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### First Year Research Writing: “Research into Your Roots and What it Tells You about the World”: Two Assignments

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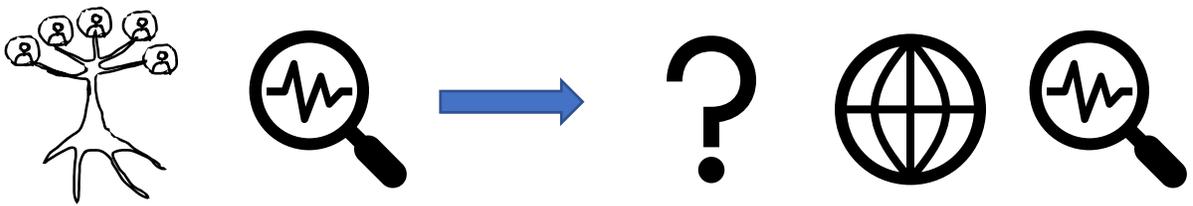
## First Year Research Writing

### “Research into Your Roots and What it Tells You about the World”

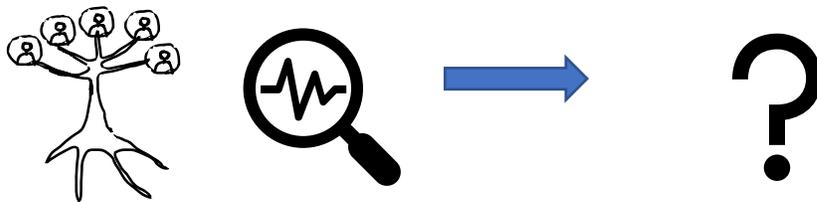
#### Two Assignments

This is a sequence of two research assignments in which the first research will help you determine the object of your second research paper.

- 1) You will research and narrate your own family/community story.
- 2) You will then select a particular person, moment, place, or time that you learned about during your genealogical research, and this will become the subject of your research project in the areas of sociology, geography, environmental studies, psychology, or medicine. You will choose what question you would like to explore further, and the question itself will stem from the findings of your family/community research.



#### ASSIGNMENT 1. Primary Research. Finding Your Roots



**Research your family roots or your community origins and write about your findings.**

Your paper should be about 2-3 pages long.

Sharing what you already know about your family history creates the background for your RESEARCH. You MUST have a question or two that you set to explore through analyzing primary sources and conducting interviews. It is NOT ENOUGH to just write down your family history.

Choose your **AUDIENCE**:

- Community members
- Family members, for example but not necessarily, your children (present or future, imaginary or real)
- Your classmates
- Your teacher

Think about your **PURPOSE**: Why are you doing this? Even though it is your English 151 class assignment, you are not just doing it for your instructor or for the grade. The histories you are creating are an important part of your identity and the identity of your family/community.

You can use a number of **GENRES** to suit your purpose. Consider:

- Narration
- Description of primary sources, your methods of research, objects and/places playing an important role in your family/community histories.
- Report
- Analysis

In this paper, you are not expected to argue for any position. If you really want to argue, see me to discuss.

**DESIGN**: You may want to include photographs, family tree diagrams, illustrations, maps.

If you are using any sites for your research or any secondary sources, make sure to cite them MLA format (see the link below).

The paper must be typed and MLA formatted: Times New Roman, 12 pt, double spaced, margins 1 inch, see more here:

The paper must be printed and stapled.

**Due date:**

Steps.



**Step 1.** Start by putting down on paper whatever you already know about your family.

*For example:*

What are the names of your parents and grandparents? How far into the past generations can you go?

Where do/did they live? How did they arrive to these places? Where from?

How did people in your family meet each other?

Can you think of any details about their present and past lives, their occupations, any important events in their lives that you know about, any life changing events?

How and where did people from the previous generations in your family die?

**Step 2.** The next step would be to look at some **primary sources** like

Photographs

Map

Letters

Video

Documents (e.g. birth certificates)

Sound recording

Artifacts

Anything you can get a hold of

Observe each primary source and keep documenting your observations as you are looking (That's what your Research Journal is for!):

- Who created this primary source?
- When was it created?
- Where does your eye go first?
- What do you see that you didn't expect?
- What powerful words and ideas are expressed?
- What feelings and thoughts does the primary source trigger in you?
- What questions does it raise?
- What was happening during this time period?
- What was the creator's purpose in making this primary source?
- What does the creator do to get his or her point across? (if applicable)
- What was this primary source's audience?
- What biases or stereotypes do you see?

**Step 3.** Write a list of questions that come to your mind about what you do not know but are curious about. Brainstorm the questions without limiting yourself by thinking about whether it is realistic to find the answers or not.

**Step 4.** Think of ways to find the answers to your questions. It is okay not to be able to find the answers to all of them. Continue your primary research by conducting interviews. Which of the questions in step 3 could you address to your interviewees? Keep accurate notes of the answers.

**Step 5.** Write about your findings in the steps 1 to 4.

## ASSIGNMENT 2.



Now you are beginning to write your final research paper. Your research stems out from your family history – something personal and precious. Therefore, this research paper is a way for you to address a really important question/issue that illuminates how your family history ties into the larger context of this world and helps you explore and better understand what happened to your family members, and, possibly, better understand them in their choices.

Besides, you have done a lot in order to prepare for this research paper. You now know how to find relevant sources, how to read and summarize them, how to make your paper focused, how to put your sources in conversation, and how to enter that conversation with your own judgements, conclusions, doubts, and suggestions.

I hope you will enjoy this process (you may want to show this paper to your children and grandchildren together with the research to your family history!).

## Guidelines

There are some more things you may need to know as you are writing your first draft. These guidelines will help you along the way.

- 1) Decide whether you want to argue or to explore. Both are great choices.
  - If you have arrived at some definite conclusions as you were reading through your sources, then go for the Argumentative one and show the reader how you arrived at your conclusions.  
YOU WANT YOUR READER TO TAKE YOUR POINT OF VIEW SHOWING THEM HOW YOU ARRIVED AT IT.
  - In an Exploratory paper, you are taking your reader on your journey as you are exploring, going from one question to another (as you are discussing your sources, you have more questions rising and you are showing the process of looking for the answers).  
YOU TELL YOUR READER THE STORY OF YOUR THINKING. (see more in Curious Researcher, p.150)

Your paper will include the following:

- A question, a hypothesis, a point, a claim, a thesis – what do you want to say about your research question?
- A review of what has already been said by others about your topic.
- Specific information on which your findings, conclusions, speculations, assertions are based
- A variety of methods of reasoning through the question: a narration, comparison/contrast, argumentation, cause and effect, explanation, definition, etc. to convey the ideas to the reader.
- Depending on which type you choose – Argument or Exploration, FOLLOW the structure on page 151 for Exploration or page 153 for Argument (attached to this assignment).

To write rhetorically, think what you want your reader to do and how would you like your reader to change. Approach it the way that you are on an important mission to untangle a difficult

question or to change this world for the better, convincing your reader to change their mind. BE PASSIONATE! (but polite and academic) 😊

- 2) Use the quotes in a coherent way. Also, do not cherry pick them just to support your argument without fully understanding the context of those quotes.
- 3) Your paper must use at least 4 reliable secondary sources out of 7 that you have read at the preparatory stages. You should also use your primary research.
- 4) There has to be clearly perceived care for the reader.
- 5) Your citations must be in MLA style.
- 6) The first draft of paper is due:

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