

Guidelines for Essay #4—Researched Argument Assignment

For this assignment, students will write a researched argument paper. This requires the citation of at least five scholarly sources, one of which can be a selection from *Rereading America*. The topic area needs to be inspired by our text. All sources must be reliable and scholarly, and they must be full articles or books, not simply a website or dictionary. The paper will use the MLA documentation style and have a Works Cited page. Parenthetical citations and a Works Cited page are essential elements of a research paper; if a paper is submitted without these required parts, it will not receive a passing grade. Please review the details in both the “Researching” (329-60) and the “MLA Papers” (363-432) sections of *A Writer’s Reference*. This assignment addresses all of the Course Outcomes listed on the syllabus.

Here are some stipulations:

- 1) Use an idea drawn from the research journal. In other words, the focus will be directly inspired by one of our assigned readings or one of our discussions. This connection has to be made clear in the paper.
- 2) The paper will incorporate discussion of one of the three areas of analysis regarding argument: assumptions/fallacies, evidence, or tone/voice, making specific reference to such area in the paper. Include the terminology. Use of the terminology will demonstrate understanding of the concept. (See D2L for handouts discussing these areas.)
- 3) The topic must be something arguable, since the paper presents a position on the topic. Recall our discussion of the segment from *A Writer’s Reference* regarding argument, especially the question “What’s at stake?” See pages 57-61. Also, the opening pages of the “Researching” section offer wonderful advice.
- 4) There are some topics so overdone they should be avoided for this assignment. These include: gun control, abortion, the paying of student athletes, the legalization of marijuana. If in doubt, feel free to ask me!
- 5) A list of suggested topics is posted on D2L. These are in keeping with the focus and intent of *Rereading America*. Please clear with me any topic not on this list.
- 6) This extends the research begun with the annotated bibliography assignment. In fact, the topic for this paper has to be the same topic researched for the bibliography.
- 7) It can be beneficial for two students to work together as research partners, to help each other through the various steps of this assignment. Of course, each student is conducting independent research; the topics chosen will not be the same. We will have a peer review day for this assignment. As with the narrative essays, a peer review sheet will be posted on D2L indicating necessary considerations for this assignment.

Keep in mind that the assignment asks students to:

- Consider personal experience, if applicable;
- Incorporate at least five scholarly sources, one of which can be our text;
- Provide supporting details;
- Consider what tone to convey;
- Feel free to use the first person perspective, since this is an opinion piece;
- Organize with Unity and Coherence in mind;
- Write a final essay of four-six pages (using standard spacing and 12-point font);
- Be sure to use correct in-text citation and Works Cited format.

For tips on the organization of the paper:

For information regarding the organization of the paper, refer to section A4 of *A Writer's Reference*. See especially pages 100-101. Under number 2 Draft, there is a suggested outline for an argument paper. This is a great resource for any student trying to figure out how to organize the whole paper!