Brainstorming Topics for the Research Paper
1st Assignment

• Your first assignment should look like this ...
• TOPIC: TBD
• INTO THE WILD CONNECTION: TBD
• QUESTION OF INQUIRY: TBD
• THESIS: TBD

• Topic should be specific but broad. See examples.
• Where does your idea come from in the novel? Be specific.
• What is your main question of inquiry? What do you want to learn about the topic?
• Write a draft thesis based on simple research on your topic.
1st Assignment Sample

Your Name
Period xx
Date

Research Paper Assignment 1: Topic, Questions, Thesis

Research Topic: Narcissism, narcissistic people

Into the Wild Connection: In the author’s note, Krakauer writes, “a wacko, a narcissist who perished out of arrogance and stupidity.”

Questions: What is a narcissist? How do I know if someone is a narcissist? Historically, who has been considered extremely narcissistic? Were they considered good people or bad people?

Thesis Statement: The characteristics of a narcissist on the surface seem negative, but in some cases a narcissistic individual has had a positive influence on the world.
How Do I Find a Topic?

• **Step 1: Read the novel**
  • This takes time and focus but it is where the ideas come from. Think critically about the words and concepts the author is describing to you and pick one that interests you. **Find a line or passage from the novel to start and write it down!**

• **Step 2: Inquire**
  • Consider the idea you have found, it may be a single word or a paragraph, and ask yourself, “What do I want to know about this idea or thing?”

• **Step 3: Brainstorm**
  • Start looking into your idea, some simple research, and begin connecting other information to your topic.
How Do I Find a Topic?

- **Step 1: Read the novel**
  - “In the author’s note, Krakauer writes, ‘a wacko, a narcissist who perished out of arrogance and stupidity.’”

- **Step 2: Inquire**
  - “What do I want to know about this idea or thing?” I want to know what personal characteristics a narcissist exhibits. How do I know if someone is a narcissist?

- **Step 3: Brainstorm**
  - Narcissist = center of their own universe
  - Trump, Henry VIII, Hitler, Ghandi, FDR, Alexander the Great, Bill Clinton, Madonna, Kardashians, Bieber, Barry Bonds, Cam Newton
How Do I Find a Topic?

• Step 4: Question
  • Form questions to guide your research. The more you write the easier it is to narrow your topic.

• Step 5: Research
  • Conduct some research on your topic so you can form a larger picture of the topic BEFORE you write the thesis. You will want to know what the different sides to your topic are before writing the thesis.

• Step 6: Thesis
  • Write your working thesis, the sentence that will guide the rest of your paper. This sentence should be the focus of everything you will write about.
How Do I Find a Topic?

• **Step 4: Question**
  What is a narcissist? How do I know if someone is a narcissist? Historically, who has been considered extremely narcissistic? Were they considered good people or bad people?

• **Step 5: Research**

• **Step 6: Thesis**
  The characteristics of a narcissist on the surface seem negative, but in some cases a narcissistic individual has had a positive influence on the world.
Conducting Research Online
How Do I Conduct Research?

• After you have a clear topic to research, you need to collect reliable information about it and then document where you found it.
• The following steps will help you collect, organize, and identify your research.
  1. Search for secondary sources at a library or online, or conduct primary research.
  2. Evaluate sources of information. Are they trustworthy?
  3. Take notes and document source material.
  4. Prepare citation and works cited information.
How Do I Conduct Research?

• **Step 1: Search for Information on your Topic**

  - *Primary research* is any type of research that you go out and collect yourself (not when you find it written by someone else). It is firsthand evidence about a topic and include surveys, interviews, observations, fieldwork, experiments, speeches, and ethnographic research.

  - *Secondary sources* describe, discuss, interpret, comment upon, analyze, evaluate, summarize, and process primary sources. Secondary source materials can be articles in newspapers, journals, magazines, books, website, or film that discuss someone else's original research.

• A good researcher knows how to use both primary and secondary sources in her writing and to integrate them in a cohesive fashion.

• Use Google Scholar and College Research Databases.
How Do I Conduct Research?

• **Step 2: Evaluate Sources of Information**
  - The world is full of information to be found—however, not all of it is valid, useful, or accurate, or it may just not relate to your topic.
  - You have to decide where to look, what clues to search for, and what to accept. You may be overwhelmed with too much information or too little. The temptation is to accept whatever you find, but only use the best information you can find.
  - Primary research is completely trustworthy but may not always support your thesis.
  - Secondary research is not always accurate, especially from the internet, and must be cited to avoid plagiarism. **AVOID WIKI pages** as they are not trustworthy sources of any facts.
How Do I Conduct Research?

- **Step 3: Take Notes and Document Source Material**
- When you determine that a source is reliable, and the information you discovered is accurate, then you can take notes on it.
- Collect important quotes and chapter title, page #, paragraph #, or line #.
- Paraphrase the main idea of a short piece (sentence or paragraph) in your own words and collect where the ideas come from (author, speaker, page).
- Summarize the main idea(s) of a longer piece (chapter, article) in your own words, including only the main points. Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source.
How Do I Conduct Research?

• **Step 4: Prepare Citation and Works Cited Using MLA**

• When you quote, paraphrase, or summarize a source, you need to identify who wrote or spoke the idea or words and cite the source where you found it in your text.
  • EX: Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

• At the end of your paper, you will need a works cited page to avoid plagiarism. Collect that information while you are doing your research.

• In your citation, the elements should be listed in the following order:
  • Author, title of source, title of container, other contributors, version number, publisher, publication date, location.
Creating a Formal Paper Outline
How Do I Outline My Paper?

• There are many reasons to create an outline for a long research paper.

• An outline will help you show the hierarchical relationship or logical ordering of information about your topic and sub-topics, and it will help you stay organized.

• The most common type of outline, and usually instantly recognizable to most people, is the alphanumerical or formal outline. The formatting follows these characters, in this order:
  I. Roman Numerals
     A. Capitalized Letters
        1. Arabic Numerals
           a. Lowercase Letters

More important

Less important
How Do I Outline My Paper?

• To create an outline, consider these items first:
  • Determine the purpose of your paper.
  • Determine the audience you are writing for.
  • Develop the thesis of your paper.

• After you identify these items, complete these tasks:
  • Brainstorm – List all the ideas that you want to include in your paper.
  • Organize – Group related ideas together.
  • Order – Arrange material in subsections from general to specific or from abstract to concrete.
  • Label – Create main and sub headings.

• Your outline should look like this ...
How Do I Outline My Paper?

I. Introduction
   A. Quote from Kurt Cobain
      1. “I don't care what you think unless it is about me.”
   B. Connect topic to quote, context for topic
   C. Connect to what I want to know
      1. How do I know if someone is a narcissist?
      2. Is a narcissist necessarily a bad person?
   D. Thesis: The characteristics of a narcissist on the surface seem negative, but in some cases a narcissistic individual has had a positive influence on the world.
   E. Transition to the next section
      1. Hitler and Trump
      2. Ghandi and FDR
II. What is a narcissist?

A. Define narcissist
   1. Compare definitions and concepts
   2. Extroverts vs. introverts

B. Address clinical findings of the personality trait
   1. Personality disorder (Mayo Clinic)
   2. Symptoms (Goodtherapy.com)
   3. Case studies (Psychiatric times.com)

C. Give examples of historical figures who were narcissists
   1. Trump, short summary
   2. Hitler, short summary
   3. Franklin Roosevelt, short summary
   4. Ghandi, short summary

D. Introduce the idea of positive contributions by narcissistic people.
How Do I Outline My Paper?

III. The negative side of narcissism
   A. Xxxxx
   B. Xxxx
   C. Xxxx
   D. Xxxxx

IV. The positive side of narcissism
   A. Xxxxx
   B. Xxxx
   C. Xxxxx

V. Compare the different influences narcissists have had historically
   A. Xxxxx
   B. Xxxx
   C. Xxxxx

VI. Conclusion
Creating a Works Cited Page
How Do I Create a Works Cite Page?

• MLA (Modern Language Association) style is most commonly used to write papers and cite sources within the liberal arts and humanities.
• MLA format for sources will describe how you:
  • To cite sources within your own writing (quotes, paraphrase, summary), also called *in text citation*
  • List your sources in a Works Cited page
  • The Works Cited page is challenging because the source could be published in multiple places, the question is where did you find it.
• To make it simpler, use the following websites to help prepare your Works Cited page.
  • http://www.citationmachine.net/mla/cite-a-book
  • http://www.easybib.com/
How Do I Create a Works Cite Page?

Works Cited


How Do I Create a Works Cite Page?

• In text citation of your sources varies based on the source.
• https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/
• In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what is known as *parenthetical citation*. This method involves placing relevant source information in parentheses after a quote or a paraphrase.
• The source information required in a parenthetical citation depends (1.) upon the source medium (e.g. Print, Web, DVD) and (2.) upon the source’s entry on the Works Cited (bibliography) page.
• Any source information that you provide in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. More specifically, whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text, must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited List.
How Do I Create a Works Cite Page?

Author’s last name + page #

Title of Article + page #
Could be website name, no page #

Multiple author’s last name + page #
Formatting Your Research Paper
How Do I Format My Paper?

• MLA (Modern Language Association) style is most commonly used to write papers and cite sources within the liberal arts and humanities.
• In this case, your final draft paper should look like the sample on this website:
  • https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/13/
  • 1-inch margins; 12 point Times New Roman font; double spacing all text, indent 1 tab space at the beginning of each paragraph; correct headings, title, and header.
How Do I Format My Paper?

Toward a Recovery of Nineteenth Century Farming Handbooks

While researching texts written about nineteenth century farming, I found a few authors who published books about the literature of nineteenth century farming, particularly agricultural journals, newspapers, pamphlets, and brochures. These authors often placed the farming literature they were studying into an historical context by discussing the important events in agriculture of the year in which the literature was published (see Demaree, for example). However, while these authors discuss journals, newspapers, pamphlets, and brochures, I could not find much discussion about another important source of farming knowledge: farming handbooks. My goal in this paper is to bring this source into the agricultural literature discussion by connecting three agricultural handbooks from the nineteenth century with nineteenth century agricultural history.

To achieve this goal, I have organized my paper into four main sections, two of which have subsections. In the first section, I provide an account of three important events in nineteenth century agricultural history: population, technological changes,
How Do I Format My Paper?

Major heading that matches your outline:

Sub-heading that matches your outline:

The nineteenth century saw many changes to daily American life with an increase in population, improved methods of transportation, developments in technology, and the rise in the importance of science. These events impacted all aspects of nineteenth century American life, most significantly those involved in slavery and the Civil War, but a large part of American life was affected, a part that is quite often taken for granted: the life of the American farmer.

Population and Technological Changes. One of the biggest changes, as seen in nineteenth century America’s census reports, is the dramatic increase in population. The 1820 census reported that over 10 million people were living in America; of those 10 million, over 2 million were engaged in agriculture. Ten years prior to that, the 1810 census reported over 7 million people were living in the states; there was no category for
How Do I Format My Paper?

Works Cited

Allen, R.L. The American Farm Book; or Compend of American Agriculture; Being a Practical Treatise on Soils, Manures, Draining, Irrigation, Grasses, Grain, Roots, Fruits, Cotton, Tobacco, Sugar Cane, Rice, and Every Staple Product of the United States with the Best Methods of Planting, Cultivating, and Preparation for Market. Saxton, 1849.


Advice for Your English 12 Research Paper
Things to Remember ...

• Your research paper begins with the novel *Into the Wild*, the idea comes from the novel, but it is not about the novel, the people, or author. Don’t write about it.
• Follow the instructions for the assignment. I gave them to you in writing. And pay attention to the grading rubric.
• Do research on your topic before you get approval to make sure you will find enough reliable sources.
• Teacher must approve your topic, research questions, and thesis before you write the paper; you cannot change topics once the teacher approves it.
• Plan to use headings and subheadings in your paper.
• This is research: no 1\textsuperscript{st} or 2\textsuperscript{nd} person pronouns.
• You must write 6-8 pages PLUS a 1 page Works Cited page (on its own page).
Peer Editing Checklist

✓ FOR ALL PAPERS, read and provide general feedback.
✓ 1st reader, check for capitalization and punctuation errors.
✓ 2nd reader, check for spelling errors.
✓ 3rd reader, check to see that the author includes evidence (paraphrases and quotes).
✓ 4th reader, check to see that the author has commentary that is equal to or greater than the evidence provided.
✓ 5th reader, check the topic sentences, do they relate to the thesis and connect with the evidence in the paragraph?
✓ 6th reader, check to see if all evidence is cited correctly.