# Do's and Don'ts for Researching and Writing

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## *Guidelines for Writing Academic Papers*

**1) Timing**: Don't postpone research and writing of your paper until the very end (of a regional course segment or online course discussion). Consider that a good paper more often than not includes at least the following steps and procedures:

1) Reading primary and secondary sources.
2) Designing and refining the outline of your paper before you start writing.
3) Writing your paper and then asking someone else review it for spelling, content and clarity.

**2) Structure** your paper:

I. Introduction
II. History of previous research (focus on secondary sources)
III. *Structured* analysis of your topic (focus on primary sources)
    A. Main point
        1. Subpoint
            a.
            b.

        2. Subpoint
    B.
    C.
IV. Conclusion
V. Bibliography

**3) Quotations**:

Don't use more than 15 % quotations. Use quotations not to replace your own work and analysis but to inspire and affirm what you have found and done.

**4) Plagiarism**:

Plagiarism refers to stealing someone else's intellectual property. If you borrow an idea, a phrase, sentence or whole paragraph from anyone and don't cite the source in a footnote and provide full publication facts, then you plagiarize and are subject to disciplinary action by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). See the *Student Handbook* for further information.

**5) Footnotes and bibliography: Turabian Style**

The following are examples of proper Turabian style for citation of sources.

**IN THE FOOTNOTE**:

***Book***:

[1] Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 25.

***Essay (Chapter) from Book***:

[1] John Muddiman, "Making Sense of Romans," *What Is It that the Scripture Says? Essays in Biblical Interpretation, Translation and Reception in Honour of Henry Wansbrough OSB*, ed. Philip McCosker (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 89-101.

***Article***:

[1] David W. Baker, "Old Testament Prophecy. Recent Publications," *Ashland Theological Journal* 33 (2001): 57-76.

***Article from Dictionary***:

[1] J. D. Charles, "Pagan Sources in the New Testament," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. C. A. Evans, S. E. Porter (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000): 756-763.

**CORRESPONDING ENTRY IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY**:

***Book***:

Evans, C. A. *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005.

***Article***:

Baker, David W. "Old Testament Prophecy. Recent Publications." *Ashland Theological Journal* 33 (2001): 57-76.

***Article from a Dictionary***:

Charles, J. D. "Pagan Sources in the New Testament." In *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. C. A. Evans, S. E. Porter, 756-763. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000.

## *Sources for Writing in Biblical Studies*

**1) Substandard Sources:**

Attempted Definition:

There are sources that are substandard for writing in an academic setting because they were written for a different audience, and they don't stimulate the kind of creative and critical thinking that is part of Trinity's educational mission. Among these substandard sources are:

Online Sermons, Old commentaries written for laypeople, such as commentaries by Matthew Henry (1706-21, English non-conformist), Adam Clarke (1760-1832, Methodist), Jamiesson / Fausset / Brown, J. V. McGee, *Thru the Bible*, literature written for church ministry and lay people, e.g., Bible handbooks, Study Bibles, most one-volume commentaries, books written by radio speakers, conference speakers, evangelists, etc.

**2) Standard Sources:**

Attempted Definition:

Part of what defines "standard" literature in my eyes are the quantity and value of footnotes and references [which indicate], the depth of review and evaluation of *various* points of views, the precision and skill of understanding the original languages with the aid of standard language-tools, the ability to use a variety of methods that provide access to the meaning to the text, and commitment to the text prior to confessional loyalties. All of that does not have to be displayed within the article or book but I need to be able to presuppose the skills for doing that kind of work.

- Glynn, John. *Commentary &Reference Survey. A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical and Theological Resources*, 10th ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007. [311 pages]
  Lists ca. 900 commentaries and 1,600 other biblical resources

- Generic & Specific Dictionaries

***Generic***

Betz, H. D., Don S. Browning, Bernd Janowski and Eberhard Jüngel, eds. *Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion*. 11 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2005-2012.

Freedman, D. N., ed. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Sakenfeld, Katherine Doob, ed. *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. 5 vols. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2006.

Alexander, T. D., B. S. Rosner, D. A. Carson, G. Goldsworthy, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000.

***Specific: New Testament***

Green, Joel B. and Scot McKnight, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992.

Hawthorne, G. F. and R. P. Martin, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993.

Martin, R. P. and P. H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of The Later New Testament & Its Developments*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997.

Evans, Craig, Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2000.

**The Essential IVP Reference Collection** on CD Rom (ca. $ 125)

***Specific: Old Testament***

Alexander, T. D. and David W. Baker, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003.

Arnold, Bill T. and H. G. M. Williamson, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005.

Longman, Tremper, III and Peter Enns, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008.

- Theological Journal Library (CD Rom), vols. 1-10: $399.95
  more than 75 running feet of book shelves, face value almost $15,000.00

- ATLA Religion Database
  [TOLC → TEL → OCLC's First Search → Log in → select ATLA Religion Database]
  The 1.4 million+ records in the *ATLA Religion Database* include: 488,000+ journal article records, 215,000+ essay records from 15,700+ multi-author works, 446,000+ book reviews of 232,000+ books

**3) Helpful Websites**

ntgateway.com

Written and maintained by Mark Goodacre, a New Testament professor at Duke University, this website provides a fabulous collection of links to very useful information on the internet related to anything concerning the New Testament. Always a good starting point!

Searchable Reference Books at Amazon.com and Google.com

http://home.comcast.net/~rciampa/AmazonResearch.htm

Makes use of google's "look inside" promotional tool. Many important Commentaries that can be searched for free on the internet are listed here by book of the Bible.

Open Content Alliance

Nonprofit book-digitization project. You can download thousands of books onto your hard-drive! There is a lot of important older literature (out of copyright) available in full-text (e.g., Chrysostom, Calvin, Goodspeed, Dods, Godet)!

biblicalstudies.org.uk

Offers not only helpful bibliographies to each book of the Bible but also pdf. files (again: no charge!) of helpful scholarly essays and articles!

theologicalstudies.org.uk

See comments to previous website.

worldcat.org

Website allows you to locate a book in the library nearest to your zip-code.

bookreviews.org

Quality book reviews about quality literature in Biblical Studies