

Module 4 Final Assessment: Research Proposal and Planning

Purpose

In module 3, students were given a research question to use as a starting place for source selection. In module 4, students will reverse, seeking to create a variety of research questions, narrow it to a single question of individual interest, evaluate and revise the question, and then hypothetically consider a research plan in light of that inquiry (stopping short of actually finding, analyzing, and evaluating sources in connection). This assessment provides students the necessary practice for topic-to-question generation, which will be the start of The College Board's Tasks 1 and 2 processes. It will also give students practice in narrowing the scope of their questions and consideration for the next steps (students will act upon the next steps in subsequent modules and do so in the high-stakes Tasks themselves).

In the Classroom: Set-up

This is an individual assignment, though much of the discussion will happen in a full group setting before the beginning of this assessment. Before the assignment, students should have already deeply engaged with the following sources:

- Selections from Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels's Communist Manifesto
- Selections from Upton Sinclair's The Jungle
- Film, Fritz Lang's Metropolis (1927)
- Poem, W.H. Auden's "Unknown Citizen"
- "Impact of workplace displacement during a natural disaster on computer performance metrics: A 2-year interrupted time series analysis" published by the IOS Press (August 2021)

These sources mimic the kinds of 'stimulus materials' students will receive from The College Board for Task 2 and in Part B of the end-of-course exam. Students will make a note of and discuss themes that come from the intersection of the sources. These themes then become a springboard for research question formulation.

What To Do

Students will create research questions and then select, evaluate, and revise their individual questions based on techniques learned in the module. This research question will then form the basis for the requirements of this assessment, enumerated below.

Assignment Requirements:

Students will create hypothetical Formal Proposals and Research plans for the research question of their choosing, evaluated and revised in light of connection to the module's provided stimulus materials. Students will create well-written and properly-formatted documents (please refer to teacher directions regarding which official format to follow), which will include—as organized—the following:

Research Question and Introduction

In 100-150 words, state your research question. Include a discussion of the stimulus materials broadly, particularly how your question is inspired by themes that arise between the sources. Then, reflect on what is at stake in answering your research question by considering the intended audience (who or what gains from solving the question), the broader relevance, and what can be gained from an answer.

Research Plan

- **Lens:** in 50-100 words, discuss the lens you would use to pursue this research question and justify your choice (in other words, why would that lens be a good one to pursue for your question? What would you expect to gain from applying that lens specifically?)
- **Perspectives:** in 100-150 words, consider the kinds of perspectives you would expect to find on this issue (make a bit of projection); you may consider a hypothesis here and then also reflect on what potential problems might exist, what alternatives might be available or worth considering, or where issues of disagreement might arise.
- **Personal Bias:** in around 50 words, consider your own bias on the question—what values do you hold as a person and a researcher that might contribute to how you approach this question? What can you set aside to ensure you objectively approach your research question?
- **Secondary Questions:** in a bulleted list, create 3-5 additional research questions that derive from your overall question—think about questions that can help lead you to areas of inquiry that might provide you more perspectives as you search for sources related to the inquiry.
- **Search Terms:** create a list of at minimum five search terms or phrases that you would use to begin finding sources related to your inquiry (consider evaluating them in light of the knowledge of database and internet searching, Boolean logic, etc.). Then, in around 50 words, reflect on where you would best find information related to your inquiry (i.e., what kinds of sources—scientific journals, observations of live experiences, journalistic or media works, art pieces, etc.). Make sure to justify why those kinds of sources would best relate to your inquiry.

Stimulus Material

In a simulation of Task 2, students will select one of the provided materials to use as part of their research for their inquiry. Students should select the material that best connects to the line of reasoning in their chosen topic and will include a 250-word annotation of the material, addressing:

- The main argument, idea, or thesis of the work or source selection
- The line of reasoning, identified claims, and evidence provided in support of the main idea or thesis
- The effectiveness of the evidence and contribution to the overall research question, including the rationale for its purposeful use, type of document and relation to the question, authority, and credibility

For Teachers:

Teachers may also choose to have students complete a structured peer review so that they can practice providing peer feedback on question relevance and question evaluation and also provide additional sub-topic questions, search terms, and feedback regarding the analysis and evaluation of the use of the stimulus materials concerning inquiry questions.