

MODULE 4 ASSIGNMENT 1: EXPLORATORY ESSAY AND RESEARCH PROPOSAL

OVERVIEW

For Module 5 you will write an argument essay on a topic that interests you. That essay is many steps away, though. In Module 4 you will begin with exploration, preliminary research, and brainstorming.

Consider this assignment an anti-essay. For this essay, you aren't supposed to have a thesis, you won't write an introduction or a conclusion, and your body paragraphs won't be focused on supporting a main argument or claim.

Wait. What?

You heard me right. This paper is not about reporting on an idea or arguing a position. **This paper is about you satisfying a genuine curiosity using the research process.**

Your goal is to *explore*. Choose a topic you are genuinely interested in learning more about. Think of questions you want answered. Be curious. For this essay, you start by researching the answer to one question, and that question/answer should lead you to other questions. Follow them and see where they take you. Research is recursive. The knowledge of the answer to one question leads you to the next question.

In this essay you will narrate your research process, and explain what you learn and how it helps answer your research question.

You should spend approximately 6 hours on this assignment.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Pre-Write:** Start with the research questions you developed for Discussion 1: Research Brainstorming. That is it. This anti-essay does not require pre-writing. The essay is about exploring the idea.
2. **Write:**
 - List your initial research question(s).
 - Write out your process – exactly, and step-by-step. (Yes, you'll say: "The first thing I did to find information was to...")
 - Explain what you learned from each source you consulted and how the information connects to your research question.
 - Your initial research should lead you to more questions. Start following those and duplicate the process: ask the question, do more research, write about it. Ask good questions and pursue them until you run out of questions.

- Rather than writing a conclusion, end the essay with an argumentative thesis developed from the information you found on your exploratory journey. This thesis will become your working thesis for your Module 5 researched argument.

3. **Tips for Success:**

- Don't try to look for a thesis as you research. Simply ask and answer questions. Don't try to figure out where the research is taking you. Let your questions lead the way.
 - You must cite 7-8 sources in your text. Create a correctly formatted (MLA Style) Works Cited page that lists your cited sources.
 - At least three of your sources should be academic journal articles. You should use at least three different types of sources. Think back to your scavenger hunt activity. Your research should rely heavily on academic journal articles, but also consider magazines, news articles, podcasts, documentaries, government sources, and internet sites. Pay attention to the credibility of the sources you consult.
 - This essay should be approximately 1,300-1,500 words.
4. Please be sure to use correct MLA Style for your essay and to create an MLA Works Cited page. Need help with MLA? Please refer to the [CCCOOnline MLA Citation Toolkit](#), or consult the Purdue OWL for more information [on general MLA format](#) or how to create a correctly formatted [MLA Works Cited page](#).
5. Once your essay is written, revised, and proofread, you may submit it to the **Module 4 Assignment 1: Exploratory Essay and Research Proposal dropbox**.

See the *Course Schedule*, *Course Rubrics*, and *Grading and Evaluation* sections in the *Syllabus* module for due dates and grading information.