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# Research Paper: Source Report

Caitlin Geoghan  
*CUNY City College*

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## Structuring Your Research Paper

Many writers find it helpful to structure their research papers in one of the following ways. Keep in mind, some strategies may be more appropriate to some disciplines than to others; in some cases, you may also want to apply a combination of these approaches:

1. **Problem-to-Solution:** In the first part of your paper, label a problem and explain its importance; in the second part, propose solutions for that problem based on your research.
2. **Cause-to-Effect or Effect-to-Cause:** If your research question (RQ) is “How does free trade affect the economy in Indonesia?”, you are beginning with a cause (free trade) and trying to explain the effects (the economy in Indonesia). If your RQ is “Why is Indonesia impoverished?”, your paper will attempt to explain the causes of a certain phenomenon.
3. **Unknown --> Known --> Unknown:** Raise a question (“unknown”), and use the research you have done (“known”) to answer it. After presenting your research and explaining your conclusions, you can label new questions raised by your research. What questions or problems have your sources overlooked?
4. **Comparison-and-Contrast:** Do your researchers provide different data? Do they provide similar data but interpret the data differently? Evaluate the merits and shortcomings of different approaches, and be specific about where your evaluation is coming from.

### Source Grid Instructions

This grid offers you a simple way to begin to connect and categorize the sources you have found so far.

1. Write your research question in the space provided at the top of your grid.
2. In the first column, list the papers/sources that are most relevant to your research question.
3. In the second column, list the main argument(s) of each source. This is not an easy step, but it might be the most important one; working carefully to identify the authors’ arguments in this step can make synthesizing material much easier later on.

4. In the third column, list any comments or questions that you have about each source, and record the most important or most interesting detail that the source provides.

5. Compare and contrast the sources on your list. Do any of them fall into the same “camp” or category? Within a particular category or camp, what distinguishes different authors or studies from one another? Do some of them contradict or put into question others? extend another’s hypothesis? or limit it? Note these distinctions in the margins, at the bottom, or on the back, of your grid sheet.

Your Research Question:		
Source Title	Main ideas (what content from this source is most relevant to your research question?)	Best match(es) Think about synthesis—which of the other sources is the best match for this source and why?


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Once you have completed the grid, consider the following questions:

i. What conclusions can you reach based on the available evidence from your research?

ii. What are the gaps you see in the current literature (what other studies are needed)?

iii. What are the contradictions you see in the research literature?

iv. Which questions do you feel are left unanswered after engaging the literature in your area of interest?

v. Are there items that you have overemphasized (for example, do you have more background information than theories/research findings?)

vi. Are there items that are underdeveloped? If there are few sources in an area, ask why. Is this a novel area of inquiry? Do you need to look more broadly for sources?