

The 9th Grade English

Research Essay

Assignment – 2017

Due date: Tuesday, April 4th

**The Basics!**

Get ready to put on your detective hat! You will be writing a research paper on an unsolved mystery. Once you have selected a topic, you will be required to submit a prospectus, which must be approved by your teacher.

Your final essay will be 6 to 8 pages (at least 1500 words) in length and have a minimum of 4 subtopics.

Don’t get behind in the process! *There will be graded checks along the way…and sorry to say, no late work will be accepted! Please be aware that this is major assignment and is worth two (2) essay grades.*

Students must complete a minimum of 40 note cards from a minimum of 5 sources. I will give you a Ziploc bag in which you will keep all your note cards, source cards, concept map, outline and drafts. This packet will be handed in with your final draft.

Note cards and source cards must follow the format provided to you. In addition to class conference times, students may set up extra help times during study halls.

**Unit Essential Questions:**

* How do I follow standard methods of research?
* How is the library used to acquire print and electronic material to prepare and write a formal research paper?
* How is the actual paper produced?
* What is plagiarism?

**I. Task Definition & Quick Overview of the Process**

Questions:

* What are the main components of a research paper?
  + What are subtopics???
* How does a thesis statement guide research?

The Task

For this assignment, you will be choosing an unsolved mystery which may include: Atlantis, a lost civilization?; The Bermuda Triangle; Bigfoot; Crop Circles; Amelia Earhart; Easter Island; Jack the Ripper; The Loch Ness Monster; The Mary Celeste; Nazca Lines; Roswell, New Mexico; or Stonehenge.

Your task is to research one of the unsolved mysteries. Your paper will explain what facts are know, what theories have been presented about the topic, which theory is most widely supported, and also what aspects of the mystery remain unexplained.

**Overview of the Process**

* Choose an unsolved mystery or two. Google your topics to find out the basic details to determine which topic you would most like to pursue.
* Read about and research the facts of your chosen unsolved mystery.
* Think about what you learned. What will be the focus of your paper? What are your subtopics?
* Create a concept map – with at least 4 subtopics
  + After your introduction, you will divide your paper into at least 4 subtopics – and, you may have sub-subtopics!
  + Subtopics may include ideas such as (not in these words!): facts; theories; aspects of the mystery that remain unexplained; conclusion that focuses on most widely supported; etc.
* Write a prospectus detailing the focus on your paper

**Now that your Prospectus has been approved, here’s a quick overview of the rest of the process:**

* Create a ‘working thesis statement’
* Continue your research.
* Investigate the leading theories behind the mystery, including the most widely accepted theory (and explanations for each!)
* Gather research from a variety of sources including: EBSCOHost databases, print/books, acceptable sources from the Internet.
  + **At least 5 sources are required for your paper.**
  + Do you want to add a visual, a map, a graph in your paper? If it adds ‘value,’ use it! This will be an additional source to add to your Works Cited – note***: it cannot be counted as one of your 5 required sources!***
* Use note cards and source cards. Be sure to indicate which are facts, ideas, paraphrases, direct quotes to avoid plagiarism!
  + **40+ note cards will be checked during the note-taking process**
* Create your detailed outline.
* Start your draft…yes, type!
* Edit, revise, and maybe edit again! Make your paper *sparkle*.
* Submit a **final draft in MLA format (6-8 pages in length) plus a Works Cited - that is, at least 1500 words not including any charts, or the Works Cited**

*Please note:* While we may spend one to two days a week working on the essay, much of the work will be done outside of the classroom. All your work must be kept in a research folder (that has a pocket) that you will bring to class on work days. I will let you know which days are work days.

**II. Locate, Access, and Evaluate Sources**

Questions:

* Where do I find evidence to support my own research?
* How do I recognize a credible source?
* Why is it important to use a variety of electronic and print sources?

**Sources to Use**

* **EBSCOHost** – at least two+ (2) of the sources
* **Credible on-line sources** – may be two+ (2) sources
* **Book** – one+ (1) print source(s)

We have learned about how to use EBSCOHost already in school (see the class website). Visit your library for help on finding print or other online sources.

Remember: When you find sources on EBSCOHost, email the citation (in MLA) to yourself so it is properly formatted. For other sources, use the Owl at Purdue Online Writing Lab, or even Easy Bib, for proper format. HOWEVER, if the citation looks ‘odd’ it’s probably wrong – even if it comes from Easy Bib!

**III. Gather and Use Information**

Questions:

* How do note-taking strategies simplify the task and improve the paper?
* How can effective note taking prevent plagiarism?
* What are the rules for outlining?
* How can I organize my information in outline form?
* How can note taking create an effective paper?
* What is parenthetical (internal/ in-text) documentation and how do I use it?

Important Terms:

* Formal outline\*
* Informal outline\*
* Parenthetical (internal/in-text) documentation
* Paraphrase/indirect quotation
* Summarize
* Direct quotation
* Partial quotation (with ellipses)
* Plagiarism

At this point in your assignment, you should use your note cards to take notes. Refer to your concept map to make sure you stay focused. Maybe you need to make some changes based on the information you are now gathering!

Start your outline! An example will be provided.\*

Plagiarism? Just don’t do it!

Many new researchers commit plagiarism. According to Webster’s dictionary, **plagiarism is the act of stealing and passing off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: using (another's production) without crediting the source.** Plagiarism can be either the blatant copying of another’s work or it can be negligent plagiarism, which is done when a researcher does not cite his or her sources properly or fully.

**Even if you paraphrase information, you need to cite the original source of the IDEA.** We will discuss plagiarism in more detail in class. *Please note that all final papers will be scanned through a plagiarism checker.*

**IV. Synthesis – Putting it All Together**

Questions:

* What steps are required to draft a research paper?
* How do I edit my paper?
* What is the format of the research paper?

Now it is time to take your notes and put them into your outline (if you have not already done so) with the appropriate internal citation after each note. DO THE CITATION; it will save you lots of time later!

After your outline is complete, you should have a nice blueprint from which to draft your paper. GO AHEAD; start typing. You should add your analysis and thought into the paper without resorting to 1st or 2nd person point of view.  **As you type, don’t forget to use signal phrases and/or internal citations to give credit to the information which you’ve collected from outside sources.**

After you have a rough draft, it needs to be revised and edited. You **revise** when youchange/add/eliminate sections of text. You **edit** when you look for and change spelling/grammar/capitalization/punctuation mistakes. DO BOTH.

**V. Evaluation**

So, how will the paper be evaluated? Remember it is a “Research” paper so you will be evaluated on your research. This is not an opinion paper, so no personal commentary please!

Check to make sure your paper meets the following criteria:

* Follow the C-E-C format
* At least two quotes/pieces of research per body paragraph. Make sure you ‘vary’ your research within the paragraph. Try not to just use one source.
* At least 10 verifiable facts about your topic
* Mention and discuss at least 3 leading theories about your mystery and the reliability of each (based on research, not your opinion : )
* All evidence, information relates specifically to your thesis statement
* Includes a Works Cited page with at least 5 research sources (excluding charts, maps, etc.). Each of these sources is used in your paper.
* A variety of sources are used: at least 2+ from EBSCOHost; 2+ credible Internet sources; 1+ print/book.
* You may include a visual aid (which must be included in your Works Cited) in the format of a charts, map, graph, photograph.
* Use MLA format for all quotes, sources, paraphrased material, other format
* Use appropriate tone and style; varied vocabulary; varied sentence structure; proper grammar, punctuation, spelling
* Written in 3rd person
* Tenses!
  + Use present tense as the primary tense of your paper to state facts, to discuss your analysis, to discuss views of a particular author
  + Use past tense when referring to historical references
* Appropriate MLA pagination, spacing, margins
* Paper is typed in 12 pt Times New Roman
* Paper is 6-8 pages in length (excluding Works Cited) – that translate a minimum of 1500 words (excluding visual aids)
* Follow all other directions

**Note-taking techniques: Use Note Cards**

**While note taking, it is KEY that you gather all the necessary publication and documentation information you will need from each source.** YOU CANNOT USE **UNDOCUMENTED** INFORMATION FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES WITHIN YOUR PAPER!

**Notecards**

**A Note Card Note Taking Technique**

Note topic description Author’s name or title of source

Paraphrase or directly direct quote from the text you might want to use in your paper.

\*Only put one fact or quote per note card (this will help you organize your paper later).

\*Remember to use **“quotation marks”** around exact words borrowed from the author.

Page # number of card

Number of card from this source Page number where information was found

* Make sure only ONE note goes on each card!
* Suggestion: Use different colored cards/highlighters or ink for each source to keep them organized.
* **Write all works cited (publication information) on the source card**
* When you have all your notes are taken, use the brief note topic description on each note card to organize your notes.
* Remember your notes NEED to be a combination of paraphrasing and direct quotes. Make sure to indicate when exact words are taken from a text with “quotation marks.”

EXAMPLE of Note Card Note-Taking Model

Front of the card:

Childhood Ability Bort, Mark

Sallie Mae was considered by many in her youth to be a “prodigy who was able to manipulate colors even in her simple childish art work.”

Page 26 1

4 22

**Source Card # D-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Type of source: \_\_\_ journal \_\_\_\_\_\_ newspaper \_\_\_\_\_\_other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**1. Author (s) Name**

**Last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**First \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**First \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\* IF there are more than 3 authors, just list the first one and use “et al.” for the others in the citation.**

**2. Editor (s) Name - (if applicable):**

**Last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**First \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**First \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**3. “Title of Article”:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**4. Title of Journal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**5. Volume: Issue: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**6. (Date of Publication): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**7. Pages number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**8. *Name of Database*: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**9. Date of access: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**ONE NOTE PER NOTE CARD!**

\*Remember your notes NEED to be a combination of paraphrasing and direct quotes. Make sure to indicate when exact words are taken from a text with “quotation marks.”

When you’ve completed the revisions and editing and your paper *“sparkles,”* you are ready to publish (turn in) your final draft for a grade!

\*\*Turn in your final draft in your google folder and also a provide a printed copy.

Place the final copy in the Ziploc with your note cards, source cards, concept map, outline, drafts, editing sheets.\*\*

**Timeline and Important Deadlines**

M – 3/6 Introduce research paper

T – 3/7 Determine research topic

Begin research; develop research questions

F – 3/10 *Present Prospectus* (what are you writing about?)

Begin Concept Map

T – 3/14 *Check working thesis statement*

W – 3/15 *Check Concept Map, 3 source cards + 25+ note cards*

F – 3/17 *Check 2+ additional source cards + notecards – must have all sources*

*and at least 40+ note cards* *in total*

Teacher meetings

Begin outline

T – 3/21 *Detailed outline due*

Teacher meetings during the week

Begin typing your draft and Works Cited

Th - 3/23 *Check typed Works Cited*

T – 3/28 Peer edit #1 – Bring in typed copy of your draft. Edit and revise

Th – 3/30 Peer edit #2 – Bring in edited and revised copy of paper

**T – 4/4 Final essay and Works Cited due**

***\*\* Please note that each ‘check point’ is part of your process grade. Credit is only given if the assignment is 100% - no partial credit will be given.***

***No late papers will be accepted. If you are absent the day that the paper is due, you must still submit it online by class time in order to receive credit.\*\****

Overview of Assignment Expectations:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **General Format**   * Double Spaced * One inch margins * Typed (12pt. font, TNR or CN) * Headers on all pages (including WC) * Spacing between paragraphs | **MLA Citations**   * Sources cited match Works Cited Page (internal citations match first line of WC page entries) * At least 5 citations (one for each source) are used * Citations properly set up and used in paper * Information accurately paraphrased or directly quoted * All borrowed material is cited * Quotation marks around directly quoted material * Periods and commas properly placed inside quotation marks and outside internal citations * Ellipsis marks used if material omitted |
| **Page One of the Paper – Cover Page**   * Follow format discussed in class | **Works Cited Page**   * Works Cited information is on a separate page * Proper header at the top of the page * Works Cited title centered * Double spaced (page and entries) * 1st line of entries are flushed left; subsequent entries are indented * All entries are completed in proper format according to source type (order, spacing, punctuation, spelling, etc.) * Entries in ABC order * Minimum 5 sources used (at least one print source) and all are cited in the paper |
| **Content**   * Clear thesis statement in introduction paragraph * Pro/con format followed * Topic sentences used in each paragraph * Original thought included in the paper; not just a copy and pasting of borrowed information * Thesis restated in conclusion * Content of paper complete and detailed * Paper is well organized (transitions used) * Paper is 6-8 pages in length – a minimum of 1500 words | **Formal Writing Skills & Conventions**  **Watch for:**   * Fragment or run-ons * Sentence ending with prepositions * Contractions used * Slang or text messaging style used * Capitalization mistakes * Subject verbs agreement mistakes * Commonly misused words – used incorrectly * Use of 1st or 2nd person (keep 3rd person) * Incorrect punctuation of titles * Referencing the essay itself * Sentences that begin with “This quote”. * Author addressed improperly (First and last name used in first mention of author, and only the last name of the author in all subsequent sentences.) * Misuse of commas |