

## Research Assignment English 1.2

### **Purpose:**

- To help shape you into a self-reliant learner through critical thinking and analysis.
- To make you a more mature, academic writer.

### **Requirements:**

- 10-11 pages, not counting Works Cited page
- Double spaced 12-point font
- Typed in MLA format (no cover page)
- Minimum of 5 academic sources, 10 max.

### **Deadlines:**

- Thesis Statement due **Monday of Week 12**
- Simple Outline of thesis and topic sentences **Monday of Week 14**
- Completed Rough Draft due on **Monday of Week 15**
- Peer Review due by **Friday of Week 15**
- Final draft due on **Friday of Week 16**

Like every formal research paper, you will:

1. gather information.
2. analyze, synthesize, and evaluate what you've gathered to support an original thesis statement you will argue.
3. write an accurately documented paper based on your analysis and evaluation.

These steps will be easier if you break each of them into separate smaller steps. Your grade for the research paper will depend on your attention to these steps.

### **I recommend you set up a research log**

- Create a Research Log using a document on a computer or paper and pen.
- Record each step in your search for information. Enter the date, search strategies used, the gist of the information you found, citation information for the sources you found, and exactly where you filed that information—for example, the file or folder name.
- Note the next step you think you should take when you return to your research.
- Decide when you're ready to move away from gathering material to organizing it and writing about it.

### Choose a Topic:

1. You must choose one of the amendments to the U.S. Constitution to research. To do that, review the materials we've been studying and summarize the amendment you choose here:

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2. Choose a current controversy that deals with the amendment you chose. This topic must be something fresh and not beaten to death by years of debate. It must be complex and not frivolous. This means you cannot choose any of the following topics:

gun rights, prayer in schools, abortion, flag burning, creationism, evolution, plastic surgery, steroid abuse in sports, sex in the media, vaccinations, the causes of autism, legalization of gay marriage, home schooling, the existence of God, or whether sports stars get paid too much.

If you choose one of these topics you will get an F for not meeting the requirements of the assignment.

You might be wondering what you *can* write about. There's a lot. You need to use critical thinking to find a research-worthy topic. Here are some resources for you to explore:

<https://www.oyez.org>

<http://www.scotusblog.com>

### More about Topics:

- Your topic should be of an academic nature and be worth researching. Avoid trivial topics that prevent you from analyzing and thinking critically (i.e., exercise, fashion, hobbies, sports).
- Use prewriting strategies to generate ideas. In addition to whatever prewriting method you like doing, it is also strongly recommended that you use *questioning* to supplement your prewriting. Questioning will help you think of directions to take your essay in and will help you develop sufficiently.
- Whatever you do, don't sit and stare at a blank sheet of paper. Instead, talk to your small group about possible topics and browse the library databases. These are good ways of getting the gears moving and helping you come up with a research topic.

### Locate and evaluate sources

Use the library databases available on the library's web page (<http://eggsberg.edu/library/>) to find academic sources. You can also use the Internet, but avoid non-academic sites. You must use at least 5 sources total, and they need to be academic sources from the library

databases or actual library books or journals (not magazines). You can use more than 5 sources, but remember that material from outside sources **should not be more than 15%** of your paper. *Your* ideas are what I'm interested in. Use the sources to strengthen your own arguments and suppositions. You definitely should not have more than 10 sources.

When you find a document that you think might be relevant to your research, print or email the article and write down all of the citation information (including the date you accessed the website) that you will need to make your Works Cited page and in case you want to find the document again.

### **Take notes**

As you read documents, books, or articles, take notes in a notebook or on cards. Write down ways in which the material relates to your research questions or thesis. Continue asking and answering questions about the material and about connections with your own paper. Evaluate the sources with a critical eye. Keep your notes separate from your own essay so that you don't accidentally copy ideas from the outside sources into your research paper as your own work. Write down the exact reason you chose to print or download each source. Underline or highlight anything that you think will be useful to you.

### **Draft a preliminary thesis statement**

It helps to have a thesis statement in mind when you start writing your first draft, but you don't have to feel stuck with it. As you write, you may want to change your thesis, and that's ok. However, writing without any thesis in mind may make your paper lack a focus. Remember that your final essay needs to have an arguable thesis statement in the introduction. **You must get approval from the teacher for your thesis by Week 12.**

### **Outline**

After you have done your research, getting started on the writing may seem overwhelming. A good way to organize all of your information is to make an outline. It can be very detailed or just a rough sketch of paragraph topics. You will submit a simple outline for grading.

### **Only now are you ready to start writing your research paper.**

To do this, carefully follow these steps as you have been taught to do. It should take you several weeks of intensive writing and revising. Working steadily and making weekly progress is the best approach to such a huge task. Since your time is short, you should *set*

*goals of maybe a page per day and two pages each weekend day.* Part of your grade for the research paper will be based on the work you do over the next few weeks, not just the final product. Save drafts as separate documents. I may ask to see them.

- Write a draft
- Document carefully
- Revise the paper
- Edit and proofread

### **Plagiarism**

Any plagiarism, no matter how slight or unintentional, will result in a grade of zero (F) for the research paper. Document carefully. Here are some actions that constitute plagiarism.

- Copying word for word from anywhere or neglecting to enclose the words in quotation marks and cite the source—even if it's only a few words.
- Summarizing or paraphrasing someone else's words or ideas and failing to cite the source.
- Reproducing the organization or structure of another person's work and failing to cite it.
- Any other act in which someone presents someone else's intellectual material as his own, whether it involves text, graphics, code, data, charts, etc.
- Using your own essay from a different class without the permission of both teachers.

### **Scoring of the research paper:**

• Thesis Statement approved on time	5 points
• Outline submitted on time	5 points
• Rough draft submitted on time	10 points
• Topic complexity	10 points
• MLA formatting	10 points
• Effective use of methods of development	10 points
• Academic writing style	20 points
• Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling	20 points
• Appropriate use of integrated sources	30 points
• Development of the topic into a convincing argument	30 points
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150 points	