

FREE RESEARCH GUIDE 2026

The Ultimate AI Research Toolkit for Students & Researchers

5 AI tools to supercharge your research workflow

+ step-by-step Paperguide mastery guide

Paperguide

Consensus

Elicit

Scite

ResearchRabbit

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■ Introduction — Why AI for Research?

Research has never been more demanding — or more exciting. With millions of academic papers published every year, finding the right sources, synthesizing information, and writing clearly can feel overwhelming. **That's where AI research tools come in.**

The best AI tools don't replace your thinking — they amplify it. They help you search smarter, read faster, cite accurately, and write with more confidence. In this guide, we've handpicked **5 AI tools** that every serious student and researcher should know about in 2026.

200M+ Academic papers searchable with AI	10x Faster literature review process	5 AI tools covered in this guide	Free Plans available for all tools
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Each tool in this guide offers a free plan so you can start immediately. Our top recommendation is **Paperguide** — a comprehensive platform that combines search, reading, citation management, and AI writing assistance in one seamless workflow. You'll find a detailed step-by-step mastery guide for Paperguide starting on page 11.

■ Pro Tip

Get Paperguide free at paperguide.ai/?ref=quangbui213 and use code **RESEARCH** for 30% OFF the Pro plan.

■ Paperguide — Your #1 AI Research Assistant

The all-in-one platform built for serious researchers

01

Paperguide

All-in-one AI research platform

★★★★★

Free / \$12/mo (30% OFF with code RESEARCH)

Paperguide is the most comprehensive AI research tool available today. It gives you access to 200M+ academic papers, an intelligent Literature Review Agent, PDF reading with AI chat, plagiarism checking, and an AI writer — all in one platform. Whether you're writing a thesis, conducting a systematic review, or exploring a new field, Paperguide handles the heavy lifting so you can focus on your ideas.

- ✓ Search 200M+ academic papers with natural language queries
- ✓ AI-powered Literature Review Agent — generates full reviews automatically
- ✓ Chat with any PDF using contextual AI understanding
- ✓ Unlimited reference manager with smart organization
- ✓ Built-in plagiarism checker for academic integrity
- ✓ AI Writer for drafting sections, abstracts, and summaries

Try it free: paperguide.ai/?ref=quangbui213

What makes Paperguide stand out?

Feature	Paperguide	Other Tools
Paper Database	200M+ papers	10–50M papers
Literature Review AI	Full automation	Manual or partial
PDF Chat	Unlimited	Limited pages
Reference Manager	Built-in	Separate tool needed
Plagiarism Check	Included	Extra cost
AI Writer	Included	Not available

■ Consensus — Search Papers with AI

02

Consensus

AI-powered academic search engine

★★★★■

Free / \$9.99/mo (Pro)

Consensus uses AI to search and synthesize findings from peer-reviewed research. Instead of returning a list of papers, it extracts the actual conclusions and gives you a direct answer to your research question — with citations. It's perfect for quickly understanding what the scientific consensus is on any topic.

- ✓ Ask research questions in plain English
- ✓ AI extracts key findings from thousands of papers
- ✓ 'Consensus Meter' shows % of papers that agree/disagree
- ✓ Filters by study type: RCTs, meta-analyses, reviews
- ✓ Export citations directly to reference managers
- ✓ Copilot feature for deeper research synthesis

Try it free: consensus.app

Best use cases for Consensus:

- Finding the current scientific consensus on a research question
- Quickly screening dozens of papers before deep reading
- Fact-checking claims with peer-reviewed evidence
- Getting an overview of a new research area you're unfamiliar with

■ Pro Tip

Combine Consensus with Paperguide: use Consensus to identify key papers, then import them into Paperguide's reference manager for deep reading and citation.

■ Elicit — Automate Literature Reviews

03

Elicit

AI research assistant for systematic reviews

★★★★■

Free (5,000 credits/mo) / \$10/mo

Elicit is an AI research assistant that automates the most time-consuming parts of a literature review. It can find relevant papers, extract key data from abstracts, summarize findings in structured tables, and help you identify gaps in the research — turning a week-long task into a few hours.

- ✓ Automated paper search across 125M+ papers
- ✓ Extract structured data from papers into tables
- ✓ Summarize abstracts with custom extraction fields
- ✓ Identify research gaps and contradictions
- ✓ Generate literature review outlines automatically
- ✓ Export to CSV, Excel, or citation managers

Try it free: elicit.com

How Elicit accelerates your workflow:

Step	Without Elicit	With Elicit
1. Find papers	Hours of database searching	Minutes — AI searches automatically
2. Screen abstracts	Read each one manually	AI extracts key info into a table
3. Extract data	Manual spreadsheet entry	Auto-populated extraction table
4. Synthesize findings	Write from scratch	AI generates structured summary

■ Scite — Smart Citations & Evidence

04

Scite

Citation analysis with context



Free (limited) / \$10/mo

Scite goes beyond traditional citation counts — it tells you HOW a paper has been cited. Did other researchers support, contradict, or simply mention it? This citation context is invaluable for evaluating the credibility of sources and understanding how findings have held up over time in the scientific community.

- ✓ Smart citation analysis: supporting vs. contrasting citations
- ✓ Search 1.2 billion citation statements
- ✓ Scite Assistant: AI chat over any research topic
- ✓ Reference check — verify if your citations are well-supported
- ✓ Custom dashboards to track citation trends
- ✓ Browser extension for citation context on any page

Try it free: scite.ai

Understanding citation types in Scite:

Type	What it means	When to use
Supporting	Paper A confirms findings of Paper B	Strengthen your argument
Contrasting	Paper A disputes findings of Paper B	Address counterarguments
Mentioning	Paper A references Paper B neutrally	Background/context citations

■ Pro Tip

Before submitting a paper, run your key references through Scite to ensure they haven't been significantly contradicted by newer research.

■ ResearchRabbit — Discover Connected Papers

05

ResearchRabbit

Visual paper discovery network



100% Free

ResearchRabbit maps the citation network of academic papers visually, helping you discover related work you might never have found through keyword search alone. Add a few seed papers and watch ResearchRabbit build an interactive map of the entire research landscape — showing you what papers cite them, what they cite, and what other researchers in the space are reading.

- ✓ Visual citation network maps for any paper collection
- ✓ Discover earlier foundational and newer follow-up papers
- ✓ 100% free — no paid tier
- ✓ Personalized recommendations based on your library
- ✓ Zotero integration for seamless reference management
- ✓ Email alerts for new papers matching your interests

Try it free: researchrabbitapp.com

ResearchRabbit workflow:

1

Add seed papers

Upload or search for 2–3 key papers you already know are relevant to your topic.

2

Explore the map

ResearchRabbit shows you a visual network of related papers — click any node to preview.

3

Add promising papers

Add interesting papers to your collection to expand the network further.

4

Export to Paperguide

Export your curated list to Paperguide for deep reading, chat, and citation management.

■ Tool Comparison at a Glance

Feature	Paperguide	Consensus	Elicit	Scite	ResearchRabbit
Paper Database	200M+	200M+	125M+	1.2B citations	Semantic Scholar
AI Search	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Literature Review	Full AI agent	Partial	Automated	✗	✗
PDF Chat	✓ Unlimited	✗	✗	✗	✗
Reference Manager	✓ Built-in	✗	CSV export	✗	Zotero sync
Citation Analysis	Basic	Basic	✗	Deep analysis	Visual network
AI Writer	✓	✗	Outline only	✗	✗
Plagiarism Check	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Free Plan	✓ Generous	✓ 20 searches/day	✓ 5k credits	✓ Limited	✓ Fully free
Best For	All-in-one	Quick consensus	Lit reviews	Citation verify	Discovery

Our verdict: Paperguide is the clear winner for researchers who want one tool that does everything. Use it alongside ResearchRabbit for discovery and Scite for citation verification to build an unbeatable research workflow.

■ Mastering Paperguide: Step-by-Step Guide

From sign-up to publishing-ready research in one workflow

1

Create Your Free Account

Go to paperguide.ai/?ref=quangbui213 and sign up for free. No credit card required. You get unlimited AI searches and access to 200M+ papers immediately. For 30% OFF the Pro plan, use code RESEARCH at checkout.

2

Start Your First AI Search

Click 'AI Search' and type your research question in plain English — e.g., 'What are the effects of sleep deprivation on cognitive performance?' Paperguide returns ranked papers with AI-generated summaries of key findings.

3

Build Your Reference Library

Click the '+' button on any paper to add it to your library. Organize papers into collections by project, topic, or chapter. Paperguide automatically extracts metadata (title, authors, DOI, abstract) so you never have to type it manually.

4

Chat with PDFs

Upload any PDF or open a paper from your library, then click 'Chat with PDF'. Ask questions like 'What methodology did they use?' or 'Summarize the key findings' — Paperguide responds with cited answers from within the document.

5

Run the Literature Review Agent

Click 'Literature Review' and enter your research question. The AI agent searches your library and the web, identifies themes, synthesizes findings, and writes a structured literature review draft in minutes — with all citations included.

6

Use the AI Writer

Open the AI Writer to draft specific sections: abstract, introduction, methodology, discussion. Provide key points and the AI generates fluent academic prose. Always review and edit the output to add your own analysis and voice.

7**Check for Plagiarism**

Before submitting, run the Plagiarism Checker on your draft. Paperguide highlights any passages that are too similar to existing sources and suggests rewording — protecting your academic integrity.

8**Export Your Citations**

Go to your reference library and click 'Export'. Choose from APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard, Vancouver, and 7,000+ other citation styles. Export as BibTeX for LaTeX or directly to Word/Google Docs format.

■ Advanced Tips & Research Workflow

Power-user strategies to get 10x more from your AI tools



The 'Research Sandwich' Workflow

Start with **ResearchRabbit** to discover papers → import the best ones into **Paperguide** for deep reading and library building → use **Consensus** to verify key claims → check citations with **Scite** before writing. This four-tool workflow covers discovery, reading, synthesis, and verification.



Write Better Paperguide Search Queries

Instead of keyword searches, ask full research questions: 'Does intermittent fasting improve insulin sensitivity in type 2 diabetics?' vs. 'intermittent fasting diabetes'. The AI understands intent, not just keywords, so natural language works better.



Build a Living Literature Review

Create a Paperguide collection for your thesis topic and add papers continuously. The Literature Review Agent can re-run on your growing library to update your review draft — keeping it current as new research emerges.



Master the PDF Chat Feature

Ask structured questions when chatting with papers: 'What are the limitations of this study?', 'How does this compare to [other paper]?', 'List all statistical methods used', 'What are the implications for practice?'. You'll extract insights in minutes that would take 30+ minutes to find manually.



Use AI Writer as a First Draft Tool

Never stare at a blank page. Give the AI Writer bullet points of what you want to say and let it generate a first draft. Then rewrite in your voice, add your analysis, and cite specific evidence. This 'draft-then-refine' approach is 3x faster than writing from scratch.



Set Up Elicit Extraction Templates

In Elicit, create custom extraction fields for your systematic review: 'Sample size', 'Study design', 'Primary outcome', 'Limitations'. Apply this template to all your papers to auto-populate a structured evidence table — the foundation of any systematic review.

■ Conclusion & Next Steps

The AI research revolution is here — and the researchers who embrace these tools early will have a significant advantage. The five tools in this guide represent the best of what's available in 2026, covering every stage of the research workflow from discovery to writing.

Our recommendation is to start with **Paperguide** as your central research hub and add the other tools as specialized companions. The combination is powerful, and most of these tools are free to start.

Your Action Plan:

Today	Sign up for Paperguide free at paperguide.ai/?ref=quangbui213
Day 2	Add your first 10 papers to your research library
Day 3	Try the Literature Review Agent on your current research question
Day 4	Sign up for ResearchRabbit and map the citation network of your topic
Day 5	Use Consensus to verify your key claims with peer-reviewed evidence
Week 2	Run your draft through Paperguide's Plagiarism Checker before submission

Ready to transform your research?

Get Paperguide Pro 30% OFF with code **RESEARCH**

paperguide.ai/?ref=quangbui213

This guide was prepared by coreluxreview.com — your source for honest AI tool reviews and research productivity tips.