

Research Paper Guidelines

You will spend five weeks completing a 5-7 page academic argument in APA style. Each week is devoted to one phase of the academic writing process:

1. Topic Selection & Beginning Research
2. Pre-Writing & Organization
3. Draft Writing
4. Revision
5. Editing & Final Draft

Week 1: Topic Selection & Beginning Research

Select a topic from the list of approved topics that begins on page two of this document. You will be working with the same topic for the next five weeks. Choose a topic that is interesting but be wary of topics that elicit a strong emotional response. We will be writing an objective academic paper in third-person perspective, which may be difficult if you feel too personally connected or emotionally passionate.

As you begin to gather research on the topic, start organizing your work into an annotated bibliography. You will submit your annotated bibliography for grading and feedback at the end of Week 1. You will use a working thesis statement to guide you. These items may need to be revised before you move forward.

Week 2: Pre-Writing & Organization

After gathering sufficient research, you will begin to build a credible argument about the topic, which may require revisions to your working thesis statement. You will submit an outline of your academic argument for grading and feedback at the end of Week 2. The outline may need to be revised before you move forward.

Week 3: Draft Writing

You will utilize your revised annotated bibliography, revised outline, and instructor feedback as tools to write a rough draft essay. The annotated bibliography provides you with your research notes while the outline guides you through the structure of your argument. You will submit a rough draft of your academic argument for grading and feedback at the end of Week 3. You will have time to fully revise and edit your draft over the remaining two weeks of class.

Week 4: Revision

The revision process contains a number of steps that may overlap and repeat. This includes additional research, more writing, proofreading, editing, and content revision. You must consider and apply the feedback you received throughout class as you revise your rough draft. Every student is encouraged to utilize Ashford's tutoring and paper review services during revision. You are expected to use Week 4 as an opportunity for careful and thorough revision.

Week 5: Final Draft

The final week of class will culminate in the submission of a **Final Research Paper**. This is the final, complete, error-free version of your academic argument. The final draft is worth 30% of your final grade in this class.

Writing Prompts – Select One for this Class

Prompts have been organized by subject area. Please review all options before making your final selection. Consider selecting a topic that is related to your field of study and/or career.

Pay very close attention to the specific details below. Each prompt begins with a broad topic and concludes with a research question. The research question is the starting point for your research. Your final paper must provide an argument that directly answers the specific research question from the prompt. If you have questions about the prompts, please contact your instructor.

Education & Information Literacy

1. **Developing Citizenship in K-12 Schools**

The United States Department of Education sets basic guidelines and standards for K-12 education while each state regulates its own unique standards. Recent emphasis on college preparedness and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects has changed the way students are taught in schools across the country.

Research Question: How should K-12 schools balance college preparedness, STEM education, and other curricula to ensure that all graduates are prepared to be well-informed, productive citizens?

2. **Common Core State Standards**

Common Core is one of the latest movements in public school reform in the United States. Some states have adopted Common Core State Standards for math and English language arts/literacy (ELA) while others have rejected it.

Research Question: What is your home state's position on Common Core State Standards and what impact has that position had on schools, teachers, students, and families?

3. **Fake News**

Assumptions, invalid arguments, intentional manipulation, lies, fallacies, and propaganda have become more prevalent in the American public's consciousness. Professional journalists, bloggers, politicians, celebrities, and private citizens are struggling to find validity and truth in information in the digital age.

Research Question: Why is "fake news" so hard to identify and what can be done to limit its influence in society?

4. **Technology & Young Children**

Technology can be a learning tool, even in early childhood education. Children are often exposed to interactive media and mobile devices before learning to walk. Technology is frequently present at home as well as daycare and school.

Research Question: What is the appropriate use of technology and interactive media in early childhood education?

Business & Ethics

5. **New Business Model**

Business analysts have alleged that the music industry is faltering due to outdated record label business practices, inefficient and overly complex artist contract agreements, a failure to evolve with technology, and other factors.

Research Question: Why is the music industry faltering what can be done to improve the current business model?

6. **Environmental Responsibility**

Manufacturing businesses create goods for public consumption. Disposable products and packaging have an impact on the marketplace and the environment. Some municipalities have begun regulating the use of single-use plastic bags, Styrofoam containers, and other disposable items.

Research Question: What should the role of local, state, and federal government be in the regulation of environmental responsibility in private businesses?

7. **Telecommuting**

Telecommuting, the practice of working remotely from an off-site location, is a growing trend in the American workplace. While there may be positive impacts for the company and employee, there may also be downsides.

Research Question: How does the practice of telecommuting impact workplace culture, employee experience, and organizational success?

8. **Gender-based Income Gap**

The gender-based income gap has become a topic of conversation in many industries. Popular opinion suggests that women make less money than men for the same jobs, regardless of experience or education.

Research Question: What is the cause of gender-based income disparity in the United States and how can it be eliminated?

Behavioral Science & Health Care

9. **Affordable Health Care**

Health insurance is a program meant to assist people with the cost of medical services and health-related procedures. Historically, health insurance was a benefit provided by employers. Over time, individuals were asked to contribute to the costs of health insurance as well. Individuals who were not offered health insurance through their employer often struggled to afford health insurance alone or were excluded entirely. The federal government has been attempting to ensure that all Americans have access to health insurance and affordable health care.

Research Question: What impact does the cost of health care have on American society and what should be done to address the problem of high health care costs in the United States?

10. Prenatal Genetic Testing

More pregnant women are being encouraged to participate in prenatal genetic testing during their first trimester. However, there is much debate about the appropriateness of genetic testing for all pregnant women due to the occurrence of misleading results and future privacy concerns for the child.

Research Question: What is the appropriate use of prenatal genetic testing for pregnant women in the United States?

11. Aging Population

A large generation of aging Americans will require extra behavioral, health, and human services in the very near future. Some experts have expressed concern that the country is unprepared for a surge in the geriatric population.

Research Question: What are the needs of aging Americans and what roles should the healthcare industry and government agencies play in meeting those needs?

12. Psychological Impact of Poverty

Researchers have documented the physical impacts of poverty on the human body, including issues of health and safety. In addition to the physical impact, poverty can also have a long-lasting psychological impact on an individual.

Research Question: How does poverty influence the behaviors of an individual and what is the impact on the broader community?

Criminal Justice & Military Studies

13. Citizen Protests

Americans are afforded the constitutional right to peacefully assemble in protest with certain limitations. Lawful protests may, however, escalate and result in criminal activity.

Research Question: How can governments and peace officers work together to protect the rights of citizens while also enforcing laws that may be misunderstood by the public?

14. Police-Worn Body Cameras

The American public has recently rallied to ask for body cameras to be mandatory for all law enforcement personnel. As districts and municipalities have begun using body cameras, issues of reliability, cost, storage, privacy, community relations, cause-and-effect, and procedure have arisen.

Research Question: What is an appropriate use of body-worn cameras by police and other law enforcement personnel in the United States?

15. Cybersecurity

Cyberspace and infrastructure (servers, cables, routers, etc.) are vulnerable to many risks. Cybercriminals have the ability to operate from remote locations across the globe to find vulnerabilities in the link between cyberspace and physical systems, records, and infrastructure.

Research Question: How can the Department of Homeland Security and other agencies protect American assets and citizens from cyber-attack?

16. **Military-Civilian Life Transition**

Active military service can be very different from civilian life. Some veterans have a smooth transition to civilian life at the end of their service while others do not. There are many variables that may influence a veteran's experience.

Research Question: What can be done to increase the likelihood of a smooth transition from military service to civilian life?

Building on GEN103: Information Literacy

17. **GEN103 Option**

If you have completed GEN103: Information Literacy at Ashford University, you have created a unique topic and research question that may be appropriate for this class. You may be able to build upon your prior research if your topic is appropriately narrowed for an academic argument. You must obtain approval from your instructor to use your GEN103 topic in this class.

If you select this prompt, you must email your GEN103 research question and GEN103 annotated bibliography to your instructor for approval by Thursday, Week 1 Day 3.