

ENGL 403 - Final Project
Components Due on various dates. See calendar.
Final Submission 5/10/13 by 11:59pm

What is this final project about?

Your task is to choose a relevant research question to write about that relates to children's literature. Yes, that is a vague description. The reason is simple: Say you're a nursing student taking this course as an elective for your Junior/Senior courses. You may want to write an essay called "Reading to the sick: How children's literature improves morale among terminally ill children." Your friend who is an Education major might prefer to write a paper called "How *Corduroy* and *Peter Pan* present the concept of 'Judgment' to school children."

I don't want to limit what you can write about. I want you to really think about children's literature and then choose a topic that is relevant to you and your studies/life/thoughts, etc. There are a few rules, but really I want you to choose a topic that will bring you closer to children's literature and allow you the freedom to write a research paper that you enjoy.

As a reminder from the Syllabus:

Final Project [45% of your final grade]

Due Friday, 5/10 by 11:59pm. No late projects will be accepted. eCampus access closes at Midnight on 5/11.

This assignment will be an in-depth research project (8-10 pages) using a topic you will develop, the books we read in this course and other books of your choice (if you like). There will be several graded components of this assignment and they will add up to be 45% of your final grade. You will need to complete each component on time so you do not feel rushed as you write the paper. Full details of this assignment will be available on Monday, 3/11 so that you have time to consider ideas for the project before the first part of the assignment is due on 4/12. I cannot accept any late final projects, as I have to grade them and submit your final grade by 8am the following day.

Why is my grade divided into components?

I have found in my years of teaching that asking students to break up the project into sections actually helps them feel less pressured at the last minute. Be honest, if I said – "Hey, write this paper and turn it in by the last day of class" you wouldn't start until the last minute and you'd feel stressed about finishing. With my method, you write your topic... Then write your extended outline (prospectus) and by then the paper is almost done – it's a full shell that just needs more thought, more discussion, to be complete. After you write the prospectus, you start writing the paper itself using my notes to help you do well.

You submit a draft to me so that I can help you do even better than you were doing when you submitted that draft. THEN, finally, you turn in your full project. This way, you've been working on it continuously for a month and you have no reason to rush at the end.

What is the timeline for the components?

Remember to keep track of the course on your calendar!! All components are due by 11:59pm on the day listed. Your **Topic** is due **4.12**. I will grade and send notes on your topic immediately after the deadline passes, so when you wake up on 11.15 you will be able to begin your prospectus at your leisure. Your **Prospectus** is due **4.19**. Your **Draft** is due **5.1**, and your **Final Submission** is due **5.10.13**.

Fine, fine, fine... But what are the INSTRUCTIONS for all the components?

I thought you'd never ask:

1. Final Project TOPIC (Due 4.12.13 by 11:59pm) [50 pts. toward final grade]

Think about what you've been discussing in our discussion boards and with your friends, family or in your own mind. Think about children's literature and what it might mean to you. Choose a topic that suits your studies, your life, your work, your ideals. You can literally choose ANY topic about children's literature so long as you follow these guidelines (which also serve as the grading rubric for this portion of your project): [20 pts] *Choose a topic that is not too narrow, but not too broad.*

For example: The topic "How children's literature inspires children" is far too large, far too much to discuss in one research paper. And the topic "Pinocchio's suspenders as indicators of his change from wooden to real boy" is far too narrow. Think of ideas like "How Dr. Seuss inspires children to be active in society" or "*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as a retelling of the New Testament." Put your brain to work and come up with a topic you'll enjoy.

[15 pts] *Write a paragraph explaining WHY you chose the topic.*

Simple enough. Why this topic? What do you hope to accomplish?

[15 pts] *Use proper spelling and grammar.*

2. Final Project PROSPECTUS (Due 4.19.13 by 11:59pm) [100 pts. toward final grade]

A prospectus (in this class, at least) is a preliminary statement for a paper. It has two purposes - first, to get you to think about your paper before the night before it is due, and second, to let me see what you have in mind so I can help you develop the question you want to ask, and direct you to some resources. The prospectus is brief – 1 or 2 pages – and should contain the following elements (grading rubric):

[10 pts] *Remind me of your topic.*

[20 pts] *List at least 5 questions your research paper will attempt to answer.*

These questions will be linked to your topic. They will be detailed and focused on specific points that address your topic and give details about it.

[25 pts] *Thesis Statement.*

The thesis is the most important part of your research project. It defines what you seek to prove. Good theses come from good questions, poor theses come from unclear questions. A great thesis statement should clearly state what your research paper is trying to prove.

[35 pts] *Preliminary Bibliography*

The preliminary bibliography is exactly what it sounds like. You will list at least 6 academic sources you might be able to use in the final paper. You do not have to annotate these items, simply list them in proper MLA format.

[10 pts] *Use proper spelling and grammar.*

NOTE: The final paper may deviate from the prospectus. This often happens (although, if you want to do a completely new topic, you will need my approval). Sometimes, the question you think you can ask turns out to not be a good one, or not be answerable, or answerable only with a doctoral dissertation, or vague, or uninteresting. You wouldn't know any of this if you started the paper the day before its due. A prospectus allows some second thought, which is also a good idea in writing a paper.

3. Final Project DRAFT (Due 5.1.13 by 11:59pm) [50 pts. toward final grade]

You will submit a draft of what you've written so far. You should be getting close to having the full paper written since it's due 2 weeks from the time the draft is due. Your draft should include title page, any parts of the essay you've written and your Works Cited for what you've written so far. Here's the grading rubric:

[20 pts] *Components all included (title page, some work on paper, Works Cited).*

[20 pts] *Proper use of MLA Style.*

[10 pts] *Proper spelling and grammar.*

4. Final Project FINAL SUBMISSION (Due 5.10.13 by 11:59pm) [250 pts. toward final grade]

Here's the grading rubric for the final submission:

[30 pts] *Use of proper spelling and grammar.*

[50 pts] *Use of proper MLA Style throughout (see sample MLA paper for help).*

[40 pts] *Use of proper MLA Citation throughout (see power point & MLA sample paper for help)*

[10 pts] *Clearly stated thesis.*

[80 pts] *Concise argument that stays on topic throughout the paper.*

[20 pts] *Paper is 8-10 pages in length, double spaced in 12pt Times New Roman font.*

[20 pts] *Well-developed conclusion that draws the paper back to the original thesis.*