



INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR SYNTHESIS RESEARCH PAPER

So everyone hates research papers. Students hate them. Teachers hate them even more. They're a necessary evil we accept, or try to skate by with minimal effort. And they're boring. Or maybe they are not those things. Maybe those are the things we tell ourselves. If you have a growth mindset, maybe research papers are a chance to demonstrate our ability to synthesize knowledge gained from a variety of sources with our own experience and logic into something entirely new and interesting, something we actually mean and want to say.

I invite you to think of your paper in these terms. Select your topic *care-fully*. Make sure you care fully about it. Make sure you want to learn more about it. And, in the end, instead of just another dull task fulfilled dully, make this a paper you can be proud of. Don't try to skate by. Excel. Excelsior.

And please follow instructions – with care.

General Topic:

Much of your research will come from the selections in one chapter in the textbook *Everything's an Argument*. If you gave me the correct email address for you, I have already given you access to the file for the textbook on my Google Drive. First choose **ONE** of the following chapters from *Everything's an Argument*:

- 22. How Does Popular Culture Stereotype You? (pp. 479-567)
- 24. Why Worry about Food and Water? (pp. 657-731)
- 25. What Should "Diversity on Campus" Mean and Why? (pp. 732-815)
- 26. What Are You Working For? (pp. 816-885)
- 27. How Do We Define "Inequality" in American Society? (pp. 886-950)

Specific Topic:

Your research topic does not have to answer the question of the title of your selected chapter. You can make any reasonable argument related to that topic, as long as you can support your thesis with evidence from 4 of the selections within the chapter and additional sources.

Sources:

The following are *minimum* requirements for your sources:

- You must use at least **4** of the sources from the chapter you chose in *Everything's an Argument*:
- You must use at least **1** article/essay from Opposing Viewpoints (Gale) database.
- You must use at least **1** article/essay from a reliable internet source.

We will have lessons in class about the last two of the above requirements.

Requirements:

Your research paper must meet all of the following requirements:

- 800-1100 words (do not go over)
- *Perfect* MLA Format (each error results in a deduction of points)
- Typed in Times New Roman, size 12 (handwritten papers will not be accepted for either draft)
- Double-spaced (not 1.5 or 2.5)
- *At least* **6** sources used (see specifics above)
- Final draft **MUST** be submitted through Safe Assign *before* due date and time or final draft will be counted late (if you don't have internet access at home, you'll need to make other arrangements to do this).

Thesis:

Thesis must be specific and responsive to the specific argument you have chosen to make.

Website:

There is a new Research section in the top frame of my website with many helpful files. Use these valuable resources.

Outline:

A typed outline is required. See website for example. It is due the Wednesday after we get back from the break.

Grading

For the final draft, I will be using a standard holistic 9-point rubric that I use for timed writes. MLA errors will cause deductions to the converted 100-point scale grade.

Warning:

Computer excuses of any type (i.e. my computer crashed, my printer broke, my printer only prints in white, etc) will not be accepted, nor will other excuses. The district's late work policy will apply for both drafts.

Due Dates:

1. **Typed Outline with internal documentation** (minor grade) – due December 3 at beginning of class.
2. **TWO copies of 1st draft in MLA format** (minor grade) – due December 5 at beginning of class.
3. **Final draft in perfect MLA format and submitted to Safe Assign**(major grade) – due* December 15 at beginning of class

*+5 for turning it in on December 12

Rubric: *See rubric on back page.*

CCISD Honor Code

This Honor Code was developed by Clear Creek ISD high school students with the expressed intent to state that our Academic Integrity is being challenged in the face of high stakes testing and reports of periodic cheating. Therefore, it has become a moral imperative that our work ethic today will impact our future.

We believe the students of Clear Creek ISD subscribe to becoming self-directed learners and doing the best we can. Furthermore, we believe that academic honesty is respecting yourself and others, as well as claiming your own work.

We believe students are responsible for maintaining and supporting the academic integrity of the school by completing all assigned work, activities, and tests in an honorable process without engaging in cheating, fraud, plagiarism, or prohibitive electronic assistance. Through this effort, we will become trusted members of society and prepared for the workforce of the 21st Century.

We believe teachers are responsible for monitoring students during all assessments and holding students accountable for cheating. We believe that each class and teacher is only as strong as each individual's personal commitment to integrity, honor, and responsibility. Teachers are also encouraged to have faith in their student's success and for making sure the class is highly engaging.

We believe the measure of success of our school community is based on the success of our students so the consequences below shall serve as a deterrent to a violation of this Honor Code and Our Academic Integrity. These consequences will be listed in our Secondary Student Code of Conduct in addition to the In School Suspension consequence. As a result of clear and compelling evidence of student's cheating:

1. A student shall receive a "0" for the school work, and is subject to a "U" in conduct and disciplinary action (including ineligibility in the next contest/game).
2. There will be no retakes for students who cheat.
3. Students who are enrolled in advanced academic courses (Pre-AP/AP) will be immediately removed from the advanced academic course and placed in the next lower level class.
4. A student is not eligible for any final exam exemption.
5. A documented finding of academic dishonesty shall be reported on the student's college application.
6. Students in violation of the Honor Code shall be immediately removed from the National Honor Society, National Junior Honor Society and any other Honor Society that is an organized school event.

Synthesis Research Paper Rubric

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional flaws in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

- 9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 essays and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, skillful in their synthesis of sources, or impressive in their control of language.
- 8 Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** develop a position on one of the controversial topics. They support the position by successfully synthesizing at least six sources. The argument is convincing, the tone is unbiased, and the sources effectively support the student's position. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.
- 7 Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but are distinguished by more complete or more purposeful argumentation and synthesis of sources, or a more mature prose style.
- 6 Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** develop a position on one of the controversial topics. They synthesize at least six sources. The argument is generally convincing and unbiased. The sources generally support the student's position, but the argument is less developed or less cogent than the arguments of essays earning higher scores. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.
- 5 Essays earning a score of 5 develop a position on one of the controversial topics. They support the position by synthesizing at least six sources, including at least 3 for each side of the issue, but their arguments and their use of sources are somewhat limited, inconsistent, uneven, and may at times verge on being biased. The argument is generally clear, and the sources generally support the student's position, but the links between the sources and the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas adequately.
- 4 Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** develop a position on one of the controversial topics. They attempt to present an argument and support the position by synthesizing at least four sources, but may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify either their own argument or the sources they include. The tone may be biased and/or the argument may be unpersuasive. The link between the argument and the sources is weak. The prose of 4 essays may suggest immature control of writing.
- 3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less understanding of the sources, less success in developing their own position, or less control of writing.
- 2 Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in developing a position on one of the controversial topics. The topic may be too broad. The tone may be completely biased and/or the argument may be mostly unpersuasive. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays may misread the sources, fail to present an argument, or substitute a simpler task by merely responding to the topic tangentially or merely summarizing the sources. The prose of 2 essays often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.
- 1 Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2 but are especially simplistic, are weak in their control of writing, or do not cite even one source.