishing house for clarification regarding any of the terms in the contract, I highly recommend you have the conversation via email and retain a printed copy along with your book contract. Of course, if you have the ability to do so, you can always seek the advice of an intellectual property attorney. Most academic authors do not do this, and it's perfectly fine to skip this step if you feel comfortable with your understanding of the agreement you're entering into. If you do seek legal counsel for an academic book contract, make sure the attorney understands that it is not a trade book, as those often have very different boilerplate terms. Remember, should you seek advice from an attorney, or for that matter a colleague, you are gathering information. It does not mean you have to bring any or all of the concerns they raise to the publisher. At the end of the day, you will need to use your own judgment. The question I am most asked is: Can I negotiate? Yes. Everything in a book contract is open for negotiation. Everything.

I'm not an attorney and in no way should you substitute my judgment for your own or legal counsel; however, based on my experience, I would like to point out a few terms that are likely to appear in your book contracts, which I feel are important. Please bear in mind that the specific language in any given book contract may vary.

Transference of Copyright. Typically, academic publishers require that you transfer copyright to them. This means that they now own the work. You will not have the right to use portions of that work in any way without seeking their formal permission to do so. Sometimes you can negotiate to

retain copyright (and license the book) or come to a shared copyright agreement, but this is not the norm.

Right of First Refusal. This clause means that you have to offer your next book to the publisher before you can seek an alternative publisher. Because it's often so difficult to get a book contract, particularly for a first book, and authors can face extensive rejections, people are often happy to sign this clause without necessarily fully understanding the implications. Personally, I have this clause stricken from each one of my book contracts. I believe this advantages publishers and disadvantages authors. If your current book does well with the publisher and you have a good relationship with them, you can pitch them your next book anyway. Most publishers are interested in long-term relationships. However, if you are dissatisfied with the job they do, from price to production to marketing, you may be stuck giving them your next book if you have signed a contract including this clause.

Noncompete. This clause means that you cannot publish a book that competes with the existing book for which you are contracted. It's very important that the scope of the noncompete is clearly delineated in the contract. If the noncompete is too broad, it could prevent you from pursuing other publishing endeavors in your field. It's also important to understand the time period to which the noncompete applies, which may be as long as the book is in print.

There are also a range of financial terms to be worked out in the contract. It's important to be realistic about where you are in your career, the level of name recognition you have, and realistic sales expectations for your book. The whole world is not a market for your book, nor is an entire field of study. It just doesn't work that way. Sometimes authors have unrealistic views of potential audience. The vast majority of all published books only sell a couple hundred copies. If you're not sure about some of these things, you can ask the publisher what their sales expectation is for both the first year and lifetime sales and what they are planning for the first print run (how many copies they will initially print). You can also talk to colleagues about their book sales and financial terms. Some folks will be willing to share that information.

Royalties. Royalties are the primary way authors are paid. This term refers to the percentage of profit you are entitled to for each copy sold. Royalties can be structured either as a flat rate (e.g., 10% for all copies

sold) or on a sliding scale (e.g., 5% up to 1,000 copies, 10% for copies 1,001–3,000, and 15% on all copies thereafter). Typically authors receive a royalty statement and payment annually or biannually, which is specified in the book contract. There are additional related issues.

- **Bulk sales.** There may be lower royalties or no royalties offered on sales offered at a highly discounted price (typically at 50% off or at cost).

- **Licensing.** When other publishers seek to reprint parts of your book, they will seek permission from your publisher, who may charge them fees for this usage. You are entitled to a percentage of these fees (typically publishers offer 25–50%).

- **Foreign translations.** When a foreign publisher seeks to translate your book, they will enter into a contract with your publisher. Financial terms may include an advance or a nonrecoupable licensing fee (the former is tied to royalties, the latter is not) and royalties. You are entitled to a percentage of these payments (typically publishers offer 40–50%, but some offer much lower rates).

- **Ebooks and epublishing.** Authors may confuse these terms as referring to the same thing. However, there are key distinctions between ebooks and publishing (or digital publishing). An ebook, much like a paperback or hardback, is sold as an individual unit for which an author receives royalties. Other forms of epublishing may involve including a book in an online digital repository, platform, or archival system. The online repository might be owned by your publisher or another entity. When books are made available in this format, they may be downloaded innumerable times. In some instances, publishers pay royalties on these downloads that are akin to how streaming services compensate musicians. In other instances, there may be no compensation for these downloads. It's important to understand your publisher's practices in these areas and the terms in your contract. It is possible to negotiate for an embargo on digital copies of your work, thereby preventing your publisher from distributing your book in this format for a predetermined amount of time (e.g., 12 months, 24 months, 36 months, permanently).

- **Advances.** This is a lump-sum payment tied to future royalty earnings. In other words, you will not earn any royalties on your book until this amount has been recouped (paid back). Advances may be paid at the time the contract is signed or at the time the final manuscript is delivered to and accepted by your publisher, or these payments may be split with part paid when the contract is signed and the remainder paid when you deliver the final manuscript.

■ **Grants.** This is a lump-sum payment that is not tied to future royalty earnings. It is the equivalent of a signing bonus. Like advances, these may be paid at the time the contract is signed or at the time the final manuscript is delivered to and accepted by your publisher, or these payments may be split. Grants are typically only paid for textbooks or large reference works (e.g., handbooks) and not for monographs or smaller anthologies. If you are working on a textbook or large reference work, I highly recommend negotiating the best possible grant, as this money is guaranteed, whereas royalties and advances are unknown.

■ **Gratis copies.** Your publisher will provide you with complimentary copies of your book, which could range from a few copies to a couple dozen. Typically your contract also specifies that you are entitled to buy additional copies at a significant discount (usually around 35% off). If you are working on an anthology or any kind of book that will include other contributors, your contract should also specify that each contributor will receive a complimentary copy of the book (and the contract should state what format, e.g., paperback, ebook).

■ **Permission fees.** If you will need to reprint excerpts from other books, journals, magazines, or artwork, you will need to seek permission to do so. There may be fees attached to using these works. If you anticipate that this will be the case with your book, you can negotiate for a permissions budget in your contract. For the average academic book, these budgets may range from \$250–\$2,500.

■ **Indexes.** Your publisher may require an index, or you may want to include one with your book. The contract should specify whether the publisher will prepare the index at their expense or whether the author must do so. If you anticipate an index will be necessary for your book, you can negotiate up front for the publisher to prepare it at their expense.

Beyond the issues mentioned above, there may be other things that are important to you. Most book contracts have or can have an additional section on “special considerations” or the like, in which specific agreements can be noted. For example, you may want to have creative input on the cover design. Often, publishers retain the right to change book titles and choose any cover they like. There are, however, academic publishers that will tell you up front whether you will be involved in cover design. If nothing is mentioned in your book contract, you should have this conversation with your editor if it’s an important issue. You can also ask for whatever you agree on to be noted in the book contract. As another example, if you have original visual artwork or photographs in the book, you may want the

right to use those in other ways (e.g., on a website, in an art show). This should be specified in your contract.

My five biggest pieces of advice regarding book contracts are: (1) have conversations up front with your publisher about your expectations; (2) understand what you are signing; (3) be realistic about financial terms based on where you are in your career and the sales expectations for your book; (4) remember that everything is open to negotiation (and you may have to push back during multiple rounds of negotiations); and (5) be willing to walk away if it's not the right fit.

With respect to the last point, authors often refer to their books as their “babies.” Well, you wouldn't leave your human baby with any random person who offered to watch them. You'd do due diligence to find the right caregiver. The same holds true for finding the right publisher for your book. After all, at the end of the day, the publisher is the caretaker of your work. Do your best to make sure your book is in good hands.

✓✗ Dos and Don'ts: Contracts

- ✓ Do have conversations up front with your editor about issues that are important to you.
- ✓ Do ask for clarification of terms you don't understand and retain records of responses.
- ✓ Do negotiate fair terms.
- ✗ Don't sign anything you don't understand.
- ✗ Don't have unrealistic expectations regarding financial terms.
- ✗ Don't be afraid to walk away from the wrong deal.

Developing a Relationship with Your Editor

The author–editor relationship is at the heart of book publishing. Editors not only “sign” your book, but they also offer critical guidance and feedback throughout the entire process and view your book with their unique editorial eye, providing insights and suggestions no one else could. They are an author's touchstone. Good editors are invaluable. The more they believe in a book and get behind it, the better the outcome. Although there's certainly no rule that you have to be friends with your editor, you should develop a strong professional relationship. Think about this potential relationship from the outset when you approach an editor and pitch your project by email or at a conference. Be professional and courteous. Show your enthusiasm for

your book idea and for the larger field of which it is a part. Take the editor's feedback to heart. Qualitative researchers are adept at building trust and rapport with research participants. Do the same with your editor.

Also bear in mind that developing a relationship with your editor is one avenue for developing a long-term relationship with your publisher. I'm a big believer in finding the right publisher for each book. At the same time, I also believe there are tremendous benefits to developing a long-term relationship with a publisher, when it's a good partnership. I've worked with about 10 publishers for the 40 or so books I've published to date. Some only briefly. Others, I've worked with on 10 or more books for 10, 15, or 20 years.

The Production Process



What happens when you submit your manuscript to your editor? This process varies from publisher to publisher, but it often involves receiving feedback from your editor and/or anonymous reviewers. The more feedback you garner at this stage, the better. Although positive reviews are always lovely to receive and make us feel good, the truth is that constructively written critical reviews are far more useful. At this stage, you still have an opportunity to strengthen your manuscript. Any comments and suggestions that help you to do so are a gift. Try to maintain that frame of mind when you read reviewer comments. It's often useful to read reviews and stew on them for a few days before addressing them, allowing your emotional response to lessen. Try to keep your eye on the big picture: producing the best possible book.

When your publisher accepts your final manuscript, it will undergo copyediting. Please note that, although most publishers have manuscripts professionally copyedited, there are some that do not. Every book needs a copyeditor. If your publisher does not provide this service, you can hire a copyeditor before submitting your manuscript. No one can copyedit their own book. A friend can't do it, either. Professional copyediting is specific and necessary. Again, most publishers provide this service, and you can certainly inquire about this before signing a book contract. Copyeditors will make grammatical corrections, verify references, and the like. The best copyeditors will also make substantive suggestions. These comments may include suggesting rewording a sentence or paragraph, pointing out something confusing or that may otherwise need to be changed, highlighting an issue of tone you may be unaware of, or pointing out global observations (e.g., the overuse of a particular word or phrasing across the manuscript).

Copyeditors' sole purpose is to help your manuscript sparkle. There's no reason to be defensive. Of course, there may be certain edits you disagree with; however, think carefully before rejecting suggestions, and make sure your decision is driven by what is best for the book.

If you have special notes or requests for your copyeditor, it's best to submit those before the copyediting process begins. For example, if you capitalize a word that is not always capitalized (e.g., racial categories, the name of a concept or theory), you should let them know in advance. As another example, if you use nonbinary pronouns, you may want to bring that to their attention. Likewise, if there is something you are concerned about (e.g., whether a particular section makes sense or evokes the tone you intend), you can ask the copyeditor to take an extra look at that.

Although the copyediting process can be frustrating at times, it's a huge asset, and you should take full advantage of it. Don't leave anything to chance. Put in the effort. By the time you reach copyediting, you may feel mentally "done" with the project. In fact, you may have felt this way for a long time, as writers often hit a wall at some point in draft development where they just desperately want to be done. Some authors may rush through the copyedits and later the final page proofs or, worse, fail to review them (an especially easy trap with page proofs as there may not be any queries to you, so you're the only one who will know if you read them). Trust me, carefully review and respond to copyedits.

Finally, review the page proofs—all rounds. If you can read the final proofs twice, do so. Seriously. No matter how many people have read the book and how many times you have, errors can still happen, typos can be overlooked, words can shift during typesetting. Even when you read books from *The New York Times* bestseller list, you'll often catch errors. As an author who has invested so much time and effort into conducting research and writing it up, it's extremely frustrating to catch these errors once the book has been published. So do your best to minimize this experience. Also, if these errors exist because you didn't at least try to proof your work, you'll kick yourself. I'm truly embarrassed to say I've been there. Here's a confession I've never made before. When I published my first solo book, based on my dissertation, I didn't understand the necessity of reviewing every round of typeset pages. I was also overwhelmed with a high teaching load, service to my college, and being a parent to a young child. Those were my excuses. So, I skipped final proofing. Naturally, the book came out with glaring errors which I've had to live with ever since, and which mortify me. Please learn from my mistakes. Carefully and thoroughly review all copyedits and page proofs. If you need to ask your publisher to extend your production schedule to accommodate these rounds of review, do so.

Marketing

■ ■ ■

I would be remiss not to add something about what happens when your book is released (after you dance around your office in utter glee). Chapter 9 provides more detailed advice about building a career—which, yes, involves marketing, but for now, here are a few things to consider. Let people know about your book. Email colleagues, notify your department and university’s media relations office so they can share the news on their webpages, share on social media, update your website and CV. Talk about your book at professional conferences, and always let your publisher know which conferences you’ll be attending. Fill out any marketing materials in detail from your publisher to assist them in their efforts (e.g., listing journals that might review your book). Authors often rely on publishers to do all the marketing. This is a mistake. Although it’s great to work closely with your publisher to learn about their efforts and share your suggestions, the reality is that most books receive far less marketing than you may expect. Your book needs you to sing its praises. No one will ever understand or care about your book as much as you do, which makes you the ideal person to trumpet it.

Conclusion

■ ■ ■

Writing a book is exciting. It’s also daunting. Remember, you’ve done the bulk of the work. You’ve carried out a qualitative research project. Writing is always easier when you have more to say, and you’ve got plenty to say. Stay grounded in the data. The key is to take it one step at a time. Put in the effort to create a thorough table of contents. Draft section by section. Rely on your writing discipline by creating a writing routine and workspace. Revise with an eye on the big picture and the details. Be ruthless. Revising makes our work shine.



Checklist of Considerations

- ☒ Decide what type of book you are writing.
- ☒ Prepare a detailed table of contents.
 - Determine the organization of the data/findings.
 - Organize the flow of topics.
 - Consider your pacing.
 - Decide on your approach or approaches to writing.

- ☑ Draft your book.
 - Rely on your writing discipline.
 - Work on a section at a time.
 - Play, experiment, try things out.
- ☑ Engage in rounds of revision and seeking feedback.
 - Keep the big picture in mind—the overarching story.
 - Edit for small picture details—language, sentence structure.
- ☑ Determine what type of publisher you want.
- ☑ Make a long list of potential publishers.
- ☑ Craft a thorough book proposal following the publisher's instructions.
 - Put in the time.
 - Work on the overview.
 - Compile a well-researched competing-books list.
 - Highlight your qualifications to write the book.
- ☑ Make sure you understand a book contract before signing.
- ☑ Develop trust and rapport with your editor.
- ☑ Be involved with the production process.
 - Take full advantage of copyediting (which is a must).
 - Review all rounds of proofs.
- ☑ Market/promote your book.
 - Notify colleagues.
 - Notify your university.
 - Share on social media.
 - Share at conferences.



Writing Activities

1. Write a detailed table of contents for your book. Include chapter titles and section titles. Note which data, literature, and other sources will be used in each section of each chapter. Play around with the order of topics.
2. Draft one section of your book. Not even a whole chapter, just a section. Depending on the topic, it could be a few paragraphs or many pages. Focus on your writing approach and the part of the story you're trying to relay.
3. Write a book proposal aimed at an academic publisher. Remember, this is a pitch. Do all the necessary research to write a strong proposal that includes a section on the market and a complete list of competing books.

Note

1. Self-publishing and hybrid publishers are two additional options. These are reviewed in Chapter 7, on writing in literary forms. Although these methods of publishing can work very well for fiction, they are far less common and less desirable for academic nonfiction. That said, I'm a believer that if one path does not work out, try another.

CHAPTER 7

Writing and Publishing in Literary Forms



*The idea is to write it so that people hear
it and it slides through the brain and goes
straight to the heart.*

—MAYA ANGELOU (in Darling, 1981)

Of the various formats for representing qualitative research reviewed in this book, the literary form, or fiction, is perhaps considered by some the most innovative, controversial, or marginal. None of this is true. Writing up research in literary forms is not new. There's a rich history of scholars using literary writing as a means of building and communicating their theories, research, and ideas. Consider, for example, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Zora Neale Hurston, and W. E. B. Du Bois. These legendary scholars each wrote many novels, novellas, short stories, plays, and other creative works espousing their research. Sartre was even awarded the Nobel Prize for that very kind of work (although he declined to accept it). There are countless other examples, including many who are lesser known. The historical novel is a genre in its own right, as historical research has long been presented through fiction. So, although journal articles and academic books such as monographs and anthologies are considered the most conventional and widely accepted formats for representing research, they are by no means the only legitimate options.

Over the last decade or more, there has been a dramatic increase in or resurgence of the practice of merging qualitative research and literature.¹ This increase can largely be attributed to the rise of narrative inquiry, auto-ethnography, and arts-based research—all of which have been changing the

landscape of qualitative research for the last several decades. Researchers who use these approaches do so for many reasons and in a variety of ways. They tend to have a common desire to breathe humanity into their work, to tell stories (their own and those of others) in more truthful, engaged, and resonant ways, and to do work that has the potential to increase connectivity and reflection. For example, narrative researchers attempt to avoid the objectification of research participants and aim to preserve the complexity of human experience (Josselson, 2006). Arthur Bochner and Andrew Herrmann (2020) understand narrative inquiry to “humanize the human sciences.”

The increase in the practice of combining qualitative research and literature can also be attributed to the widespread push toward public scholarship across academia. Most simply, public scholarship is that which is available outside the academy. Lay citizens have access to public scholarship in two regards: It circulates in spaces to which they have access *and* it’s understandable (Leavy, 2011a, 2019, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). The move to popularize research has made scholars reconsider the outcomes of their work, which has given way to many new ways to represent research, including the increased use of fiction and drama. Whereas journal articles and monographs may be inaccessible to the public, fiction can be read by virtually anyone.

This was a driving factor in my turn to fiction. For years I collected interview research with women about their identities, relationships, body image, and self-esteem struggles. It became clear to me that my research findings would never reach the kinds of women I had interviewed, for whom my work might be beneficial. So, I wrote my debut novel, *Low-Fat Love* (2011b, 2021d). As it turned out, the novel found wide readership both within and outside the academy and resonated with many readers. The following excerpt introduces the protagonist, Prilly. It’s meant to show her emotional center, how she feels about herself, and how her self-concept developed in the context of commercial media.

■ That night when Prilly entered her apartment she immediately kicked
 ■ off her comfort heels and slipped on her at-home uniform: Old Navy
 ■ black pajama pants and worn-out Ugg boots. She poured a glass of
 ■ Beaujolais and lay on the couch. Remote in hand, she flipped between
 ■ her usual stations and landed on *Access Hollywood*. They were fea-
 ■ turing a story about Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. She always bought
 ■ tabloids when they were on the cover. Although she despised the idea
 ■ that they were mostly adored for their good looks, she was fascinated.
 ■ Sometimes she fantasized about what Angelina’s life was like. More

than any other celebrity, Angelina seemed to have it all. She was ridiculously gorgeous, the kind of beauty that doesn't seem to go out of style or age. She had lived a wild life, and now she had a massive, multicultural family (that she probably never had to take care of with all her nannies, assistants, and so forth), a fabulous partner who undoubtedly worshipped her, and an amazing career. Somehow she had managed to be both an artist and a commercial success, or at least she could reasonably claim to be both. People admired her. People like Prilly. As Prilly watched the story she felt a familiar storm cloud of envy, longing, and self-loathing.

Access Hollywood was just the prelude to whatever “movie of the week” she could find. Tonight she was watching a Lifetime movie about a woman who worked as a newspaper reporter and, while reporting on a local crime, became the next target of a psychopath. As Prilly picked up each forkful of the vegetable stir-fry she made during the commercials, she couldn't help but think, *In some ways the reporter is lucky. At least her life is exciting.*

Prilly lived in between who she was and who she wanted to be. She had moved to Manhattan from Boston in search of a *big life*. She had always felt she was meant to have a big life. To date, at the age of thirty, she had barely lived a small life. Although she was an atheist, she blamed God for all her problems (when she wasn't blaming her parents). She thought it all came down to looks, to genetics. She was convinced that beautiful people have a much greater shot at a big life. Ugly people have no shot. People somewhere in the middle, which is where she was firmly located, had to work hard for it, but it *was* possible. So ever since Prilly was about seven years old and she realized that she was regular looking at best, she blamed God and her parents for her lot in life. As a teenager, she admired the beautiful, popular girls. To her, they had been graced with the best gift of all: the gift of possibility. When you are beautiful, all you have to do is add on to that to get what you want, to be who you want to be. When you aren't beautiful, you spend your life making up for it, filling in what is lacking. Compensating. At times Prilly even envied the ugly girls. If you are ugly and know it, you have no hope for a big life. Ultimately, that could be very freeing. You could focus on being content with your life as it is. Ugly girls don't have to waste time or money with makeup, hair care, exercise, beauty treatments, and fashion. What's the point? No one fabulous would ever get close enough to reject them, so they must be free from disappointment too, she thought—once they accepted their situation, at least. The ones who had it the worst were those in the

middle, the girls who, with enough work, could be considered pretty but never beautiful. Those girls could taste the big life, they could see it close enough to salivate over it, even to reach for it. Prilly was in the middle.

(Leavy, 2021d, pp. 4–6)

Why might you decide to represent your qualitative research in a literary form?

In addition to contributing to public scholarship, strengths of fiction include verisimilitude, promoting empathy, highlighting micro–macro connections, and stimulating self- and social reflection (including the disruption of stereotypes). The importance of these facets of research has been reviewed in early chapters, so here I briefly review them as they relate to literature.

Achieving **verisimilitude** is a standard goal in qualitative research and one of the benchmarks against which ethnographies, for instance, are evaluated. Fiction is uniquely suited for capturing verisimilitude. As readers of fiction we may suspend our disbelief and become swept up or “immersed” in the story-world—the sights, sounds, and people.

Perhaps more than anything else, a compassionate research practice, the cornerstone of social justice research, requires the cultivation of **empathy**—learning about, understanding, and caring about others, however similar or dissimilar they may be to us. Reading fiction can foster empathy. Rishma Dunlop states that “we write ourselves as we read” (2001, p. 12). As readers engage with fiction and develop highly personal relationships with the characters, they are in fact constructing intimate relationships with “the imagined other” (de Freitas, 2003, p. 5). Therefore, fiction promotes “empathetic engagement” (de Freitas, 2003).

Fiction is uniquely well suited to crystallizing **micro–macro connections**. In other words, fiction can be used to show the relationship between individuals’ lives and the larger cultural and institutional contexts in which we live our lives. Many scholars aim to make these connections explicit. This is particularly true in sociology, where many are influenced by C. Wright Mills’s (1959) concept of “the sociological imagination.”

Literature fosters **self- and social reflection**. Readers may become immersed in story-worlds and invested in characters’ journeys—ultimately exploring worlds and people that are similar and/or dissimilar to their own—and seeing them in new ways. As we read about characters and their stories, we may reflect on our own lives and the larger society in which we are enmeshed. In this respect, fiction offers a way to promote new learning, create awareness, and challenge stereotypes.

The rest of this chapter details how to take your qualitative research

and write a work of literature, and then how to navigate the publishing process.

Building a Structure for Fiction



The structure of a fictional work gives you its foundation and form. The general structure may be a short story, a novella, a novel, or an ethnodrama (a play based on qualitative research). Next, there are several types of specific structures when writing a literary work. Our understanding of literary structures dates all the way back to Aristotle's book *Poetics*. Structures aid the organization and pacing of fictional narratives. When you build a structure, it helps you parcel out the story and create flow.

I'm focusing on structures for novels; however, these can be adapted for other literary works. (Note: The Appendix includes suggested readings if you're specifically interested in ethnodrama, poetry, or other forms of arts-based or literary research, as well as additional reading on fiction.) The most common is the **three-act structure**, which divides a story into three acts or parts: the setup, the confrontation, and the resolution. The first act, the setup, is typically used for narrative exposition. Primary characters are introduced, the relationships between characters are fleshed out, the setting is established, and to varying degrees a backstory is provided. As the first act moves along, there is an inciting incident, which introduces drama into the narrative. This may come at the end of Act 1. At this critical point in the plot, something challenges the protagonist, which, ultimately, the character must confront. The second act centers on the confrontation, central conflict, or rising action in the novel, which typically worsens as this part of the story unfolds. The protagonist often lacks the means to solve the problem off the bat, and so things get worse before they get better. This is the central part of the protagonist's journey, during which the character changes, grows, and evolves. This transformation is referred to as a character arc. The third and final act offers resolution or revelation, as the protagonist completes his, her, or their journey (and supporting characters do as well). Four- and five-act structures are common adaptations of the three-act structure.

An **open-form structure** does not follow prescribed patterns and is not organized in a specific way. The narrative flows freely, chapter to chapter, and is not broken down into parts. Although this openness allows the story to develop in its own unique way, as with all narrative fiction, there is generally a beginning, middle, and end, which are made up of the setup, the confrontation, and the resolution.

I view **alternative structures** as any model outside of conventional

three-, four-, or five-part structures or wholly open structures, with no prescribed format. These may be existing structures or entirely new ones that you create.

There are some alternative structures that novelists use fairly commonly. For example, a narrative can be structured as a **before-and-after story**. In this kind of narrative, there is a critical event, and the story unfolds both before *and* after the event. This is a specific way of organizing a story in two parts.

Another commonly used alternative structure unfolds as a **before-together-after story**. In this kind of story, characters are shown individually, living their own lives, usually only briefly (in a few chapters or less). Most of the narrative then unfolds as all the characters are together (e.g., at an event such as a wedding or funeral, on vacation, in a disaster). The final and third part, again generally brief, shows the characters back in their own lives. This way of structuring a story shows the impact of the group being together on the characters when they return to their own lives. We have seen them before, then something happens when they are together, and then we see how they have been affected.

Another alternative structure is the **multiple-viewpoint narrative**. This type of story is told by changing narrator viewpoints, chapter by chapter. In the simplest version, there are two characters whose perspectives are emphasized, and these perspectives are switched from chapter to chapter. A multiple-viewpoint narrative can be even more complex, following more characters' perspectives, not necessarily presented in a predictable order.

A final widely used alternative structure is the **single-day** or **multiple-day narrative**. These are stories that unfold deliberately over the course of 1 day or a series of days (usually up to 1 week).

This is by no means an exhaustive review of alternative structures. For example, the **story within a story** (also referred to as an **embedded narrative** or **nested story**) is a popular convention. There are also **fractured narratives**, which are told in a nonlinear manner (and may be particularly powerful for stories centered on trauma, depression, addiction, or other topics people are likely to experience in a nonlinear manner). And on and on. Perhaps most exciting of all, there are also the new structures you may create.

Master Plots

Master plots, sometimes referred to as master narratives, are narratives that are told over and over again in different ways. These stories draw on deeply held values, hopes, and fears (Abbott, 2008). Master plots frequently reappear in the literature within a given culture and, at times, across cultures.

Some master plots are essentially universal—the quest story, the story of revenge, and so forth—whereas others are more culturally specific (Abbott, 2008). The classic Cinderella story is an example of a master plot that reappears in different guises.

Master plots are powerful literary tools because they resonate deeply with readers and therefore carry “enormous emotional capital” (Abbott, 2008, p. 46). Using a master plot allows us to draw on that emotional capital. Sometimes writers unconsciously adapt a master plot. As researchers using fiction, it is worthwhile to consider the possible advantages of tapping into a narrative that readers are likely to find familiar, credible, and resonant. In truth, master plots are so broad that a writer would be hard pressed to write a story that doesn’t adapt one. So although we all strive for originality in our fiction, it’s also important to be realistic. Most stories have been told many times.

Plot and Storyline

A **plot** refers to the overall structure of the narrative. Typically, the process of plotting involves ordering the major events or scenes of the story and sketching a general outline of the beginning, middle, and end of the narrative. Major “plot points” are typically noted during this process. For example, a traditional three-act structure includes narrative exposition, an inciting incident or central conflict, and resolution. When you’re plotting, note what generally happens at these different points of the narrative.

The **storyline** refers to the progression or sequence of events within the plot (Saldaña, 2003). The plot is a general A-to-B-to-C structure. The storyline fills in the details of how you get from A to B and so on. Storylining can be an involved process. Whereas you may have a clear sense of the overall plot—what generally transpires in the beginning, middle, and end of the narrative, including the narrative arc—how you get from A to B to C is much more complicated. Some writers draft a detailed storyline at the outset. This is a strategy that works for many; however, there are writers who prefer to work with a general plot structure and fill in the storyline as they go. Similarly, some writers have a general plot structure and parts of the storyline sketched, and fill in the rest throughout the writing process.

Scenes, Narrative, and Gaps

There are two basic methods for writing fiction: scenes and narrative. Fictional writing typically draws on both approaches, although that’s not always the case.

Scenes are a dramatic way of writing—by showing what is happening as if the action were unfolding before the reader’s eyes. Well-written scenes offer a high sense of realism and appear like slices of reality or episodes (Caulley, 2008, drawing on Gutkind, 1997). When you are writing in a scenic or dramatic fashion you “write about one continuous action in essentially one place by essentially the same people” (Cheney, 2001, p. 27). Theodore A. Rees Cheney writes: “As fiction writers know, scenes give vitality, movement, action—life—to the story. Scenes show people doing things, saying things, moving right along in light of ongoing stream. Even when writing about the past, writers may play scenes in the present tense, giving the reader the feeling of being eyewitness to the action” (Cheney, 2001, p. 11). Scenes are about *showing*. On a practical note, scenic writing may involve the use of active verbs (Caulley, 2008).

Narrative writing, on the other hand, is a means of summarizing or offering readers information beyond what is transpiring in specific scenes. Narrative is less about showing and more about *telling* (Caulley, 2008). Narrative can be helpful in communicating information that happened outside of the scenes and/or providing commentary on characters and/or situations. This kind of writing typically involves the use of passive verbs. When employing third-person narration, the narrator’s voice emerges through narrative writing. For example, narrators may explain background information about characters in order to contextualize or comment on situations that have occurred in the past or present. Let’s look at an example. Table 7.1 contains excerpts from my novel *Shooting Stars*, a love story.

As you can see, the scenic style excerpt occurs in real time as unfolding action. The narrative style excerpt is written from the narrator’s perspective and provides summary. The narrative excerpt I selected also provides an ideal opportunity to review the issue of gaps in fictional narratives.

Bear in mind that fictional narratives are always incomplete. Stories have **gaps** that readers inevitably fill in (Abbott, 2008; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Iser, 1980). Alan H. Goldman writes that we interpret a fictional work as we read, and “our imaginations fill out the fictional worlds beyond what is explicitly stated” (2013, p. 6). Typically, fictional narratives combine scenes and narrative that may occur over some expanse of time, and therefore there are temporal gaps (gaps between scenes). For example, there’s a scene that takes place in the evening. The next scene begins the next morning. There is a temporal lag. Sometimes the gaps are much larger. For example, a scene occurs one day. The next scene occurs days, weeks, or months later. Even in cases in which the entire fictional narrative occurs in one dramatic scene (a continuous unfolding action), what happened before and after the scene is still left up to the reader’s imagination. Based on

TABLE 7.1. Scenic versus Narrative Writing

Scenic writing	Narrative writing
She answered his FaceTime call, seated in the library stacks, her glasses askew. She whispered, “Hey, baby. They don’t allow cell phone use. You’re going to get me in trouble.” “I just wanted to see your pretty face,” he said quietly. She smiled. “How’s it going?” he asked. “I just read the most fascinating study about how our brains process literature. I’ll tell you about it tonight, but for now, I really need to go. I have a lot to get through and the reference librarian is giving me dirty looks.” “Okay, sweetheart. I’ll see you tonight. How about I pick up takeout?” “Sounds great. Love you.” “I love you too,” he said.	Days passed, each one easier than the last. Tess was immersed in her book project, Jack was back to feeling fully invested at work, they saw their friends every Friday night, and each day they laughed and loved more. They were happy. On the Wednesday exactly six weeks from the day Jack found Tess hiding in the closet, something changed.

what information the author provides about a character, for example, readers will develop their own backstory beyond the words on the page. Like everything else in fiction, gaps are intentional and should be constructed purposefully. Gaps in the narrative allow readers to use their imaginations, and thereby they allow for a multiplicity of meanings to emerge in spaces of ambiguity (Barone & Eisner, 2012, drawing on Iser, 1980). Decide when you want readers to fill in the blanks.

Endings, Closure, and Expectations

How do you structure the end of your narrative? The **ending** is the final impression with which you leave readers. It’s their final thought, and it carries the power to elevate the whole story and leave it lingering in people’s minds; or it can be disappointing and forgettable. Because endings have such a big job, it’s important to think about what you want to achieve. There are two interrelated issues to consider: expectations and closure.

Readers develop expectations as they read stories. These expectations are based on (1) signs and signals the writer has created and (2) their previous experiences reading stories or even watching television and film. Beginning with the former, there are many different ways that writers create expectations. For example, when the author is working with a familiar

genre, readers expect the writing will follow the conventions of that genre. I'm not implying that this needs to be the case, only that those expectations will have been created. For example, in a romance novel, readers expect the main characters to fall in love and live happily ever after. Chekhov famously told an aspiring writer "if in the first chapter you say that a gun hung on the wall, in the second, or third chapter it must without fail be discharged" (Abbott, 2008, p. 60). The assumption is that, by noting that there is a gun on the wall, the author has set up expectations in the reader, and the writer has an obligation to fulfill those expectations. Although the former may well be true, as readers are accustomed to looking for signs, signals, and foreshadowing, the latter is open to debate. Expectations do not necessarily need to be fulfilled. In fact, sometimes it is beneficial to violate readers' expectations (Abbott, 2008). A surprise ending may illuminate something we wish to highlight, may point to the constructed nature of the genre or master plot we are drawing on, and/or may require readers to reflexively revisit previously held assumptions, which may in fact be our goal. This brings us to the issue of closure.

Closure refers to "resolution of the story's central conflict" (Abbott, p. 57). Readers anticipate the ending of the story and will often judge a "good" ending based on how well it satisfies their expectations. In short, readers don't want to be disappointed. Master plots, for example, typically end in anticipated ways, providing closure and familiarity. As an author you will need to decide whether to provide closure in a way that fulfills readers' expectations. It's important to be mindful of readers and what their experience of the story may be, but by the same token, we have to stay true to our visions. Sometimes we have good reason for ending a narrative differently than what may be expected. Figuring out how to end a narrative is a balancing act between understanding the expectations readers are likely to develop and deciding when it is appropriate to fulfill them and when it is appropriate to violate them.

☑️ Dos and Don'ts: Plotting and Readers' Expectations

- ✓ Do study the conventions of a master plot you are adapting.
- ✓ Do remain cognizant of readers' expectations and how you have set those up.
- X Don't be afraid to subvert a master plot to tell the story differently as it aligns with your goals.
- X Don't forget to balance readers' expectations for closure with your goals as the writer.

Style



Structure gives form to literary writing, but there are a range of stylistic choices that give fiction its feeling, or *gestalt*. What kind of story are you writing? What's the style of the writing? What feeling do you want to impart? What's the tone or mood? How are you telling the story? There are specific elements that respond to these questions and allow writers to develop a fictional style.

Genres

A **genre** is a “recurrent literary form” (Abbott, 2008, p. 49). Genres are thematically driven. Popular examples include, but are not limited to, romance, mystery/suspense, thriller, adventure, speculative fiction, science fiction, inspirational, fantasy, horror, historical fiction, young adult, LGBTQIA, and women's fiction or “chick lit.” Each genre comes with its own set of conventions, so it's important to familiarize yourself with writing in that genre. This does not mean that you need to follow all the traditional conventions; however, it's vital to be aware of them so that you know when you are meeting or violating readers' expectations. Those decisions should be thoughtful and intentional.

When selecting a genre, bear a few things in mind. First, consider the thematic content you wish to cover—your purpose—and allow that to guide you toward appropriate genres. Second, consider your intended audience. Who do you hope reads the piece? Different genres tend to appeal to different primary audiences. You want to pick a genre your readers will enjoy and find resonant. Finally, bear in mind that master plots are typically linked to particular genres (Abbott, 2008). The decision to use a master plot may go hand in hand with your choice of genre. For example, if you're drawing on the classic Cinderella story master plot, that may direct you to either the romance or women's fiction genre.

Quick Writing Activity

Select two select popular genres you are familiar with and briefly jot down the main conventions of the genre. Spend no more than 5 minutes on each.

Themes and Motifs

A **theme** is a recurrent idea. A **motif** is a recurrent subject, idea, or theme. Themes and motifs give fiction layers of meaning. As a qualitative

researcher, this idea is already familiar to you. Qualitative researchers are accustomed to thinking and writing thematically. Typically, data are coded so that themes may emerge, which then become the focal point of the interpretive and writing processes. When writing fiction, we often wish to explore and convey thematic content. To do so, we weave themes and motifs into the narrative. They become part of the subtext underscoring the narrative, as well as the substantive content within it. You may develop themes and motifs from the outset, and they will also unfold through the writing process itself. There will be opportunities to reify or layer themes.

Style and Tone

Every author leaves his, her, or their **fingerprint** on their writing. An author's style is their unique way of writing—their unique voice. When we gravitate toward certain authors, it's not only because of the genre they write within that may appeal to us; there's something about their writing in particular that we enjoy—something unique that makes their writing different from someone else's. Fiction relies heavily on writers using their imaginations in conjunction with a range of literary tools that can be made their own. Therefore, styles vary widely. Some elements that contribute to an author's style include sentence structure, attention to the dramatic effects of language (e.g., the use of short statements, long, flowery statements, emotionally weighted language), attention to the lyrical nature of language, use of humor, the balance between scenic and narrative writing, point of view, narrator voice, and how interior monologue and dialogue are used. The more you write fiction, the more you'll develop your own style based on the skills you learn, your personality, and your preferences.

As you develop your writing style for a particular project, consider the tone of the story. Everything from sentence structure to uses of language to uses of humor and the like will affect the tone of the narrative. Stylistic choices, therefore, should be made with tone in mind. Consider the following questions:

- What feeling-world do you want to create?
- What emotional response do you hope to prompt in readers? For example, is the story meant to be uplifting, hopeful, tragic, humorous, or suspenseful?
- What is the emotional arc or journey you want to take readers on?

Characterization

■ ■ ■

Fiction is character driven. **Characters** are the people who populate your story-world. When using data garnered from qualitative research methods (e.g., interviews or field research), characters may be based on research participants. Characters may be **composites**, so that the themes that emerged during data collection can be used to create character “types.” When your research does not include participants (e.g., content analysis), you may create characters based on the data you do have, as well as your review of the literature. There are three primary issues to consider.

First, as in any research practice, there is an ethical obligation to protect the participants’ identities. Be careful what details you reveal. Generally speaking, you want to build characters that extend beyond any specific participant.

Second, you need to decide how many participants to transform into characters. For example, will you create composites based on aggregates of data, or will some participants’ stories and experiences be highlighted? How many characters are needed to tell the story? In the case of ethno-drama, Johnny Saldaña (1999, 2003) proposes that the number of research participants whose stories stand out during a review of the data become the number of characters in the script. The number of characters and their relations to one another affect the plot and structure, which need to be considered as well. For example, the play may unfold from the perspectives of a central character (the protagonist), of two characters in conflict (protagonist and antagonist), of two flawed characters that guide each other to greater understanding, of multiple characters in vignettes, or other standard formats (Saldaña, 1999).

Third, when writing up your research in a literary form, it’s vital to portray people truthfully, sensitively, compassionately, and responsibly. Avoid or challenge stereotypes. Strive to achieve multidimensionality. Make these fictional folks seem *real*. Treat them with care.

Saldaña (1999, p. 62) provides sources researchers can utilize to create three-dimensional portrayals:

1. From interviews: what the participant reveals about his, her, or their perceptions.
2. From field notes, journal entries, or memoranda: what the researcher observes, infers, and interprets from the participant in action.
3. From observations or interviews with other participants connected

to the primary case study: perspectives about the primary participant.

4. From the research literature: what other scholars and theorists offer about the phenomena under study.

I suggest creating a robust character profile for each character in your story. This process will help you develop your characters. Here are some things you can include:

- **Physical description.** The physical description may include status characteristics (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity), age, clothing, facial features, and perceived attractiveness. Also consider the point of view from which we learn about the character's physicality. For example, are readers introduced to what the character thinks of his, her, or their own appearance, do we see what a character looks like through the eyes of other characters, or do we learn what a character looks like through descriptions by the narrator?

- **Activities.** How does the character spend his, her, or their time? What are they shown doing? How do they feel about these activities? Consider education, employment, and hobbies.

- **Personality.** What is this character like? For example, is the character funny, sarcastic, shy, loud, boisterous? What are the character's core values, morals, and ethical guidelines? What motivates this character? What makes him, her, or them tick? How does the character make others feel? What kinds of relationships do they have?

- **Name.** Names can carry symbolic meanings. For example, character names may denote age, nationality, and religious background. Names can also be used to make characters more distinct or to give them a common "every person" quality. You may also consider whether or not the character will be referred to by one or more nicknames and what those nicknames signify about the character and/or their relationship to other characters. Sometimes when a character has a nickname or term of endearment that is only used by one other character, it's a way of quickly signifying who is speaking during dialogue-based scenes. This is a writerly trick some authors use. For instance, romantic partners may refer to each other as *sweetheart*, *baby*, *honey*, *sugar*, *darling*, *love*, or some such term that always makes it clear who is speaking.

Beyond the specifics outlined, when developing a character, keep an eye on the big picture. You want to capture the essence of who this person is and find ways to communicate that to an audience. Consider the following questions:

- Who are they at their core?
- What is their central motivation?
- What is their central fear?
- What do they have in common with other characters?
- What makes them unique?
- What are their strengths?
- What are their weaknesses?

Character Types

There are recurring kinds of characters referred to as “types.” **Character types** are often linked to master plots, so if you are working within a master plot to structure your narrative, you may work with a character type as well. For example, a battered wife is a character type, and her story (which centers on a cycle of abuse) is a master plot (Abbott, 2008, p. 49). Just as with master plots, character types may carry emotional and symbolic weight for readers, making them potentially useful tools. Readers’ expectations are once again an issue. Readers may expect certain kinds of behaviors or personality traits from common character types, so you’ll need to decide when to fulfill and when to disrupt those expectations. In truth, a balancing act occurs when using a recognizable type of character. You want to capitalize on the resonance they may already have with readers, but you don’t want to create a flat or surface-level portrayal. When using a character type, be careful to avoid stereotypes or superficiality. Well-written characters have multidimensionality, specificity, and their own voice.

Quick Writing Activity

Take a participant from your research and start jotting down initial ideas for their character profile. It can just be a list of words and phrases. Consider their physical description, activities, and personality. Spend 5–10 minutes.

Dialogue, Interaction, Interiority, and Monologue

Nothing brings a character to life more than dialogue. Through hearing their voices, seeing how they interact with others, and listening to their streams of consciousness and/or private reactions to people or situations, readers learn who characters truly are. There are three main techniques for incorporating dialogue into a fictional work: dialogue with others (via interaction), internal dialogue, and monologue (in the case of ethnodrama).

Fictional narratives often feature **dialogue**, or “captured conversations,” which enhance characterization and serve as snippets of the way people communicate daily (Caulley, 2008, p. 435). Writing dialogue between characters illuminates who individual characters are and how they relate to one another. Realistic dialogue—that which rings true—is an important feature in most fiction. It is a critical tool for both character development and moving the plot forward. Here are some things you can consider when writing dialogue:

- The way that a character uses language. This includes the use of formal, informal, and slang language, culturally specific expressions, and so forth. A character’s particular style of talking can also shed light on the way he, she, or they react to or feel about particular people or situations.
- The relationships between characters. Through dialogue, authors denote familiarity between characters, the comfort level of the characters with one another, the closeness or distance between characters, and many other aspects of their relationships.
- The tenor of conversations. The tone, feeling, or mood of conversations/interactions is also communicated through dialogue.
- Additional features of dialogue. It is important to consider the pace of a conversation, pauses, audible signals other than language (e.g., sighs, huffs, snorts, groans, exaggerated words), gestures (e.g., side eye, rolling eyes, smirking, hand waving), expressions, and the context in which the dialogue is unfolding (e.g., if there is a conversation between characters sitting in a restaurant, consider how the waiter coming over to the table might affect the conversation).

Dialogue literally and figuratively gives voice to your characters. Dialogue must ring true. This is a critical component of creating compelling characters and a believable story-world. Well-written dialogue engages readers and moves the story forward.

In the case of composite characters, Saldaña (1999, p. 64) offers the following guidelines for interweaving participant voices from two or more interviews:

1. Offer triangulation through their supporting statements.
2. Highlight disconfirming evidence from their contrast and juxtaposition.
3. Exhibit collective story creation through the multiplicity of perspectives.

Let's look at an example to illustrate the importance of dialogue. *Celestial Bodies: The Tess Lee and Jack Miller Novels* (Leavy, 2022) is a collection of six novels I wrote. At the core, it's a love story about the power of love to help us heal from trauma and grief and learning to balance darkness and light in our lives so that we may live in full color. The following excerpt is the opening scene, in which the two main characters meet. It's entirely dialogue-driven. Every word conveys meaning and foreshadowing—illustrating who the characters are from the outset (e.g., Jack is a protector) and showing the bond between the two as it begins to develop.

“How's your son doing in school?” Tess asked the bartender.

“Really well. He especially loves the history course he's taking.”

A man came in and sat two stools down from Tess. They looked at each other and smiled in acknowledgment.

“Hey, Jack. The usual?” the bartender asked.

Jack nodded. “Please.”

Tess continued chatting with the bartender as he served Jack a bottle of beer. “The humanities are so important. It's a shame they're undervalued,” she said.

“You're the expert,” the bartender replied.

Just then, a different man sidled up to Tess. “You have the most beautiful brown eyes,” he said.

“Do I?” she asked.

“And the way your hair flows all the way down your back. You know what they say about dirty blondes?”

“I don't think you should finish that sentence,” Tess said.

“I've been watching you. Can I buy you a drink?” he asked.

“No, thank you,” she replied.

“Come on, just one drink. I'm a nice guy.”

“No, thank you,” she said, turning away.

The “nice guy” opened his mouth to protest, but Jack stood up with an imposing air and said, “The lady said no.”

The man snorted and walked away.

“Thank you,” Tess said, staring straight into his sea-colored eyes.

“Don’t mention it. I did feel a little sorry for him, though. You are beautiful and I can’t blame him for taking a shot.”

Tess smiled and pulled out the stool next to her. “Please, scooch over. Let me buy your drink.”

He smiled and took the seat next to her. “My name is Tess Lee,” she said.

“Jack Miller,” he replied. “But it’s on me. Yours looks nearly empty. What are you having?”

“Sparkling water. I don’t drink. It’s just a personal choice,” she replied.

“Another sparkling water for my new friend,” Jack said to the bartender. “So, Tess, what brings you here by yourself?”

“I was supposed to meet my best friend, Omar, but he had a last-minute emergency. His partner, Clay, was pulled over tonight and it became an incident.”

“What was he pulled over for?” Jack asked.

“Being Black,” Tess replied. “Clay is a surgeon and was on his way home from the hospital. He was pulled over for no reason and harassed. It’s happened to him before. Once, he was on his way to an emergency at the hospital, and he was detained even after he showed his hospital ID. It’s egregious. Anyway, I told Omar to stay home with him. They need time together to process and decompress. Omar understands this kind of experience, being of Middle Eastern descent. I was already in a cab on my way here, so I decided to come anyway. I moved to DC from LA about six months ago and I don’t have that much of a life yet, I suppose. And you?”

“My friends ditched me. We usually get together on Friday nights at a different bar, but they all had to stay late at work. This place is right down the block from my apartment.”

“So, what do you do?” she asked.

“I’m a federal agent with the Bureau, working in counterterrorism. I joined the military right out of high school, Special Forces. I was in the field, often deep undercover, until about a year ago, when I took a desk job as the head of my division.”

“Wow, you’re like the real-life Jack Bauer. You even look a little like him, with that whole rugged, handsome, hero thing you have going on,” she said.

He blushed. “I promise you I’m no Jack Bauer, even on my best day. People thought that character was so tragic, but the real tragedy is that Jack Bauer doesn’t exist and you’re stuck with guys like me.”

She smiled. “What made you choose that line of work?”

“My parents raised me and my siblings to value community, to be patriotic. My father was in the military and then became a firefighter. The idea of service always seemed important. I wanted to serve my country, to protect people. It’s hard to explain, but when I see someone innocent being threatened, I’m willing to do whatever is necessary to protect them. I know it sounds cliché, but I feel like it’s my purpose in life.”

“That’s noble,” she said.

He shook his head. “The lived reality often isn’t. When you spend most of your life in the abyss, it gets pretty dark.”

“A residue remains, right?” she asked.

He looked at her intently, a little surprised. “Yes, exactly.”

“I understand. You convince yourself it’s all been for something that matters more than you do, that whatever part of yourself you sacrificed was worth it, because it simply has to be.”

He looked at her as if she had read his innermost thoughts. “Yes,” he said softly. “Tell me, what do you do?”

“I’m a novelist.”

“What are your books about?” he asked.

“That’s a hard question to answer. I guess I wanted to write about everything: What it means to live a life, why it’s so hard, and how it could be easier. To walk people through the darkness, in a way. Perhaps my goals were too lofty, and in that respect, each book fails more spectacularly than the one before.”

The bartender smirked.

Tess wistfully said, “Maybe reality can never live up to our dreams.”

They continued talking, completely engrossed with one another. Two hours later, Jack said, “I live nearby. Do you want to come over for a cup of coffee?”

Tess looked him straight in his warm eyes. “I’d love to.”

(Leavy, 2022, pp. 3–5)

In addition to dialogue between characters, fiction writers also have the ability to represent **interiority**—what a character is thinking and feeling. This can be understood as the character’s stream of consciousness. The ability to reveal internal dialogue and represent a character’s interiority is a significant distinction between fiction and other writing forms. Representing interiority allows writers to make visible what is otherwise hidden

(Caulley, 2008). In the context of fiction based on your research, you may consider using internal dialogue for any of the following purposes:

- Exploring sociopsychological processes (by giving readers access to what a character thinks and feels in regard to himself, herself, or themselves, in response to interactions with others, and in response to particular events, situations, or circumstances).
- Creating empathetic engagement (getting to know, care for, and sympathize or empathize with characters).
- Establishing micro–macro connections (illustrating how larger social, political, economic, cultural, or historical forces are interpreted by characters and/or how they affect characters).

Internal dialogue can be incorporated into the narrative in different ways. For example, during a dialogue with others, we may also have access to what a character is privately thinking. In these instances, we are learning not only about the individual character but also about the relationships between characters. Internal dialogue can also be used when characters are by themselves. In these instances, characters may be engaged in an activity (such as exercising), they may be consuming art or media (such as reading a book or watching television), or they may be engaged in a passive activity (such as sitting on a train or lying in bed).

Finally, in the case of ethnodrama, you may also include monologues. **Monologues** can be conceptualized as “portraits in miniature” that may reveal the essentials of a character, such as his, her, or their motivations or obstacles (Saldaña, 2011, p. 66). Well-done monologues can offer social insight (which may include the researcher’s voice or voices from the literature review or theory) and can also foster emotional responses in the audience (Saldaña, 1999, pp. 63–66).



Quick Writing Activity

Give your character voice by either writing a snippet of their internal dialogue or a monologue. Don’t overthink it. Just free write for up to 10 minutes.

Literary Tools



Fiction is a craft. Good writing matters. John Van Maanen (2011) reminded ethnographers to adhere to literary standards in their impressionist writing

in order to keep readers interested. He encouraged researchers to use “unusual phrasings, fresh allusions, rich language, cognitive and emotional stimulation, puns and quick jolts to the imagination” (2011, p. 106).

We write in literary forms because it allows us to express what is otherwise inexpressible. The writing may be beautiful, rich, layered, emotional, jolting, or transporting. Literary tools allow us to achieve these ends. Literary tools were reviewed briefly in Chapter 4, and I now discuss them in more detail, as they’re integral to writing fiction.

Language

At the end of the day, the only tool that writers really have available is language. Whether writing dialogue, describing places, or reaching a narrative arc, language is the medium with which we communicate. Writing fiction requires attention to craft and specifically to language. Elizabeth de Freitas writes, “In my own fiction writing, I plunder my experiences, my language, and my very being, to achieve an exactness in my sentences and paragraphs, grooming them over and over until they match my intentions and my sense of potential impact. Nothing is sloppy in fiction. . . . Composing fiction is a rigorous act” (2004, pp. 269–270). When writing fiction, one must constantly go back to revise, tweak, and rework the language. Of course, language imparts meaning, but it does so much more. Consider the sounds of words, alliteration, the lengths of words, and how the words function when strung together.

Like many novelists, including Stephen King, I’m a believer in writing first drafts on your own. Hear only the voice in your own head. Get lost in the story-world. Translate what you see in your mind’s eye. Write as much as you can, knowing you can edit later. Once you’ve completed a full draft, it’s time to engage in cycles of revisions and seeking feedback. Be ruthless when you revise. Use a red pen on every unnecessary word. Be specific with your language. Pay attention to sentence structures, aiming to vary not just what you say but *how* you say it. Look for unnecessary repetition and weed it out. Use repetition purposefully. Reorganize dialogue and scenes, playing with what you have until you’re satisfied. Look for spaces to elaborate and spaces to pare down.

It’s also important to seek feedback from peers and mentors. Join or create a writing group or find a writing buddy with whom to share your work. Writing groups and buddies work well when there is an atmosphere of noncompetition and everyone is committed to helping one another best achieve their vision. As noted in the last chapter, professional copyeditors are also essential.

Description, Detail, and Specificity

Rich descriptions of places, people, and situations help to draw readers into the narrative. As readers enter into the social world represented in the story, they want to see, hear, and smell what the characters in that space are experiencing. In this regard, the robust descriptions that often characterize fictional writing bear striking similarity to the “thick descriptions” found in the best ethnographic writing (Geertz, 1973). The way a room looks, its size, color, lightness and darkness, its mood, smell, the objects it contains, how a character feels in that space—all of these elements may be important. Physical descriptions do more than denote what a person or place looks like; they help create the atmosphere and mood.

During the process of building descriptions, incorporate concrete details. Realistic details “conjure emotions and images in the reader” (Caulley, 2008, p. 47). Saldaña (2018) urges researchers to document “rich, telling details about a participant or field site that capture an essence or quality” (p. 28). Change *participant* to *character* and *field site* to *setting* and the same holds true for social fiction. Details matter. The use of details accomplishes several things in fiction. First, these details create mood or atmosphere and help develop the tone of the narrative. Second, incorporating realistic details helps us achieve verisimilitude. Achieving authenticity paves the way for building resonance and prompting reader engagement. Finally, as researchers, we are incorporating empirical data/details into our stories. Selecting and combining this empirical data, as Wolfgang Iser (1997) suggested, is an integral part of the fictionalizing process. The selection and combination of realistic details or data is a central strategy for weaving themes or motifs into a narrative.

Writing fiction well requires specificity. Use language clearly and crisply to achieve your intention. Every word conveys meaning. Is the sky blue, or cobalt, or starry? Is the water 300 degrees or scalding? Is she sad, melancholy, depressed, or defeated? Is he heartbroken, gutted, or shattered? Be specific.

Foreshadowing and Flashbacks

Foreshadowing is a way that writers hint at what is coming up later in the narrative. Foreshadowing is often understood to create suspense, build anticipation, and foster dramatic tension. Although it can be used in that way, it is by no means the only way. Sometimes foreshadowing is simply used as a method of signposting. It is a method of dropping clues or advance warnings, often subtly, about events to come. I think of it like leaving a

trail of breadcrumbs for readers. These hints may or may not be noticed as they come up, but ultimately help to construct a cohesive narrative that all comes together.

Flashbacks are a common device for providing backstory. Flashbacks take you to something that has happened earlier in a character's life. This device is used to help you learn more about a character and how they've become who they presently are or how they've come to their present-day circumstances and to contextualize and shed light on their current circumstances. This technique may be particularly helpful in research in which you learn about a participant's entire life or significant portion of the individual's life (e.g., oral history, life history, case study). Flashbacks can be used to add backstory and contextualize a life by snapshotting significant moments in an individual's past.

Metaphors, Similes, Symbolism, and Juxtaposition

Fiction writers employ a range of devices in order to achieve rhetorical effect. It's not simply about the language we use but how we arrange that language to convey meaning and express our ideas more powerfully. There are many rhetorical devices available to writers, a few of which I review here.

Creative writing often draws on the power of metaphors and similes. **Metaphors** are used to create a link or comparison between two ideas. For example, in my novel *Supernova*, I use the concept of supernovas (a stellar explosion that gives birth to new stars) as a metaphor to talk about the relationship between the two protagonists during a crisis point. Similes are used to directly compare two ideas by highlighting their similarity to each other using words such as *like* or *as*. *Crazy like a fox* is a common simile. Similes may be used to create micro–macro connections, to challenge, disrupt, or subvert taken-for-granted assumptions, or to create subtext. They “allow writers both to interpret and construct meanings” (Watson, 2016, p. 12). Qualitative researchers are adept at thinking metaphorically and symbolically (Saldaña, 2011). So use that to your advantage.

Fiction writers also often use symbolism to build and impart meaning. **Symbolism** allows writers to convey meaning in an artistic or poetic way, as opposed to a literal way. For instance, shades of blue may be used to denote sadness or depression and build a melancholic tone, instead of directly describing characters as depressed. For another example, stormy weather or unwieldy landscapes might be used as symbolism for troubled relationships.

Juxtaposition involves placing two subjects side by side in order to highlight their differences. It's a commonly used tool for creating contrast. Any two subjects may be contrasted—characters, places, concepts, objects. For example, two male characters may appear in one scene—one exhibiting misogyny and another positive masculinity. The stark contrast between the two serves to amplify certain traits in each character while simultaneously highlighting the differences between the two.



Quick Writing Activity

Take a concept from your research (e.g., from your data, from a literature review) and try to transform it into a metaphor. Just jot down ideas for up to 10 minutes—you may or may not come up with something that works. That's okay.

Front and Back Matter

■ ■ ■

When writing a novel, there are several ways of bookending the story or packaging it for readers, with front and back matter. These are all optional, and your novel may include any number of these, or none at all.

Prologues and Epilogues (Optional)

Prologues and epilogues are *parts of the story*, each set in time, before and after the main narrative. A prologue is an opening to a novel that provides context or background information. It may be set anywhere from years to merely a day before the main narrative begins. An epilogue is an ending to a novel that occurs after the main narrative has concluded, whether that be the next day or years later. An epilogue provides closure or “where are they now” information not contained in the main text.

Forewords, Prefaces, and Afterwords (Optional)

Forewords, prefaces, and afterwords are front and back content that are *not* a part of the novel itself but are written in the author's voice (or a guest author). A foreword is a short introduction to a novel that is written by someone other than the author. A preface is a short introduction to a novel that is written by the author. Although it's far more common in fiction to have a foreword than a preface, in the case of fiction derived from research, some authors like the opportunity to talk about their intent in writing the

book and/or the research that informed the novel. If a book includes both a foreword and a preface, the foreword comes first. An afterword comes at the end of the novel and is a short discussion of the book which may include why or how it was written. An afterword may be written by the author or someone other than the author and is another opportunity for an author to talk about the intent and/or process. Although these features are all optional, they can be particularly useful for graduate students who need to satisfy committee members through discussion of their research process.

Titles



Titles are incredibly important and very personal. The title signals to potential readers what the work of fiction is about. It's also something that you as an author should feel good about—it should mean something to you and as closely as possible “match” what you feel is most important about the work. A title might be direct or might be something readers will not fully understand until they've read the entire work. Sometimes we know the title before we start writing. Other times, the title doesn't come until the end. When you're trying to develop a title, I suggest the following:

- As you write, keep a running list of key words and phrases—words and phrases that stand out to you in your book.
- Look for synonyms for those words to come up with additional possibilities.
- Note key themes, concepts, or metaphors as possible titles.

Once you have a working title, play around with it.

Publishing Literary Works (Novels)



This section focuses on publishing novels, as that path is different from what was covered in the last chapter. Short stories are generally published in literary magazines, literary journals, academic journals, or anthologies. Likewise, ethnodramas are generally published in academic journals or anthologies. Do an online search to find appropriate venues and follow their submission instructions carefully. If you have multiple related short stories or ethnodramas, you may also publish these as a book (see Chapter 6).

There are four primary pathways to publishing novels: trade publishing (which generally requires a literary agent), academic publishing, self-publishing, and hybrid publishing. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Literary Agents and Trade Publishers

In the world of general or commercial fiction, the most common way to publish is with a trade publisher. Trade publishers are set up to reach general readers. Most trade publishers do not accept unsolicited submissions. Authors need a literary agent. The world of trade publishing is extremely competitive, and getting an agent is no easy task. That does not mean you shouldn't try if you feel trade publishing is the path for you. Be prepared; some of the most famous novelists in the world say it took them many years and hundreds of rejections to get an agent. Perseverance matters. Preparedness does, too. First, your book manuscript needs to be complete and professionally copyedited before you approach agents. Make it sparkle. Second, do your research. Buy the most current book of literary agents and comb through it. Any agent who accepts in your genre and is currently accepting submissions should be on your list. Going on their websites to do "extra" homework on them and the books they've published may also be helpful. There are also writing conferences you can attend where you can meet and even pitch agents. Many literary agents get new clients this way. There are also opportunities on social media, through contests and the like, to reach out to agents. For example, check out Pitch Wars on X (formerly Twitter), which hosts four pitch days per year.

Third, write a query letter, a short synopsis of your novel (such as a back-cover blurb), and a full synopsis of your novel that details all the plot points (these items should be professionally copyedited). The one-page query letter should introduce your book, with a hook, and introduce you (don't be afraid to brag about your accomplishments and let your personality shine). In the box on page 156 is an example of a query letter.

As you can see, the query letter includes a brief synopsis of the novel. Please note that although most do not, there are some trade publishers who do accept unsolicited manuscripts. In that case, simply adapt the query letter to pitch the publisher directly. In addition to the query letter, many agents will request a full synopsis of your book, including all the main and supporting characters, and all the major plot points (including the ending). Don't hold back because you don't want to ruin the book for them—they need a complete synopsis. In the box on pages 157–158 is an example of a full synopsis. (I am only including the first few paragraphs of a three-page

Sample Query Letter

From: Patricia Leavy

Address

Phone Number

Re: *Hollyland*, women's fiction, 53,650 words

Commented [PL1]:
Include your name and contact information

Dear Ms. X,

Commented [PL2]:
Always include the title, primary genre, and word count (unless instructed otherwise)

What happens when a seemingly ordinary woman with a passion for the arts meets, falls in love with, and marries a Hollywood star known for his bachelor status and quick temper with the paparazzi? Something extraordinary.

Commented [PL3]:
Use last names with appropriate formality

Dee Schwartz is a writer and arts researcher. Ryder Field is a famous actor who descends from Hollywood royalty. On the night they meet outside a bar, their connection is palpable. They each lost their mother at a young age, which bonds the pair. Ryder's mother, legendary actress Rebecca Field, half of Hollywood's golden couple, was kidnapped and murdered by a crazed fan in a shocking event that forever tarnished Tinseltown. The two embark on a love story that explores their search for magic or "gold dust" in their lives. However, everything changes when Dee mysteriously disappears after an awards ceremony. Is history repeating itself? Can there truly be a happily ever after in Hollywood? Their friends and family are along for the ride, including: Troy, Dee's hilarious bestie who loves sex talk and celebrity gossip; Billy Sumner, Ryder's best friend and the actor known for his superhero franchise; Seymour Peretz, the head of the largest movie studio in the world; and Lou Schwartz, Dee's beloved father.

Commented [PL4]:
Start with a hook

Set against the backdrop of contemporary Los Angeles, *Hollyland* is a poignant novel that moves fluidly between romance, humor, suspense, and joy. Ultimately, it's a feel-good, fast-paced book about living an extraordinary life through a passion for love and art. In the end, Dee and Ryder find their gold dust and show us that it's often already in our own hands.

Commented [PL5]:
Brief synopsis of the book

I've published thirty books, both fiction and academic nonfiction, without an agent but all with traditional publishers (mainly Oxford University Press, Guilford Press, and Brill/Sense). With your help, I'm looking to reach a wider, trade audience, and I'm hoping to build a long-term relationship. Among other book honors, my novel *Spark* won the 2019 American Fiction Award for Inspirational Fiction and the 2019 Living Now Book Award for Adventure Fiction, and my novel *Film* won the 2020 American Fiction Award for Inspirational Fiction. I have received numerous career awards from professional associations, including The National Art Education Association and The American Creativity Association. In 2018, SUNY-New Paltz established "The Patricia Leavy Award for Art and Social Justice." I'm currently working on my next novel, a witty love story that takes place on a film set in Sweden.

Commented [PL6]:
Include relevant biographical information

Please let me know if the novel interests you; I would be happy to send you the manuscript. This is a multiple submission. Thank you for your time.

Commented [PL7]:
If you are submitting to more than one agent, assuming they allow that, you must let them know

Sincerely,

Patricia Leavy

Commented [PL8]:
Be professional

Sample Synopsis: *Hollyland*

Forty-year-old arts researcher and writer DEE SCHWARTZ walks around the corner of the Los Angeles bar to take a phone call. Fifty-year-old legendary actor and Hollywood bad boy RYDER FIELD (RYE) steps out of the side door to smoke a cigarette. Dee, shy by nature, lowers her voice, saying, “On page one, there’s an explicit oral act in the balcony of a church. Page four, bent over a pew . . . No, the other thing. Page seven, on the altar . . .” Captivated by her phone call, Rye strikes up a conversation. Sparks fly as they discover a mutual love of the arts and a shared search for magic or “gold dust” in their lives. They decide to leave together, and Dee goes inside to tell her friends, TROY and SARA, that she’s met someone. Hearing who that someone is, Troy does a Google search and hilariously recaps Rye’s failed marriage, broken engagement to America’s sweetheart, drunken Las Vegas wedding to a porn star, recent break-up with a model/actress wannabe because he doesn’t want to marry again, and infamous clashes with the paparazzi. Troy says, “Have lots and lots of babies with him,” while uptight Sara disapproves. Dee and Rye take off in his Porsche.

They spend a long, sexy weekend together, sharing details of their lives. Dee’s mother, Lisette, died when Dee was ten. Heartbroken by the outer world, Dee turned to the arts and books to nurture her inner world. What hurts her the most is that she can no longer remember her mother’s voice. Rye’s mother, Rebecca, famous actress and half of Hollywood’s royal couple, was abducted and murdered by a fan after leaving an awards ceremony. Rye was only eight, and her death forever changed him. The entertainment media published the crime scene photos, creating Rye’s short fuse with paparazzi. Dee and Rye quickly develop an intimate bond over this shared loss and their mutual passion for art. Learning that Rye is secretly a talented guitar player and singer-songwriter, but is afraid of the stigma of actors pursuing music, she encourages him to go for it.

Rye invites Dee to a business dinner in which he and his famous friends attempt to woo a hot director for their new film project. The group, including BILLY SUMNER, known as the world’s greatest superhero, are chatting when SEYMOUR PERETZ, head of the biggest movie studio in the world, walks in. The actors’ mouths hang open when Seymour wraps Dee in a bear hug, invites her to his home

for dinner, and credits her with saving one of his films. The group is puzzled, wondering who Rye's new flame really is. Through this encounter, Rye learns that Dee's father, LOU SCHWARTZ, and Seymour are childhood friends. When the film director they're trying to impress joins them, he's blown away to meet Dee, whose work he admires greatly. Everyone soon learns that Dee is a legend in scholarly circles, with a slew of awards and bestselling books to her name. Over the course of the evening, Dee persuades the director to join the film. Uncomfortable with the attention she receives at dinner, she steps outside for some fresh air. Rye follows and professes that he has fallen in love with her. As they kiss, a frenzy of flashbulbs erupts and paparazzi scream, "Ryder, is that your new girlfriend?"

document so as to not give away what happens in my novel; agents, however, need to know the entire plot).

As you can see, the full synopsis, rendered chronologically, includes far more detail than the short, one-paragraph synopsis (and, again, should proceed all the way to the ending of the book).

Finally, follow instructions. Some agents will want just the query letter and the first three pages of your manuscript. Some will want the letter, synopsis, and the first 20 pages. And on and on. Send them *exactly* what they have requested and via the method they have specified (e.g., email in the body, email attachment, online submission portal, postal mail). Finally, when the inevitable silence or rejections come, find more agents, and keep sending it out.

If you're successful in finding a literary agent to represent you, read your contract carefully and make sure you understand the terms. It's always advisable to have an attorney review it as well, if you're able to do so. Your agent will pitch your novel directly to publishers. If they receive any offers, you'll be able to decide whether or not to accept.

☑️ Dos and Don'ts: Literary Agents

- ✓ Do follow directions.
- ✓ Do proofread all materials (including emails).
- ✓ Do read all contracts carefully.
- X Don't send more material than requested.

- X Don't follow up beyond the scope of what they permit.
- X Don't sign anything you don't fully understand.

Academic Publishers

Although, generally, academic publishers do not publish fiction, thanks to the recent growth in representing research through fiction, this is slowly changing. And you can always pitch even to those who don't. Someone always has to be the first. I've published novels with three publishers, none of whom published fiction prior to my work. If you go that route, you'll need to come up with an angle to try to sell them on the idea. You do not need an agent to pitch an academic publisher, and typically the work does not need to be complete. Publishers have different requirements, which you can read on their websites, but generally you need a book proposal and a sample chapter (see Chapter 6 for guidance on pitching academic publishers). If you're working in academia, and you need your fiction to "count as research," then an academic publisher may be ideal. Although they publish far less fiction than trade publishers, it's also less competitive. On the downside, most academic publishers are not set up to market to general readers, so even if you get a contract, you may end up with a far more limited potential audience. Academic publishers also generally price their books higher than trade publishers do, so before you sign a deal, I suggest discussing price point. No one is going to buy an \$80 novel.

Self-Publishing

Self-publishing involves authors publishing their own work. Although self-publishing used to have a bad rap, there are highly professional ways to do it, and for many authors, it makes sense. When you self-publish, you retain copyright and all the other rights to your work. There are numerous platforms that you can use to self-publish. The best known is Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP; Ingram is another well-regarded option). With KDP, you can publish paperback, hardcover, and/or ebooks. They have online templates, and the process is relatively simple. They are also highly responsive to email inquiries from authors. With KDP, there are no up-front costs, and the royalty split favors authors. This process is enabled by print-on-demand technology, in which each paperback is printed when ordered, so there is no costly print run or warehousing. These days many publishers use print-on-demand technology, including some well-known academic publishers. Be warned however that print-on-demand (POD) is more than a means of

production, it is also a status that a book carries. If a book is marked POD, bookstores will not carry it. In order for a book to be in a bookstore, you need traditional distribution (which requires a print run and distributor). There are other platforms that assist with self-publishing, but many charge fees and demand a print run, so explore your options carefully to see what makes the most sense given your goals. The downside of self-publishing is that you're on your own. If you go this route, I highly suggest you hire professional freelancers—at minimum a professional copyeditor. Depending on your comfort level and budget, you may also want to hire a typesetter and cover designer. Ask mentors, peers, or colleagues for suggestions, do an online search (and then do research on each one), or use the list of suggestions provided by KDP. Also, note that if you purchase your own ISBN at a modest cost, you can start your own imprint, and the publisher's name that appears on online retailers will be the name you have selected (as opposed to KDP or whatever platform you've used).

Hybrid Publishers

Hybrid publishers combine the features of trade publishing and self-publishing. There is a vetted submission process. Authors who receive acceptances usually pay a fee to cover publishing costs (these fees can range but are generally at least \$7,500). The publisher provides many of the services trade publishers provide—cover design, typesetting, sales, and marketing. Most importantly, there is traditional distribution, so you have a path to bookstores. Books are also eligible for many of the same things that trade books, but not self-published books, are eligible for, such as library sales, professional review services, and sales into retailers. Authors retain copyright and often other rights (these vary based on the publisher and what each author negotiates for their contract), and authors receive high royalties (often 60–70%, which is worlds above the 2–15% traditional publishers pay). For those who can afford it, this is a great option for authors who want to retain legal ownership of their work and be more involved in the production and marketing process while gaining many of the benefits of traditional trade publishing. On the downside, you must financially invest with no way of knowing whether you'll see that money again. Also, although hybrid publishing has grown dramatically over the past 15 years and has produced many successful books (including national bestsellers and books that have been turned into films), there are still those in the literary world who turn their nose up at the practice.

Elaborating on my last point, it's important to distinguish between a "vanity press" and a hybrid publisher. Vanity presses are not competitive,

will publish just about anything, and charge fees for publication. There are some vanity presses that disguise themselves as academic or trade publishers. These publishers offer little more than a rubber stamp with their name on it. Hybrid publishers, on the other hand, have a competitive process, submissions are vetted (sometimes in multiple rounds), and they offer a range of publishing services including traditional distribution. Be wary of any publisher that seeks you out. Publishing is highly competitive and it's extremely rare that a reputable publisher would contact you.

Publishing Shorter Works of Fiction

I want to briefly comment on publishing shorter works of fiction. Qualitative researchers can also represent their work as a short story, creative non-fiction essay, chapbook, or some other shorter format. If you have written a short literary work, here are some avenues for publication:

- **Anthologies:** Look out for calls for submissions, both for literary collections and traditional academic anthologies on your topic (anthologies allow for a multiplicity of writing styles, and some editors make space for creative expression).
- **Literary magazines and journals:** There are many literary journals, each with its own requirements. Do an online search and then carefully follow submission requirements. Note that these are typically very competitive spaces with high rejection rates, so I suggest, as with a traditional journal article, making a list of several possible publication venues. If rejected, keep going down your list.
- **Online zines:** There are a few online zines popping up that are devoted to various approaches to qualitative research (e.g., autoethnography) or devoted to literary or creative approaches to research in a specific discipline (e.g., sociology). Do an online search and then carefully follow submission requirements. These platforms tend to have higher acceptance rates than traditional literary journals.
- **Chapbooks:** These are short books, usually 30–40 pages, devoted to poetry or fiction. There are publishers who specialize in chapbooks and other publishers that run contests for chapbook submissions. Do an online search and then carefully follow submission requirements. You can also consider self-publishing (previously discussed).

I have two final suggestions regarding publishing shorter creative works. First, there are numerous residency programs for literary writers

and artists in various genres. Whether or not you intend to apply for a residency, I suggest visiting some of these websites. When they have mailing lists, sign up. Their emails often include publishing opportunities you would not otherwise know about. This is a great way to get calls for submissions. Second, check out Submittable, or other sites like it, where you can view hundreds of calls for submissions in various genres. Please note that some publishing platforms charge fees to submit your work for consideration.

Conclusion



Literary writing offers many benefits to qualitative researchers, including contributing to public scholarship, achieving verisimilitude, promoting empathy, forging micro–macro connections, and fostering self- and social reflection. Fiction is a craft that requires practice and discipline. Although I’ve tried to cover as much as possible, it’s impossible to capture it all. This chapter has been adapted from my book *Re/Invention: Methods of Social Fiction* (2023b, Guilford Press), which I recommend you read if you decide to pursue literary writing.

Checklist of Considerations

- ☑ Select a structure for your fictional work.
- ☑ Select a genre based on your thematic content and desired audience.
- ☑ Be aware of whether you are drawing on a master plot as you outline the plot and then a more detailed storyline.
- ☑ Use scenic and narrative writing as appropriate to your goals.
- ☑ Insert gaps intentionally into the narrative.
- ☑ Build robust, three-dimensional, sensitively rendered characters.
 - Create dialogue, interiority, and/or monologue to illustrate who characters are and their relationships with other characters, and to deliver thematic content and move the plot forward.
- ☑ Develop your own writing style.
 - Use language rigorously with specificity.
- ☑ Use literary tools to develop content.
- ☑ Explore different publishing options based on your goals, be professional in your correspondence, and make sure you understand contracts in full before signing



Writing Activities

1. Think about your research topic, research participants, the participants' primary setting, and the central ideas related to your topic. Imagine a fictional rendering based on these factors and free write for at least 20 minutes. Don't fret too much. Just write. If you're not sure where to begin, select a snippet of data (e.g., a phrase a participant said, a definition from the literature, a note about the setting) and use it as a jumping-off point.
2. Select one of your research participants and transform that person into a primary character, or select several participants who share similarities and create a composite character. This is your protagonist. (If you don't have research participants, create a character based on yourself as you relate to the research project.) Name the character and develop a robust character profile that includes a physical description, main professional and leisure-time activities, and personality. Describe his, her, or their values, motivations, challenges, and family and friendship network. Consider the people who populate their world. Next, create a full snippet of interior dialogue or a monologue (or if you can picture the character in conversation with another character, create a scene of dialogue). If you're not sure where to begin, knowing who the person is, consider, for example, something going badly in his, her, or their day. What might the character's internal dialogue sound like, or how might the character talk about his, her, or their experience with someone else?
3. Based on the topic of your research, you've created a protagonist. Now you can flesh out your research project into fiction through plotting and storylining. First, using the character you created, write a general plotline for a fictional work based on a traditional three-act structure. (I suggest using this structure, as it's the most basic to learn; however, if you're inspired to use a different structure, do so.) Second, write a storyline with specific scenes that get you from the beginning to the end of the plot. Finally, use your storyline to start writing, beginning with the opening scene. You can always change it later, so just start writing. If you're having trouble envisioning the opening scene, don't fret. Pick a scene from anywhere in the book that you most clearly see in your mind's eye and start writing it.

Note

1. In 2010 I coined the term *social fiction*, which I use as an umbrella term for fiction grounded in scholarly research or concerns. I have also used the terms *fiction-based research* and *fiction as a research practice*.

CHAPTER 8

Writing and Publishing Blogs and Op-Eds



*Academics seeking tenure must encode
their insights into turgid prose.*

—NICHOLAS KRISTOF (2014)

Blogs? Op-eds? Are these relevant to qualitative researchers? Yes. Although journal articles remain the “gold standard” in much of academia, followed by monographs, neither of those formats is accessible to the public. Today, many researchers aim to share their work more broadly. There are many benefits to publishing in popular formats, including creating awareness about a topic, influencing public opinion and shaping or generating public discourse, and advocating for policy changes. Academic research is often left entirely out of these discussions. Writing a blog or op-ed is a way of making your research a part of the conversation.

Although a series of blogs or op-eds may be the only outcome of your research, this is unlikely. Much more frequently, a blog or op-ed is one of at least two outcomes of research. Generally, you will have published a journal article, monograph, or literary work, and you’ll write a blog or op-ed to (1) bring your research to a different, public audience and (2) promote your work (a common practice, especially if you’ve published a book of any kind).

There are two common misconceptions about blogs and op-eds. First, some scholars assume you must “dumb things down.” This is not true. Distilling information down to what is most pertinent is not the same as dumbing down. Second, some assume that, because these pieces are short and lack jargon, they are easy to write. This is also untrue. Academics

are trained to write in, well, academic formats and language. Relying on those devices can make writing easier. However, it doesn't necessarily make writing better. Blogs and op-eds require using a different voice, explaining things clearly and concisely, simplifying without dumbing down, and making the writing engaging so that people want to read it. This isn't easy. Sometimes it's harder to say something well with fewer words. Popular writing requires a specific skill set. Don't worry, it's a skill that can be learned. Many researchers also find, once they get the hang of it, that they love writing in these formats, as there's a freedom that doesn't exist with traditional academic prose.

Whether or not you have a deep desire to publish blogs and op-eds, I encourage you to practice writing in this format. **Writing for the public** will make you a much stronger writer. **Learning to simplify and distill** will make you a much stronger writer. In my own experience, which is echoed by many scholars, writing in public formats has greatly improved my traditional academic and literary writing, as well as public speaking, such as conference presentations. So, regardless of whether you want a more “public” career as a researcher—something elaborated on in the next chapter—developing this skill set will benefit you enormously.

Blogs versus Op-Eds

■ ■ ■

In this chapter, I mostly review blogs and op-eds simultaneously, as two short article formats aimed at public audiences. However, there are important distinctions between the two formats.

Blogs are pieces written for online platforms. The websites that accept blogs are extremely wide ranging with respect to subject matter, style, tone, and required word count. There are discipline-specific blogs, thematic or topic-oriented blogs, and community-centered blogs (intended for authors of a specific group, e.g., Black women, transgender writers). There is a continuum with respect to style and tone (see Figure 8.1). At one end of the continuum, websites prioritize personal writing styles that use first-person narration and include, or center on, the writer's own experiences. At the

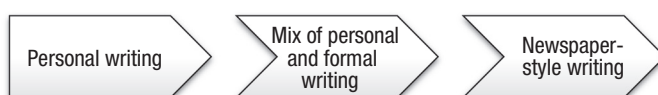


FIGURE 8.1. Continuum of blog types.

other end of the continuum, there are online platforms that attempt to mirror traditional op-ed style newspaper reporting more closely (e.g., *The Huffington Post*). Read a variety of blogs in order to familiarize yourself with the various options.

Op-eds are opinion or editorial pieces written for newspapers. They may be published in print, online, or both. Their style is more formal than blogs (see Table 8.1 for comparisons). They are not intended to be personal stories but, rather, well-researched thought pieces. Claims need to be supported (most newspapers ask that facts are hyperlinked to reliable sources). Strict word counts apply. Check the submission guidelines for the newspaper you’re submitting to, but generally requirements range from 600 to 900 words, with the most common around 650 to 700 words. If you’re not sure what newspaper you are going to submit to, aim for 650 words, and edit as needed. Read a variety of op-eds to get a better sense of the typical style and tone. Although they are more formal than blogs, as you’ll see in a later example, they leave plenty of room for you to inject your personality to make the writing engaging and to punctuate your points.

Crafting a Blog or Op-Ed

When it comes to writing a blog or op-ed, there are five primary decisions you’ll need to make regarding the content, style, and structure.

■ **The topic.** First, you need to decide what the piece is about. Blogs and op-eds require a specific and limited focus. You will need to narrow down your research and distill it into a manageable topic. For example, if you’ve written a monograph based on years of ethnographic research, you won’t be able to cover as many topics in a short article. You will need to select one aspect of the research to focus on. As you’re mulling over your topic, consider your goals with the piece, the intended audience, and what they might benefit from. Also, consider issues of **timeliness**. When writing

TABLE 8.1. Comparing Blogs and Op-Eds		
Format	Publication venue	Style
Blog	Online platforms	Wide ranging, generally informal, often uses first-person narration and personal experiences
Op-ed	Newspapers (print and/or online)	Formal, well researched (all claims supported), strict word counts

for a popular audience, and especially when writing for a newspaper, it's vital to show the relevance of the piece to current events. There are different ways to achieve timeliness. Consider the following as ways to tie your piece into the present: links to a current event or political discussion, the anniversary of an event, a holiday. **A good article needs a hook or an angle**—something that grabs the readers' attention and makes the piece relevant to the now.

- **The data, facts, research, examples you'll use.** Once you've focused your topic, you'll need to decide on the substantive content of the piece. What data, facts, research, and/or examples will you use? Again, you will not be able to relay all that you know about the topic; consider which pieces of evidence can best be used to persuade and illustrate your points. Newspapers, and some blogs, require hyperlinks to reliable sources. Do your research well to ensure it is solid.

- **The takeaway.** Blogs and op-eds are meant to leave readers with a takeaway message. Try to avoid the desire to give half a dozen concluding points, as you might do in the context of an academic journal article. Instead, figure out the primary message. It's usually best to deliver this at the end—ideally in the last sentence. Mull over the lingering message you want to leave. Once you've nailed it, you'll be able to write the piece gearing it toward that main point.

- **Writing style and voice.** The three previous decisions focus on content. You'll also need to land on a writing style. In other words, consider what voice you'll be using. This will depend in part on whether you're writing an op-ed or a blog and the specific publication outlet. The piece should be somewhat similar to other pieces they've published. Beyond the specifics of the format and outlet, you'll also need to consider your own strengths and preferences as a writer, as there's plenty of leeway regarding bringing your style into the piece. For example, the decision to use humor is highly personal.

- **Organization.** Finally, you'll need to decide how to organize or structure your article. What's your lead? How are you going to introduce the topic? In what order will you present the data, facts, research, and/or examples? How will you create flow from one part of the article to the next? How will you conclude? Box 8.1 details the main components of a blog or op-ed.

Bear in mind that there are many ways to organize blogs and op-eds. You'll notice that even the examples I provide later in this chapter do not

BOX 8.1. The Components of a Blog/Op-Ed

Titles (a hook or clever turn of phrase)

Five-paragraph organization

Paragraph 1: Sets up the topic

Paragraphs 2–4: Presents your argument and evidence

Paragraph 5: Summarizes and leaves a final thought

perfectly correspond to this structure. I'm simply giving you the most general structure, which you may find especially helpful if you're new to writing in this format. However, these are broad guidelines, not requirements. Use them as a guideline, not a prison.

Quick Writing Activity

Pick one aspect of your research that might make a good op-ed. What is the takeaway message? Brainstorm possible last sentences of the op-ed, in which you deliver the takeaway.

Let's look at two published examples from my work: an op-ed and a blog. In Chapter 9, additional examples are reviewed more briefly.

As mentioned earlier in this book, in 2023 I released a novel titled *Hollyland*. On the surface, it's a light celebrity romance with a suspenseful twist. However, it's also a philosophical treatise on the arts. The protagonist, Dee Schwartz, is an acclaimed arts researcher. She researches the relationship between art and science to teach people about the value of the arts in society. Dee has also been in love with the arts since childhood. The novel takes place in Hollywood. Dee falls in love with movie and television star Ryder Field, and they are surrounded by people who work in the entertainment industry. I drew on decades of research into the arts in order to write the arts narrative in the book, which raises questions about the value we do or do not place on art, art in education, what the arts bring to our lives, the nature of controversial art, the relationship between art and science, the joy to be found experiencing or making art, distinctions between art and entertainment, and the value of art regardless of whether it is deemed "successful."

I decided to write an op-ed focusing on those two latter arts themes: distinctions between art and entertainment and the value of art, regardless of whether it is deemed “successful,” which in both the book and op-ed centers on discussion of celebrity or fame in relation to art.

Here are some brief excerpts from *Hollyland* that center on these themes.

An excerpt from the conversation between Dee and Ryder in the opening chapter:

“I love art more than anything; it’s sacred to me. Artists need to be free. Art shouldn’t have to apologize for itself. It should provoke, inspire, unsettle, and disrupt—or at least aspire to,” she explained.

“What about entertain?”

“Sure, that too. Of course, art and entertainment aren’t always the same thing, are they?”

He looked at her intently as if she had just asked a question that he had been asking himself for years.

She continued, “I just mean that as soon as you’re thinking about entertaining, you’re thinking about audience. Sometimes art gets watered down to appeal to the masses or to placate the people holding the purse strings. It’s hard to be truthful or to follow your own creative heart if you’re too concerned by what others might think. Let’s just say that I’ve never been terribly interested in what’s trendy. There’s no place for that when making art.”

(Leavy, 2023c, pp. 2–3)

An excerpt from a conversation between Dee and Ryder the first time he visits her home:

She walked over to her desk while he perused her bookshelves.

“Deanna Schwartz,” he said as he pulled one of her books off the shelf. “That’s your full name?”

“Uh-huh,” she said.

“*New York Times* bestseller, wow,” he said. “I didn’t realize. I mean, you didn’t mention . . .”

“Those things don’t matter to me,” she replied. “Accolades don’t change what’s on the pages of the book. That’s all that matters. God help any artist who cares about sales or reviews.”

(Leavy, 2023c, p. 37)

An excerpt from a conversation between Dee and the head of the biggest movie studio in Hollywood, who is also an old family friend:

“You’re right about that, Dee. I have the Oscars to prove it.”
 She rolled her eyes. “Awards are ridiculous. But it’s a fine film. I was glad to help.”
 “People say that, but you’re the only person I know who means it. Don’t ever change.”
 (Leavy, 2023c, p. 54)

An excerpt from a conversation at a restaurant between Dee and several Hollywood stars and a movie director:

“Luckily, I’m not interested in what they think. I make art simply because it brings me joy. There’s no other reason.”
 Sloane smiled faintly and the table fell silent, as if they were all contemplating what those words meant in their own lives.
 “Honestly, I was just looking for a creative means of uncensored expression. I didn’t consider what anyone would think. The reason I started writing poetry and novellas instead of some other, more popular forms was because hardly anyone reads them,” Dee explained.
 “Yet your poetry collections and works of fiction have all become bestsellers. Seems as though people do read them, critics too,” Oliver said.
 “Yeah, it was a flawed plan.”
 (Leavy, 2023c, p. 62)

An excerpt from a conversation at a restaurant between Dee and several Hollywood stars and a movie director:

She paused, looked around the table, and said, “I love and see value in all art. Children’s art, street art, doodles in someone’s scrapbook, novice actors on community theater stages. I find beauty in it all. Some of my favorite artists are people you’ve never heard of. There’s so much unrecognized talent.”
 (Leavy, 2023c, p. 77)

An excerpt from a party scene where Dee introduces one of her arts friends to Ryder (the artist has earlier been identified as the most famous street artist in the world, a Banksy type):

Dee introduced one of her friends as “Charlie, a talented street artist.” After he walked away, Rye asked, “What kind of street art does he make?”

“Oh, you’d know it. “

“He’s not . . . Green? *The Green?*”

Dee nodded and said, “Shh, his identity is secret. Besides, I hadn’t a clue who he was when we first met. Didn’t matter to me. Talent is talent. Courage is courage.”

(Leavy, 2023c, pp. 139–140)

Now let’s see how I translated those ideas into an op-ed, by linking to a current happening (my hook or angle) *and* relevant research. The op-ed in the box on pages 172–173 was published in the *Portland Press Herald*, Maine’s most circulated newspaper, on February 7, 2023.

As you can see, the hook or angle I used to make the piece timely were the recent or upcoming art exhibits of three well-known celebrities. The piece begins with the hook, provides historical context, and draws on statistical research (which was hyperlinked in the published piece) as evidence of the circumstances of most contemporary artists, highlighting the stark differences from the famous actors-turned-artists. The article concludes with the takeaway (the commercial art world is all about hype). Finally, my byline mentioned *Hollyland*, as well as my city of residency (to connect it to the specific newspaper).

Before moving on, there’s one additional issue to consider when writing an op-ed: **Localize the piece.** Many editors look for a connection to the geographic area so it’s clear why the piece is published in that newspaper. Sometimes the topic will lend itself to a big and obvious connection. For example, you’ve conducted ethnographic field research or community-based research in a city on the topic of urban development in that area. More frequently, though, the piece could be published anywhere, and the connections to the local are just a detail or two. For example, in my *Portland Press Herald* op-ed, there’s the line:

You’d have a better shot getting into Fort Knox and following up with dinner at The Lost Kitchen.

In Maine, the Lost Kitchen has a reputation for being difficult to get into. If I were submitting the piece to the *Los Angeles Times* or the *New York Times*, I would have changed that reference to Nobu. If I was submitting it to *The Guardian* in London, I would have used the Ivy or the Savoy Grill. In short, make it relatable to local audiences. This may require research.

What Celebrity Art Reveals about the Changing World of Contemporary Art

Brad Pitt? Johnny Depp? Pierce Brosnan? They're not just Hollywood actors. They're the names the art world is buzzing about. But why and what does it reveal?

From van Gogh to Modigliani, many of the world's most revered artists never enjoyed success in their lifetime. That changed in the 1980s when the Mary Boone Gallery in New York's Soho became the epicenter of the American pop art movement. The artists she represented—Jean-Michel Basquiat, Julian Schnabel, and Roy Lichtenstein—became celebrities. The most famous of all, Andy Warhol, was a fixture in that scene. Warhol played with ideas about celebrity in his art, creating iconic paintings of the rich and famous, ironically making himself rich and famous. The explosion between art and fame that occurred during this time was so powerful gallerist Mary Boone became just as famous as the artists with a 1982 *New York Magazine* cover dubbing her “The New Queen of the Art Scene.”

The blurring of art and fame that we are seeing today isn't new, but it has changed. In the 1980s artists became famous. Today, the famous become artists.

In July, Johnny Depp's debut painting collection sold out at a London gallery in record time, fetching millions. Brad Pitt's sculptures were recently on public display in Finland, drawing world-wide attention. Now Pierce Brosnan has announced his paintings will be exhibited at an art gallery in Santa Monica, California, beginning on May 13. They are hardly the first celebs to try their hand at art. From David Bowie to a couple of Rolling Stones, there's a long list who have used their platform to catapult themselves into the exclusive world of high-end art.

It's not surprising that when A-listers premier their art, global attention follows. We seem insatiably fascinated by celebrities—we follow their social media accounts, scan tabloids, and bid on celebrity auctions the way we used to play the lottery. Perhaps we assume their lives are better than us normal folks and we want a glimpse. Pitt said his sculptures are about “self-reflection” and what he's “gotten wrong” in relationships. One could hardly avoid the public unraveling of his personal life in recent years, so it's not surprising that many were curious about his artworks.

What is surprising though is what the recent wave of celebrity art reveals about the nature of the art world and the harsh reality most contemporary artists face.

On June 7, 2022, Angelica Villa reported in *ARTnews* that only 4% of half of all US museum shows are dedicated to contemporary or modern artists. In other words, very few living artists ever have their work displayed in museums. Only 10% of art school graduates earn a living from their art. Only 0.000001% of artists become famous.

The art world is notoriously exclusive. You want to be an artist and show at a major gallery? Good luck. You'd have a better shot getting into Fort Knox and following up with dinner at The Lost Kitchen. It's nearly impossible. At least for mere mortals. For celebrities, the red carpet is rolled out, ushering them into an elite sphere.

We know celebrities enjoy special treatment. How is this any different from the fast-tracking of actors-turned-musicians? Both Hollywood and the music industry are understood as branches of the entertainment business. Art has been held to a different standard. For better or worse, art has been distinguished from entertainment, elevated above it. Distinguishing art from pop culture has allowed the gatekeepers of the art world—gallerists and curators—to maintain an insular world and their esteemed place within it. They claim there are objective qualities that make art exceptional which they alone are qualified to judge. This new trend challenges their status and thus our notions about what makes art worthy of our attention. By unabashedly embracing celebrity art, perhaps a poorly hidden truth has been revealed. The art world is all about hype.

Patricia Leavy, PhD, is the author of *Hollyland*. She lives in Kennebunk.

Quick Writing Activity

Brainstorm possible hooks—angles—for an op-ed on your research topic. Remember, a hook is something that makes the piece relevant today. A hook could be many things—for example, an anniversary of a historical event, a holiday, or a current event.

Let's look at another example. Most of my scholarship is about arts-based research (ABR). ABR values the arts as a way of knowing. Arts-based research practices are a set of methodological tools that adapt the

tenets of the arts in order to address research questions across the disciplines. I've published many journal articles and books about ABR, most notably *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice* (2015). I wanted to get this research out to broader, public audiences. The opening chapter of the book provides a broad overview of the relationship between social research and the creative arts. There's far too much information to attempt to share in one article. So, I narrowed it down to the section of that chapter that focuses on the arts and learning,

The box on the facing page is an excerpt from a blog that was first published by *The Huffington Post* on April 23, 2014. It was republished with minor changes by *The Creativity Post* on May 15, 2014. The published piece is ten paragraphs. I'm reprinting four paragraphs for illustrative purposes—the intro (how I come to the piece), a middle paragraph (one of the examples), and the last two paragraphs (the takeaway). The full piece is available online for free.

You'll notice that because this was a blog and not an op-ed, I made different stylistic choices. The piece is written from my personal experience: how I came to the topic and what I've learned. This is a common writing style for blogs. Because a blog goes out to the web, I did not localize the piece, as I did in the op-ed shared earlier. Blog readership can benefit from a catchy title, so I tried to achieve that with my spin on the popular “Your Brain on Drugs” and flipped it to “Our Brains on Art,” which signals the neuroscience bent of the research. The writing style and tone differ considerably from *Method Meets Art*, which was written for academic audiences; but I should note that I was able to share roughly all the same research as I do in that section of the book.

Publishing Blogs and Op-Eds



Before you start drafting blogs and op-eds, as with any other form of writing, you should first start by reading them. Read many. Read as many as you can. This will give you a sense of how to write them and also where to submit your piece.

There are so many blogs that it can be difficult to know where to begin looking for the right platform. Do online searches by your discipline or subject area. To narrow down the results, visit the sites and see how well your piece fits. You may also want to get a sense of audience size. In other words, how many readers or viewers usually see the pieces published on that site? Some sites show how many times an article has been viewed or downloaded; however, many do not. Some sites also have an “about” section (or

Our Brains on Art

I am a sociologist by training. I come from the academic world, reading scholarly articles on topics of social import, but they're almost always boring, dry, and quickly forgotten. Yet I can't count how many times I've gone to a movie or a theater production or read a novel and been jarred into seeing something differently, learned something new, felt deep emotions and retained the insights gained. I know from both my research and casual conversations with people in daily life that my experiences are echoed by many. . . .

Natalie Phillips (2012) used the fiction of Jane Austen in a study about how reading affects the brain. The preliminary results of this work have been revealing. Phillips and her colleagues found that the whole brain appears to be transformed as people engage in close readings of fiction. Moreover, there appear to be global activations across a number of different regions of the brain, including some unexpected areas such as those that are involved in movement and touch. This research helps to explain how we become immersed in novels, actually feeling as though we are within the story and that the house could burn down and we wouldn't notice. We actually place ourselves in the story. Research in this area seems to be taking off. For another example, Gregory Berns (Berns, Blaine, Prietula, & Pye, 2013) led a team of researchers in a study published in *Brain Connectivity* that suggests there is heightened connectivity in our brains for days after reading a novel. . . .

In 1963 famed sociologist Lewis A. Coser, far ahead of his time, published a book titled *Sociology through Literature* which he deemed "experimental." Coser believed that novelists were uniquely able to tap into and describe human experience, which could be of great value to teaching in the social sciences, but he knew others were not yet ready to follow suit. I recently read an op-ed by Gregory Currie published in *The New York Times* that suggested literary fiction may actually improve our moral sensibility and social intelligence.

A good novel can make us smarter and more compassionate. I think Lewis A. Coser would have enjoyed that article. Considering the scope of what we know now about how the brain works, which no doubt merely scratches the surface, it seems clear that the move to the arts in social research opens limitless possibilities.

Patricia Leavy is the author of *Method Meets Art*.

something like it), in which they note their weekly or monthly readership. If there's no information, you can look to comments on existing articles to get some sense about the level of reader engagement. Unfortunately, information on readership can be difficult to discern.

There are some popular blogs (and online magazines) that have very high rates of submission and thus low acceptance rates (e.g., BuzzFeed, Pop Sugar, The Mary Sue). If you choose to submit to an extremely competitive blog, make sure to have a list of more realistic backups ready, so that if your piece is not accepted, you can send it on to the next. Bear in mind the timeliness of the article as you decide how high to aim. If your piece is directly linked to an unfolding current event and will not be publishable days or weeks later, you may want to make the strategic choice to play it safe and submit somewhere likely to publish. Most blogs do not allow simultaneous submissions.

Newspapers have a clear hierarchy based on circulation numbers: national, state, and regional (local). Beginning with national, *The New York Times* is considered the paper of record in the United States. Other top newspapers include *The Boston Globe*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today*. It may be tempting to submit to one of these newspapers because of the wide readership and prestige. Bear in mind that they also receive the most submissions and thus have the highest rejection rates. Consider newspapers where you live, from the most distributed to regional publications, to give you more options. Many opinion editors give priority to authors from the area. For example, the *Portland Press Herald*, where I published the op-ed shared earlier, privileges “Maine Voices,” which gave me a leg up in the submission process.

Timeliness is a salient issue with op-eds. They are always intended to be **of the moment**. Therefore, they have a short shelf life, which doesn't necessarily leave you a lot of time for waiting out a series of rejections. I suggest making a list of possible newspapers. Look at their time frame (e.g., they respond within 3 days, 5 days). Figure out how many days you have for the article to be relevant and fresh (yes, we're often talking a matter of days with op-eds). Then figure out how many on the list you can safely send it to in total. Start with what you deem the best, and work your way down as needed. **Simultaneous submissions are *never* permitted with newspapers.**

When you do submit to a blog or op-ed, make sure your submission complies perfectly with their guidelines. Give them exactly what they are asking for in exactly the manner in which they want to receive it. Follow instructions carefully.

Sometimes you will receive a rejection email if the editor has decided to pass. It's good when this happens, because you can go right to the next blog or newspaper on your list. However, most often there will be silence. The time frame the outlet has allotted has passed, and you've heard nothing. This is a rejection. Do not email them. Do not resubmit. If you do, all that will happen is you'll ensure you'll never have your work published by that venue. Silence is a rejection. Yes, it's frustrating and feels a bit ambiguous, but this is how the media operate.

✓✗ Dos and Don'ts: Submitting Your Blog or Op-Ed

- ✓ Do follow word count requirements.
- ✓ Do follow all submission requirements.
- ✓ Do include your byline as you wish it to appear.
- ✗ Don't submit your piece to more than one outlet at a time (unless simultaneous submissions are allowed).
- ✗ Don't harass the editor (no response is a no).
- ✗ Don't forget to add a hyperlink to your byline to your website or publication.

Postpublication



Once your piece is published, promote it. Share it on social media (use hashtags to help readers find your piece) and add it to your website (if you have one). Ask your friends and followers to share it on their social media. Send it to your university or employer and ask them to share it, too. This will help the piece gain traction. You did the research. You wrote the article and successfully navigated the publishing process. Make the most of it.

There's an important dimension to publishing in these formats that I haven't addressed: the personal and professional challenges of going public. When you publish a journal article, you're far removed from any potential responses from readers. It's a different experience with blogs and op-eds, which may be read widely and immediately. Moreover, they often prompt quick responses from readers, which often include critical comments. There are a range of considerations that come along with the public nature of these formats, from your emotional readiness to potential career fallout. Your public identity as a researcher is something that deserves thought, regardless of the formats in which you publish, and it surfaces in other

ways, including your online presence, from social media to personal websites. Therefore, this topic is discussed in depth in the next chapter, along with the many rewards of doing publicly accessible work.

Conclusion



Blogs and op-eds are great vehicles for sharing your research with broader audiences and reaching relevant stakeholders outside of the academy who can benefit from your work. Accessible, jargon-free, and available widely (usually for free), these articles can open your work up to an entirely new readership. Moreover, these popular forms of writing put your research into conversations that have the potential to create awareness, to open dialogue, and to shape public opinion and policy. Blogs and op-eds help make your research matter in the real world. Learning to write effective blogs and op-eds also gives you another skill set as a writer. Mastering these forms will strengthen all your writing. Truly.



Checklist of Considerations

- ☑ Decide whether you are writing a blog or an op-ed.
- ☑ Draft an outline that details:
 - The topic
 - The data, facts, research, and/or examples you'll use
 - The takeaway
 - The writing style or voice
 - The organization of the article
- ☑ Localize the article (if submitting to a newspaper).
- ☑ Make sure the piece is timely.
- ☑ Make sure the piece is well researched and include hyperlinks and a relevant byline.
- ☑ Make a list of media to submit to.
 - Bear in mind turnaround time and the timeliness of the piece.
 - Consider national and regional publications.
 - Consider local newspapers.
- ☑ Once the piece is polished (after rounds of revision), follow all submission guidelines.
- ☑ After publication, share your piece on social media.



Writing Activities

1. Read four or five blogs or op-eds on topics related to your topic. Write a short analysis of each article—the structure, tone, evidence, and takeaway. What did you find persuasive? What didn't you respond well to?
2. Narrow down your research to a manageable topic and draft a blog or op-ed using the strategies reviewed in this chapter. You already have a hook and a takeaway point, so you have the core of your intro and ending. What points will you make in between and what data will you use as evidence?
3. Now take the article you wrote and change it into the other format. If you wrote an op-ed, now transform it into a blog. Make note of how your style and voice changes and how that affects delivery of the content. *Note:* You do not need to publish either of these pieces. The goal is to learn to distill your research and write accessibly for public audiences in both less and more formal ways.

CHAPTER 9

Building a Career, Creating a Body of Work, and Going Public



*The cloistered ivory tower is going
the way of the card catalog.*

—ARLENE STEIN AND JESSIE DANIELS (2017, p. 152)

This book has discussed how to write and publish qualitative research. I've reviewed various formats for representing qualitative research, as well as different avenues toward publication. Some might call it a day. However, that would be like describing the trees without addressing the forest. It's unlikely that you're going to conduct one study, publish one piece, and be done. Rather, you're going to create a body of work. In the process, you're going to establish yourself as a scholar. You're going to build a career. Publishing pieces of research is like planting trees. Someday those trees turn into a forest. That forest is your body of scholarship. What kind of forest will you grow?

As you make critical decisions about how to represent and share your research, it's important to ask yourself: How do I want to contribute to knowledge? Who do I want to have access to my research? What kind of scholar do I want to be?

The academic landscape has changed significantly over the past few decades, as the world has changed. Simply consider online communities, professional websites, social media, and electronic publishing, for example. These may all be a part of how you present yourself and your research. The paths for building a successful career as a researcher have multiplied. With more options and opportunities, there are also more decisions to make.

Chapters 5–8 reviewed radically different formats for representing

qualitative research. How do you choose which format? How do you decide which audience(s) to try to reach? What are the advantages of publishing in more than one format? When is it appropriate to do so? What are the costs and benefits? How do you maximize the potential impact of your published research? These are all important questions.

To begin, I review recent changes in the academic landscape, culminating in the move toward public scholarship, as well as the rewards and challenges of doing this kind of work. Next, I review how to take your research and represent it in multiple formats, followed by how to make the most out of your research by considering your online presence. I conclude with some final advice.

The Contemporary Academic Landscape



Academic researchers are trained to be mindful of the structural barriers toward professional advancement. Everyone needs to be able to earn a living and pay their bills. In short, academic researchers need to be cognizant of typical hiring, tenure, and promotion requirements. Historically, there was a mandate of “publish or perish.” This meant that to advance professionally, a researcher needed to primarily publish peer-reviewed journal articles. To a certain extent, this still holds. Most schools require a minimum number of published journal articles. Further criteria may include the ranking of the journal. Scholars are thus highly incentivized to represent their research in this format, whether or not it best serves their specific goals or preferred writing style.

However, the mantra has been shifting to “go public or perish.” Today, researchers are encouraged to engage in dialogue with different audiences as a part of “public communication” (Cannella & Lincoln, 2004; Leavy, 2011a, 2019, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Woo, 2008, 2019, 2022). Many universities are modernizing their tenure and promotion policies to account for the range of ways academics may contribute to knowledge building. In some places, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, there are increasingly new criteria *requiring* scholars to demonstrate the impact of their work. There is reason to believe this trend will continue.

Before delving into public scholarship, let’s briefly consider the primary factors that have reshaped the academic landscape, which include (1) the effects of the social justice movements, (2) the move toward interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, (3) the nature of contemporary problems and public engagement, and (4) the digital turn (including open access publishing).

The social justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s—civil rights, women’s rights, LGBTQIA rights, worker’s rights—shined a spotlight on rampant social injustices and inequalities. These movements precipitated numerous changes in how research is carried out and distributed. For the sake of this discussion, the emphasis on social justice highlighted the importance of *inclusion* within knowledge building and dissemination. How do we represent our research? For whose benefit? How do we share it?

The move toward interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity has also had serious implications for not only how we conduct research but also how we represent it. Historically, a disciplinary model prevailed in academia. Disciplines were siloed off, research was conducted within strict borders, often by lone researchers, and ultimately published in discipline-specific journals or monographs. Today, there is much more focus on the problem at the center of inquiry and bringing in multiple resources and lenses to study it, as appropriate (Leavy, 2011a, 2019, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). There has been an erosion of disciplinarity in favor of more pragmatic approaches. This change has also spawned the creation of many new and emergent research methods. These methods allow us to ask new research questions or to ask old questions in new ways. The result is a wealth of new knowledge. These innovations continually raise the question: How do we best represent this research?

The nature of contemporary problems and public engagement has also affected research practices. First, many of the most pressing problems are large, diffuse, and multifaceted—sustainability, environmental degradation, public health, systemic racism—and many more topics. These kinds of topics lend themselves to interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary research and thus shift the research landscape further away from a traditional disciplinary mode (Leavy, 2011a, 2019, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). Second, the public has become more engaged regarding problems of importance due to increases in education, as well as access to an endless loop of information on the internet and other media. Many have lost faith that the major scientific and political institutions are equipped to deal with the most pressing problems of our time and consider academics to be out of touch with reality. The popular but stereotypical image of academics sitting in an ivory tower conversing only with their colleagues is all too common. In short, both within and beyond the academy, many are concerned that the research community has neglected its public role (Woo, 2008). Researchers have been asking themselves new questions. What is the role of research in society? How can research make a difference?

The digital turn has also had wide-ranging effects on research practice. Technology has changed not only how a great deal of research is carried out

but also how it is represented, distributed, and how people engage with it. The myriad of ways this has occurred could itself be the subject of a book. A few examples include electronic journals (some solely electronic and some that publish online first), open access publishing, ebooks, ebook repositories, print-on-demand technology, websites, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, and social media. Some may be quick to assume that the digital turn has caused the push for public scholarship. Phillip Vannini (2012) suggests the turn to “popularize” research is the result of our desire to make our research more accessible and thus more valuable. Technology is a *tool* for facilitating much of this work, but it is not the reason for doing it. Nevertheless, scholars now ask a range of questions. Where do we share research? What online presence should researchers have? What are the costs and benefits?

Although this was by no means an exhaustive discussion, the effects of the social justice movements, the move toward interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, the nature of contemporary problems and public engagement, and the digital turn are all an important part of the context in which there has been a shift toward public scholarship. Figure 9.1 illustrates this confluence of factors.

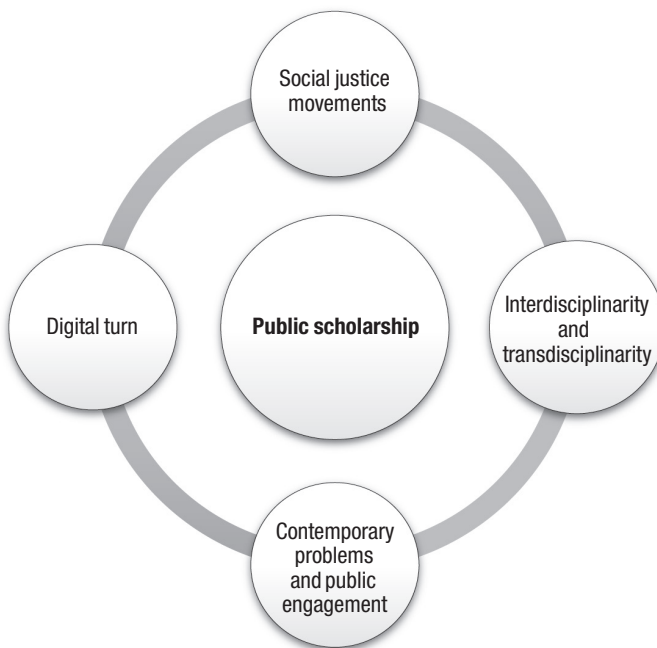


FIGURE 9.1. Factors that have reshaped the academic landscape and increased public scholarship.

Public Scholarship

■ ■ ■

Although public scholarship has always existed and has been a regular part of academic and public discourse since the 1960s (Denzin & Giardina, 2018), it has gained considerable attention over the past 25 years. In 2014, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof wrote a scathing indictment of the academic research system, noting that professors, although among the most knowledgeable people, have made themselves irrelevant in conversations of import. He contends that it isn't merely that they've been marginalized but also that they have "marginalized themselves." Kristof (2014) likens academic writing to "gobbledygook" that is often "hidden in obscure journals." He is not alone. Many inside and outside of the academy have critiqued traditional research practices for resulting in a wellspring of research that circulates exclusively within the academy and garners surprisingly small readership even within that sphere. Studies have shown that most academic journal articles in the social sciences, education, and humanities have only a handful of readers, with some claiming the majority are never read by anyone other than their author, journal editor, and the author's mentor.

The small audience for journal articles is easy to understand. Peer-reviewed articles are inaccessible in two ways. First, they circulate in hard-to-get journals that are available only in university libraries. No one else is aware of these journals or has reasonable and affordable access to them. Second, academic journal articles are loaded with discipline-specific jargon. They are written for our academic peers.

What is public scholarship? Most simply, public scholarship is that which is available outside of the academy. Lay citizens have access to public scholarship in two regards: It circulates in spaces to which they have access, *and* it's understandable (Leavy, 2011a, 2019, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). Some also suggest that public scholarship isn't merely available to the public or some segment of it but is also useful to them. Public scholars contribute to the democratization of research.

Public scholarship has always existed, to some extent, but has become the focus of debate over the past 25 years. Michael Burawoy's 2004 American Sociological Association Presidential Address, devoted to public sociology, is frequently credited as a turning point (Burawoy, 2005). Although this certainly is a noteworthy moment in the historical timeline, it is also a problematic one for two key reasons. First, many sociologists have long engaged in this kind of work, whether or not they were properly recognized in the academic reward and "fame" structure, which itself is highly hierarchical and insular. For example, Patricia Hill Collins (2007) explains that

before the term *public sociology* was popularized, she was long “doing a kind of sociology that had no name” (p. 101). Whereas Collins ultimately earned rock-star status in academia, most do not and have carried on with this work in the shadows. Even those who have done this work and received recognition are operating from the margins, not the center, of the discipline (Collins, 2007). Second, as Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2007) has astutely pointed out, Burawoy’s “social position” as a white male at an elite university permeated his conception of public sociology and the confidence with which he in fact mapped out the entire discipline of sociology in his speech (Glenn, 2007, p. 215).

I’m going to pause for a moment because you may be thinking something like, “I have no interest in public scholarship” or “I just want to publish journal articles and monographs, so this is irrelevant.” Please bear with me. Whether you come to this book wanting to learn about popularizing your research in op-eds or literary works or you simply want to understand how to represent your research in traditional forms, which is perfectly valid, it’s important that you understand the context in which you’re building a body of work. To some extent, all scholars engage with the public. When you publish a journal article or monograph, there is always the potential for it to be read. It could even be cited in a news story or legal proceeding. Rare, yes. But possible. When you publish your research, you are creating a public record. Here’s another example. You could spend your entire career publishing only traditional journal articles that are poorly read. Then you deliver an address at a conference, and someone records it on their phone and puts it on YouTube or shares clips on their social media. Boom, you’ve gone public. No, this isn’t the same level of exposure as writing op-eds or novels, or posting your own online content, but it’s still a taste of it. Clearly, there is a continuum, but all researchers must contend with these issues, so it’s best to be prepared and make informed decisions. Simply making the choice to have a professional website, social media account, or Wikipedia page is linked to how you represent and share your work.

There are four primary considerations when engaging in public scholarship: (1) learning to write/communicate in different ways, (2) learning the medium you are working with, (3) weighing the personal toll, and (4) possible professional costs.

First, presenting your work in different formats and to multiple audiences requires **being able to write or speak in different ways**. Don’t worry, we do this all the time. As reviewed in the opening chapters of this book, we all regularly communicate differently with different people. For example, we may email our professor but text our friend, and the content and formality of those exchanges also varies. When it comes to representing your

research, writing in different formats requires you to think seriously about your language, structure, and the audiences to whom you are speaking. Katharyne Mitchell (2008) writes the following about her experiences presenting her work outside of university settings: “I have radically changed my language, including the vocabulary and even grammatical structure of my sentences. But I have retained most, if not all, of the content, and in a number of cases, I have felt that editorial suggestions made my writing crisper and stronger” (p. 2).

Second, you need to **learn about the medium within which you are working**. For instance, if you’re using a popular medium such as op-eds, you need to learn to write in that format in order to be able to get your work published. As with anything, practice is needed. Take what was reviewed in Chapter 8 and practice, practice, practice. Lisa Wade began the widely read Sociological Images blog in 2007 and concurs that writing for a general audience requires extensive practice (Stein & Daniels, 2017). Wade credits daily writing with improving her skills and increasing her online following. Again, developing a writing discipline as reviewed in Chapter 1 is essential. If you’re turning to a literary format, as Kip Jones (2003) noted, you can’t simply take your interview transcript and rearrange it on the page to mimic a poem and then call yourself a poet. You need to learn about the craft of poetry (Faulkner, 2009, 2019). When publishing in new venues, bear in mind that you may need to work your way up. For instance, submit your op-ed to a local newspaper to build your credibility before sending your work to *The New York Times*.

Third, there may be a **personal cost** to producing public scholarship (Mitchell, 2008). Most researchers aren’t used to having their work widely read, let alone overnight. Most peer-reviewed journal articles have a tiny audience. Even those rare articles that gain legs do so only over time. There is also a long lag between when you complete an article and when it is published (sometimes a year or more). Then, if people read it, you may not feel those effects for years, and, if you do, it will be in the form of citations in other articles from people who do or don’t agree with you. It’s a pretty detached process. You are far removed from the response to your work. Public formats such as blogs, vlogs, and op-eds are totally different. They are published quickly, often instantly. People do read them. And people respond, often without filtering themselves, for better or worse. When you put your work and ideas out there, you can’t control what you get back, which may involve hurtful online comments, emails, letters from those who disagree with you, or bad reviews or other public critiques of your work.

Fourth, there may be a **professional cost** to producing public scholarship. Shortly I review some extreme examples of academics being targeted

for their public outreach and facing disastrous career outcomes. However, as I explain, these incidents are extremely rare. A more common concern is that some universities do not value public scholarship. Therefore, spending significant amounts of your work time on these efforts may hinder your career advancement. It's important to understand the tenure and promotion requirements at your institution.

There are plenty of trolls online looking for a fight. Although not the norm, in extreme cases, scholars have had their careers derailed. For example, in perhaps the best-known case, Steven Salaita was fired from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign after his 2014 tweets criticizing Israel's bombing of Gaza garnered critique. Salaita faced claims of anti-Semitism, and a campaign was launched against him. Although he subsequently won a lawsuit against the university, his career was badly damaged. In 2014, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* included him on their list of influencers, calling him a "Twitter casualty." A year later Saida Grundy faced a similar situation. Grundy had been hired as an assistant professor at Boston University when, in response to then-current events, she tweeted that white college-age males were the "problem population." A campaign was launched calling for her firing and attempting to force a public apology. Grundy has subsequently said she failed to realize there were "people who hunt" for social media comments from professors (Stein & Daniels, 2017, p. 141). It is important to note that in both cases it was scholars of color who were attacked. Scholars of color and women of all races are often targeted.

Robin M. Boylorn, a respected qualitative researcher, blogger, and one of the founders of the widely popular Crunk Feminist Collective (CFC), has written about the *public* nature of public scholarship. Boylorn (2014) considered the prospect of blogging and receiving immediate audience feedback "uniquely risky." Notwithstanding the challenges, she has developed a large and loyal following and describes blogging as a way of integrating activism into her writing, which is often missing from scholarly research. My own experiences are similar. I've written blogs and op-eds that have garnered immediate feedback in all the forms I've described, as well as gleaned the attention of the media, leading to television news and radio appearances. Writing something that is read by thousands in less than 24 hours has made me feel incredibly vulnerable but also allowed me to share my research with those who can most benefit.

This raises the issue of whether you should **respond to readers**. This is a personal decision all writers need to make for themselves. Most professional writers would probably tell you not to even read comments left online, let alone respond to them. That's sound advice. Online forums

elicit extreme responses. The people most likely to comment either loved or hated your piece. Many online comment sections trend negative. This means that those who hated the piece are the most likely to respond. As you might guess, their responses are often harsh and emotional. The comment sections of newspapers and blogs are much like a review site such as Yelp—the people who really hate the restaurant are the ones most likely to post a review. Some of the people who really love it will, too. The average customer will not. The same trend applies with public writing. Avoiding comments left on public forums can help protect your ability to continue to create and share your work. Besides, the point of sharing the piece publicly is for people to engage with your work. Allow them the space to do so. You do not need to involve yourself in that process. It's important to protect your mental well-being and your time. You have a right to do so.

If you do choose to respond to readers, I urge you to do so prudently. Try to take the emotion out of it. Leave short responses, such as, “Thanks for your comment” or “Agree to disagree” and do not go back and forth with a reader. Another approach is to disengage from comments left on the original posting but share the link on your social media and engage with your followers who leave comments. People who follow you online are less likely to leave extreme comments, and you may choose to engage with them as a part of community building. This is all at your discretion.

Quick Writing Activity

Take the project you are working on and imagine sharing it publicly in a popular form (e.g., a literary work, blog, op-ed, series of social media posts). Now imagine negative comments, critique, or bad reviews. This is a hypothetical situation, but it's meant to be an honest gut check. Be unwaveringly truthful. Spend 10 minutes writing, diary style, how this might make you feel. Also consider your response. For example, would you respond to negative online comments?

Although I advocate strongly for public scholarship, blogging and the like are certainly not for everyone. Academic researchers may pay a price, depending on how their colleagues, institutions, and tenure policies value this work. It also may not personally suit a researcher or contribute to their agenda. That's perfectly reasonable. Time is limited. We all need to make choices. If you do this work, you need to develop strategies for insulating yourself and stay true to the value system guiding your work. Despite low points and challenges, those who do this work usually claim that the rewards far outweigh the costs (Mitchell, 2008; Zinn, 2008).

It's important to note that talking about public scholarship as a “choice” represents a privilege some researchers do not enjoy. For some, public scholarship simply comes with the territory. For example, Melissa W. Wright (2008) notes that the professional experience of feminist scholars in women's studies departments differs, with their work and mere existence constantly judged in the public domain. By positioning themselves as openly feminist, they are necessarily “public” scholars, with many actively speaking, writing, and protesting in public forums. The same is true for critical race scholars and those working within queer/sexualities frameworks. Collins (2007) suggests public scholarship for those committed to social justice is only a *choice* in the sense that an artist making art is a choice. Both are callings.

One of the issues you may have picked up on throughout this chapter is **researcher visibility**. The four primary formats reviewed in this text—journal articles, monographs, literary works, blogs/op-eds—afford researchers different levels of visibility. Figure 9.2 illustrates this continuum. Bear in mind that there are additional ways for sharing our research that also come with high visibility, including social media, which is revisited later in the chapter.

Publishing Research in Multiple Formats

■ ■ ■

In Chapter 2, I noted that what and how much you want to communicate, coupled with the primary audience you want to reach, leads to the selection of an appropriate format. As you think about these issues, bear in mind that there may be more than one audience for your research. This means that you may choose to engage with multiple representational forms in a single research project. Although it is not good ethical practice to publish more than one journal article on the same research (although you may publish more than one article if it is about different aspects of the research), it is perfectly legitimate to publish the results of your research in more than one format. Often there will be a primary outcome as well as one or more secondary outcomes.

Let's take the example of an interview study about women's romantic



FIGURE 9.2. The continuum of visibility.

relationships to examine possible configurations of primary and secondary outcomes. (Tables 9.1–9.4 are adapted from Leavy & Harris, 2019.)

Let’s take another example: an oral history project with Ukrainian refugees about their experience since the beginning of the 2022 Russian invasion. See Tables 9.5 and 9.6.

Let’s take a final example: an ethnographic study conducted in middle schools about student learning and teacher practices. See Tables 9.7 and 9.8.

TABLE 9.1. Traditional Academic and Public Forms		
Outcome	Form	Content
Primary	Traditional academic	Peer-reviewed article that details the study (research purpose and questions, participants, method and methodology, findings)
Secondary	Public	Blog or op-ed that outlines the 5 features of women’s romantic relationships and asks readers to reflect on their own relationships [Tip: a piece of this nature could be released during women’s history month or in conjunction with a holiday such as Valentine’s Day]

TABLE 9.2. Literary and Traditional Academic Forms		
Outcome	Form	Content
Primary	Literary	Social fiction novel that draws on the interview research to create composite characters that exemplify key themes, issues, and patterns
Secondary	Traditional academic	Peer-reviewed article that details the methodology used in the study (contributing primarily to the research methods literature)

TABLE 9.3. Public and Traditional Academic Forms		
Outcome	Form	Content
Primary	Public	Series of blogs or vlogs, each one centered on a theme from the interview research
Secondary	Traditional academic	Peer-reviewed article that details the study (research purpose and questions, participants, method and methodology, findings)

TABLE 9.4. Literary, Traditional Academic, and Public Forms

Outcome	Form	Content
Primary	Literary	Social fiction novel that draws on the interview research to create composite characters that exemplify key themes, issues, and patterns
Secondary 1	Traditional academic	Peer-reviewed article that details the methodology used in the study (contributing primarily to the research methods literature)
Secondary 2	Public	Blog or magazine article that offers relationship advice based on the interview data

TABLE 9.5. Traditional Academic and Public Forms

Outcome	Form	Content
Primary	Traditional academic	Monograph describing in detail the experiences of refugees from the 2022 invasion
Secondary	Public	Blog or op-ed that relays the personal stories of refugees situated in a discussion of the invasion and how U.S. citizens can help

TABLE 9.6. Literary and Traditional Academic Forms

Outcome	Form	Content
Primary	Literary	A social fiction novel that draws on the research to create composite characters used to evocatively illustrate the experiences of refugees
Secondary	Traditional academic	Peer-reviewed article that details the study (research purpose and questions, participants, method and methodology, findings)

TABLE 9.7. Traditional Academic and Public Forms

Outcome	Form	Content
Primary	Traditional academic	Peer-reviewed article that details the study (research purpose and questions, participants, method and methodology, findings)
Secondary	Public	Blog or op-ed that outlines 3 takeaways about student learning and best education practices situated in a discussion of education policies

TABLE 9.8. Literary and Public Forms		
Outcome	Form	Content
Primary	Literary	A collection of short stories that take readers through student and teacher experiences using composite characters
Secondary	Traditional academic	Peer-reviewed article that details the curriculum implications of the study

Bear in mind that these examples also don’t consider the myriad ways you may represent your research beyond these four formats, from traditional academic conference presentations to podcasts to performances. The possibilities are innumerable.

Let’s take it away from hypothetical scenarios and look at some published examples from my research. I always represent my work in more than one format and have done so from the start of my career. I’ll offer four examples each with a different combination of primary and secondary outcomes.

Example 1: Monograph and Journal Articles

For my dissertation, I conducted qualitative content and document analysis examining how the media portrayed events, including the *Titanic* sinking, the Pearl Harbor bombing, the Columbine shootings, and the September 11th, 2001, terrorist attacks. Aside from the dissertation itself, which was completed in 2002, the primary outcome of this research was a 2007 monograph titled *Iconic Events: Media, Politics, and Power in Retelling History* (Leavy, 2007a). The book examined the processes of collective memory surrounding traumatic events that have been deemed iconic in American culture. The book unpacked the social and market forces that shaped the meanings and enduring significance of events that have captured the public’s imagination. I organized the book around three interpretive phases that served to mold public perception of these events: journalistic representations, political appropriations, and popular adaptations.

I also published three peer-reviewed journal articles based on different aspects of the same research. These articles were the secondary outcome of the research. In 2005 I published an article that focused on the popular adaptations of Pearl Harbor, titled, “The Memory–History–Popular Culture Nexus: *Pearl Harbor* as a Case Study in Consumer-Driven Collective Memory.” In 2007, the same year the monograph was released, I published

an article that focused on journalistic representations and political appropriations of September 11th, titled “Using 9–11 Memory in other Political Struggles: American Journalists and Special Interest Groups as Complicit Partners” (Leavy, 2007b). Finally, in 2009, after another mass school shooting occurred, I coauthored an article comparing journalistic representations of Columbine and the more recent event, which occurred on a Native American reservation. My coauthor and I collected and analyzed additional data for the article, which was titled, “American Reporting of School Violence and ‘People Like Us’: A Comparison of Local and National Newspaper Coverage of the Columbine and Red Lake School Shootings” (Leavy & Maloney, 2009).

I share this as an illustration of how you might conceive of a monograph and journal article(s) representing your project. A monograph allows you to cover many themes in detail. In contrast, journal articles have a more limited scope. To create an article out of your book, you may focus on one theme or aspect of the data, as I did. Another approach would be to offer a broad overview of the project, leaving the robust descriptions for the book.

Example 2: Journal Article and Literary Work (Poems)

Lisa Hastings and I conducted in-depth interview research with women who identified as heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual about their body image and sexual identity. The primary outcome of this research was a peer-reviewed journal article published in 2010 titled “Body Image and Sexual Identity: An Interview Study with Lesbian, Bisexual and Heterosexual College Age Women” (Leavy & Hastings, 2010). We organized the article thematically. In the box on page 194 you will find an excerpt from the section on Body Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction among the Heterosexual Interviewees.

The article was useful for sharing the basics of the study, but I felt that some of the emotional tenor of the participants’ stories did not come through in this format, nor would it be accessible to those with whom it may resonate. So I decided to write a series of poems that were published in two additional journal articles (one of which was open access), as well as on poetry websites. Here is one of the poems, which hits on some of the same data reviewed in the article excerpt. It was published in an open access online journal in an article titled “Poetic Bodies: Female Body Image, Sexual Identity and Arts-Based Research” (Leavy, 2010). I use this as an illustration of how you can translate traditional academic writing into an artistic expression.

Body Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction among the Heterosexual Interviewees

When asked in an open-ended format what, if anything, they didn't like about themselves, the heterosexual women talked extensively about numerous features of their bodies, ranging from stomachs and thighs to ears, noses, height, and most frequently weight. One woman listed some of her concerns as follows:

"I don't like my face because my skin is really bad. . . . I have really big ears, my ear lobes are really big. . . . I'm like short and kinda chubby. . . . it's just that whenever I gain weight I'm not tall so it doesn't really have anywhere to go, so I'm chubby and I don't like that. Um, that's my biggest problem, I feel like I am overweight."

Thirteen of the heterosexual women interviewed were significantly dissatisfied with the shape and/or size of their bodies, specifically stating that certain parts were too "large," and that largeness was unattractive. Although the majority of women felt that being "too skinny" was considered unappealing, most still aspired to a thin beauty ideal which they reported was communicated to them from the media, family, and peers. One woman talked about her arms and thighs: "I just don't like that I have big arms. . . . I have really big thighs, um, you know. . . . I have a wide butt." Another woman expressed similar dissatisfactions: "and I mean yeah I look in the mirror and I'm like 'man, I wish my ass was smaller, I wish my waist was smaller.'" Many women had strong feelings about the parts of their bodies that displeased them and often invoked the word *hate* when referring to their perceived deficiencies. One woman fervently stated: "I have fat thighs!! I hate it! And I think, I feel like no matter how long I go to the gym, I'm never gonna have skinny thighs. That just pisses me off." Other women talked about how they "hated" their legs or their "gut."

. . . A theme throughout the heterosexual interviews was that the beauty ideal of thinness and big breasts was desired because it was viewed as a way to attract men.

"I was always a little overweight so I always wanted to be skinnier like the skinny girl who like, so I could get a boy like that."

Girl-Box

I never felt pretty
looking in the mirror
all I could see
is what I longed to be

girls are supposed to be pretty
beauty bouncing off screens
and onto all their eyes
a laser onto me

the boys should look at me
so I focus on what I wear
but they don't see me
and I feel the girls stare

we are in competition
to be the thinnest
the best package
so I put my game-face on

I paint my face
with protection
and try to blend
into their projection

Example 3: Literary Work (Novel) and Journal Article

In 2016 I published a novel titled *Blue*. Grounded in interview research, autoethnographic observations, and informal conversations, the novel follows three characters who are a couple of years postcollege as they try to figure out who they are, what they want, and who is going along with them on the journey. In short, it's a novel about identity and the possibilities inside each of us, and it was the primary outcome of my scholarship on the topic. The novel is set in the Soho neighborhood of New York City. Although it is set in contemporary times, a tribute to 1980s popular culture runs throughout the novel. The following excerpt gives you a sense of place in the novel. It begins inside the Anna Sui store in Soho, where Tash, the protagonist, works part-time.

■ Tash looked up from the large cardboard box she was unpacking and
■ noticed Aidan wandering around the store.

■ “Aidan, come here and help,” she called from the door of the
■ backroom.

“Hey, babe. Love the space of this store. The whole purple and black thing against the glossy cherry wood floors is badass.”

“Hey. Hold this open,” she instructed, handing him a large garbage bag.

Aidan sat on a small stool and held the bag as Tash stuffed it full of discarded Styrofoam packing materials. “Why do they pack the shipments in this non-recyclable crap?” he asked. “It’s so retro, and not in a good way.”

Tash sat on the floor, collecting errant Styrofoam bits. She looked up at him, clearly annoyed. “Think I know? Let’s just finish so we can get the hell out of here. What time is it, anyway?”

He looked at his phone. “Twelve fifteen.”

“Shit, we’re late. Let me just go to the bathroom,” she said, tossing the full garbage bag aside.

They finished up at the store and headed to Café Borgia. The little Soho staple was busting at the seams. Tash spotted her cousin sitting in the far right-hand corner. She slid into the booth next to Kyle, and Aidan took the opposite seat . . .

■ ■ ■

Tash and Aidan spent the next few hours wandering from Soho back to the Village. They looked in store windows and stopped in art galleries.

“Come here,” she said, pulling him into a gallery featuring Andy Warhol prints.

“Warhol was ahead of his time,” Aidan remarked as they walked through the gallery.

“I know. Can you imagine what he would say about reality television?”

“He predicted it. I don’t think he’d be surprised in the least.”

“Uh huh. I love the Marilyns,” she said, stopping in front of one of Warhol’s most iconic pieces.

“Of course you do, beauty queen.”

“Shut up,” she said, playfully punching his arm. “I saw a documentary about her in college. Did you know when she talked to reporters she used to say, ‘Would you like me to be her for you?’ or something like that. She was in complete control. Marilyn was a character she created.”

“Or one side of her personality,” Aidan suggested.

“Exactly. It was like she was able to hold on to both Norma and Marilyn.”

“But kind of fucked up if she never integrated them, right? I mean,

living as two people instead of one whole person can't be easy. Maybe that's why she . . . ”

“Oh don't even say it. I never believed she killed herself.”

He smiled. “Neither did I, but that doesn't mean she was happy.”

Tash shrugged.

“That's what was so brilliant about Warhol. He captured the lie and shoved it in everyone's face, decorated in bright, psychotically happy colors.”

“Can I tell you something?” she asked, turning toward him.

“Of course.”

“You know how some people have this romantic notion of New York in the 1920s?”

“Uh, rich white people might.”

“Shut up,” she said, punching his arm harder this time.

“I'm just kidding. Yeah, I know what you're talking about. People who read a lot of Edith Wharton or whatever.”

“Well, I have this romantic notion of New York in the 1980s. I think that's why I've been so obsessed with the movies lately. My medium has always been film; it's how I connect with different times and ideas.”

He smiled. “You always light up when you talk about film.”

She shrugged. “Anyway, I have this love of New York in the 1980s, you know when the Mary Boone Gallery was the hottest place in Soho, not a freaking H&M or whatever. The time of Warhol and all of those pop visionaries.”

“You know who I love from back then? Jean-Michel Basquiat. Nobody blurred graffiti and art like that before he did. He was exposing the lie too, I think, but in his own way. I think the bullshit is really what killed him.”

“Totally. I'm telling you, when Mary Boone closed her Soho gallery and opened on Fifth Avenue, something died forever.”

They smiled at each other and finished their tour of the gallery.

(Leavy, 2016, pp. 49–50)

I ultimately decided I wanted to share more about this project with the research community, so I wrote a journal article titled “Shades of *Blue*: ‘No, I Am Not a Character in My Novel *Blue*, but Yes, It Is my Most Personal Book’” (2017b), published in *International Review of Qualitative Research*. The article details the autoethnographic experiences that informed the development of the setting for the novel. It covers the same material as the novel excerpt, so it serves as an illustration of (1) moving

from a literary work to a nonfiction report, and, when reading in the opposite order, (2) how specific details from qualitative research can be represented in a literary form. In the article I noted that I am from Boston, but my mother would frequently take me to New York City. Here is an excerpt.

And then we'd spend the days in Soho. My mother was a painter, fascinated with the art scene in Soho, which in the 1980s was home to the pop art movement. The epicenter of the movement was the Mary Boone Gallery. When the media labeled her "the queen of the art scene," they weren't kidding. I was there. I remember. During the days we wandered around the streets of Soho. You would've had to be there in that time to understand because although I visit there every year, I am trying to return to a place that no longer exists. Where now a huge Anthropologie store stands, there once was a galleria filled with booths where artisans sold their one-of-a-kind merchandise. We always stopped by Janice's booth. She was a beautiful, dark-haired woman who sold antique jewelry mostly from the 1940s. Sometimes my mother would buy something that I would secretly use for dress-up once we were back home. We would go to Café Borgia, my favorite place, where I would get a hot chocolate with whipped cream or some other creation. The only thing I loved more than wandering around the streets of Soho was the magic that would happen at night when we would go to an opening at Mary Boone's gallery. . . .

The entire novel takes place in Soho and the surrounding area. Because I wanted to capture the feeling of a Soho that no longer exists, the characters are frequently viewing or talking about art and pop culture. It's no surprise the artists of the Mary Boone Gallery in the 1980s, from Warhol to Basquiat, make their way onto the pages. My favorite spot, Café Borgia, opened in 1975, which is the year I was born, and I document its existence in a scene in *Blue*. The cafe permanently closed its doors the summer I finished writing. The Anna Sui boutique, with its dark cherry gloss floors and purple walls with glossy black trim, a favorite spot for me to daydream as a child, is where the protagonist works. After decades there, the boutique moved the very summer I finished writing *Blue*.

(Leavy, 2017, pp. 254–255)

Example 4: Book and Blog

In Chapter 8, I provided an example of a book and a blog (my book *Method Meets Art* [2020b] and my essay "Our Brains on Art" [2014]). I won't

repeat myself here, but you can refer back for an example of pairing these two types of representations.

In each of the four preceding instances, I also engaged in other ways of sharing my research, including presentations at professional conferences, social media posts, vlogs, podcasts, radio, and more. So it may be that there are two or three published pieces of research but myriad efforts at outreach. I hope these examples spark ideas of your own for how you might best share your research. Representing your research in multiple formats allows you to get the most out of it, to reach wider and more diverse audiences, and to maximize the effects of your scholarship. If you've conducted qualitative research, you already know that it is a ton of work. It is time-intensive. It takes a lot of energy. Designing a qualitative project, generating data, and analyzing them is a significant undertaking for any researcher. Don't you want to get the most out of it?

One issue that can arise is that by the time you've completed everything for a project other than representation, you're beat. You may simply be exhausted, or tired of it, or itching to move on. Put a fork in you, you're done. These understandable feelings can cause some researchers to rush through the representation and distribution phases of the process. Don't allow that to happen. Take a break if you need it, engage in self-care that works for you, but then dive into the representation process full force. In the end, what will matter the most is how you represent the research. That's what people are left with. That's the contribution. The saying "that's all she wrote" is apt. Literally, the research all comes down to what you write. So think in earnest about the advantages to developing more than one outcome for your work.

☑️ Dos and Don'ts: Multiple Representations

- ✓ Do consider having more than one outcome for your project.
- ✓ Do try writing with different audiences in mind.
- ✓ Do practice writing in multiple formats to strengthen your writing.
- ✗ Don't write two journal articles about the same aspects of the same study.
- ✗ Don't be afraid to write in new ways.
- ✗ Don't assume you can write in a new format without learning how to do it and practicing.

Online Presence

■ ■ ■

Regardless of how you publish your research, today we must all consider our online presence. Whether you decide to have a big or small digital

footprint, you can't avoid it altogether, so it's best to make conscious choices. For example, if you teach at a university, you likely have a faculty page on your department website. Consider how to present your research interests and publications. Also, be mindful of how frequently you have the information updated. For another example, consider what appears on your Google panel. What immediately comes up when people run a Google search on your name, as is prone to happen to researchers? Anyone able to prove their identity in a few easy steps can claim their Google knowledge panel. This allows you to suggest edits (such as correcting false information or adding social media links). These are brief examples of the online presence you likely already have and how you can take more control over it, to present yourself as the representative of your research in the way you think is best. Now let's consider some other choices.

Professional Websites

Although there's no rule that you must have your own website, I highly recommend that you do for several reasons (and if you work as a consultant or independent scholar, it's essential). First, when people read your work and search for you, a website directs them to how to find you. I've received many speaking invitations over the years because of someone reading one of my publications and then visiting my website. I've also been told that peers have not received invitations to such speaking engagements because they did not have websites. For example, I was invited to the famed Salzburg Global Seminar in Austria for a session on art and neuroscience. It was one of the single best professional and personal experiences of my life. I was told that the organizer read my blog "Our Brains on Art" and then looked me up and was directed to my website. Without my website, I would not have received the invitation. Second, a website allows you to present yourself and curate your work for audiences. Which books or articles are important in your body of work? What bio do you want people to read when they search for you online? Something outdated from a job you had years ago that is still available online or a bio you have written that you can update regularly?

If you do decide to create a professional website, you'll have a range of options, from free sites that you can build yourself to hiring professional web designers. You'll need to consider both your budget and what you hope to achieve with the website. Think carefully about the aesthetics of your site—the look. It should reflect who you are as a professional. Of course, you should also think carefully about the content. What do you want to

highlight? What links do you want to include (e.g., to social media, to publications)? Do you want to have a blog?

Regardless of how you build your website, I have two suggestions. First, make sure you can update the site yourself, even if you have professionals create it. Every time you have a new book release or want to update your bio, you don't want to have to hire people to do it. Today it's easy to have a website built with Word Press, which anyone can easily learn to update, even if you're not a tech person (which I am not). Second, I encourage you to buy your domain name. It's a small financial investment that protects your domain name. Your website will also show up higher in search results if you own the domain name, and one of the benefits of having your own site is directing people to it.

Social Media

Social media present ways for a researcher to build a professional network and share their research with new audiences. It's a great way to let people know who you are and what you're interested in studying and to share information about new publications, including links to journal articles, books, and blogs. Social media platforms allow you to create your own pages and share posts, but also to join professional communities in your areas of interest. As a bonus, they are free to join. I suggest using hashtags to help people find your posts.

For all the potential benefits of social media, there are downsides to consider as well. First, it is public exposure. You can embarrass yourself or, worse, damage your career. Although the incidents mentioned earlier in this chapter are extremely rare, they do exist. There is always some risk to sharing your ideas publicly. Some scholars make distinctions between "personal" and "public" social media accounts, but in reality, anything you post online is, to a certain extent, public. It's attached to you. Second, you may receive negative comments on your posts. This is a common experience. You have to decide whether or not that is something you can handle and whether, if you do choose to, you have strategies for dealing with those incidents (e.g., not responding). Third, as noted earlier, time is limited, and we all need to make choices. Social media seems like it could be a "quick" thing to do—short posts to spread the word about your work—but many people would say it can become quite time-consuming to build a following and consistently create content. You'll need to balance the pros and cons, especially as they relate to the kind of research you do, and decide what's best.

Quick Writing Activity

Take five points from your research project and draft five X posts (formerly tweets) to share those findings with public audiences (this is just an exercise—you don't need to actually post the tweets). Bear in mind the kind of language you use, the character limit (280 characters at the time of this writing but check current limits), and hashtags that might help get your tweets seen by relevant audiences. A tip: tweets that are about 100 characters get more traction, so it's good to whittle down your posts when possible.

Research-Sharing Sites

There are websites designed for academic researchers to share their work, the most popular of which are Academia.edu and ResearchGate. These sites allow you to create a profile and upload works in progress or published works, designating each piece with interest areas in the hopes others who may be interested will find it. These sites are useful for sharing your work with students and academic researchers. If you are working at an institution that requires evidence of “impact” for your research, these sites allow you to demonstrate download numbers for your work. If you do decide to share your work via these kinds of sites, be mindful of the copyright issues of your published work. Many journal, book, newspaper, and magazine publishers require transfer of copyright and do not allow authors to share their published work. Do not violate copyright law. Likewise, you need to decide if it is in your best interest to share your work on these sites or to try to direct audiences to the original publications. One strategy I have used for some of my books is to create a .pdf with the book title, synopsis, and buying links. This allows me to make more people aware of the existence of the book, without giving it away or violating copyright.

Conclusion: Now You're a Writer, and Writers Write



There's a lot to think about as you develop a body of research. Day to day, you need to think about the trees. Each project, each representation. Over time, also make sure you keep an eye on the forest you're growing. Consider your body of scholarship. Be mindful of how that work is presented to the world by taking an active role in determining your online presence.

You may be inclined toward a particular format for representing your scholarship. Journal articles are most common. That's fine. However, I encourage you to challenge yourself to learn to write in at least two of the formats reviewed in this text. Learning to write for different audiences and

in different formats will make you a better writer. So, even if you only ever publish journal articles, practice writing blogs and op-eds. This will help you distill and clarify your thinking and will improve your writing. Even if you only ever publish monographs, practice writing in literary forms. This will help you write more compelling and engaging books. The better you're able to write in various formats, the better you're able to write. If you really want to challenge yourself, experiment with all the formats described in this book. You'll find that the tools from one will help you with another. For example, literary tools such as metaphor, symbolism, and characterization can also strengthen it. Understanding how narrative works can strengthen any form of writing. So, even if you gravitate toward more traditional ways of publishing qualitative research, make your write-ups sparkle and give yourself the chance to use all the tools available to writers. This also allows you to grow as a researcher over the course of your career. The way you write now may not be the way you always choose to write. The academic landscape will continue to evolve. So will you.

In the end, my advice is pretty simple. Develop a writing discipline. Experiment with different formats and writing to different audiences. Seek a lot of feedback during the writing process, but when your work is published, let it go. Make peace with it and let it go. Find ways to let people know about your new publications so you can extend the impact of your work.

You may find the task of writing to be daunting. Fear not, you already have valuable writing experience, and this book has given you the tools you need to write and to do so well. You've got this. You *are* a writer. Writers write, so get started. There's no more advice. No tricks. Write. Just write.

Checklist of Considerations

- ☑ Consider the factors that have led to an increase in public scholarship.
- ☑ Consider the potential value of making your research publicly accessible.
- ☑ Learn to write in different formats for different audiences.
- ☑ Learn the format you are working in.
- ☑ Weigh the personal cost of making your research accessible to the public.
 - Consider researcher visibility.
- ☑ Make proactive decisions about your online presence.
 - Mindfully create the content for your university webpage.
 - Claim your Google knowledge panel.
 - Decide whether you want a professional website.

- Decide which, if any, social media platforms you will use.
 - Decide how you will use the platforms, including how you will deal with negative comments.
- Decide which, if any, research sharing sites you will use.
 - Decide what kind of work you will share on these sites.

 Writing Activities
.....

1. Design a professional website for yourself. You do not need to publish it online; just develop the style and content. First, do some research. Look online at the websites of qualitative researchers you admire. What do they include? What is the aesthetic? Second, draft the content. What are the various pages? What is the content on each page? If there is a blog, write your first post.
2. You have everything you need to take your research and write it up. Select a format and write up your study as an article, monograph, literary work, or series of blogs or op-eds. This isn't really an activity. This is the work of a qualitative researcher.

APPENDIX

Suggested Print and Online Resources



Suggested Books about Specific Genres of Qualitative Writing

- Adams, T. E., Holman Jones, S., & Ellis, C. (2014). *Autoethnography: Understanding qualitative research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Boylorn, R. M., & Orbe, M. P. (Eds.). (2020). *Critical autoethnography: Intersecting cultural identities in everyday life* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Efron, S. E., & Ravid, R. (2019). *Writing the literature review: A practical guide*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Faulkner, S. L. (2019). *Poetic inquiry: Craft, method and practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Faulkner, S. L., & Squillante, S. (2015). *Writing the personal: Getting your stories onto the page*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill.
- Gullion, J. S. (2022). *Writing ethnography* (2nd ed.). Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill.
- Leavy, P. (Ed.). (2018). *Handbook of arts-based research*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Leavy, P. (2020). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
- Leavy, P. (2023). *Relinvention: Methods of social fiction*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2011). *Ethnotheatre: Research from page to stage*. New York: Routledge.

A Few Suggested Books about Qualitative Research

- Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of qualitative research: A practical guide*. New York: Routledge.
- Espósito, J., & Evans-Winters, V. E. (2022). *Introduction to qualitative intersectional research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Roller, M. R., & Lavrakas, P. J. (2015). *Applied qualitative research design: A total quality framework approach*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. (2021). *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

A Few Suggested Readings about Interpreting and Analyzing Qualitative Data

- Saldaña, J. (2020). Qualitative data analysis strategies. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 877–912). New York: Oxford University Press. (This chapter is available to download from Oxford Handbooks Online.)
- Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Silver, C., & Lewins, A. F. (2020). Computer-assisted analysis of qualitative research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 912–955). New York: Oxford University Press. (This chapter is available to download from Oxford Handbooks Online.)
- Trent, A., & Cho, J. (2020). Interpretation in qualitative research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 956–982). New York: Oxford University Press. (This chapter is available to download from Oxford Handbooks Online.)

Suggested Qualitative Journals

This is not an exhaustive list—I suggest you also look at one compiled by Dr. Ronald Chenail for *The Qualitative Report* and available as a free download: <https://tqr.nova.edu/journals>.

Action Research (SAGE)
<http://arj.sagepub.com>

American Journal of Qualitative Research (The Center for Ethnic and Cultural Studies, Fort Myers, Florida)
www.ajqr.org/home/about-journal

Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal (ARI) (University of Alberta)
<https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/ari>

Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies (SAGE)

<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/cultural-studies-%E2%86%94-critical-methodologies>

Etudes: An Online Theatre and Performance Studies Journal for Emerging Scholars

www.etudesonline.com/cfp.html

Health Education and Behavior (SAGE)

<http://heb.sagepub.com>

International Journal of Qualitative Methods (University of Alberta)

<https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM>

Journal of Autoethnography (University of California Press)

<https://tqr.nova.edu/journals>

Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action

(Johns Hopkins University Press)

www.press.jhu.edu/journals/progress_in_community_health_partnerships

Qualitative Health Research (SAGE)

<http://qhr.sagepub.com>

Qualitative Inquiry (SAGE)

<http://qix.sagepub.com>

Qualitative Psychology (American Psychological Association)

www.apa.org/pubs/journals/qua

The Qualitative Report Online (NOVA)

<http://tqr.nova.edu>

Qualitative Social Work (SAGE)

<http://qsw.sagepub.com>

UNESCO Observatory Multidisciplinary Journal in the Arts (University of Melbourne)

http://education.unimelb.edu.au/about_us/specialist_areas/arts_education/melbourne_unesco_observatory_of_arts_education/the_e-journal

Online Zines

The Autoethnographer: A Literary and Arts Magazine

<https://theautoethnographer.com>

SoFi: A Sociological Fiction Zine

<https://sofizine.com>

References



- Abbott, H. P. (2008). *The Cambridge introduction to narrative* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Adler, E. S., & Clark, R. (2015). *An invitation to social research: How it's done* (5th ed.). Sanford, CT: Cengage Learning.
- Ahloranta, M., & Ahlberg, V. (2004, April). *What do concept maps reveal about pupils' learning and thinking?* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching Annual Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
- Ahmed, S. (2013). Making feminist points. Retrieved from <https://feministkilljoys.com/2013/09/11/makingfeminist-points>.
- Barone, T., & Eisner, E. W. (2012). *Arts-based research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Beren, S. E., Hayden, H. A., Wilfley, D. E., & Grilo, C. M. (1996). The influence of sexual orientation on body image in adult men and women. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 20(2), 135–141.
- Berns, G. S., Blaine, K., Prietula, M. J., & Pye, B. E. (2013). Short- and long-term effects of a novel on connectivity in the brain. *Brain Connectivity*, 3(6), 590–600.
- Berry, K., Gillotti, C. M., & Adams, T. E. (2020). *Living sexuality: Studies of LGBT relationships, identities, and desires*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of qualitative research: A practical guide*. New York: Routledge.
- Björling, E. A., & Singh, N. B. (2017). Anger without agency: Exploring the experiences of stress in adolescent girls. *Qualitative Report*, 22(10), 2583–2599.
- Bochner, A. P., & Herrmann, A. (2020). Practicing narrative inquiry: II. Making meanings move. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research second edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Boylorn, R. M. (2014). Working while Black: 10 microaggressions experienced in the workplace. Retrieved from www.crunkfeministcollective.com/2014/11/11/

- working-while-black-10-racial-microaggressions-experienced-in-the-workplace.*
- Boylorn, R. M. (2023). Unpacking (un)privileged or flesh tones, red bones, and sepia shades of brown. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Privilege through the looking-glass second edition* (pp. 10–18). Kennebunk, ME: Paper Stars Press.
- Burawoy, M. (2005, February). For public sociology. *American Sociological Review*, 70, 4–28.
- Cannella, G. S., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2004). Epilogue: Claiming a critical public social science—Reconceptualizing and redeploying research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), 298–309.
- Caulley, D. N. (2008). Making qualitative research reports less boring: The techniques of writing creative nonfiction. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(3), 424–449.
- Charmaz, K. (2007). What's good writing in feminist research? What can feminist researchers learn about good writing? In S. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (pp. 443–458). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Charmaz, K., & Thornberg, R. (2021). The pursuit of quality in grounded theory. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 305–327.
- Cheney, T. A. R. (2001). *Writing creative nonfiction: Fiction techniques for crafting great nonfiction*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.
- Cogan, J. C. (2001). Body norms in lesbian culture. *Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide*, 8(4), 26–32.
- Cole, A. L., & Knowles, J. G. (2008). Arts-informed research. In J. G. Knowles & A. L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 53–70). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Collins, P. H. (2007). Going public: Doing the sociology that had no name. In D. Clawson, R. Zussman, J. Misra, N. Gerstiel, R. Stokes, D. L. Anderton, & M. Burawoy (Eds.), *Public sociology: Fifteen eminent sociologists debate politics and the profession in the twenty-first century* (pp. 101–113). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Coser, L. A. (1963). *Sociology through literature: An introductory text*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Currie, G. (2013, June 1). Does great literature make us better? *The New York Times*.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Darling, L. (1981, October 13). Maya Angelou, a woman's heart: Inside the raging storm, looking out. *Washington Post*.
- Davidson, J. (2014). *Sexting: Gender and teens*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense.
- de Freitas, E. (2003). Contested positions: How fiction informs empathetic research.

- International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 4(7). Retrieved from www.ijea.org/v4n7.
- de Freitas, E. (2004). Reclaiming rigour as trust: The playful process of writing fiction. In A. L. Cole, L. Neilsen, J. G. Knowles, & T. C. Luciani (Eds.), *Provoked by art: Theorizing arts-informed research* (pp. 262–272). Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada: Backalong Books.
- Denzin, N. K. (2018). The pragmatics of publishing the experimental text. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Handbook of arts-based research* (pp. 673–687). New York: Guilford Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Giardina, M. D. (2018). Introduction: Qualitative inquiry in the public sphere. In N. K. Denzin & M. D. Giardina (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in the public sphere* (pp. 1–14). New York: Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y., Giardina, M., & Cannella, G. (2024). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. Denzin, Y. Lincoln, M. Giardina, & G. Cannella (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (6th ed., pp. 1–27). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Dunlop, R. (2001). Excerpts from Boundary Bay: A novel as educational research. In L. Neilsen, A. L. Cole, & J. G. Knowles (Eds.), *The art of writing inquiry* (pp. 11–25). Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada: Backalong Books.
- Dutt, A., Jacquez, F., Chaudhary, N., Wright, B., Adhikan, R., Adhikan, T., . . . de Aboughosh, L. S. M. (2022). Creating collective solidarity: Insights from the development and process evaluation of civic action for refugee empowerment in Cincinnati. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 28(3), 349–360.
- Efron, E. S., & Ravid, R. (2019). *Writing the literature review: A practical guide*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Eidinger, A. (2019, May 7). Cultivating a conscientious citation practice. Retrieved from www.unwrittenhistories.com/cultivating-a-conscientious-citation-practice.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. L., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic field-notes* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Epel, E. S., Spanakos, A., Kasl-Godley, J., & Brownell, K. D. (1996). Body shape ideals across gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, race, and age in personal advertisements. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 19(3), 265–273.
- Esposito, J., & Evans-Winters, V. E. (2022). *Introduction to qualitative intersectional research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Etter-Lewis, G. (1991). Black women's life stories: Reclaiming self in narrative texts. In S. Berger Gluck & D. Patai (Eds.), *Women's words: The feminist practice of oral history* (pp. 43–58). New York: Routledge.
- Fallon, M. (2016). *Writing up quantitative research in the social and behavioral sciences*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense.
- Faulkner, S. L. (2009). *Poetry as method: Reporting research through verse*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

- Faulkner, S. L. (2019). *Poetry inquiry: Craft, method and practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Faulkner, S. L., & Squillante, S. (2020). Creative approaches to writing qualitative research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 1023–1044). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fink, A. (2019). *Conducting research literature reviews: From the internet to paper* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- French, S. A., Story, M., Remafedi, G., Resnick, M. D., & Blum, R. W. (1996). Sexual orientation and prevalence of body dissatisfaction and eating disordered behaviors: A population-based study of adolescents. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 19(2), 119–126.
- Frye, M. (2007). Oppression. In S. M. Shaw & J. Lee (Eds.), *Women's voices, feminist visions: Classic and contemporary readings* (pp. 84–86). Oregon: Oregon State University.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretations of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gilgun, J. F. (2020). Writing up qualitative research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 985–1011). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Glenn, E. N. (2007). Whose public sociology? The subaltern speaks, but who is listening? In D. Clawson, R. Zussman, J. Misra, N. Gerstiel, R. Stokes, D. L. Anderton, & M. Burawoy (Eds.), *Public sociology: Fifteen eminent sociologists debate politics and the profession in the twenty-first century* (pp. 213–230). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Goddard-Durant, S. K., & Kyriakakis, S. (2022). Beyond individual coping: Daily living conditions which negatively shape the wellbeing of women engaged in sex work in Barbados. *International Journal of Sociology*, 52(3), 179–207.
- Golden-Biddle, K., & Locke, K. (1993). Appealing work: An investigation of how ethnographic texts convince. *Organization Science*, 4, 595–616.
- Goldman, A. H. (2013). *Philosophy and the novel*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Goodall, H. L., Jr. (2008). *Writing qualitative inquiry: Self, stories, and academic life*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Gullion, J. S. (2015). *Fracking the neighborhood*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Gullion, J. S. (2016). *Writing ethnography*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense.
- Gullion, J. S. (2022). *Writing ethnography* (2nd ed.). Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill.
- Gutkind, L. (1997). *The art of creative nonfiction: Writing and selling the literature of reality*. New York: Wiley.
- Harris, A., & Holman Jones, S. (2016). *Writing for performance*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense.
- Hesse-Biber, S. (2010). *Mixed methods research: Merging theory with practice*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2016). *The practice of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- Hinds, K., & Stephen, J. (2017). Fiscal crises in Barbados: Comparing the early 1990s and the post-2008 crises. *Third World Thematics*, 2(6) 762–782.
- Holliday, A. (2016). *Doing and writing qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Hunter, H., Lusardi, P., Zucker, D., Jacelon, C., & Chandler, G. (2002). Making meaning: The creative component in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research Journal*, 12(3), 388–398.
- Iser, W. (1980). *The act of reading: A theory of aesthetic response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Iser, W. (1997). The significance of fictionalizing. *Anthropoetics III*, 2, 1–9. Retrieved from www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0302/iser_fiction.htm.
- Jones, K. (2003). The turn to a narrative knowing of persons: One method explored. *Narrative Studies*, 8(1), 60–71.
- Jonsen, K., Fendt, J., & Point, S. (2018). Convincing qualitative research: What constitutes persuasive writing? *Organizational Research Methods*, 21(1), 30–67.
- Josselson, R. (2006). Narrative research and the challenge of accumulating knowledge. *Narrative Inquiry*, 16(1), 3–10.
- Kewin, S. (2010). Writing posts 101. Retrieved from www.dailywritingtips.com/writing-prompts-101.
- Kristof, N. (2014, February 15). Professors, we need you! *The New York Times*. Retrieved from www.nytimes.com/2014/02/16/opinion/sunday/kristof-professors-we-need-you.html.
- Lakkis, J., Ricciardelli, L. A., & Williams, R. J. (1999). Role of sexual orientation and gender-related traits in disordered eating. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 41(1–2), 1–16.
- Lamott, A. (1995). *Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life*. New York: Knopf Doubleday.
- Lancelot, C., & Kaslow, N. J. (1994). Sex role orientation and disordered eating in women: A review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 14, 139–157.
- Leavy, P. (2005). The memory–history–popular culture nexus: *Pearl Harbor* as a case study in consumer-driven collective memory. *Sociological Research Online*, 10(1).
- Leavy, P. (2007a). *Iconic events: Media, politics, and power in retelling history*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Leavy, P. (2007b). Using 9–11 memory in other political struggles: American journalists and special interest groups as complicit partners. *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 35(1), 85–101.
- Leavy, P. (2010). Poetic bodies: Female body image, sexual identity and arts-based research. *LEARNing Landscapes*, 4(1), 175–188.
- Leavy, P. (2011a). *Essentials of transdisciplinary research: Using problem-centered methodologies*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Leavy, P. (2011b). *Low-fat love*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense.
- Leavy, P. (2014, April 23). Our brains on art. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved

- from www.buffingtonpost.com/patricia-leavy-phd/our-brains-on-art_b_5200651.html.
- Leavy, P. (2015). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
- Leavy, P. (2016). *Blue*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense.
- Leavy, P. (2017a). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Leavy, P. (2017b). Shades of *Blue*: “No, I am not a character in my novel *Blue*, but yes, it is my most personal book.” *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 10(3).
- Leavy, P. (Ed.). (2018). *Handbook of arts-based research*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Leavy, P. (2019). Introduction to *The Oxford handbook of methods for public scholarship*. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of methods for public scholarship* (pp. 3–16). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leavy, P. (2020a). Introduction to *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 1–20). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leavy, P. (2020b). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
- Leavy, P. (2020c). *Shooting stars*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill/Sense.
- Leavy, P. (2021a). Introducing methods for working with nonacademic stakeholders, teams, and communities. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Popularizing scholarly research: Working with nonacademic stakeholders, teams, and communities* (pp. 1–11). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leavy, P. (2021b). Introducing research methods and practices for popularizing research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Popularizing scholarly research: Research methods and practices* (pp. 1–11). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leavy, P. (2021c). Introduction. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Popularizing scholarly research: The academic landscape, representation, and professional identity* (pp. 1–11). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leavy, P. (2021d). *Low-fat love: 10th anniversary edition*. Kennebunk, ME: Paper Stars Press.
- Leavy, P. (2022). *Celestial bodies: The Tess Lee and Jack Miller novels*. Kennebunk, ME: Paper Stars Press.
- Leavy, P. (2023a). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
- Leavy, P. (2023b). *Reinvention: Methods of social fiction*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Leavy, P. (2023c). *Hollyland: A novel*. Berkeley, CA: She Writes Press.
- Leavy, P., & Harris, D. (2019). *Contemporary feminist research from theory to practice*. New York: Guilford Press.

- Leavy, P., & Hastings, L. (2010, May 3). Body image and sexual identity: An interview study with lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual college age women. *Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality*, 13.
- Leavy, P., & Maloney, K. (2009). American reporting of school violence and “people like us”: A comparison of local and national newspaper coverage of the Columbine and Red Lake school shootings. *Critical Sociology*, 35(2), 273–292.
- Leavy, P., & Scotti, V. (2017). *Low-fat love stories*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill.
- Ling Pan, M. (2008). *Preparing literature reviews: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.
- Manders, E., & Chilton, G. (2013). Translating the essence of dance: Rendering meaning in artistic inquiry of the creative arts therapies. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 14(16), 1–17.
- Martin, E. (1999). The egg and the sperm: How science has constructed a romance based on stereotypical male–female roles. In S. Hesse-Biber, C. Gilmartin, & R. Lydenberg (Eds.), *Feminist approaches to theory and methodology: An interdisciplinary reader* (pp. 15–25). New York: Oxford University Press.
- McIntosh, P. (1989, July/August). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom Magazine*, pp. 10–12.
- Meyer, M. (2017). Concrete research poetry: A visual representation of metaphor. *Art/Research International*, 2(1), 32–57.
- Mills, C. W. (1959). *The sociological imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mitchell, K. (2008). Introduction. In K. Mitchell (Ed.), *Practising public scholarship: Experiences and perspectives beyond the academy* (pp. 1–5). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mitchell, K. M., & Clark, A. M. (2018). Five steps to writing more engaging qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17, 1–3.
- Morrison, M. A., Morrison, T. G., & Sager, C. L. (2004). Does body satisfaction differ between gay men and lesbian women and heterosexual men and women? A meta-analytic review. *Body Image*, 1, 127–138.
- Morse, J. M. (2009). Tussles, tensions, and resolutions. In J. Morse, B. J. Bowers, K. Charmaz, A. E. Clarke, J. Corbin, C. J. Porr, & P. N. Stern (Eds.), *Developing grounded theory: The second generation* (pp. 13–23). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Mulvihill, T. M., & Swaminathan, R. (2023). *Collaborative qualitative research*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Pelias, R. (2019). *The creative qualitative researcher: Writing that makes readers want to read*. New York: Routledge.
- Pitman, G. E. (2000). The influence of race, ethnicity, class, and sexual politics on lesbians’ body image. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 40(2), 49–64.
- Plath, S. (2007). *The unabridged journals of Sylvia Plath*. New York: Anchor.
- Priya, A. (2016). Grounded theory as a strategy of qualitative research: An attempt at demystifying its intricacies. *Sociological Bulletin*, 65(1), 50–68.

- Rahaman, A., & Saha, S. (2020). Negative emotions in fieldwork: A narrative inquiry of three EFL researchers' lived experiences. *Qualitative Report*, 25(12), 4182–4208.
- Ravitch, S. M., & Mittenfelner Carl, N. (2021). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Ray, V. (2018, April 27). The racial exclusions in scholarly citations. *Inside Higher Education*. Retrieved from www.insidehighered.com/advice/2018/04/27/racial-exclusions-scholarly-citations-opinion.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 923–948). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Richardson, S. (2015). *Gender lessons: Patriarchy, sextyping and schools*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense.
- Saldaña, J. (1997). Survival: A White teacher's conception of drama with inner-city Hispanic youth. *Youth Theatre Journal*, 11, 25–46.
- Saldaña, J. (1999). Playwriting with data: Ethnographic performance texts. *Youth Theatre Journal*, 14, 60–71.
- Saldaña, J. (2003). Dramatizing data: A primer. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(2), 218–236.
- Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *Thinking qualitatively: Methods of mind*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Saldaña, J. (2018). *Writing qualitatively: The selected works of Johnny Saldaña*. New York: Routledge.
- Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. (2018). *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Share, T. L., & Mintz, L. B. (2002). Differences between lesbians and heterosexual women in disordered eating and related attitudes. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 42(4), 89–106.
- Siever, M. D. (1994). Sexual orientation and gender as factors in socioculturally acquired vulnerability to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 6(2), 252–260.
- Singh, A. A., & Lukkarila, L. (2017). *Successful academic writing: A complete guide for social and behavioral scientists*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Stein, A., & Daniels, J. (2017). *Going public: A guide for social scientists*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Strindberg, J. (2022). "I'm often alone": An ethnographic study of school loneliness and bullying in a Swedish elementary school. *Journal of Research and Practice in Children's Services*, 52(4), 875–892.
- Stiman, M., Leavy, P., & Garland, A. (2009). Heterosexual female and male body image and body concept in the context of attraction ideals. *Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality*, 12. Retrieved from www.ejhs.org/Volume12/BodyImage.htm.

- Striegel-Moore, R. H., Tucker, N., & Hsu, J. (1990). Body image dissatisfaction and disordered eating in lesbian college students. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 9, 493–500.
- Thompson, H., & Vedantam, S. (2012). *A lively mind: Your brain on Jane Austen*. NPR Health Blog. Retrieved from www.npr.org/blogs/health/2012/10/09/162401053/a-lively-mind-your-brain-on-jane-austen.html.
- Thomson, P. (2023). *Refining your academic writing: Strategies for reading, revising and rewriting*. London: Routledge.
- Umoquit, M., Tso, P., Varga-Atkins, T., O'Brien, M., & Wheeldon, J. (2013). Diagrammatic elicitation: Defining the use of diagrams in data collection. *Qualitative Report*, 18, 1–12.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Vannini, P. (2012). *Popularizing research: Engaging new genres, media, and audiences*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Watson, A. (2016). Directions for public sociology: Novel writing as a creative approach. *Cultural Sociology*, 10(4), 1–17.
- Weaver-Hightower, M. B. (2019). *How to write qualitative research*. New York: Routledge.
- Wheeldon, J., & Ahlberg, M. (2012). *Visualizing social science research: Maps, methods, and meaning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Wolcott, H. E. (1990). *Writing up qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Wolcott, H. E. (2009). *Writing up qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: CA. SAGE.
- Woo, Y. Y. (2019). Narrative film as public scholarship. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Handbook of methods for public scholarship* (pp. 359–382). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Woo, Y. Y. (2022). Narrative film as public scholarship. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Popularizing scholarly research: Research methods and practices* (pp. 230–256). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Woo, Y. Y. J. (2008). Engaging new audiences: Translating research into popular media. *Educational Researcher*, 37(6), 321–329.
- Wright, M. W. (2008). Craven emotional warriors. In K. Mitchell (Ed.), *Practising public scholarship: Experiences and perspectives beyond the academy* (pp. 29–35). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Zinn, H. (2008). The making of a public intellectual. In K. Mitchell (Ed.), *Practising public scholarship: Experiences and perspectives beyond the academy* (pp. 138–141). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Author Index



Abbott, H. P., 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 144
Adams, T. E., 67
Adler, E. S., 49
Ahlberg, M., 43
Ahlberg, V., 43
Ahloranta, M., 43
Ahmed, S., 41

Barone, T., 56, 137, 138
Beren, S. E., 44, 45, 46
Berns, G. S., 175
Berry, K., 67
Bhattacharya, K., 21, 30
Björling, E. A., 30
Blaine, K., 175
Blum, R. W., 45
Bochner, A. P., 131
Boylorn, R. M., 67, 187
Brownell, K. D., 45, 46
Burawoy, M., 184

Cannella, G. S., 21, 181
Caulley, D. N., 66, 137, 145, 149, 151
Chandler, G., 43
Charmaz, K., 50, 66
Cheney, T. A. R., 137
Chilton, G., 43
Clark, A. M., 53, 54, 56
Clark, R., 49
Cogan, J. C., 45, 46
Cole, A. L., 56
Collins, P. H., 184, 185, 189
Coser, L. A., 175
Creswell, J. D., 39
Creswell, J. W., 39, 43

Daniels, J., 180, 186, 187
Darling, L., 130
Davidson, J., 102, 104
de Freitas, E., 133
Denzin, N. K., 21, 75, 184
Dunlop, R., 133
Dutt, A., 32

Efron, S. E., 40, 41
Eidinger, A., 41, 42
Eisner, E. W., 56, 137, 138
Emerson, R. M., 117
Epel, E. S., 45, 46
Esposito, J., 30
Etter-Lewis, G., 23
Evans-Winters, V. E., 30

Fallon, M., 86
Faulkner, S. L., 8, 54, 186
Fendt, J., 37, 56
Fink, A., 40
French, S. A., 45
Fretz, R. L., 117
Frye, M., 67

Garland, A., 62
Geertz, C., 5, 60, 151
Giardina, M. D., 21, 184
Gilgun, J. F., 78
Gillotti, C. M., 67
Glenn, E. N., 185
Goddard-Durant, S. K., 30, 32
Golden-Biddle, K., 56
Goldman, A. H., 137

Goodall, H. L., Jr., 6, 116
 Grilo, C. M., 44, 45
 Gullion, J. S., 60, 61, 100, 117
 Gutkind, L., 137

Harris, A., 84, 85
 Harris, D., 190
 Hastings, L., 193
 Hayden, H. A., 44, 45
 Herrmann, A., 131
 Hesse-Biber, S., 21, 84, 85, 86
 Hinds, K., 31
 Holliday, A., 117
 Holman Jones, S., 84, 85
 Hsu, J., 45
 Hunter, H., 43

Iser, W., 137, 138, 151

Jacelon, C., 43
 Jones, K., 186
 Jonsen, K., 37, 56
 Josselson, R., 131

Kasl-Godley, J., 45, 46
 Kaslow, N. J., 45
 Kewin, S., 7
 Knowles, J. G., 56
 Kristof, N., 164, 184
 Kyriakakis, S., 30, 32

Lakkis, J., 45
 Lamott, A., 12, 13
 Lancelot, C., 45
 Leavy, P., 21, 29, 56, 62, 64, 86, 131, 133,
 146, 148, 169, 170, 171, 181, 182, 184,
 190, 192, 193, 198
 Lincoln, Y. S., 21, 181
 Locke, K., 56
 Lukkarila, L., 116
 Lusardi, P., 43

Maloney, K., 193
 Manders, E., 43
 Martin, E., 66
 McIntosh, P., 67
 Meyer, M., 67
 Mills, C. W., 133
 Mintz, L. B., 45, 46
 Mitchell, K., 186, 188
 Mitchell, K. M., 53, 54, 56
 Mittenfelner Carl, N., 21
 Morrison, M. A., 45, 46
 Morrison, T. G., 45, 46

Morse, J. M., 50
 Mulvihill, T. M., 32

O'Brien, M., 43
 Omasta, M., 27

Pan, L., 41
 Pelias, R., 3, 13
 Phillips, 175
 Pitman, G. E., 45, 46
 Plath, S., 20
 Point, S., 37, 56
 Prietula, M. J., 175
 Priya, A., 50
 Pye, B. E., 175

Rahaman, A., 27
 Ravid, R., 40, 41
 Ravitch, S. M., 21
 Ray, V., 41
 Remafedi, G., 45
 Resnick, M. D., 45
 Ricciardelli, L. A., 45
 Richardson, L., 28
 Richardson, S., 104, 107

Sager, C. L., 45, 46
 Saha, S., 27
 Saldaña, J., 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 49, 67, 69, 94,
 116, 136, 142, 146, 149, 151, 152
 Scotti, V., 64
 Share, T. L., 45, 46
 Shaw, L. L., 117
 Siever, M. D., 45
 Singh, A. A., 116
 Singh, N., 30
 Spanakos, A., 45, 46
 Squillante, S., 54
 Stein, A., 180, 186, 187
 Stephen, J., 31
 Stiman, M., 62
 Story, M., 45
 Striegel-Moore, R. H., 45
 Strindberg, J., 83
 Swaminathan, R., 32

Thompson, P., 82, 83
 Thornberg, R., 50
 Tso, P., 43
 Tucker, N., 45

Umoquit, M., 43

Van Maanen, J., 26, 27, 28, 117, 149
 Vannini, P., 183
 Varga-Atkins, T., 43

Watson, A., 152
 Weaver-Hightower, M. B., 4, 12, 14, 22, 82,
 84, 117
 Wheeldon, J., 43

Wilfley, D. E., 44, 45
 Williams, R. J., 45
 Wolcott, H. E., 7, 10, 26, 27, 47, 116
 Woo, Y. Y. J., 181, 182
 Wright, M. W., 189

Zinn, H., 188
 Zucker, D., 43

Subject Index



Note. *f*, *n*, or *t* following a page number indicates a figure, note, or table.

- A**bility to write or speak in different ways, 185–186
- Abstracts, 41, 76, 77. *See also* Journal articles
- Academic audiences. *See also* Audiences
- book writing and, 98
 - formats for qualitative writing and, 26*t*
 - overview, viii, 36*n*
- Academic form, 190*t*–192*t*
- Academic publishers, 108, 159. *See also* Publishers
- Activities in characterization, 143. *See also* Characterization
- Advances (payment), 122
- Aesthetic nature of writing, 28–29
- Afterwords, 153–154
- Agents, literary. *See* Literary agents
- Alternative structures, 134–135. *See also* Structure for fiction
- Analytic and formal writing
- book writing and, 100, 104, 108
 - description, details, and dialogue in writing and, 62
 - narrative structure and, 34
 - narrator point of view and, 34
 - overview, 26, 29–30, 32–33, 33*f*
 - voice and, 54, 55*t*
- Angle or hook, 167, 168
- Anonymizing submissions, 88. *See also* Submitting writing
- Anthologies, 95*t*, 96–97, 161. *See also* Book writing
- Approaches to qualitative writing. *See also* Writing qualitatively; *individual approaches*
- book writing and, 100
 - journal article writing and, 79, 80, 80*f*
 - narrative structure and, 34
 - narrator point of view and, 34
 - overview, 26–33, 33*f*, 34, 35–36, 57
 - voice and, 54
- Articles, journal. *See* Journal articles; Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Arts-based research (ABR), 130–131, 173–175
- A-to-B-to-C structure, 136
- Audiences
- blogs or op-eds and, 164, 165, 166–167, 174–175, 176–177
 - book writing and, 98, 108
 - decision making regarding, 181
 - formats for qualitative writing and, 26*t*
 - genres and, 140
 - literary writing and, 131
 - overview, viii, 36*n*, 202–203
 - public scholarship and, 184
 - voice and, 54
 - writing with audience in mind, 56
- Authenticity, 56, 151
- Author–editor relationship, 124–125, 128
- Author’s voice. *See* Voice
- Autoethnographic research, 22, 81, 130–131. *See also* Qualitative data
- B**ack matter, 153–154
- Bar graphs, 86. *See also* Visual elements
- Before-and-after story, 135. *See also* Structure for fiction
- Before-together–after story, 135. *See also* Structure for fiction
- Bias, 59–60
- Black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) scholars, 41–42

- Block quotes, 83. *See also* Quoting data
- Blogs. *See also* Online presence
 comment sections and, 187–188
 compared to op-eds, 165–166, 165*f*, 166*t*
 learning about the medium within which
 you are working, 186
 outlining phase of writing and, 12
 overview, viii, 25, 26*t*, 164–166, 165*f*,
 178–179
 postpublication and, 177–178
 publishing, 174, 176–178, 198–199
 writing, 166–174
- Book contracts, 120–124, 128
- Book proposals, 109–119, 128. *See also*
 Submitting writing
- Book writing. *See also* Anthologies;
 Monographs; Textbooks
 book contracts and, 120–124
 book proposals and, 109–119
 marketing published books, 127
 overview, 94, 98–99, 127–128
 process of, 100–108
 production process, 125–126
 publishing in multiple formats and, 198–199
 relationship with editors and, 124–125
 table of contents, 99–100
- Breadth, 26*t*
- Breaks, writing tricks and, 18
- Buddies, writing. *See* Writing groups or
 buddies
- Bulk sales, 122
- Bylines, 178
- C**adence, 54. *See also* Voice
- Cases, 23–24. *See also* Data organization
- Chapbooks, 161
- Chapters, 97–98. *See also* Book writing
- Character types, 144. *See also*
 Characterization
- Characterization
 character types, 144
 dialogue, interaction, interiority, and
 monologue, 145–149
 literary tools and, 151
 overview, 142–149, 162
- Chronological narratives, 23. *See also* Data
 organization; Narrative approaches;
 Storytelling
- Citation practices. *See also* Quoting data
 literature reviews and, 41–42
 metaphors and, 67
 overview, xi–xii
- Closure, 139
- Coauthoring, 31. *See also* Collaborative
 writing
- Coding data, 23, 46–47. *See also* Data
 organization
- Coherence, 56
- Collaborative research, 24
- Collaborative writing
 book writing and, 100
 overview, 18, 26, 31–32, 33*f*
 voice and, 55*t*
- Comment sections, 187–188
- Communicating through written language
 ability to write or speak in different ways
 and, 185–186
 overview, 3–4
 as a reason for qualitative writing, 21
- Community-based research (CBR), 31–32
- Composites, 142, 146. *See also*
 Characterization
- Concept, 49–50
- Concept map, 43
- Conceptual framework, 51. *See also* Theory
- Conclusion component of research articles,
 76. *See also* Journal articles
- Conference proceedings, 98
- Confessional writing
 book writing and, 100, 107
 narrator point of view and, 34
 overview, 26, 27–28, 33*f*
 voice and, 55*t*
- Congruence, 56
- Constructive feedback, 89. *See also* Seeking
 feedback
- Contemporary academic landscape, 181–183,
 183*f*. *See also* Recent research
- Content analysis, 192–193
- Contracts, book, 120–124
- Convincing write-ups, 56
- Copyediting
 literary writing and, 150
 overview, 16–17, 125–126
 publishing literary works (novels) and,
 155, 160
- Copyright
 book contracts and, 120–121
 research-sharing sites and, 202
- Cost, personal and professional, 186–189,
 203
- Cover designers, 160
- Creative writing. *See* Fiction, use of; Literary
 writing; Narrative approaches
- Creativity, writing prompts and, 8
- Critical writing
 book writing and, 100
 overview, 26, 30–31, 32–33, 33*f*
 voice and, 55*t*, 56
- Criticality, 56. *See also* Voice

- Data.** *See also* Qualitative data
 generation of, 46–47, 48, 80
 interpretation of, 48, 206
 types of, 57
 writing blogs or op-eds and, 167
- Data analysis**
 journal article writing and, 75, 80
 literature and, 46–47, 48
 organizing data and, 24
 resources, 206
 writing analytically and formally and, 29–30
- Data analysis and interpretation procedures**
 component of research articles, 76, 77.
See also Journal articles
- Data organization**
 book writing and, 99, 101, 104
 journal article writing and, 75, 79, 80, 80*f*,
 81, 92
 overview, 22–25, 35
- Databases**, 39–42
- Decolonizing frameworks**, 30–31
- Defensiveness**, 90–91
- Depth**, 26*t*
- Description**, 59–65, 150, 151
- Descriptive and realistic writing**
 book writing and, 100
 overview, 26–27, 33*f*
 voice and, 55*t*
- Details**, 59–65, 151
- Dialogue**
 characterization and, 145–149
 literary writing and, 150
 overview, 59–65
- Digital turn**, 181, 182–183, 183*f*. *See also*
 Online presence; Technology
- Discipline of writing**
 book writing and, 100–108
 creating, 5–9
 overview, 19, 202–204
 writing tricks and, 17–18
- Discussion of findings component of research**
 articles, 76, 77, 79, 81, 84. *See also*
 Findings component of research
 articles; Journal articles
- Dissertations**, 46, 48
- Distillation**, 165
- Diversity**, 41–42
- Document analysis records.** *See also*
 Qualitative data
 characterization and, 142
 description, details, and dialogue in writing
 and, 60
 journal article writing and, 81
 overview, 22
 publishing in multiple formats and,
 192–193
- Documentation**, as a reason for qualitative
 writing, 21
- Drafting.** *See also* Phases of writing
 book writing and, 101, 127, 128
 literary writing and, 150
 overview, 10*f*, 11*f*, 12–13
- Ebooks**, 122
- Edited volumes**, 97–98. *See also* Book writing
- Editors**, 124–125, 128
- Education research**, 24
- Embedded narratives**, 135. *See also* Structure
 for fiction
- Empathy**, 133, 149
- Encyclopedias**, 97. *See also* Book writing
- Endings**, 138–139
- Epilogues**, 153
- Episodic narratives**, 23. *See also* Data
 organization; Narrative approaches;
 Storytelling
- Epublishing**, 122
- Ethical considerations**, 41–42, 142
- Ethnodrama**, 142–143, 149
- Ethnographic research.** *See also* Qualitative data
 book writing and, 100, 104–107
 characterization and, 142
 description, details, and dialogue in writing
 and, 60–61
 journal article writing and, 81
 overview, 22, 26–27
 publishing in multiple formats and, 190,
 191*t*–192*t*
- Examples**, xi–xii, 167
- Expanding searches**, 40–41. *See also*
 Searching databases
- Expectations**, 139
- Facts**, 167
- Feedback**, seeking. *See* Seeking feedback
- Fiction**, use of. *See also* Literary writing
 front and back matter and, 153–154
 literary tools and, 149–153
 overview, 130–134, 162–163
 publishing literary works (novels), 154–162
 structure for, 134–139, 138*t*
 titles, 154
- Fiction as a research practice**, 163*n*
- Fiction-based research**, 163*n*
- Field notes.** *See* Ethnographic research
- Findings**, research
 book writing and, 99
 writing blogs or op-eds and, 167
- Findings component of research articles**, 76,
 77, 79, 81, 84. *See also* Discussion of
 findings component of research articles;
 Journal articles

Fingerprint, 141. *See also* Voice
 First-person narration, 34, 54, 55*t*
 Flashbacks, 152
 Flow, 54. *See also* Voice
 Flow of topics, 99–100. *See also* Topics
 Foreign translations, 122
 Foreshadowing, 65*t*, 69–70, 151–152. *See also*
 Rhetorical devices
 Forewords, 153–154
 Formal writing. *See* Analytic and formal
 writing
 Formats for qualitative writing. *See also*
 Writing qualitatively
 decision making regarding, 181
 overview, 25–26, 26*t*, 34, 35, 36*n*, 57,
 202–203
 publishing in multiple formats and,
 189–199, 190*t*–192*t*
 submitting articles to journals, 88
 Formulas for writing, 75–76
 Fractured narratives, 135. *See also* Structure
 for fiction
 Fragmented narratives, 23. *See also* Data
 organization; Narrative approaches;
 Storytelling
 Front matter, 153–154

Gaps, 137–138

Genres

literary writing and, 140
 overview, 162
 resources, 205

Goals of writing, 166–167

Grants, 46, 123

Graphs, 86. *See also* Visual elements

Gratis copies, 123

Grounded theory projects, 47

Groups, writing. *See* Writing groups or
 buddies

Handbooks, 97. *See also* Book writing

Headings, 96

Histograms, 86. *See also* Visual elements

Hook, 167, 168

Hybrid publishers, 129*n*, 160–161

Hyperlinks, 178

Impressionistic writing

book writing and, 100
 overview, 26, 28–29, 33*f*
 voice and, 55*t*

Inclusion, 42, 182

Indexes, 123

Inequality, 30–31

Injustice, 30–31

Institutional review board (IRB) application, 46

Insular citation practice, 41–42. *See also*
 Citation practices

Intentional citations practice, xi–xii, 42. *See*
 also Citation practices

Interaction between characters, 145–149. *See*
 also Characterization

Interdisciplinarity, 181, 182, 183*f*

Interiority, 148–149. *See also*
 Characterization

Internal consistency, 56

Intersectional frameworks, 30–31

Interviews. *See also* Qualitative data

book writing and, 107

characterization and, 142–143

dialogue in writing and, 61–64

journal article writing and, 81

metaphors and, 67

overview, 22

publishing in multiple formats and,
 189–190, 190*t*–191*t*, 193–198

as a writing prompt, 8

Introduction/topic component of research
 articles, 76, 77, 78. *See also* Journal
 articles

Jargon, 14

Journal articles

audiences and, 131

blogs or op-eds and, 164

components of research articles, 76–78

multiple publishing formats and, 192–198

organizing, 78–86, 80*f*, 85*f*

outlining phase of writing and, 12

overview, viii, 25, 26*t*, 75–76, 92–93, 164

public scholarship and, 184

publication, 87–92, 192–198

quantitative data in mixed methods

research and, 86

Journal entries, 142

Journals, 161, 206–207. *See also* Journal
 articles

Juxtaposition. *See also* Rhetorical devices

book writing and, 101

literary writing and, 153

overview, 65*t*, 68–69

Keywords, 39–40

Keywords component of research articles, 76,
 77. *See also* Journal articles

Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP), 159–160.

See also Self-publishing

Landmark studies

book proposals and, 110

citation practices and, 42

literature reviews and, 41

Language

- ability to write or speak in different ways and, 185–186
- characterization and, 145
- literary writing and, 150, 151
- overview, 57–59

Large-scale theories, 50, 51. *See also* Theory

Learning about the medium within which you are working, 186

Learning to write, 6. *See also* Discipline of writing

Levels of theory, 50–51. *See also* Theory

Licensing, 122

Limiting searches, 40–41. *See also* Searching databases

Line graphs, 86. *See also* Visual elements

Literary agents, 155–159

Literary magazines, 161

Literary skills. *See also* Literary tools; Voice; Writing qualitatively

- description, details, and dialogue, 59–65
- language and specificity, 57–59
- overview, 55–57, 70
- rhetorical devices, 65–70, 65*t*

Literary tools. *See also* Literary skills;

Rhetorical devices

- book writing and, 101
- literary writing and, 149–153, 162
- overview, 203
- writing prompts and, 8

Literary works. *See also* Literary writing

- drafting phase of writing and, 13
- foreshadowing and, 69–70
- outlining phase of writing and, 12
- overview, 25, 26*t*

Literary writing. *See also* Literary works;

Literature; Narrative approaches

- blogs or op-eds and, 164
 - book writing and, 100
 - characterization, 142–149
 - description, details, and dialogue in writing and, 61–64
 - front and back matter, 153–154
 - literary tools and, 149–153
 - multiple publishing formats and, 190*t*–192*t*, 193–198
 - overview, 26, 28–29, 33*f*, 130–134, 162–163
 - publication, 154–162, 190*t*–192*t*, 193–198
 - structure for fiction and, 134–139, 138*t*
 - style and, 140–141
 - titles, 154
 - voice and, 55*t*
- Literature. *See also* Literary writing
- book writing and, 101
 - overview, 37–49, 45*f*, 46*f*, 51–52

purposes of using, 44–49

selecting, 39–42

synthesizing, 43–45, 45*f*, 46*f*

Literature map, 43, 45*f*, 46*f*

Literature review component of research

articles, 76, 77. *See also* Journal articles

Literature reviews

journal article writing and, 75

overview, 38, 52

purposes of, 44–49

searching databases and, 39–42

synthesizing literature and, 43–45, 45*f*, 46*f*

as a writing prompt, 8

Localization, 171, 178

Mapping strategies, 43, 45*f*, 46*f*

Marketing published books, 127, 128

Master plots, 135–136, 162

Materials for writing, 7. *See also* Discipline of writing

Meaning-centered approach to research, 21

Memo notes, 22, 60. *See also* Qualitative data

Metaphor. *See also* Rhetorical devices

book writing and, 101

literary writing and, 152

overview, 65*t*, 66–68

Methods, organizing data and, 24

Methods/methodology component of research

articles, 76, 77, 79. *See also* Journal

articles

Micro–macro connections, 133, 149

Middle-level theories, 50–51. *See also*

Theory

Mixed methods research, 24, 86, 93

Monographs. *See also* Book writing

audiences and, 131

blogs or op-eds and, 164

foreshadowing and, 69–70

literature reviews and, 47

outlining phase of writing and, 12

overview, 25, 26*t*, 95, 95*t*, 98–99, 164

publishing in multiple formats and,

192–193, 198–199

table of contents, 99–100

writing, 100–108

Monologue, 149

Motif, 140–141

Mulling, 10–11, 10*f*, 11*f*. *See also* Phases of writing

Multidimensionality, 142, 144

Multimethod research, 24

Multiple formats, publishing in, 189–199, 190*t*–192*t*

Multiple-day narrative, 135. *See also*

Structure for fiction

Multiple-viewpoint narrative, 135. *See also*
 Structure for fiction
 Myth of writer's block, 17–18, 19

Names in characterization, 143. *See also*
 Characterization

Narrative approaches. *See also* Literary
 writing; Storytelling
 book writing and, 108
 characterization, 142–149
 foreshadowing and, 69–70
 front and back matter and, 153–154
 organizing data and, 23
 structure for fiction and, 134–139, 138*t*,
 162

Narrative coherence, 56

Narrative structure, 33–34, 36, 137–138,
 138*t*

Narrator point of view, 33–34, 36, 36*n*, 54,
 55*t*

Nested story, 135. *See also* Structure for
 fiction

Newspapers. *See* Op-eds

Noncompete clauses, 121

Notes. *See also* Ethnographic research;
 Qualitative data
 characterization and, 142
 description, details, and dialogue in writing
 and, 60
 overview, 22

Novels, 154–162, 195–198. *See also* Fiction,
 use of; Literary writing

Observation

characterization and, 142–143
 description, details, and dialogue in writing
 and, 60–61

Online presence, 199–202, 203–204. *See also*
 Blogs; Digital turn; Social media

Online zines, 161, 207

Op-eds

comment sections and, 187–188
 compared to blogs, 165–166, 165*f*, 166*t*
 learning about the medium within which
 you are working, 186
 outlining phase of writing and, 12
 overview, viii, 25, 26*t*, 164–165, 166,
 178–179
 postpublication and, 177–178
 publishing, 174, 176–178
 writing, 166–174

Open-access journal, 87

Open-form structure, 134. *See also* Structure
 for fiction

Opinion, 59–60

Oppression, 30–31

Oral history, 190, 191*t*

Organizing data. *See* Data organization;
 Qualitative data

Outlining. *See also* Phases of writing
 journal article writing and, 92
 overview, 10*f*, 11–12, 11*f*
 table of contents and, 99–100
 writing blogs or op-eds and, 178

Overquoting, 82–83. *See also* Quoting data

Pace, 54, 99–100. *See also* Voice

Participants, research
 literary writing and, 151
 writing collaboratively and, 31–32

Participants component of research articles,
 76. *See also* Journal articles

Participatory action research (PAR), 31–32

Payment in book contracts, 121–123

Peer-reviewed journal articles, 25, 26*t*, 75,
 92–93, 184, 192–198. *See also* Journal
 articles

Permission fees, 123

Personal cost, 186–189, 189*f*, 203

Personal preferences, 57

Personality in characterization, 143. *See also*
 Characterization

Persuasion, 56–57

Phases of writing, 9–17, 10*f*, 11*f*, 19

Photos, 8, 84. *See also* Visual elements

Physical description in characterization, 143.
See also Characterization

Plausibility, 56

Plot

master plots, 135–136
 overview, 136, 162
 storyline, 136

Poetic writing, 28–29, 193–195. *See also*
 Impressionistic writing; Literary
 writing

Point of view. *See* Narrator point of view

Political factors, 42

Popular audiences. *See* Audiences; Public
 audiences

Practicing writing, 6, 8. *See also* Discipline of
 writing

Prefaces, 153–154

Presentation of data, 81, 92–93

Print-on demand, 159–160. *See also* Self-
 publishing

Professional cost, 186–189, 189*f*, 203

Prologues, 153

Promotion, 177–178

Prompts, 7–9

Proofreading, 126

Proposals, book. *See* Book proposals;
Submitting writing

Public audiences. *See also* Audiences
blogs or op-eds and, 164, 165
book writing and, 98
formats for qualitative writing and, 26*t*
literary writing and, 131
overview, viii, 36*n*

Public engagement, 181, 182, 183*f*

Public scholarship, 184–189, 189*f*, 190*t*–192*t*,
203

Public sociology, 185

Publication
blogs or op-eds and, 174, 176–178
book contracts and, 120–124
book proposals and, 109–119
book writing and, 108–119, 127–128
contemporary academic landscape and,
181–183, 183*f*
decision making regarding, 181
journal article writing and, 87–92, 93
literary works (novels), 154–162
marketing published books, 127
overview, 180–181
production process, 125–126
publishing in multiple formats, 189–199,
190*t*–192*t*
relationship with editors and, 124–125
review process, 88–92
of shorter works of fiction, 161–162

Publishers. *See also* Submitting writing
book writing and, 128
overview, 124–125
publishing literary works (novels) and, 159

Punctuation, 14

Purpose statement and research questions
component of research articles, 76, 77.
See also Journal articles

Qualitative data
overview, 22–25, 22*f*, 34, 35, 38, 48
textbooks and, 95
writing analytically and formally and,
29–30

Qualitative research. *See also* Writing
qualitatively
data and, 22–25, 22*f*
overview, ix–x, 4–5, 21, 48, 55–56
quantitative data in mixed methods
research and, 86
writing descriptively and realistically and,
26–27

Qualitative writing. *See* Writing qualitatively

Quantitative data, 86, 93

Query letter, 155–158

Quote dumping, 82–83. *See also* Quoting data

Quoting data. *See also* Citation practices
book writing and, 104
journal article writing and, 81–84

Realistic writing. *See* Descriptive and
realistic writing

Recent research
citation practices and, 42
contemporary academic landscape,
181–183, 183*f*
literature reviews and, 41

References component of research articles,
76, 77. *See also* Journal articles

Reflexivity, 27–28

Rejection, 89

Repetition, 14

Research, qualitative. *See* Qualitative
research

Research articles. *See* Journal articles

Research findings, 178. *See also* Findings,
research

Research questions, 24

Researchers, 24, 189, 189*f*

Research-sharing sites, 202, 204

Resources, 205–208

Responding to readers, 187–188

Resubmitting articles, 90. *See also* Submitting
writing

Review process. *See also* Seeking feedback
book writing and, 128
journal article writing and, 93
submitting articles to journals and, 88–92

Revising. *See also* Phases of writing
blogs or op-eds and, 178
book writing and, 101, 128
journal article writing and, 87, 88–92
literary writing and, 150
overview, 10*f*, 11*f*, 13–17
review process and, 90

Rewriting, 13, 14, 48. *See also* Drafting;
Phases of writing; Revising

Rhetorical devices. *See also* Literary tools
book writing and, 101
foreshadowing, 69–70
juxtaposition, 68–69
metaphor, 66–68
overview, 65–71, 65*t*, 203
simile, 68
symbolism, 69
voice and, 54

Rhythm, 54. *See also* Voice

Rich description. *See* Thick description

Right of first refusal, 121

Royalties, 121–123

- Scatterplots, 86. *See also* Visual elements
- Scenes, 136–138, 138*t*, 162
- Scheduling time for writing, 6. *See also*
 Discipline of writing
- Scholarship, public, 184–189, 189*f*
- Searching databases, 39–42. *See also*
 Databases; Literature reviews
- Seeking feedback. *See also* Phases of writing;
 Review process
 book writing and, 128
 journal article writing and, 87, 88–92
 literary writing and, 150
 overview, 10*f*, 11*f*, 13–17
- Segmented storytelling, 23. *See also*
 Narrative approaches; Storytelling
- Self-publishing, 129*n*, 159–160
- Self-reflection, 133
- Sentence structure
 literary writing and, 150
 revising phase of writing and, 14
 voice and, 54
- Setting, 151
- Shorter works of fiction, 161–162. *See also*
 Fiction, use of; Literary writing
- Showing, compared to telling, 59–60
- Signing bonuses, 123
- Simile, 65*t*, 68, 152. *See also* Rhetorical
 devices
- Simplification, 165
- Simultaneous submissions, 87, 176. *See also*
 Submitting writing
- Single-day narrative, 135. *See also* Structure
 for fiction
- Skills, literary. *See* Literary skills
- Small-scale theories, 50. *See also* Theory
- Social fiction, 163*n*
- Social justice
 contemporary academic landscape and,
 181, 182, 183*f*
 overview, 30
 public scholarship and, 189
- Social media, 127, 128, 186–188, 201–202,
 204. *See also* Online presence
- Social reflection, 133
- Sorting process, 41. *See also* Searching
 databases
- Sources, scanning, 41
- Space for writing, 7. *See also* Discipline of
 writing
- Specificity
 importance of, 3–4
 literary writing and, 151
 overview, 57–59
- SQC model of quoting data, 81–82. *See also*
 Quoting data
- Story within a story, 135. *See also* Structure
 for fiction
- Storyline, 136
- Storytelling. *See also* Narrative approaches
 organizing data and, 23
 voice and, 55*t*
- Strength of the form, 56
- Structure for fiction. *See also* Fiction, use of;
 Literary writing
 endings, closure, and expectations,
 138–139
 master plots, 135–136
 overview, 134–139, 138*t*, 162
 plot and storyline, 136
 scenes, narratives, and gaps, 136–138,
 138*t*
- Stuckness, writing tricks and, 17–18
- Style. *See also* Voice
 ability to write or speak in different ways
 and, 185–186
 literary writing and, 140–141, 162
 overview, 54
 writing blogs or op-eds and, 167, 174–175
- Submitting writing
 blogs or op-eds and, 176–177, 178
 book writing and, 95, 108–119, 128
 journal article writing and, 87–88, 93, 95
 publishing literary works (novels) and,
 155–159, 160
- Symbolism. *See also* Rhetorical devices
 book writing and, 101
 literary writing and, 152
 overview, 65*t*, 69
- Synopsis, 155–158
- Synthesizing literature, 43–45, 45*f*, 46*f*
- T**able of contents, 99–100, 113–115, 127
- Tables, 84, 85*f*, 86. *See also* Visual elements
- Takeaway messages, 167
- Task switching, writing tricks and, 18
- Technology
 contemporary academic landscape and,
 181, 182–183, 183*f*
 personal and professional costs associated
 with, 186–187
 writing tricks and, 17–18
- Telling, compared to showing, 59–60
- Textbooks, 95–96, 95*t*. *See also* Book writing
- Theme
 characterization and, 142
 literary writing and, 140–141
- Themes in data. *See also* Data organization
 book writing and, 104
 journal article writing and, 81
 overview, 23

Theoretical or philosophical perspective
 component of research articles, 76, 77.
See also Journal articles

Theory, 37–38, 49–52

Theses, 46, 48

Thick description, 60, 107. *See also* Description

Third-person narration
 book writing and, 104
 overview, 34
 voice and, 54, 55*t*

Three-act structure, 134. *See also* Structure
 for fiction

Time for writing, 6. *See also* Discipline of
 writing

Timeliness, 166–167, 176, 178

Title component of research articles, 76, 77.
See also Journal articles

Titles
 literary writing and, 154
 writing blogs or op-eds and, 168

Tone. *See also* Voice
 literary writing and, 141
 textbooks and, 96

Tools, literary. *See* Literary tools

Topics, 46, 99–100, 166–167

Trade publishers
 book writing and, 108
 publishing literary works (novels), 155–159

Traditional academic form, 190*t*–192*t*

Transdisciplinarity, 181, 182, 183*f*

Transfer of copyright, 120–121. *See also*
 Copyright

Trolls, online, 187–188

Type of data, 57, 79, 80, 80*f*

Typesetters, 160

Typologies, 23. *See also* Data organization

Vanity presses, 160–161

Verisimilitude, 60, 70, 133, 151

Visual elements
 book contracts and, 123–124
 journal article writing and, 84–85, 84*f*, 85*f*, 93
 quantitative data in mixed methods
 research and, 86

Voice. *See also* Literary skills
 ability to write or speak in different ways
 and, 185–186
 anthologies and, 96
 blogs or op-eds and, 165, 167, 168
 book writing and, 98
 literary writing and, 141
 overview, 53–55, 55*t*, 70
 personal style and, 57
 textbooks and, 96
 writing with audience in mind, 56

Voice-activated software, 17–18

Web sites, professional, 200–201, 203–204.
See also Online presence

Writer's block, 17–18

Write-up, 22

Writing conferences, 155

Writing discipline. *See* Discipline of writing

Writing groups or buddies
 literary writing and, 150
 seeking feedback phase of writing and,
 16
 writer's block and, 18

Writing prompts. *See* Prompts

Writing qualitatively. *See also* Literary skills;
 Qualitative research
 approaches to, 26–33, 33*f*
 contemporary academic landscape,
 181–183, 183*f*
 formats for, 25–26, 26*t*
 overview, 20, 180–181, 202–204
 personal and professional costs associated
 with, 186–187
 quantitative data in mixed methods
 research and, 86
 reasons for, 21
 resources, 205–208

Writing skills. *See* Literary skills

Writing's voice. *See* Voice

Zines, online. *See* Online zines

About the Author



Patricia Leavy, PhD, is an independent sociologist, novelist, and former Chair of Sociology and Criminology and Founding Director of Gender Studies at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts. She is the author, coauthor, or editor of over 40 nonfiction and fiction books, which have received numerous awards and have been translated into multiple languages. She has served as the creator and editor of 10 book series and is cofounder of the journal *Art/Research International*. For her work in the field of research methods, Dr. Leavy has received honors that include the Distinguished Service Outside the Profession Award from the National Art Education Association, the New England Sociologist of the Year Award from the New England Sociological Association, the Special Achievement Award from the American Creativity Association, the Significant Contribution to Educational Measurement and Research Methodology Award from Division D of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Outstanding Achievement in Arts and Learning Award from the Arts and Learning Special Interest Group of the AERA, and the Special Career Award from the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry. The School of Fine and Performing Arts at the State University of New York at New Paltz has established the Patricia Leavy Award for Art and Social Justice in her honor. Dr. Leavy delivers invited lectures and keynote addresses at universities and conferences. Her website is www.patricialeavy.com.

