**Project Three: The Sustained Research Project**

(Estimated Reading Time: 5 minutes, 45 seconds)

**Beginning to Write a Major Research Project**

This essay is an argumentative paper that contains research; you will have a clearly defined, analytic, arguable, and focused thesis that you will use to persuade the reader of something, using evidence from both your in-class and outside sources.

In a research paper, you are not simply stringing together your sources: your sources should be having a conversation of sorts, relating to each other in a meaningful way. This is where analysis comes in, too—make sure to **analyze** the points that your source makes and how those sources and points relate to your thesis and overall focus/persuasion. You will probably have to summarize and/or paraphrase some of your sources—remember, you must cite every summary and paraphrase; failure to do so is plagiarism. Thus, thorough, analytic exploration of your sources and their relation to your thesis/main focus/persuasion is essential to this essay.

From your Inquiry Memo and Brooke Notes projects, you should have a pretty firm idea about your research topic. When you begin to develop a thesis statement from this topic, make sure you consider if the issue is worth discussing/arguing and if you are taking a definitive stance on a subject. From there, you will need to develop your main arguments. Because this is an **argumentative** research paper, you should include clear main arguments in your paper. Most likely, you will back up your arguments using information from your sources. Using information in this way makes you sound like a more informed, and therefore credible, writer—think **ethos**! Further, it is also important to address your counterarguments; that is, what can be said against your argument? Failure to include counterarguments will make your paper weaker, as informed writers will know what will be said against their topics. The main **purpose** of this paper is to persuade your audience to come to your way of thinking about the topic at hand; providing clear arguments and counterarguments, and sources to back these up, will help you to achieve that purpose.

Remember your **audience** at all times, too—what will your audience need to know for the paper to “make sense”? What background information should you provide? What kind of tone should you adopt in the paper? What expectations will the audience have about you and your writing? Knowing the answers to these questions will help you formulate a more effective piece of writing.

**How Do I Organize a Research Project?**

First, remember our conversation (and the document on Files) about writing introductions and conclusions. Below, then, are some ideas to help you begin to put your main ideas together.

Typically, an audience will better receive any general argument or statement you make if you “back it up” with content from a different source that in some way affirms or challenges your point.

* Evidence that affirms your point validates the reasoning behind that argument and thus adds credibility to you as a writer.
* Evidence that challenges your point demonstrates that you have considered all angles of your argument and are therefore well informed, thus adding credibility to you as a writer.

Such credible “weight” is essential to all academic writing but is especially important in verifying the research you have done for this project.

It would be helpful to write an outline before you begin drafting your body paragraphs. Make a list of…

* The main points you want to make
* Your main arguments
* Your main counterarguments
* Your rebuttals to these counterarguments

Then, think about what would be the best way to organize your body paragraphs:

* Put your most important argument first, and then your second most important argument, etc.
  + Or, instead, put them in reverse order—your least important argument first and then end up with your most powerful argument
* Consider if you want to include a counterargument after every main argument
  + Or, instead, address all the counterarguments at the end of the paper

Notice that there are several ways to organize an argumentative research paper; choose an option that makes most rhetorical sense to YOUR topic.

**Requirements**

* The final essay must be 8-10 pages, double-spaced, in an appropriate citation format, such as MLA or APA, with one-inch margins and 12 pt. Times New Roman Font.
* A Works Cited page that lists **ALL of the sources in your paper** must be attached to your paper. Essentially you will be including the sources you explored in your Brooke Notes project; if you choose to add sources, consider how scholarly, reliable, and reputable they are so that they help, not hinder, the credibility and effectiveness of your argument.
* You are required to cite **four outside-of-class sources** in this essay (these should be scholarly, significant, and non-fiction sources (i.e. sources from your Brooke Notes assignment))). If you choose to use more sources than this, consider how scholarly and appropriate they are….
* You are **required** to cite **one fieldwork source**: a survey or an interview(s). We’ll review fieldwork and practice writing questions as we move through this unit. If you are having difficulty doing fieldwork because of our current online situation, please let me know.
* You are required to cite **one in-class source** (i.e. a source that we read as a class from the readings on Canvas), as your paper must relate to popular culture in some manner.
* You must cite from EACH of your sources (citing, though, could include a paraphrase, summary, or direct quotation).
* If it would make rhetorical sense to your paper, it is acceptable to include a visual. Appropriate examples would be a photograph, diagram, or drawing. For instance, for your fieldwork, you may wish to put your survey results into a bar graph. Note that if you do use a graphic, only use one that makes sense to your topic, and do not include them to simply “take up room” in your paper. If you take a visual from another source, you must, of course, cite it.