

Unit 3 Reading

Quantitative Research

Quantitative data is research and information that can be measured or expressed with numbers in some way and, therefore, can be compared to other data. For example, the percentage of deaths from smoking in a given year is quantitative data. Likewise, increases in temperature from the beginning of the month to the end of the month as well as the cost of living increase in wages are also examples of quantitative data. Sometimes data cannot be expressed in quantitative form. For example, volunteering in a children's hospital ward may increase your sense of purpose in life or you may gain valuable insight gained from interviewing a World War II veteran. While this data (qualitative data) can be just as valuable as quantitative data, it is often difficult to express in terms of an absolute value, such as a number.

For your Unit 9 Assignment, you are required to include at least five examples of quantitative data expressed in a statistic (numbers, percentages, etc.) or through a visual graphic (graphs, bar charts, etc.). For example, including a line graph indicating the rise in suicides in the year following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy (JFK) or the percentage of African Americans that attended Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous March on Washington D.C. would fulfill this requirement. The use of quantitative data greatly enhances your research as it adds credibility to your work and is an objective representation of how an event affected society. However, keep in mind that interpreting statistics requires the use of critical thinking skills to be sure you are analyzing your data correctly and are careful to not mistake correlation for causation. For example, if the number of suicides increased the year following the death of JFK, does this necessarily mean that the event (JFK's assassination) led to the suicides? Or is it possible there might be other factors that contributed to the effect?

Visit the pages below in the PG Writing Center for more information on how to incorporate statistical information in your writing:

- [Using Statistics](#)
- [Citing Graphic and Visuals in APA](#)

For more information on qualitative versus quantitative research, review these articles from the PG Library:

Given, L. M. (2008). Qualitative research methods. In N. J. Salkind & K. Rasmussen (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Educational Psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 827–832). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Weinberg, D. (2006). Qualitative research. In B. S. Turner (Ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology* (pp. 484–486). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Kraska, M. (2008). Quantitative research methods. In N. J. Salkind & K. Rasmussen (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Educational Psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 832–838). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Research Strategies

One of the most important keys to success in developing your Unit 9 Assignment is to develop good research strategies. Any research paper is only as good as the research you found to include in the writing. First, select an appropriate topic that offers you enough depth to fulfill the criteria of the paper (exploring the effects on human behavior, expression, the ethical issues surrounding the event, and providing recommendations). Consider these elements as you select your topic.

While it is fairly likely that any significant historic/cultural event is going to have many options for exploring these issues, you want to be sure you were able to locate numerous resources that will help you to analyze them and that you feel comfortable (and interested!) in developing this research. After all, the best research paper is going to be one that you are genuinely interested in and which you feel you can learn.

After choosing and narrowing your topic, the next step is using strategies for conducting your research. An important phase in the research process is being sure you fully understand how to focus your topic. The war on terrorism is a wide topic that provides many opportunities to explore human behaviors, human expression, and even ethical issues. In fact, there are **too** many options to explore in this context. It is appropriate to focus this topic to a more manageable paper by considering such details as what aspects of terrorism you want to address. You may consider a specific terrorist event, global perspectives, how an event affected the United States, how an event affected political leaders, how the media responded to an event, etc.

In order to be as objective as possible in the research and writing, you will want to focus what you intend to present in your project so that it is balanced and does not only paint a one-sided picture.

Take the following steps when conducting your research:

1. Solidify Your Topic

This includes making sure you understand how to focus your topic enough to address how people responded to the event through their behavior (actions, words, etc.). Consider how the event resulted in various forms of human expression (art, literature, fashion, movements, music, etc.). Reflect on possible ethical issues related to the topic. Also, contemplate what kinds of recommendations or solutions you may develop to address the event. Keep an open mind as you begin your research, but always have these issues noted in front of you so you are continually thinking about how you will incorporate them into your paper.

2. Plan Your Strategy

Plan out a good strategy that is going to yield the best research results. Brainstorm some keywords that represent your topic and know how to vary them when conducting database searches. For example, in researching the Disco Era of the 1970s you might consider terms like "Disco," "1970s" "Seventies," "Disco music," "Disco Clubs," "Disco Drugs," "Fashion," etc. Experimenting with a variety of search terms will introduce even more possible ideas as you start to review your findings. Apply your critical thinking skills as you review the responses to each search to consider how you can further refine the search terms to produce useful results.

Since this is an academic paper, there should be a variety of high-quality resources. Ten different websites will not be necessary for the requirements of this project. Remember, you need resources that will yield quantitative data and academic articles from scholarly journals. While it is possible to find good information on the internet, you do not want to limit yourself to these sources, which can be problematic in credibility. The majority of the research should be conducted using the PG Library. If you are not comfortable using the library for research, review the library tutorials and guides throughout the unit readings.

3. Evaluate Sources

Once you have located some sources, you now need to assess which sources are high-quality and will provide you with valuable information. Your paper is only as good as the research you use and you will want to certain that the author of any work you decide to use is reputable. Authors who are experts in their field will often hold a PhD or be a long-time scholar or even professor. Books or websites that are looking to sell you something may contain a lot of bias and may have an underlying motivation in reporting information selectively that can be deceiving. Web research, in particular, can be misleading and you need to screen websites carefully. Some tips for what to consider when reviewing resources are:

- Does the site look professional? Does the site sound objective or biased?
- Is there an author associated with the article/web page? Can you learn more about the author to evaluate her/his credibility?
- Is it a news agency, information portal page, government site or educational site? Some examples include CNN.com, BBC.com, loc.gov (Library of Congress) or a site that ends in .edu or .gov. These tend to be sites that are more reputable.
- Be careful of using personal Web pages, blogs or sites with many popups and ads. These sites can have an underlying motive to simply invite you to buy things or can even contain computer viruses and spyware.
- Be careful of activist sites or political organizations. While they can provide factual information, you want to be sure that you also include opposing viewpoints for balance.
- Any kind of pay-for-access site should be carefully screened as well.

4. Use and Document Your Sources

Once you have located some valuable, credible resources, you will have to think about the best way to use them in your paper. For example, you may find a powerful direct quote that really drives home the significant effect of the event. Or, you may determine to paraphrase a particular statistic that supports your objective. It is important to **always** cite quoted or paraphrased information and you will want to explain or analyze the information you cite. For example, explain the significance of a particular quote or how the research you have found really supports the information you are presenting. Do not make the assumption that your reader will understand why you included the information. Always add a summary of why the information (including statistics, graphs and charts) is significant to your topic. In addition, do not use a source, statistic or quote just because you find it interesting. Limit the sources and information used to those that add to the quality and analysis of the event/ topic. It can be challenging to cut out extraneous writing, but it is an important aspect of editing.

APA Format

Use the format of the American Psychological Association (APA) for the writing, organization and citing in your paper. You should have addressed APA format in great detail in your composition courses, but for a review see more information in the PG [Writing Center](#).

Remember, failure to effectively cite your sources is considered plagiarism and will result in strict penalties possibly including failure of the course, so you want to be sure you are clear on how to appropriately cite sources. If you have any questions or concerns, please review the [APA Style Central tutorials](#).

Top Ten Mistakes in Academic Research

Writing an academic paper does not have to be overwhelming. If you plan accordingly and have a good process in place, you can proceed in a logical, timely manner that keeps you on track throughout the term. The Unit 3 Assignment will help with organization since you will prepare a proposal detailing your research plan. Before you do this, avoid unnecessary challenges and be as efficient as possible with your time and resources.

- [Top 10 Mistakes in Academic Research](#)

The Research Proposal/ Effective Presentations

As you explore the significant historic/cultural event you selected and analyze how it affected society through behaviors, expression and ethical issues, the final result needs to be an objective Research Paper. You may find the topic is powerful and as you get further into the research, you may find you have a particular position on the topic, but the final paper for this course is not an opinion or persuasive paper. Opposing viewpoints need to be researched, analyzed and presented in the final version and author bias should be as minimal as possible. In order to do this successfully, the best approach to completing the Unit 9 Assignment is to carefully plan and the Unit 3 Topic Proposal will help you to organize and prepare a strategy. In order to complete your proposal, you will want to follow an effective process. In addition, one of the interdisciplinary elements incorporated into this week's assignment is visual and written communication. Therefore, the Topic Proposal this week is to be in PowerPoint presentation format. In order to successfully create an effective PowerPoint presentation, you may need more information.

Review the following resources:

- [From the topic to the research](#)
- [Thesis development](#)
- [Writing a Thesis Statement](#)
- [Evaluating Sources](#)
- [Creating Effective PowerPoint presentations](#)
- [APA Formatting in PowerPoint](#)

You will also need to understand the basics of computer generated communication to communicate well in the PowerPoint format. Review the following articles located in the PG Library:

Anglada, L. P. (2013). Computer Mediated Communication. Salem Press Encyclopedia.

Denscombe, M. (2012). Research Proposals: A Practical Guide. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education.

Heide, B. V. D., & Walther, J. B. (2009). Computer-Mediated Communication. In H. T. Reis & S. Sprecher (Eds.), Encyclopedia of Human Relationships (Vol. 1, pp. 291–293). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.