

Research Paper: Grading Rubric and Task Sheet

Task (300 points): Write an 8-10 page paper (double-spaced) on a current and compelling issue relating to your focused topic area (major). Try to find a local (the opposite of global) and/or narrow aspect of the issue, so you can situate your topic within a particular and current context. For example, rather than prayer in school, try prayer during after-school-sports activities in Boone County, Kentucky. Use 2009 MLA documentation standards. Your research should include a range of sources, including books, periodicals, scholarly journals, and credible Internet sources. Write your paper for a specific academic audience (e.g., your department, an academic journal, or an academic conference).

Grading Rubric

Argument

- The paper speaks to a current and relevant issue (kairos), responding thoroughly to a scholarly conversation and justifying the importance of its own argument.
- The paper contains a clear, arguable thesis supported by sufficient, relevant, and balanced reasons and evidence.
- The paper is persuasive and makes good use of ethical, logical, and emotional appeals as appropriate.
- The paper exhibits a thorough investigation of an approved and appropriately narrowed subject.
- The paper effectively incorporates a variety of credible sources and adequately and appropriately considers opposing arguments.

Organization

- The title is catchy and indicates the paper's subject and the position of the writer.
- The paper has an engaging introduction that frames and focuses the subject in a scholarly conversation, provides relevant background information, and states a specific thesis or question.
- The body of the paper is unified and coherent, developing the arguments in a logical order with strong transitions.
- The conclusion reminds the readers where they've been, reconnects them to the introduction, and provides a strong finish to the argument.
- The paper includes at least two non-text modes properly inserted and labeled.

Voice

- The voice is academic, authoritative, and formal but not sterile.
- The author's voice is strong and confident, dominating the voices of the sources.

Word Choice and Sentence Fluency

- Word choice is appropriate to the rhetorical situation and enlivens the prose.
- The diction is clear, concise, and precise.
- Sentences vary in length and structure, creating a flow that eases readability.
- Sentences avoid vague, wordy or obscure constructions.

Conventions

- The paper follows MLA formatting and citation conventions.
- Punctuation, grammar, spelling, and usage adhere to the highest standards of edited American English.

Research Portfolio: Activity Packet

Research Activity 1: Brainstorming and Creating Research Questions

PART ONE—Brainstorming (about 30 minutes):

1. Spend at least 10-15 minutes brainstorming potential topics for the Research Paper. You may want to list, cluster, or map your ideas.
2. After you brainstorm, choose one or possibly two of your favorite topics/subjects and map out some details. (As we did in class.)
3. Choose one of your maps from (2), and free-write about it--vomit--(either by hand or on the computer) for at least 10-15 minutes.
4. Turn brainstorming in with your portfolio.

PART TWO—Creating Research Questions (about 30 minutes):

CONTINUE brainstorming by creating research questions about your topic, using Booth, “From a Focused Topic to Questions” (a pptx on Blackboard). Make sure you write one question for the 11 bullets in the Booth excerpt. Highlight 2-4 questions that you think will yield the most interesting discussion. Bring ALL your questions to class.

Remember!! You want to be conducting preliminary research for your project even if you are not "settled" yet. Your preliminary research will help you settle on your topic/subject.

Research Activity 2: Literary Review and Annotated Bibliography 1

(approx. 6-8 hours—so budget your time! Note: This is graded for quality)

1. This assignment will help you gather sources for your Research Paper! Hoorah! See separate task sheet posted on blackboard.
2. Bring this finished, polished bibliography to your paper conference.
3. AFTER THIS IS GRADED AND RETURNED, INCLUDE THE GRADED PIECE IN YOUR PORTFOLIO.

Research Activity 3: Introduction and Outline

Tweak your literary review and write an introduction, including a strongly-worded thesis, then include an outline for the rest of the paper. (See class notes about outlines.)

Your introduction to your paper should include the following:

- 1) Front door approach
- 2) Summary of the Scholarly Conversation,
- 3) Your Response to the Scholarly Conversation, which is your thesis, and
- 4) Justification of Your Claim: tell readers why your response is critical to the scholarly conversation (and be thorough!!)

- Post on Blackboard before class for full credit.
- Turn in with your portfolio.

Research Activity 4: Write a Zero Draft as described by Trimble

1. Revise and polish your introduction

2. Then, using your outline as a guide, vomit the rest of your paper. Write everything you can think of—that means, if you’ve read your research, this zero draft will be—at the very least—4-6 pages, if not more.

3. Bring a copy to use in class.

Turn in with your portfolio.

Research Activity 5: Full Complete Draft (1-3 hours)

1. Write a complete draft including Works Cited page.

2. Post your complete draft on blackboard before class.

3. Use the attached portfolio cover sheet and turn in a hard copy of all work from the unit—stapled—at the beginning of class.

Research Activity 6: Mock Editorial Board—Substantive Issues

Respond to the members of your group as a reply on blackboard.

To get full credit for this peer review, you should thoroughly answer these questions. P.S. NO GRAMMAR.

1. Skim through the paper once to get a feel for the paper as a whole.

2. Thesis Statement: Restate the paper’s thesis statement. Now look at the conclusion, does the conclusion reiterate the thesis? How? Does it add a new dimension?

Look at the thesis again, (1) what is the specific claim? (2) What are the reasons supporting the claim? (3) What are the underlying assumptions?

For example:

1) Claim: “Reading books is a better way of educating children than ‘educational television’”

2) Reason: “because reading requires more cognitive skill than any type of television”

Please indicate any problems with the thesis (i.e., its reasons seem too obvious to warrant a thorough discussion, or the thesis doesn’t indicate a “so what,” etc.).

3) Assumption: whatever requires the most cognitive skills in children is the best way to educate them.

3. Evidence: Read the body of the paper and identify where the main points are.

4. Each main point should have a main claim and reason. Find these (sometimes it’s at the beginning, and sometimes it’s at the end of the main point). Is there STAR evidence to support each main point?

5. “So What? Who Cares?” Glance over the introduction and conclusion. Do these sections pose a “So what? Who cares?” Question? If so, do you feel that their “so what” is sufficient? Please offer your critique.

6. Incorporating Sources: Identify a few places where the writer incorporates outside sources in her or his paper. How could the writer more smoothly incorporate them?

Organization and Paragraph issues:

Organization

a. Compare the body paragraphs’ organization to the thesis and assess if the organization matches what the thesis promises (some theses are very specific about organization, others are not. The important thing is that the body paragraphs don’t do anything the thesis does not promise). If there’s a discrepancy between the thesis and the organization, write a suggestion to improve the problem.

b. Does the organization offer too many main points (usually 5 or more)? If so, consider ways these points can be combined. Write down your suggestions.

- c. Does the organization allow for a progression of ideas, or does each main point merely repeat the same argument over and over? Write any suggestions for improving the flow of information.
- d. Which main point do you think is the strongest? Does its position contribute to its emphasis, or does its position weaken its strength? Write three alternate ways the writer could organize the material and highlight the way you think works best.

Research Activity 7: Complete Scholarly Paper Due

1. Turn in a beautiful, revised, polished final draft of your scholarly paper.
2. Include copies of your work for the peer reviews (this is what you wrote to your cohorts)