**Research Essay Assignment**

While undoubtedly you have written a research essay before, this is your opportunity to cut loose, pursue your interests, and investigate something that interests you. The world is your oyster! Literally no topic is off the table as long as you can create a mature, interesting, persuasive, and well-researched investigation of the problem or question.

This project has many components to it, and it is important that you pay attention to the various expectations and deadlines. Let’s dive in and see what you’re in for!

**Step 1: Know what the final product is going to be:**

1. You must have an approved research question
2. You must have research documented in the form of annotated bibliography entries and NoodleTools notecards
3. You must have an outline with a defensible and sophisticated thesis statement
4. You must have an essay that is 5-7 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman, size 12 font with 1 inch margins all the way around.
	1. This essay will cite a minimum of five credible and scholarly sources in support of your argument
	2. Please note that 4 ½ pages does not equal 5 pages.
	3. You must adhere to all MLA 8 formatting guidelines, and you must have a works cited page at the end (this does not factor into the 5-7 pages of writing you will have).
		1. Consult chapter 9 of *The Curious Writer*  or OWL Purdue for more information regarding MLA format.

**Step 2: Develop a research question 2/10/2020**

This question must be researchable and neither too broad nor too narrow. Make sure to get your research question approved before moving on to the next steps of the essay.

**Step 3: Research! 2/21/2020**

Use GJHS and CMU databases to find at least five relevant, scholarly sources. Make sure you’re selecting sources that are relevant to your topic; if a source isn’t relevant to your question within the first few paragraphs, it’s probably not useful to you. As you’re conducting your research, make sure to capture your sources and relevant quotes in Noodle Tools. You’ll also want to make annotated bibliography entries for those sources you are going to use.

**Step 4: Develop a thesis statement**

This is the central argument of your essay. What point are you trying to prove with all of this research?

**Step 5: Determine the structure of your argument**

I am going to ask you to commit to one of the three argument structures we have studied in class: 6-part oration, Rogerian, or Toulmin. This choice must not be taken lightly as it will set the course for how your argument will come together and which points will be emphasized. You will have to justify this choice to me in the final draft.

**Step 6: Prepare an outline 3/6/2020**

This will look differently in accordance with the argument structure you have chosen. However, regardless of structure selection, an outline is supposed to categorize your main points and provide a roadmap for organizing your paragraphs. This will help you circumvent potential writers block later.

**Step 7: Write a rough draft**

Use your outline as a guide, but provide far more detail to your major points. Include thorough analysis of your quotes and clear articulation of your argument.

**Step 8: Did you cite your sources in the text? In the Works Cited?**

Go back, look again. Already did it? Go back and look again. Paraphrased some information? Still cite it. Don’t get nailed for plagiarism. Just don’t. Chapter 9 of *The Curious Writer* is a great resource if you’re confused.

**Step 9: Revise, polish, refine**

Seek out feedback from your instructor and your peers. Look over your own work with a critical eye. Read the essay aloud and honestly assess how it sounds.

**Step 10: Submit your final draft 4/1/2020**

You did it! The only thing that’s missing is your final submission. The final draft is due by 11:59 pm on Wednesday, April 1. You may submit a hard copy in class on the due date or electronically.