

### Essay 3: The Research Paper

All research papers start out as a question. What is it you want to write about? Start out with general ideas. All research papers start generally as a question because the whole process is about narrowing down the topic as we will discuss in class.

Think about your topic and find out what other researchers are looking at in the same field. This will help to define an argument better, and it may influence your understanding of the topic. This is a good thing because it expands the mind, another reason why they require this course.

Something to keep in mind is what people already know about the field of research. Does your target audience, that means, the people who are reading this paper, will they know some of the terms used in this field? If not, it is a good idea to be ready to define several terms that your audience may not know. Other important questions are: what does audience know about my topic? What are researchers arguing/challenging? What are some biased opinions and how should I counteract those arguments?

This leads ultimately into the thesis, an argument based on the research you have found. Though there are plenty of topics to choose from, some limitations I would like are: 1) current topics, 2) researchable information that is not summarized and 3) something that can be written in 6-8 pages. The first limitation is important because things change. For example, in the 80s and 90s it would have been cutting-edge research to find out if AIDS was airborne. Researchers have since found this is no longer the case. Another example of this is gay marriage, a topic current during Obama's administration. However, this does not mean these cannot be current topics. New questions have since been posed, such as: why is there no cure for AIDS? Should we have gender neutral bathrooms to allow free space for all genders? Therefore, these topics can become renewed IF you find avenues that have NOT been DEFINED by researchers.

The list below is representative of the topics covered in class that you can certainly write about, but you are not limited to: how horror stories have become an essential appetite of people, how horrible things can happen in society, how horror/gothic stories are a set of conventions; issues of violence, fear of the unknown and the psychology of fear and terror. These could be formed into questions that lead to arguments surrounding the greater topics of this course.

Once you identify a topic, the next part of a research paper is to **write**. Fundamentally speaking, this is a sound move because you must get started right away. You may find your topic

difficult to write about, or too generalized in this process. One technique is to use the **KWL** technique, which will discuss in class. This stands for knowledge, what you want to learn and learned. Having completed the first two, one thing that you may realize is how well (or not so well) you know your topic. After having made a **KWL** chart, I suggest that you write out your thesis statement as a question and trying to answer it. Remember the job of a good thesis is to be concise and focused: **what you want to say** and **why you want to say it**.

After these first few steps, the research process can begin, which means you need to find sources. You will use several different kinds of resources: books, scholarly articles, journals, and website pages. Do not limit yourself solely to the **LACC** library as they may not have all that you are looking for. Go to other libraries especially the **LAPL** because it is such a vital resource for scholars, especially the **Central Library**. The librarians there can help you immensely including additional databases that may not have access to @ **LACC**.

If you really want to delve into the process, a few places to go to are the **LACC** library, the **Huntington Library** and university libraries like **USC** and **UCLA**. These places, alongside the **Central Library**, are some of the largest and most in-depth libraries in the nation as well as the world. Do not be afraid of, or be shy with librarians, they absolutely love to help students with research!

One other website you **MUST** look at is **worldcat.org** because it contains a database that displays several places that have certain books you might only find at **Universities**.

In writing this paper, remember what you're being graded on: **Thesis** (scope of argument), **Analysis** (how well you flush out reasons using the critical thinking process), **Evidence** (quality of sources, how you use them), **Clarity** (flow and correct use of paragraphs and transitions), **Language** (correct grammar and individualized academic voice) and **MLA Format** (how well the essay is formatted especially citing sources and the **Works Cited** page). This paper should be **6-8 pages** in length.

### Due dates

Check syllabus dates and follow accordingly

### Minimum requirements for Essay 3

- Title (not title page) and correct **Works Cited** page in standard **MLA** format
- The paper must be 8-10 pages (excludes **Works Cited Page**)

- Standard MLA format: double space, 12-point font, Times New Roman, 1” margins, 0” Before and After set to 0”
- AT LEAST 1 book
- AT LEAST 3 scholarly articles (databases)
- AT LEAST 1 other citation (i.e. website, magazine, article)
- Thesis in intro and re-stated in conclusion
- Quote and/or paraphrase per body paragraph
- 3 drafts of the Research Paper
- MLA Works Cited (no annotations on final draft) Page