

Paper 5 - Exploratory research paper

DRAFT DUE: 27 November 2006

FINAL DUE: 1 December 2006

Length: 4-6 pages

Purpose: The exploratory research paper narrates the process of researching a question. You will present a chronological narrative describing the evolution of your thought on the topic as well as the physical activities involved in your research.

For Paper 5, you will build on the question you pursued for Paper 4 and write a research narrative using the guidelines of the Writing Project described in Allyn & Bacon, Chapter 8:

Choose a question, problem, or issue that genuinely perplexes you. At the beginning of your exploratory essay, explain why you are interested in this chosen problem... Then write a first-person, chronologically organized narrative account of your thinking process as you investigate your question through research, talking with others, and doing your own reflective thinking. Your research might involve reading articles or other sources assigned by your instructor, doing your own library or Internet research, or doing field research through interviews and observations. As you reflect on your research, you can also draw on your own memories and experiences. Your goal is to examine your question, problem, or issue from a variety of perspectives, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of different positions and points of view. By the end of your essay, you may or may not have reached a satisfactory solution to your problem. You will be rewarded for the quality of your exploration and thinking processes. In other words, your goal is not to answer your question but to report on the process of wrestling with it. (194)

For Paper 5, you may expand your research beyond scholarly journals and use any source that helps advance your thinking on the topic. Your paper should answer questions such as: What did you discover? How did your understanding of the topic change as you moved from source to source? What was the most effective organizational strategy for moving from source to source or grouping sets of sources?

Obviously, as your paper involves research and citing sources, you will need to include a Works Cited page. Your list of Works Cited should begin on a separate page, following the last page of your narrative. Both the list of Works Cited and any in-text citations (i.e., quotations, summaries, or paraphrases of source material) should be formatted using MLA style; refer Allyn & Bacon, Chapter 22, or your handbook for examples of the correct MLA citation style for various kinds of sources.

Two example exploratory research papers can be found in your textbook: "An Exploration of How to Prevent School Violence" (197-201) and "Hired Guns: Uncovering the nature of Private Militaries in the Iraq War" (202-207). Format your paper according to MLA standards (see Allyn & Bacon, Chapter 22). As always, you should adhere to the rules of Standard Written English. Edit and proofread your paper carefully before turning it in. Please staple your paper at the top left-hand corner **before coming to class**. Your paper is due at the beginning of class on Friday, 1 December 2006.