

Project 1: The Research Process

This first formal project of the semester centers around a foundational aspect of college-level writing: namely, designing and planning a project that involves academic research. From sociology to nursing, English to science, disciplines across the spectrum utilize academic research to construct, prove, and illustrate claims. As a result, it is imperative that you gain experience conducting research so you become familiar with this practice and can use it effectively in future classes and professional settings.

This project thus asks you to engage in the *process* of academic research; you will not, however, write a formal paper at the end of this process (as you would usually do). Rather, you will spend time working through the steps needed to get you ready to write a paper. This structure allows you to focus on the academic practices that support a research paper, without the stress of actually writing that paper.

Topic:

The topic for this paper is media literacy. While you are required to conduct research within this general topic, you will need to hone this topic through academic inquiry and academic research.

Organization:

Ultimately, the Research Report will include four parts, produced over the course of a number of weeks. The first draft of most of these sections will first be submitted as Discussion Board posts or Low Stakes Assignments. You will receive feedback on these sections and then revise them, combine them, and submit them as the formal version of Project 1: The Research Process. The individual sections are listed below.

The final draft of Project 1: The Research Process will include all of these sections:

- A Project Proposal that includes the following:
 - a refined topic, based on the topic of media literacy;
 - a set of questions that will help limit the scope and topic of your paper and that will direct your search for academic sources;
 - a plan for conducting research, including the 4-5 academic databases you will access and 5-6 key terms you will use to search those databases.
- A Reflective Annotated Bibliography with 3 relevant, academic sources.
- A Source Map: a side-by-side comparison of 3 sources, focused on how each source addresses three specific issues.
- A Research Reflection that including the following:

- A short narration of the process you engaged in to conduct this research (~250 words). In other words, if you were to describe this process to a student outside of this class, how would you outline it?;
- The next steps you would take if you were going to write a paper based on this research, including:
 - a revised thesis statement--how might you revise your preliminary thesis statement now that you have worked closely with three of your sources?;
 - additional resources you would like to find--what additional do you think you would need if you were going to actually draft this paper?
- A reflection (~250 words) about what you learned through this process that answers the following questions:
 - What techniques, strategies, or approaches will you apply going forward?
 - What will you do differently the next time you are presented with a research project?
 - Which elements of this process did you find the most useful? Why?