



WRITERS' CENTRE



CSI First-Year Workshop:



From Evidence to Argument

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Workshop Goals

- Develop an understanding of how to frame and build an argument in the social sciences based on a case
- Find ways of incorporating one's evidence from research into one's writing

From Evidence to Argument

- Today's schedule:
 - 4.00-4.05 Introduction
 - 4.05-4.15 Reviewing your topic in relation to the prompt
 - 4.15-4.30 Identifying key elements in your case
 - 4.30-4.40 Outlining Your Introduction
 - 4.40-4.45 Strategies for writing from sources
 - 4.45-5.30 General Q&A, Mini-Consultations
 - 5.30 Exit Survey



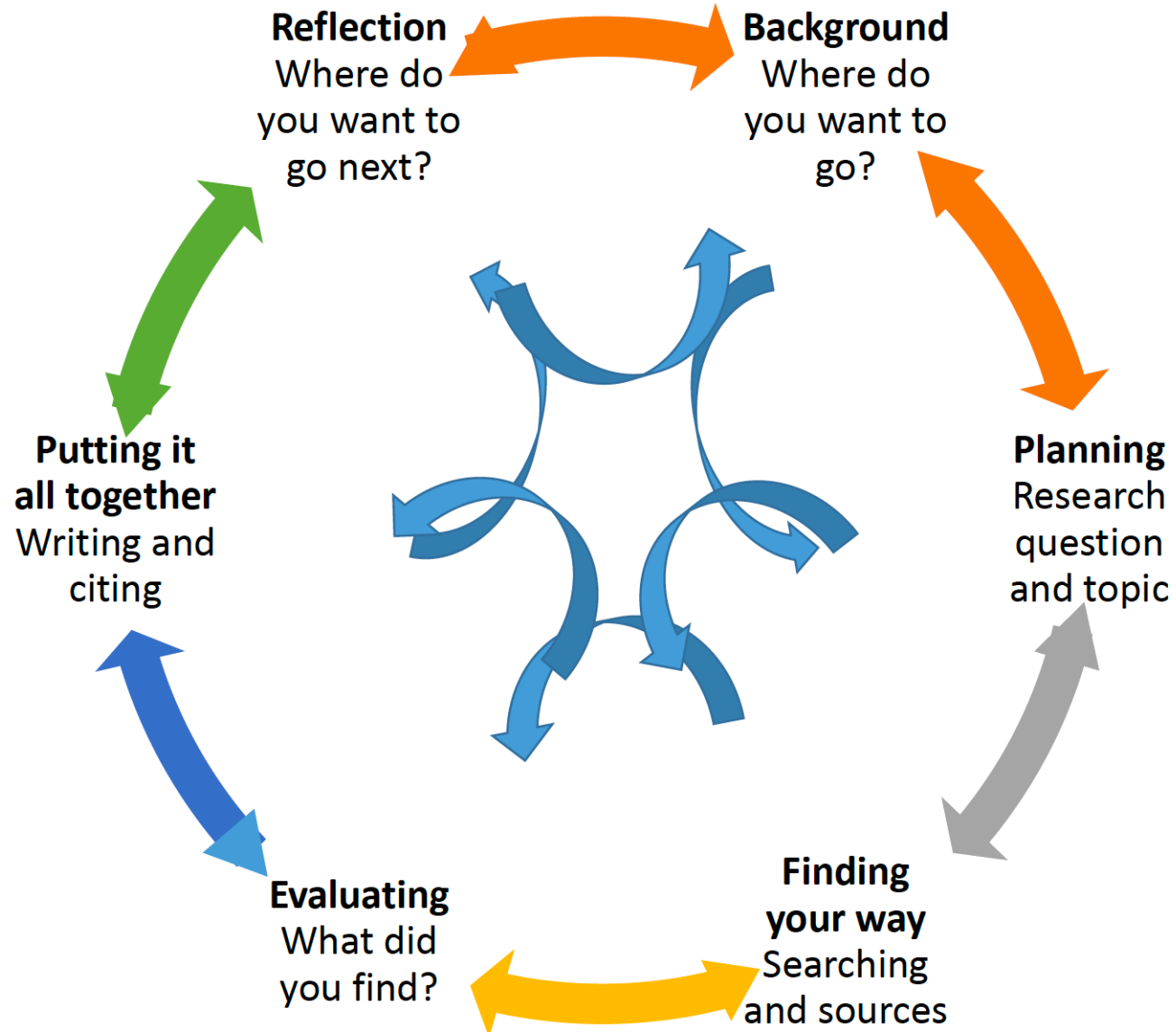
CSI Research Paper 1



Considering the Prompts

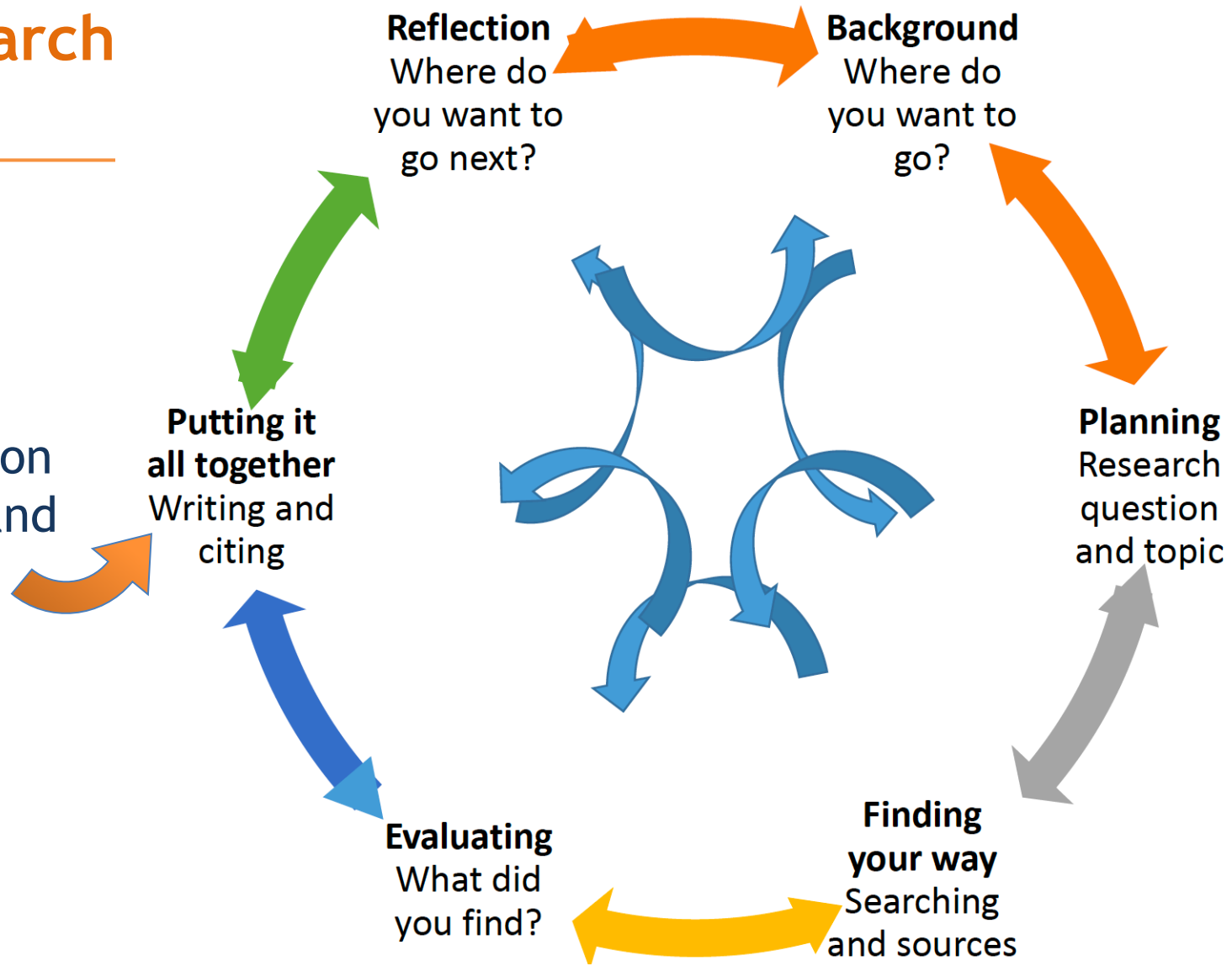
The Research Cycle

You may have already chosen a topic and started finding and evaluating evidence. This does not mean that you just need to write up your results and you are done! The process of writing may result in you revisiting earlier steps in the cycle.



The Research Cycle

Let's zoom in on the "Writing and citing" part.



Structure of the CSI Essay

Introduction

Background

Body paragraph 1

Body paragraph 2

Body paragraph 3, etc.

Conclusion

The Introductory Paragraph

Hook/Statement of topic

Background: Your case/social group

Stakes/Importance

Roadmap: Social elements involved

Thesis Statement

Activity 1 Review your topic and the prompt

- Think about a social group you are interested in researching and/or to which you have a personal connection.
- Is the social group one that can be clearly defined (Who) and bounded by historical time (When), place (Where), and some event/phenomenon (What)?
- Jot down a few words and phrases about that social group and why you find it interesting.

CSI Research Paper 1 Prompts

Write a 1500-word secondary research paper based on ONE of the following prompts:

- Is social structure constraining or enabling? Anchor your paper in a particular social group and context, case study, etc.
- What part of our behavior and beliefs, if any, is truly our own? Anchor your paper in a particular case study or population.

CSI Research Paper 1 Prompts

To answer these questions effectively, we will have to:

- Name the social factors that affect individual behavior, beliefs, or agency.
- Explain how these factors work to create these effects using evidence concerning the social group you've identified.

- Identify Key Elements in a Case:
- Analysis of Sample Introductory Paragraphs

Activity 2 Identify key elements in your case

In the social group you've chosen as your case:

- identify the social factors that enable or constrain individuals (prompt 1).

OR

- identify the social factors that account for the extent of individual agency they can exercise (prompt 2).

Let's practice by analyzing some introductory paragraphs of sample papers...

Identify key elements in Sample Introduction 1

In recent years, veganism has gained significant traction in mainstream culture. One sign of the times: a quick search in YouTube today for vegan recipes yields nearly four million videos, of which a growing number are posted by creators who dedicate their entire channels to promoting veganism. This begs the question: why are so many people becoming vegan? Even more importantly: why do we eat what we eat? This paper explores the role that social forces play in food consumption and the extent to which individuals exercise personal agency in their food choices. I will first explain the forces that influence food consumption, focusing on socioeconomic forces for the sake of brevity. I will then discuss the recent emergent vegan movement and examine whether individuals who adopt veganism truly exercise personal agency in their decision. My argument will be that although individuals possess the capacity to reconstruct their eating behavior and exercise some level of agency in that decision, they ultimately exist within an inescapable system of social controls that shape their dietary habits.

Identify key elements in Sample Introduction 2

A social structure can be characterised as “various social institutions that pattern the behaviour of people in society” as well as “the arrangement of relationships between individuals and groups that make up that society” (Paul, 2017). In this paper, I examine the social position of literate Malay women living in the Riau Sultanate during the 19th century. As constituents of a patriarchal society prescribed by gender roles of orthodox Islam and the Malay feudal order, they were constrained by limited political power, visibility and influence in intellectual discourse. However, Hijjas has observed that through the gendered literary conventions of Riau society at the time, these women were able to challenge male social hegemony through the poetic *sya’ir* they authored, which subverted the gender roles predominant in their society (Hijjas, 2011). Ultimately, however, I will argue that social structure’s influence is relative and that its effects are premised upon the nature of the social group in question and the historical context they occupied. In the case of the women-authors of Riau, the intersection of various historical forces ultimately entrenched the social structures that undermined their ability to enhance their agency beyond the world of popular fiction they constructed for themselves.

Activity 2 Identify key elements in your case

In the social group you've chosen as your case:

- identify the social factors that enable or constrain individuals (prompt 1).

OR

- identify the social factors that account for the extent of individual agency they can exercise (prompt 2).

You can try considering your case in terms of PESTLE aspects:

- Political; Economic; Social; Technological; Legal; Environmental



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- Getting Started with Your Paper:
- Creating an Outline for Your Introduction

Outlining your introduction - An Example

Outline a “working intro” for your paper. Incorporate the elements of a good introductory paragraph (topic, social case, importance/sociological frame, roadmap, main argument).

- What is the context of the group you’ve chosen?
- What are social forces or elements at work in this context?
- What is the relationship between individual agency and social forces/social structures in the case?

I’ll share what I did and then, in a moment, you can try it out and share your work with a tutor or a classmate.



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- ▶ A Word about Using Evidence in Support of an Argument

Overview

QUOTING	PARAPHRASING	SUMMARISING
Using an author's words in “ “	Putting an author's ideas in your own words	Summarising an author's ideas in your own words
Putting an author's last name and year of publication before or after <i>their words</i> and including a full reference to the source in your reference list (citing)	Putting an author's last name and year of publication before or after and including a full reference to the source in your reference list (citing)	Putting an author's last name and year of publication before or after and including a full reference to the source in your reference list (citing)
Putting the page number in the citation		
Keeping the author's intended meaning by using a sensible snippet of their words	Changing an author's words without changing their intended meaning or adding something they didn't mean	

Paraphrasing

A successful paraphrase has 2 main characteristics:

- Uses different grammar, i.e. sentence structure, verb voice, affirmative/negative, parts of speech
- Uses different words, i.e. synonyms

In addition, you need to make sure:

- Your paraphrase has the same meaning as the original
- You do not add your own ideas

Paraphrasing

ORIGINAL: *Although the instructor was considered difficult by many students, she was very popular.*

1. *Change voice (passive to active)*

- Although many students considered the instructor difficult, she was very popular.

2. *Word substitution*

- Even though quite a few students thought the teacher was tough, she was well-liked.

3. *Change connecting words*

- Quite a few students thought the teacher was tough, but she was still well-liked.

Next Steps: Continuing the Research Cycle

- Use the scholarly databases introduced during your CSI Library session
- **Search terms:**
 - Use specific terms you identified to describe social forces
 - Combine with terms related to your case's social group
- **Narrow your scope:**
 - Use 5 W questions or PESTLE elements to narrow topic
- Read Prof. Anju Paul's [CSI guide](#), especially the **sample paper**, available on Writers' Centre [Resources](#) page!

Reminders

- This is not a philosophy paper about free will and its limits, but rather an exploration of how social forces work in a specific case
- Use quotation sandwiches; emphasis on how and why evidence chosen supports your argument.
- Write a conclusion where you:
 - Offer a more fully elaborated statement of your argument
 - Explain the significance of this claim to the broader conversation about the topic and how we might apply it practically
 - Suggest areas for further research on this issue.



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Q&A, Mini-Consultations

CSI: From Evidence to Argument - Q & A

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