

Core C American Lit | Research Paper—Putting it Together | Quarter 3

Paper Requirement Reminders:

- The paper must be 1500-2200 words and follow MLA guidelines.
- A minimum of *five* sources must be used; *one of those sources must be a book*.
- Your paper should include a combination of direct quotes, paraphrases, and summaries. Any material that did not originate with you **MUST BE CITED**. Direct quotes and paraphrases should not exceed thirty percent of your paper.
- Your sources must be scholarly writings. This does not include blogs, Wikipedia, or personal web sites.

At this point you should have:

- Chosen a Topic
- Identified two sources from a library database (EBSCO or Gale Academic)
- Begun your research (notecard pages due in weeks 1, 2 and 3 of Q3)

What comes next:

- Writing a thesis statement
- Putting together your Works Cited page
- Developing topic sentences for each of your body paragraphs
- Creating an outline
- Developing arguments and counterarguments
- Writing your paper

Writing Your Thesis Statement:

- Start by asking questions about what you want to know about your topic: (Who killed Abraham Lincoln? Did s/he act alone? Was the government of the confederacy involved?)
- Now answer those questions according to your research, framing the answers in a single, arguable statement: "Though history records that John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln, Booth did not act alone but worked as an agent of the newly defeated confederate states."
- As shown above, your thesis should clearly express your paper's purpose and main idea—what is the scope of your essay, what will it cover?
- Use action words—not just what your topic IS, what it DOES (Not: Public prayers are not appropriate. Instead: Public prayers in schools violate the rights of non-religious students.)
- Remember: you must take a stand about an issue, state something that someone could argue against (not just giving a known fact or uncontroversial opinion, like *the sky is blue* or *puppies are cute*)
- Clearly word your statement in such a way that it is not so broad that it would take a textbook to cover every point, but not so narrow that you can prove your claim in one paragraph.
- Your thesis represents your entire argument, determining what you *must* say (if it's in the thesis it must be addressed in the paper) as well as what you *cannot* say (if it's not in the thesis, don't bring it up), and must be supported by every paragraph in your essay.
- For further explanations and examples, see the helpful videos on Weebly
- Your working thesis statement is due via email (NOT as an attachment) on Thurs. 1/20

Compiling Your Works Cited List/Using In-Text Citation:

- Providing evidence to support your claim is necessary for a research paper
- Whenever you quote, summarize, paraphrase, or otherwise use words or thoughts that did not come out of your head, you must cite those sources
- When providing evidence, introduce the source as part of your quote integration or summary, or put the author's last name in parenthesis following the quote (or paraphrased/summarized info)
- If a page number is provided, include that in parenthesis after the evidence
- Your in-text citation, whether integrated into your sentence or provided parenthetically, should point back to the information for that entry on your Works Cited page, making it as easy as possible for your reader to see and verify where you got your information

- Your Works Cited page is the last page of your essay, and should be on a separate page
- Works Cited entries are listed alphabetically, and generally by the author's last name, if available
- There is a specific format to how this page is set up according to MLA8—please see the example documents on Weebly

Writing Topic Sentences/Outlining:

- Each of your body paragraphs should begin with a topic sentence that addresses what that paragraph will cover, roughly aligning with your notecard topics
- These topic sentences should always lead back to your thesis statement, setting up the proofs of your argument
- Start by examining your thesis: what have you said you will prove?
- Next look back at your notecard pages and the topics you assigned to each: how do these topics fit into what you are trying to prove, and how can you organize your proofs accordingly?
- Create a topic sentence that expresses each point, broad enough to cover all the material of that point (the proofs within your paragraph will be specific; your topic sentence should be more general so as to cover all proofs)
- Your topic sentences will then become the Roman numeral points of your outline, your restrict sentences (assertions), illustrate sentences (evidence), and analysis sentences (commentary) the points following (see outline template on Weebly)
- For more information on moving from notecards to your outline and topic sentences, review the "After Notecards" PPT on Weebly

Counter Argument/Refutation:

- An effective persuasive research paper addresses how someone might argue against your claim
- This gives validity to your argument—you've considered the opposing side and are addressing it
- This strategy has two parts: you present the opposing view (the counter argument), and you tell why your argument refutes it (the refutation)
- Use signal phrases to indicate where you turn back to your claim: but, nevertheless, instead, yet, still, however, etc.
- Where your counter argument/refutation appears in your essay depends on where it appears in your thesis: it can come after the introduction to build your points after refuting the opposition, it can follow each of your points, or it can come just before your conclusion.
- For more info on counter argument/refutation, review the "Counter Argument" PPT on Weebly

Intro/Conclusion: (this should be familiar—we've covered it before!)

- Your intro starts with a HOOK—something that will grab the attention of your reader and want her to read further
- Your intro then includes background info that ties your hook to your topic and narrows to your thesis
- The final sentence of your intro is your thesis statement
- Remember: your intro starts with a broad point of interest and narrows to the specifics of your thesis (think upside down triangle)
- Your conclusion starts with your re-stated thesis—not copied & pasted, not the same wording, but the general idea of your thesis in different words
- Your conclusion then gives a short summary of the points you have presented to prove your thesis to remind your reader of the proof you have provided
- Finish your conclusion with a final statement—something to remember, a tie back to your hook, a final take-away for your reader
- Both your intro and your conclusion should be at least 5 sentences long without being redundant (saying the same thing more than once)
- For more info on writing your intro and conclusion, see the "Intro/Conclusion" PPT on Weebly

Checklists:

There will be checklists to complete and turn in with your argument and counterargument paragraphs, as well as your final draft. Parents are asked to read student papers against the checklist and sign when complete.

The final product: *(this is important and will affect your grade!)*

Final drafts must be submitted in a pocket folder. On the left side, you will include all of your graded drafts. This includes: notecard pages (all), graded topic sentence outline, graded first argument paragraph, graded counterargument paragraph, and graded intro/conclusion. Any notes/comments that I have made regarding your work should be included with your submission. On the right side, you will include your final draft, essay checklist, and rubric.

Due Date Reminders:

- January 13: 1st set of 20 note pages due
- January 20: 2nd set of 20 note pages due
- January 20: Working Thesis Statement due
- January 27: 3rd set of 20 note pages due; Works Cited due
- February 3: Topic Sentence Outline due
- February 8: Counterargument paragraph due
- February 15: Complete 1st argument paragraph due
- February 22: Intro & Conclusion due; Bring full draft to class for peer review
- March 3: Final Research Paper due (see below)

Late Penalties: Each missed deadline will earn a twenty percent point deduction. Extensions are generally granted IF a request is submitted ahead of time in writing (e-mail). Just showing up to class the day something is due without anything to turn in is not acceptable and points will be deducted.