**Real World Project**

One of the things you'll find about being in college is how important questions are, especially big questions that don't have easy answers. The questions you choose from for this project are probably all being discussed in one course or another, but they are also big issues being discussed outside of academia.

For the project, choose one of the following to work with:

* What is the importance of **critical race theory**?
* What purpose does a **mask mandate** have?
* How much do we need to be concerned about **climate change**?
* What is behind the emphasis on **STEM education**?

Your overall goal for the project is to be able to provide the best answer you can for the question. You'll do this in three parts:

A **Background** that explains what the subject is and, briefly, what is being said about it. You and your readers need to know what it is and what it's about before you start discussing views on it. Key here is using objective sources for information.

Your **Analysis** will bring in different views, different answers that people who think differently are giving for the question. You'll purposefully use biased sources for this part, to examine their arguments. You'll look for strong claims and for holes in the arguments as well as ways they appeal to logic, credibility, and emotion.

Finally, the **Response** is where you will make your case for what you think the best answer is to the question by synthesizing what the different views present.

I have purposefully worded the questions to allow for broad answers and not overly simple ones. Asking about the importance, the purpose, the concern, and the emphasis allows for answers on different sides and goes deeper into the issue (better than simply asking if something should or should not be taught or done).

I encourage you to pick a question you know you can go into with an open mind. It will be tough for you if you don't.

**Part 1/Background**

The first segment of the project provides a foundation for answering the question by first explaining what the subject matter is behind the question. It has you further practicing being able to find good sources of information, explaining in a way that promotes a basic understanding of the subject, and being objective when you explain something controversial.

For the question you are working with, provide information on the subject.

Write **400-500 words** that explain what the boldfaced term is and briefly introduce the debate regarding the question.

You need to pull information from **at least three sources** that seem to provide an unbiased explanation of the bolded term. What does the term mean? Give a little history of it, perhaps. How far back does it go and when did it become mainstream recently? What are people saying about it? Be careful here not to go into the debate too much.

Think about what adult readers probably already know. For example, you don’t need to explain what a mask is, but you need to explain what the mask mandate has referred to over the last year or so. Think about what will be a good **foundation of knowledge** for them going into the next part of the project where you look more closely at different views on the question itself.

DO NOT use a dictionary definition. Nothing says junior high writer more than the words “According to Dictionary.com,….” Anyone can look up a dictionary definition.

You can use Wikipedia as one of your sources, but **use only one encyclopedia kind of source,** if that. And stay away from public post sites like About.com.

Give **just enough but not too much** information or detail, and watch that you don’t use technical terms or jargon without explaining those.

You may use no more than two quotes, and neither can be over 25 words long.

The rest needs to be in your own words.

You’ll use [MLA](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html) or [APA](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html) citation format for this (your choice). Click either one to go to the Purdue OWL and use their resource for citation.

**This draft is worth 150 points. You get full points for composing a background that**

1. **uses at least three sources,**
2. **gives information on the subject,**
3. **is at least 400 words,**
4. **and is turned in on time.**

**Is first person appropriate?**

Probably not. This background isn’t about what you think (yet). Be neutral and objective in how you explain, like you did for Project 1, so your readers know you will try to give them a full and fair treatment of the question throughout the project.

**How much of the background should be about the issues or debates involved?**

Try to keep that to at most a third of what you write. You’ll get into the debates in the next part of the project, and you don’t want to be repetitive or risk not sounding objective.

**Why 400 words?**

There are books that could be written on these subjects, so 400 words forces you to select good information and be clear and concise. It’s enough to give readers a good foundation of knowledge.

**What will come before the background and what comes after it in the project?**

Your introduction will be the first thing in your finished project, where you will tell readers why the question is important and give it an interesting, engaging context (like a recent situation or development or statistics). After the background is the analysis of ways different sources with different views have answered the question, how they are trying to persuade their readers to think about the subject.

**Part 2/Analysis**

The second segment of the project has you researching the question by looking at answers that come from different (often political) perspectives, so that you are able to read for bias and consider different/opposing views at the same time. It also builds your critical thinking skills about what you read and how it is written.

**In 750-900 words, examine three articles that focus on addressing your question. Point out how the writing shows bias and appeals to emotion, credibility, and logic in the way it makes its points.**

Use the **three sources provided on the next page** for your question. **Summarize briefly** their answers, identifying the author and title of each in your writing as you use information from that source. Use your own wording, not quotes.

Then **show** **readers how bias comes out** in the way the sources criticize or support their views. **Rhetorically analyze** their claims: Look for ways they use reasoning, appeals to credibility, and emotion to create an impression on their readers. You may use brief quotes, but only as examples to help explain where you see bias or rhetorical moves the article makes. The clear majority of what you write for the analysis should be your own words.

Your purpose is to point out to your readers good points and weaker ones made by the different views as well as how the authors try to influence readers to see things their way. Keep your own opinion on the subject and question out of the analysis. Your opinion should be about how you see the authors arguing. Above all be fair.

**This draft is worth 250 points. You get full points for composing an analysis that**

1. **uses the three sources,**
2. **attempts to summarize and analyze those sources,**
3. **is at least 750 words,**
4. **and is turned in on time.**

**How much should be summary?**

Summaries of the overall claim(s) each source makes should be brief, probably no more than 75 words each.

**How should you organize?**

It makes sense to analyze each source one at a time, but feel free to analyze them together where you see things that can easily be compared (for example, if they present a fact differently or say something that addresses what the other said). You can choose the order you discuss them as well.

**How much and what should be analyzed?**

That could be different for each source depending on what you notice going on in the writing. It’s a good idea to give the bulk of your analysis to the two opposing sources. Don’t try to pack everything you want to say about a source into one paragraph.

**Can you state your own opinion on the subject?**

No, not here. That will come out in the next (and last) part of the project. For the analysis, your opinion is focused only on how you see the sources making their arguments.

For the **critical race theory** question use

this [New York Post source](https://nypost.com/2021/05/06/what-critical-race-theory-is-really-about/), this [Raw Story source](https://www.rawstory.com/this-is-what-opponents-of-critical-race-theory-don-t-want-you-to-know/), and this [PBS source](https://nhpbs.org/raceinamerica/?resource=4180).

For the **mask mandate** question use

this [Nature source](https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01394-0), this [Fox News source](https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/tucker-carlson-new-mask-guidelines-politics-control), and this [Atlanta Journal-Constitution source](https://www.ajc.com/education/get-schooled-blog/opinion-as-mother-of-young-children-i-beg-cobb-to-mandate-masks/YY2CZ3HHXFDT3OPMANYEN57WCQ/).

For the **climate change** question use

this [Politico source](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/08/09/climate-change-scientists-report-disastrous-502799), this [Live Science source](https://www.livescience.com/12-years-to-stop-climate-change.html), and this [Forbes Magazine source](https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelshellenberger/2019/11/25/why-everything-they-say-about-climate-change-is-wrong/?sh=6a9326a12d6a).

For the **STEM education** question use

this [Hays source](https://social.hays.com/2018/02/26/young-people-stem/), this [University of San Diego source](https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/steam-education-in-schools/), and this [Albertnet source](https://www.albertnet.us/2019/10/stop-pushing-stem.html).

**Part 3/Response**

Now that you know more about the subject of your question and more about issues around it, you are in a good position to offer your own answer. Specifically, this final part of the project is where you synthesize points from the different views to make an argument for an answer that works toward a compromise.

**Compose your own answer to the question incorporating good points made from the different sides.**

Write **600-750 words** responding to the question.

Do not just pick one of the views you analyzed and repeat what it said. **Synthesize (combine) points from the different views**—the two opposite ones and the more neutral one—along with your own view to develop an answer you believe could act as a compromise between competing answers. **Keep quoting to no more than 100 words total.**

Think of your readers as in the middle or leaning toward one view or another, not fully convinced of one of the arguments you analyzed. Try to **influencehow readers see the subject and question** rather than convert them from a strongly held belief (trying to completely change someone’s view takes a lot more than 750 words).

Do a little more research if you would like, but make sure you add the source(s) to your **bibliography at the end**. Your bibliography needs to include the three sources you used for background and the three used for analysis. **NOTE: The bibliography does not count toward the 600-750 words.**

**Use what you have learned about strong arguments** and weaker ones. Think about what you noticed about making claims and supporting them from the evaluation segment of Project 1 and the analysis part of Project 2. Use that knowledge to explain your own points well, being cautious to avoid too much appeal to emotion and too little convincing support for your thoughts.

**This draft is worth 200 points. You get full points for composing an analysis that**

1. **answers the question,**
2. **uses points made by different views,**
3. **is at least 600 words,**
4. **and is turned in on time.**

**Why can’t you just pick one side to promote?**

Part of the challenge to this argument-making is compromising. Look around us and see how many hard lines have been drawn that divide people on serious issues. Let your response blur that line and bring different people together.

**Can you use more good points from one source than from another?**

Certainly. But be careful that you don’t dismiss the other view. Show you are being fair and trying to compose a compromising answer by acknowledging the stronger points made by the other arguments.

**Why the limit on quotes?**

This response is about what you think. Use quotes only to support your own thoughts in your own words.

**What style of writing is best?**

Use a serious and even-tempered tone and style. Don’t make it too sales-pitchy, but also don’t sound so academic that it doesn’t reach public readers.

**How should you do the bibliography?**

First, remember that the list of sources does not count toward the word count for the project. Use either MLA or APA (your choice) and put the sources in correct bibliographic citation format accordingly.