How to Research and Write an Academic Paper
(especially for Academic English Writing in Japan)

- Research academically or scientifically reliable sources: book chapters, articles, etc.
- Take notes on sources and compile publication information for the References section.
- Summarize and cite English sources in APA style (or other standard style).
- If you use online sources, there is an APA format for citing and listing them in your References section.
- It is better to use English sources. But if you use Japanese sources, there is an APA format for citing and listing foreign language sources in an English paper.
- Romanize all Japanese; use Hepburn (ヘボン式) because it is closest to correct pronunciation.
- Use “quotation marks” for exact English sentences from a source. Cite the source of information in the body of your paper (= “in-text citation”) and list the source in the References section at the end of your paper. It is always “References,” even when there is only one in a short paper. APA style for in-text citations looks like, for example: (Jones, 2007, p. 6), or (Kato, 1999, pp. 11-12) for summarizing some pages of Japanese. All of your References should be cited in the body of your paper.
- Follow APA style also to format your MS Word documents.
- Use the school’s writing guides, an APA style manual, and writing resources online.
- Paper parts: title, introduction, body with in-text citations, conclusion, and References.
- Focus your research paper theme.
  - Develop a title with a purpose, topic, and limited scope.
- Quote, paraphrase or summarize to cite sources
  - To summarize the main points of pages in your own English words is best.
  - Do not copy & paste from other writers’ papers (plagiarism 無断盗用).
  - Do not use automatic translation （自動翻訳）for sentences. Use a dictionary.
  - Papers must be your own English composition （英作文）, not copied or translated.

Evaluating the Quality of Ideas in a Paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Summarize sources. Analyze. Use your own ideas in the introduction &amp; conclusion.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td>Paraphrase sources. Opinions with reasons. Conclusion including your own ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>“Quotations” from sources. Experiences. Opinions. Conclusion according to sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>Common misconceptions, relies on blogs, etc. References &amp; format not in APA style.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>Just information from sources without opinions or analysis. Sources not all cited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worst</td>
<td>Not your own writing, not your own ideas, copied or Web machine-translated.</td>
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For a paper on languages, focus on how they are acquired or learned. Write a thesis statement: “This paper will show how [a method or approach] is effective (or not) for [language learning or natural acquisition].” Make conclusions based on your thesis statement and findings (body).

Steve McCarty, 2019