predict. The units below are designed to force you to assign the research paper to be handed in before the 13th week of class. Leave the last two weeks of class, at least, for another short project and for “cleaning up” after the research paper assignment—handling plagiarism, poor documentation, sources that need verifying, lost websites, interview subjects who don’t show up for interviews, etc.

Avoiding Plagiarism
When you present the required section on plagiarism, be sure to allow ample time for discussing plagiarism in class. In addition, ask students to attach copies of their sources, including websites, to their final drafts. Read all the drafts and require all drafts to be handed in during the process, even if you don’t respond to them. See The Inkwell and The McGraw-Hill Handbook for other activities.

Workable Chunks
Assign the research paper in stages; ask for a prospectus or proposal, then a report on sources found or interviewed, then a first draft, etc.

Teaching Documentation
Teach the principles of good documentation and don’t sweat the small stuff like periods and commas in citations. Most teachers ask students to use MLA, with the warning that it is only one of many citation styles they may be asked to use in their academic writing. Some principles to make clear:

1) Can my readers find my exact source with the information I’ve provided on the works Cited page?
2) Are my citations consistent and readable?
3) Have I provided the appropriate in-text information to make my text readable and yet indicate the general nature of my sources?
4) Have I accurately indicated which words are mine and which words are someone else’s? Have I accurately indicated which words of mine are an interpretation of someone else’s words?
5) Do I know how to use the handbook to cite anything I may want to use as a source?

Additional Sources on Reading
Rose, Mike and Glenda Hull. “‘This Wooden Shack Place’: The Logic of an Unconventional Reading.” *College Composition and Communication* 41.3 (1990): 287-298.

Approaches to Teaching with The Curious Researcher
by Bruce Ballenger

Combined with Readings
A thoughtful sequence of readings could help students see how their research essays fit in various traditions of researched writing, both within and outside the academy. Because students think research is a “separate activity” from other writing in the composition course, initial readings should help convince students that research is a natural activity, and that research writing can be lively, interesting. “Enclosed. Encyclopedic. Endured: One Week at the Mall of America” is a good essay to begin with when asking students to realize that many of the essays they read are, in fact, researched articles like the ones they will be asked to write. “Forms Stretched to Their Limits” is another essay that can inspire a lively and productive discussion in response to the question: “Is this a research paper?” Both pieces demonstrate a use of images, personal experience, and various sources to entertain and inform. Also, look at other popular magazines (*e.g.* Smithsonian, Natural History, New Yorker, National Geographic, etc.) for similar researched magazine pieces. They provide a model for the kind of essays the book promotes.
Lest students think that such informal, sometimes autobiographical essays have no relation to researched academic writing, have students read essays in academic journals that are “personal” or “creative.” These mixed genre essays are increasingly common, not just in literary studies but all disciplines. In literary criticism, there are lots of choices. But there are also essays by legal scholars (Patricia Williams), biology (Naomi Weisstein), and many other fields. Next time, I might use my essay that was recently in College English (“Methods of Memory”) or a piece by geologist M. Dane Picard. Ethnographic essays that use narrative also challenge students’ assumptions about academic writing. The book Fields of Writing (St. Martin’s) has several of these. I like “Scenes from Manus Life” by Margaret Mead. I’ve also used a column by Bob Greene, “Fifteen,” that is essentially an ethnographic account of two teenage boys spending an afternoon at the shopping mall.

To spark a debate in class about why academic writing seems so dry, have students read Patricia Limerick’s essay from the Times Book New York Review “Dancing With Professors: The Trouble With Academic Prose.” Pair it with excerpts from “Inventing the University” by David Bartholomae, an essay that argues for initiating students into academic discourse. While you want to be sympathetic to students’ resistance to formal academic writing, you also want them to understand why it so often seems dry and lifeless: each discipline has its own particular conventions and gestures. This discussion is crucial. If we’re going to encourage students to write exploratory research essays, we need to help them see how the skills and habits of mind those essays encourage are applicable to more conventional academic writing.

The model of knowledge making as a “conversation” is at the heart of The Curious Researcher. (Consider putting the famous Burke quote about the parlor on an overhead or on your syllabus to make the point more emphatic.) But also use class readings to help students practice dialogic thinking. The double-entry journal is crucial here. Introduce controversial readings that really get students going. For example, last semester I used part of an essay by Mark Edmundson, “On the Uses of a Liberal Education.” It appeared in Harper’s and takes the current generation of college students to task. We read the article and in-class practiced double-entry journaling. (For more information on an exercise that uses the Harper’s article, consult Beyond Note Cards: Rethinking the Freshman Research Paper.)

Unfortunately, there are remarkably few accessible articles on academic research that might introduce students to some of the ideas about inquiry that The Curious Researcher promotes. One possibility, however, is to follow-up the first exercise with some readings on student epistemology. Excerpts from William Perry’s book, Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Development Years, as well as Belenky et al.’s Women’s Ways of Knowing, can generate a lively discussion about the nature of truth and knowledge. These are questions you can return to all semester long as students “try on” their new identity as knowers. Because the kind of essay that The Curious Researcher encourages is, to some extent, anti-disciplinary, students may not understand that disciplinary conventions are not arbitrary. This discussion will not occur if you don’t encourage it at some point during the semester. Consider bringing in a more formal example of academic writing—perhaps even one that really makes students feel like outsiders to the discourse—and allow them to vent their hatred of the writing. Then initiate a more thoughtful discussion about some reasons why the article might not be an example of “bad” writing after all. How might the article be used by “insiders” in the discourse community? What features of the article which may frustrate students might have a logic after all given the rhetorical situation of writing in this discipline? This discussion will inevitably lead to the question, “How is the kind of research paper we’re writing different?” A few students may wonder aloud why they’re not modeling more formal academic writing in their papers. This is a question you must address. One answer, of course, is that rather than teaching one of many academic discourses, you are focusing on teaching some habits of mind most discourses share: suspending judgment, tolerating ambiguity, dialectical thinking, etc. The research essay is much more likely to teach these things than the formal paper.

Variations of the Five-Week Scheme
The Curious Researcher was originally developed in a writing program that required only one writing course of first-year students, and the research assignment usually took the last five weeks of the course. Since then, the book is also being used by universities—including my own—that use the text in a second semester required course that is devoted exclusively to research writing. Consequently, instructors may not devote five weeks to the research essay or may include other assignments and use other texts in conjunction with The Curious Researcher. Fortunately, the five week structure is easy to ignore, and there are a range of other patterns for using the text. The table of contents by subject was added to the second edition as a means to helping instructors identify particular problems or skills they wanted to address and suggesting sections of the book that might be assigned to address them.

There are some other patterns of working through the book that might appeal to you. Here are my suggestions:
Research in learning theory suggests that prior beliefs about a subject or task, when they exist, significantly influence learning. Consider always beginning a research writing course in a way that surfaces students’ prior beliefs about research writing and the college research paper. Exercise I in *The Curious Researcher* is one way to begin the course that begins this discussion.

At the heart of the text is the idea of *conversation* as the means for making knowledge. This idea is relevant to any research assignment you give to students. Consider next jumping to the middle of the book, “Writing in the Middle,” and particularly the discussion of the double-entry notebook. Get students practicing dialogue notes at the very beginning of the course and throughout it.

One way to return to prior beliefs about research writing—and to begin to challenge them—is to present examples of research that don’t seem like research papers. “Why God Created Flies” was included for this purpose. Consider jumping back to this essay next. Your might also jump ahead to Exercise 4.1 which challenges students to consider how to resolve conflicting claims about what is true.

To give students practice with double-entry note taking, as well as summary, paraphrase, and quotation, try going back to the middle of the text and assign Exercise 3.3 (“Good Notes on Bad Writing”). Use this to introduce approaches to writing about sources in preparation for other reading responses or research assignments.

Depending on the structure of your course, you might next assign an exercise or reading that introduces one or more research methods. For example, if your course initially emphasizes library-based research writing, assign Exercise 1.4, “Befriending the Library.” If you want to emphasize Internet research initially, assign Exercise 1.5. If your course begins by focusing on ethnography or field research, assign sections in *The Curious Researcher* on interview. If your students are initially writing response essays to literature, Appendix C introduces students to literary research methods.

Early in almost any research writing course, you should introduce students to developing search terms and Boolean terminology. This is crucial. The second edition of *The Curious Researcher* emphasizes this even more with a new section called “The Story of a Search.” Read and discuss in the first few weeks.

Once your students are assigned a draft to write, the text will help them write it. Since students typically have a difficult time focusing their work on a researchable and interesting question, you might go back to the beginning of the book and do Exercise 1.2, “The Myth of the Boring Topic,” as an in-class exercise. Then as an assignment for their first paper, jump to the focusing exercise in Chapter 2, “Finding the Question” (Exercise 2.1). A follow-up assignment might be the “leads” exercise in Chapter 4 (Exercise 4.4).

Now that students are writing research-based material, you can use the text to focus on things you’d like to emphasize for each assignment. For example, if you want to give students tools for understanding and generating a thesis, assign Exercise 4.2. If you want to emphasize ideas about research strategy, assign the section in Chapter 2, “Developing a Research Strategy.” Or you might want to emphasize methods of evaluating and citing sources or questions about structure (see “Methods of Development”).

One way to proceed from here is to identify after one or more assignments the kinds of problems your students are encountering, and assign relevant exercises and readings from *The Curious Researcher*. In my experience, the following problems tend to surface in the research writing of first-year students, in this order more or less:

- Finding a topic, if none is assigned.
- Focusing on a limited aspect of the topic, particularly finding a limited and interesting question to explore.
- Discovering a personal purpose in writing about the topic, and expressing that in terms of claims, assertions, and questions.
- Integrating source material in their own prose; understanding plagiarism; controlling quotations.
- Finding enough credible and useful information on their topics.
- Organizing the material around some controlling idea or question.
- Maintaining a consistent voice in their essays.
- Understanding citation.
- Effectively structuring their essays.

Each of these problems is addressed in different sections of *The Curious Researcher*; the table of contents by subject in the front of the book should prove helpful in finding and assigning appropriate sections of the book to your students.

**Teaching the Research Essay: Assignments**

**Assignment: Researching and Writing About Culture**

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Purpose:
- Shorter, preliminary research assignment to a longer research project.
- Introduce students to research as activity beyond library, including field work and interviews.
- Present different modes of reporting findings, particularly use of narrative.
- Challenges idea that researchers are “objective.”
- Possibility of collaborative research.

Specifics: In class, brainstorm three different lists with class (or have small groups do it): cultural objects that are part of our lives in the 2010s (ATM, cell phone, iPad, etc.), cultural trends in the 2010s (specialty coffee houses, health clubs, extreme sports, etc.), and “subcultures” in the local area (what discrete groups in the local community share certain habits, rituals, insider language, stories, ways of seeing the world). Ask each student to choose one item from one list with which they have experience, and do some in-class writing on it. Prompt them to fastwrite about a story, scene, situation, or profile that comes to mind when they think about the trend, object, or group. Or ask them to write a narrative of thought: when you think of ___________ , what do you think of first? And then? And then? And then?

Next, ask students to conduct a field observation of people using the object, participating in the trend or group. Especially choose those that seem “typical.” Next, ask students to conduct an interview with someone (friend or stranger) involved in trend, devoted to object, or belonging to group. Also find one article in library relevant to their topic. In the next class, organize students into groups based on which category their topic seems to belong: media, health, recreation, movements, products, food, or other. Encourage students to each discuss, in turn, what they’ve observed, share an interesting passage from their article, and invite suggestions about other group members to interview, other sources to check, other places to go. After all, we are all authorities on American culture. Set a deadline for the next draft, which uses multiple sources of information. Possible focuses for next draft: profile of a “typical” member of subculture or participant in popular trend; argument about why the trend, object, or group symbolizes what’s good about America in the 2010s, or not so good; tell the story of the search; a collage essay.

Assignment: Landscape Shots or Close-Ups?

Purposes:
- To teach focusing skills.
- To demonstrate that a close look will reveal more than a topic seen from a distance.
- To encourage the intellectual habit of withholding judgment.

Assignment: The Myth of the Boring Topic

Purpose:
- To demonstrate that the worth of a topic depends, in part, about whether one can discover interesting questions about it.
- To demonstrate the heuristic value of questions.
- To initiate discussion about what constitutes a “researchable” question.

Assignment: Getting a Word in Edgewise

Purpose:
- To introduce students to the idea that knowledge is made through conversation, not monologue.
- To help them apply the practice of dialectical thinking to responding to reading.
- To introduce them to the double-entry note taking method.

Assignment: Presence in the Research Essay

Purpose:
- To demonstrate the ways that a writer can register his or her presence without self-reference.
- To offer students ways of understanding how an “impersonal” research paper can be deeply personal.

Specifics: Distribute to your class copies of the first ten paragraphs or so of Lewis Thomas’ essay “The Music of This Sphere” or “On Societies as Organisms” (both in The Lives of a Cell). Explain that you will read the excerpt from one or both of Thomas’ essays aloud, and instruct your students to place an “A” (for Author) next to places in the text where they feel Lewis’ presence most strongly. These may be moments when students sense the writer’s feelings or attitudes towards his subject, or they get a strong hint of his personality. After you’ve read the Lewis piece(s) and students have marked it, tally each paragraph–how many of your students marked an “A” somewhere in paragraph 1, paragraph 2, and so on? Begin class discussion with those paragraphs that seem to have drawn the most reaction. What are the qualities or characteristics of those paragraphs that account for your students’ sense that Lewis registers his presence? Where exactly in the paragraph did they feel that most strongly? Select several additional paragraphs that garnered the most response.
As the discussion winds down, ask your students to help you build a list on the board or on newsprint of the ways a writer can make herself felt by a reader without resorting to autobiography or the first person. What **implicit** ways can a writer reveal her motives, her feelings, her beliefs, and her opinions in a research essay?

**Discussion:** Though both of these Lewis Thomas essays are a bit challenging for first-year students, this exercise rarely fails to generate a lively class discussion. When the results are tallied, virtually every paragraph earns an “A,” but some passages clearly generate the most response. For example, in Thomas’ essay “The Music of This Sphere,” a piece that explores how science attempts to record and analyze nature’s sounds, the fifth paragraph is always the runaway winner. And it is no surprise. This is the one of the few passages in the essay that shifts to first person and personal anecdote. But it’s passages like the fourth paragraph in “On Societies as Organisms” that I find fascinating to discuss with students. Here Lewis never talks about himself, but nearly three quarters of the class hears him talking:

> What makes us most uncomfortable is that [ants], and the bees and termites and social wasps, seem to live two kinds of lives: they are individuals, going about a day’s business without much evidence of thought for tomorrow, and they are at the same component parts, cellular elements, in the huge, writhing, ruminating organism of the Hill, the nest, the hive. It is because of this aspect, I think, that we most wish for them to be something foreign. We do not like the notion that there can be collective societies with the capacity to behave like organisms. If such things exist, they can have nothing to do with us. (12)

Students immediately notice the powerful and distinctive language here: “huge, writhing, ruminating”; they often comment about how Thomas has found his own way of saying things, comparing ant life to human life in ways the reader may not expect. Insects that go “about the day’s business without much evidence of thought for tomorrow” are not the ants or bees we’ve known, but thanks to Thomas’ wit and clever angle, we see them anew. His interjection of “I think” clearly marks his presence in the text, but less obvious is the way Thomas invokes the “broadenings” that Gordon Harvey discusses. As the writer ends the paragraph, he muses that “we do not like the notion that there can be collective societies with the capacity to behave like organisms.” Then Thomas adds, “If such things exist, they can have nothing to do with us.” There are hints from the beginning of this paragraph that the writer is offering a larger, personal view of the significance of insect behavior as a metaphor for human society. Students notice the word “us” in the first sentence, for example, and implicitly sense Thomas’ intention of drawing the connection between human and insect life tighter. He then heightens the tension in those final two sentences, implying that connection makes “us” profoundly uncomfortable.

If you encourage students to consider where in a paragraph they often placed their “A’s,” they will likely notice that they come at the beginning of the paragraph, and especially at the end. There the writer is most likely to make his move to surprise, to comment, to suddenly tighten the seams between things. Thomas does this, too, and we feel his presence behind the words, all of which seem to belong distinctly to him.

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**Strand I: Exploring Ourselves, Our World, and Beyond**

by Kara Candito, Bill Green, Sarah Grieve, and Deborah Coxwell Teague

**Overview**

The overall purpose of this strand is to help students grow as writers and thinkers by exposing them to a variety of different kinds of texts, both verbal and non-verbal, and to have them write about how they relate to and are emotionally and intellectually affected by these various texts and others that bombard them each day.

The strand begins with an emphasis on the personal and serves as a nice segue for students and teachers who focused primarily on personal experience writing in ENC 1101. The texts, both verbal and non-verbal, for the first four weeks of the course, are all from the first three chapters of Beyond Words. As the course progresses, the emphasis on the personal is not completely forsaken, but the focus of class discussions and writing moves away from the personal to more of a focus on the world beyond the student’s personal experience. The second course unit makes extensive use of The Curious Researcher and The New McGraw-Hill Handbook (as well as sample student essays from Our Own Words and Beyond Words) as students choose an issue that interests them and write a feature article for a magazine of their choice. The third course unit incorporates texts from Beyond Words and asks students to analyze either a verbal or non-verbal text, their reaction to it, and its effect on a broader audience. During the last two-three weeks of the course, students work on multi-modal final projects to design a non-traditional text that explores an issue discussed during the semester. While their personal