**English II Research Paper 2013**

In the coming weeks, you will be writing a research paper for English II to prepare you for writing in English III and IV. Using the Gales Research background document on technology, as well as the *New York Times* article provided in class, you are to develop an argument on the role technology plays in society today. After developing your thesis statement, you will find two outside sources that support your thesis to include in your paper. You will then compose a three to four page paper, based on the following:

**THE PAPER:**

**Your Mission:** To compose a well-organized research paper, with the support of three credible sources, addressing an arguable thesis statement.

**Your Topic:** Technology and Socialization

**Length Requirement:** 3-4 pages, double-spaced

**Font:** Times New Roman

**Size:** 12 pt.

**Style:** MLA

**What you should be able to do by the end of the unit:**

* Write a thesis statement that takes an arguable stance on the topic
* Find credible, reliable, quality sources to support your argument
* Write quality summaries of the sources you have found
* Organize your writing into an outline, specifying source usage and integration
* Paraphrase quotes from your source documents and integrate them appropriately into your paper with proper MLA parenthetical citations
* Use direct quotes from your source documents and integrate them appropriately into your paper with proper MLA parenthetical citations
* Appropriately address the counterargument to your argument
* Write formally, without using first or second person

**Writing this paper will include the following distinct steps:**

1. Developing familiarity with the topic, and developing an argument
2. Learning how to find credible sources
3. Learning how to read non-fiction source documents and determine if the claim successfully supports your argument
4. Pre-writing in the form of a well-organized outline
5. A rough draft that includes an introduction, conclusion, and integration of all required sources
6. A final draft that meets the requirements as specified on the rubric

**Due Dates:**

**Three sources, chunked and summarized (one provided in class): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Outline:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Rough Draft:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Final Draft:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Your Argument and Appeals**

**What is an Argumentative Essay?**

The argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic, collect, generate, and evaluate evidence, and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner.

*Please note*: Some confusion may occur between the argumentative essay and the expository essay. These two genres are similar, but the argumentative essay differs from the expository essay in the amount of pre-writing and research involved.

Argumentative essay assignments generally call for extensive research of literature or previously published material. Argumentative assignments may also require empirical research where the student collects data through interviews, surveys, observations, or experiments. Detailed research allows the student to learn about the topic and to understand different points of view regarding the topic so that s/he may choose a position and support it with the evidence collected during research. Regardless of the amount or type of research involved, argumentative essays must establish a clear thesis and follow sound reasoning.

**The structure of the argumentative essay is held together by the following:**

**1. A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.**

In the introduction of an argument essay, students should set the context by reviewing the topic in a general way. Next the author should explain why the topic is important (exigence) or why readers should care about the issue. Lastly, students should present the thesis statement. ***It is essential that this thesis statement be appropriately narrowed to follow the guidelines set forth in the assignment. If the student does not master this portion of the essay, it will be quite difficult to compose an effective or persuasive essay.***

**2. Clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion.**

Transitions are the mortar that holds the foundation of the essay together. Without logical progression of thought, the reader is unable to follow the essay’s argument, and the structure will collapse. Transitions should wrap up the idea from the previous section and introduce the idea that is to follow in the next section.

**3. Body paragraphs that include evidential support.**

Each paragraph should be limited to the discussion of one general idea. This will allow for clarity and direction throughout the essay. In addition, such conciseness creates an ease of readability for one’s audience. It is important to note that each paragraph in the body of the essay must have some logical connection to the thesis statement in the opening paragraph. Some paragraphs will directly support the thesis statement with evidence collected during research. It is also important to explain how and why the evidence supports the thesis (warrant).

However, argumentative essays should also consider and explain differing points of view regarding the topic. Depending on the length of the assignment, students should dedicate one or two paragraphs of an argumentative essay to discussing conflicting opinions on the topic. Rather than explaining how these differing opinions are wrong outright, students should note how opinions that do not align with their thesis might not be well informed or how they might be out of date.

**4. Evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).**

The argumentative essay requires well-researched, accurate, detailed, and current information to support the thesis statement and consider other points of view. Some factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal evidence should support the thesis. However, students must consider multiple points of view when collecting evidence. As noted in the paragraph above, a successful and well-rounded argumentative essay will also discuss opinions not aligning with the thesis. It is unethical to exclude evidence that may not support the thesis. It is not the student’s job to point out how other positions are wrong outright, but rather to explain how other positions may not be well informed or up to date on the topic.

**5. A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided.**

It is at this point of the essay that students may begin to struggle. This is the portion of the essay that will leave the most immediate impression on the mind of the reader. Therefore, it must be effective and logical. Do not introduce any new information into the conclusion; rather, synthesize the information presented in the body of the essay. Restate why the topic is important, review the main points, and review your thesis. You may also want to include a short discussion of more research that should be completed in light of your work.

**Making A Complete Argument**

Perhaps it is helpful to think of an essay in terms of a conversation or debate with a classmate. If I were to discuss the cause of World War II and its current effect on those who lived through the tumultuous time, there would be a beginning, middle, and end to the conversation. In fact, if I were to end the argument in the middle of my second point, questions would arise concerning the current effects on those who lived through the conflict. Therefore, the argumentative essay must be complete, and logically so, leaving no doubt as to its intent or argument.

**Rhetorical Appeals**

**YOUR CLAIM:** An argument must have tension—it cannot be based on a claim that is readily accepted (i.e. I propose that smoking is bad for your health … because, yeah, most folks know this and accept this already). You are responsible for developing a thesis/claim to defend in your argument. ***In other words, make sure what you argue merits the exercise of proof.***

**Your Use of the Appeals**

**LOGOS***:* An argument requires more than your own voice (not your personal opinion)—USE YOUR RESEARCH to add texture and depth to your argument. Sure, dropping in a quick statistic or percentage does count as a source and you should use these when appropriate. However, logos isn’t ONLY about plying an argument with a ton of facts. You want your research to add a deeper layer to your argument. Don’t let the research be ‘dead weight’ in your argument. Find voices, ideas, personalities, research that compliments your viewpoint. Likewise, find some that refute your ideas, and use them to literally argue against. In addition, don’t forget your modes of discourse as the means of backing your argument. To prove a point, try to **compare/contrast** or investigate **cause and effect** or question alternative **solutions** to the **problem** at hand or offer various interpretations in order to establish a fuller understanding of **definition**. **Analysis** is also a cornerstone to argument—break down the conflict, show its parts, explain how and why they affect each other the way they do. Any and all of these can be used.

**ETHO**S*:* Ethically driven arguments require a moment of concession—a fair nod to the most likely objections to your claim (sometimes also thought of as the ‘holes in your proposal’). It’s important to address these with as little bias as possible. However, once you have granted the opposing perspective(s) a fair nod—or **concession**—you must then **refute** it. By providing a solid concession and refutation and showing thorough research you prove to your audience that you are trustworthy and fair.

**PATHOS***:* Yes, you should have some. Don’t be afraid to include appropriate anecdotes. In addition, write with imagery, connotative and figurative language devices. Be humorous or dark or angry in certain moments—show this with adjectives, adverbs and more colorful verbs (instead of ‘so and so writes’ … try ‘so and so delivers a scathing rebuttal to the proposal…’).

**Your Thesis**

### 1. The thesis statement or main claim must be debatable. An argumentative or persuasive piece of writing must begin with a debatable thesis or claim. In other words, the thesis must be something that people could reasonably have differing opinions on. If your thesis is something that is generally agreed upon or accepted as fact then there is no reason to try to persuade people.

**Example of a non-debatable thesis statement:**

*Pollution is bad for the environment.*

This thesis statement is not debatable. First, the word pollution means that something is bad or negative in some way. Further, all studies agree that pollution is a problem; they simply disagree on the impact it will have or the scope of the problem. No one could reasonably argue that pollution is good.

**Example of a debatable thesis statement:**

*At least 25 percent of the federal budget should be spent on limiting pollution.*

This is an example of a debatable thesis because reasonable people could disagree with it. Some people might think that this is how we should spend the nation's money. Others might feel that we should be spending more money on education. Still others could argue that corporations, not the government, should be paying to limit pollution.

**Another example of a debatable thesis statement:**

*America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars.*

In this example there is also room for disagreement between rational individuals. Some citizens might think focusing on recycling programs rather than private automobiles is the most effective strategy.

### 2. The thesis needs to be narrow. Although the scope of your paper might seem overwhelming at the start, generally the narrower the thesis the more effective your argument will be. Your thesis or claim must be supported by evidence. The broader your claim is, the more evidence you will need to convince readers that your position is right.

**Example of a thesis that is too broad:**

Drug use is detrimental to society.

There are several reasons this statement is too broad to argue. First, what is included in the category "drugs"? Is the author talking about illegal drug use, recreational drug use (which might include alcohol and cigarettes), or all uses of medication in general? Second, in what ways are drugs detrimental? Is drug use causing deaths (and is the author equating deaths from overdoses and deaths from drug related violence)? Is drug use changing the moral climate or causing the economy to decline? Finally, what does the author mean by "society"? Is the author referring only to America or to the global population? Does the author make any distinction between the effects on children and adults? There are just too many questions that the claim leaves open. The author could not cover all of the topics listed above, yet the generality of the claim leaves all of these possibilities open to debate.

**Example of a narrow or focused thesis:**

Illegal drug use is detrimental because it encourages gang violence.

In this example the topic of drugs has been narrowed down to illegal drugs and the detriment has been narrowed down to gang violence. This is a much more manageable topic.

***We could narrow each debatable thesis from the previous examples in the following way:***

**Narrowed debatable thesis 1:**

*At least 25 percent of the federal budget should be spent on helping upgrade business to clean technologies, researching renewable energy sources, and planting more trees in order to control or eliminate pollution.*

This thesis narrows the scope of the argument by specifying not just the amount of money used but also how the money could actually help to control pollution.

**Narrowed debatable thesis 2:**

*America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars because it would allow most citizens to contribute to national efforts and care about the outcome.*

This thesis narrows the scope of the argument by specifying not just what the focus of a national anti-pollution campaign should be but also why this is the appropriate focus.