Assignment 3

**Objectives**

* Apply the steps for writing a research paper
* Apply strategies to achieve emphasis in writing
* Apply the rules of spelling to correct spelling issues in writing samples
* Describe MLA style and when it should be used

**Assignment Overview**

This writing assignment asks students to compose an argumentative research paper.

**Deliverables**

* An argumentative research paper, at least 10 pages in length, containing at least eight sources cited using MLA style.
* Follow MLA formatting to list your name, course name, and date on the top left of the first page and your last name and page number in the header on the top right of all pages (explore the [Purdue OWL (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/) website for examples and review the MLA checklist in Step 7).
* 'Works Cited' page(s) are not included in the page requirements.
* Your assignment will be graded according to the *[Lumerit Course Grading Rubric](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1I9ua0L7Ylgq28QNckuyPM7xznukIgWUKMEu1hGigNMQ/edit?usp=sharing" \t "_blank)*[(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1I9ua0L7Ylgq28QNckuyPM7xznukIgWUKMEu1hGigNMQ/edit?usp=sharing" \t "_blank). Please reference this rubric when completing each assignment.

**TOPIC GUIDELINES**

Any debatable topic is acceptable for this assignment. Due to the length requirements, complex topics such as gun control, immigration law, abortion rights, and capital punishment are not recommended. If these issues interest you, find a specific instance or aspect of the topic to research. For example, you might want explore how other cities and states responded to the recent laws concerning immigration rights in Arizona; such a project is more focused (and more interesting) than addressing immigration rights in general.

Consider addressing a topic that is personally important to you, including issues related to health, beauty, family life, and career decisions. The more relevant your topic is to your priorities, the more likely you are to write in an engaging, compelling way.

Expand your research for the assignment using various sources for research, such as the following:

* [Public Library of Science (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.plos.org/)
* [Digital Public Library of America (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://dp.la/)
* [WorldCat (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.worldcat.org/)
* [ScienceOpen (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.scienceopen.com/)
* [Social Science Network (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.ssrn.com/en/)
* [nytimes.com (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/index.html)
* [ontheissues.org (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://ontheissues.org/default.htm)
* [procon.org (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.procon.org/)

**Step 1:** **Expand your research**

Using the Internet and/or library resources, collect sources until you have accumulated **at least**:

* 3 sources from non-scholarly periodicals such as *Time, Newsweek*, or *The Economist*
* 3 sources from scholarly sources (use your library's academic databases)
* 3 sources from the general Web (blogs, Web sites, etc.)

You need a minimum of 8 sources for this assignment, but it is recommended that you gather more while preparing so you can switch out sources if you need to. Keep a record of all the articles you consider by providing a citation and a link to each one.

**Step 2: Make notes on at least eight sources**

In this step of this assignment, make notes detailing the main ideas from at least eight sources that you plan to use in your research paper. Be sure to include the citation for the source with your notes and clearly indicate when you are paraphrasing and when you are quoting.

**Step 3:** **Prewrite**

Develop an outline for your research paper. Develop a comprehensive plan for your paper that allows you to incorporate at least eight sources in a substantial way. That is, you need to add 3-5 sentences discussing each of the sources in your draft. Do not simply add paragraphs; work on the flow of ideas so that a coherent relationship exists between your ideas and those of all your sources.

The outline does not need to be formal in the sense of having symmetrical, numbered parts. Your goal is to have a sense of the topic for each paragraph in your essay and the types/sources of evidence that will be included in each paragraph.

**Step 4: Draft an argumentative research essay**

Using your plan from Step 3, complete the draft of your research paper.

* Your introduction should provide a brief overview of the research topic. It should gain readers' attention.
* Your thesis should state your view on the issue and indicate reasons to support your view.
* Your body paragraphs should include specific evidence (summaries, paraphrases or quotes) that help readers understand the points you are making.
* Your conclusion should move beyond a simple restatement of your main points to indicate the significance and implications of this issue.

**Step 5: Revise**

After you finish your draft, leave it alone for at least a few hours and preferably a full day. If possible, get feedback from several friends. Reread your draft. Copy and paste a second version of the draft in the same computer file; in this copy of your draft, make changes that improve the thesis, the topic sentences, and the transitions in your paper as recommended in any feedback you’ve received.

Make sure that your own thinking is more evident than the material you have borrowed from your sources, which should have the appropriate in-text parenthetical citations. In other words, 30-40+% of the draft you generated in Step 4 should be different in this draft.

**Step 6: Compose your “Works Cited” page**

Following MLA style, compose a “Works Cited” page that correctly formats bibliographic citations for each source referenced in your paper. The assignment requires eight, though you may choose to include more.

**Step 7: Edit**

After you finish your draft, leave it alone for at least a few hours and preferably a full day. Copy and paste a third version of the draft and “Works Cited” in the same computer file; in this copy of your draft, make changes that improve:

* sentence construction (correct errors related to nouns, pronouns, verbs, modifiers, phrases, and clauses)
* word choice (tone, correct words, homophones [their/there/they’re, two/too/to, etc.], etc.)
* punctuation use (commas, end marks, colons, semicolons)
* mechanics (spelling, abbreviations, italics, capitalization, incorrect spacing between words or at the beginning/end of sentences, etc.)

Strategies that may be helpful in checking for the problems mentioned above:

1. Read your paper aloud from the last sentence to the first sentence. That is, read the very last sentence of the paper aloud to make sure the sentence sounds right and has all the right parts and punctuation. Now, read the previous sentence. Keep going backward until you reach the paper's beginning.
2. Use the “Find” tool in the word processing program to search for marks of punctuation (like commas) so that you can be sure they are used correctly. You can also search for commonly misspelled words and words that can usually be omitted (there is/are, it is, clichés).
3. Confirm that you have addressed every bullet point in the assignment instructions.
4. Review the [MLA checklist (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://docs.google.com/document/d/164AbTLMGBG9SYl_9EI9gSjpi-xs8Z28TMSTD00PQMtI/edit?usp=sharing) to make sure you have formatted your paper correctly.

In particular, make sure that you are consistently using present tense to discuss the articles. Save the final version in a separate document, using the file name specified in the “Descriptions” section above. This version is the one that will be graded for writing quality.

Before submitting your paper, review [this video (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.screencast.com/t/dYsnRDusxGi8) about Unplag to ensure that all citations are formatted correctly. Submit your draft to obtain your first Unplag report ([this video (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.screencast.com/t/sIOIeRVnJ5T) will show you how). Unplag highlights anything that is either plagiarized or incorrectly cited. Correct your draft based on your Unplag report, then run your essay through the Unplag report again. You may obtain up to three Unplag reports. Submit your final draft only when it shows a high originality score.