Mr. Scholtz

English 4

**Research Essay**

The research paper is the basis of most college courses. Your ability to do a research project shows not only your familiarity with the subject and your ability to use the college library, but also your ability to search independently for answers to complex questions.

**Start with a Question**

No matter what the subject, a research paper always begins with a complex question to which you do not already know the answer. There must be a number of possible answers to the question, and after some preliminary exploration, you will select one of these as your hypothesis, the tentative or trial thesis of your paper.

Often you will discover that some other researcher has already explored your question and has come up an answer. In this case, your research project will be a critique of this researcher’s work. You will look to see if other researchers have come up with different answers, and if not, you will give a full explanation of the work, trying to point out weaknesses and suggesting areas for further exploration.

If several researchers have explored your question and come up with different answers, your job is to weigh their work and decide which of the arguments is most convincing. You will present each argument in your paper, explaining the weaknesses and strengths of each that led you to your conclusions.

Finally, you may have chosen a question that has not previously been explored by researchers. This does not often happen, but when it does, it is exciting. You must construct your own explanation based on the detective work you do.

The best research projects originate with real curiosity on the part of the researcher. Your research paper may be in any subject, but it is best if you pick a subject area that interests you. Here are some examples of questions that would be a good starting points for a research project (although some might need work):

Education: 1. Do students who take AP courses earn high GPA’s in college?

Sciences: 1. Why did the dinosaurs become extinct?

2. What are the long term health risks of using steroids? Alcohol? Tobacco? Cellphones?

Sports: 1. What is the best diet and exercise program for fitness training?

2. What high school sports are the most dangerous?

Literature: 1.How was the character Sherlock Holmes developed? Huck Finn?

2. How did Walt Whitman influence poetry?

History: 1. Who was Jack the Ripper?

2. How did Americans’ feelings toward their country change as a result of the Vietnam War?

Economics: 1. How has the internet affected the world economy?

Politics: 1. What caused the rise of Islamic Fundamentalism in the Middle East?

2. Is the War on Drugs successful?

Environmental:1. Has global warming begun? How will it affect us?

2. What is the best plan of action to reduce our carbon footprint in Alaska?

**Your Research**

For this assignment you will need to collect information from a variety of resources. Make sure that the resources you choose are credible and reliable sources. These can include magazines, peer reviewed journals, books, and online databases. However, websites like wikipedia are not considered credible sources. If you have any questions on this matter please come ask me.

This paper will need to be in MLA formatting. There are numerous resources for MLA formatting and writing on my class website. Remember, MLA formatting requires that you include a work cited page. This will be a requirement for this assignment.