

Progression 3: Research Essay

Proposal due **Tuesday 3/27**

Exploratory draft due **Thursday 4/5**

Formal draft due **Thursday 4/12**

Final draft due **Sunday 4/22**

Your task in this progression is to write an extensive, well-researched critical essay around a **virtual reality exhibit**. Your exhibit can be a virtual reality film, game, or experience. I have provided a list of possible virtual reality exhibits on our Google Site, but you are more than welcome (and even encouraged) to choose something not on the list. It is also possible to choose an exhibit that cannot be seen with a Google Cardboard, and might even be rather loosely related to virtual reality, but you must run that by me first.

This essay should **not be about evaluation** – about telling us whether the exhibit is good or bad, worth watching or not; assume that by analyzing it, you’re making a case for the **exhibit’s value** from the beginning. Like the Progression 1 essay, this essay must deepen our understanding of how the exhibit works, what it communicates, and why it matters. And like the Progression 2 essay, it needs to do so by incorporating multiple sources. The added level of difficulty here is that you must conduct your own research to uncover sources relevant to your project.

You will gather **7-9 sources** that will illuminate your exhibit; these should be a mix of informational and intellectual sources. You will choose a research focus that will help you decide what to look for, based on your own interests and the kind of research the exhibit seems to demand. Most likely, your focus will be one of the following types:

1. The virtual reality exhibit speaks to a problem within a larger **cultural/historical** context. How does the exhibit evoke, comment on, and perhaps critique what is/was going on in the world at the time? This might involve looking into historical sources, news articles, op-eds, etc. In this case, you are using your virtual reality exhibit to explore a conversation beyond virtual reality, but still interpreting a problem rooted in the intersection of virtual reality and that conversation.
2. The virtual reality exhibit speaks to a problem within its **genre**. How does that exhibit embody, alter, and otherwise show an awareness of the conventions of virtual reality, art, or technology? This might involve looking into virtual reality history, essays by critics, academic articles, etc. In this case, you are using your virtual reality exhibit to explore an interpretive problem around virtual reality itself.

Progression Goals:

1. Select an **exhibit** that lends itself to dynamic interpretation and raises questions that a research paper can address
2. Ask a **research question** inspired by your exhibit that does not have an obvious answer
3. Answer that question with a strong **claim**
4. **Research** and find seven to nine sources of various types, for various purposes
5. Use **evidence** from these sources and your exhibit convincingly to prove your claim
6. Maintain a coherent **structure** throughout the essay
7. Establish a clear **motive** in your introduction.
8. Expand on the **implications** of your argument in your conclusion
9. Document sources using the **MLA** in-text citation method and include a works cited
10. Write an intriguing **introduction** and a thoughtful **conclusion**

Length:

Word limit: 2500-3000 w.