

Position Paper

Use evidence from primary and secondary sources to take a position on a research topic of your interest.

What you need to do:

1) *Get ready.*

Review the requirements. Review the Requirements for All Papers. This page has important guidance and videos on formatting your document, structuring your essay, and using evidence.

Watch the video. The overview video explains what I want you to cover in the essay and what I'm expecting in terms of arguments, evidence, and structure.

Another resource you may find helpful is the Elephant Pamphlet, which gives step-by-step guidance on preparing for and writing a position paper.

Choose your topic and thesis. The first stages of writing this paper involve choosing a topic and writing a proposal. For these two stages, see the video and details on the proposal page.

2) *Find your evidence.*

Review your feedback. The next step after writing your proposal and reviewing my feedback is to gather the research you will need to support the arguments you'll be making in your paper.

Find 3 sources. Research your topic and find at least three sources that will provide you with evidence for your argument; these need to be primary and secondary sources only (see the Research and Citation Center for more on sources).

I'll point you toward some possibilities in my feedback on your proposal.

Kinds of sources. Ideally you should have a mix of primary and secondary sources, but it will depend on the topic.

Tertiary sources are not allowed. These include textbooks, encyclopedias, and most websites. See the Research and Citation Center for more on sources.

For guidance on finding full-text online primary and secondary sources, see the Research and Citation Center. We will talk about this in class as well.

3) Write a 6- to 8-page research paper in which you take a position on your topic.

Introduction. In your introduction, briefly describe the problem and state the position you will argue as a thesis statement. Your introduction should follow the format of the proposal (see the proposal page).

A sample intro can be found on the website.

Body. In the body of your paper, make three assertions as to why your thesis statement is valid.

For each assertion, describe and discuss the evidence from the primary and secondary sources.

Each section starts with an assertion followed by evidence, and each section builds on the previous sections to make an overall argument.

Conclusion. Tie your examples and assertions together and show how they support your overall thesis.

4) Finalize your essay.

Citations. Make sure your evidence is cited and that you include a bibliography. For how to do citations and bibliographies, see the Research and Citation Center. You will be marked down drastically if your paper is not properly cited.

Optional draft. You may email me an optional draft two weeks before the final due date. It should include most of your paper (at least two thirds of the final content, with sections to be written described in square brackets). I'll give feedback, but not a grade, to help you refine your final paper.

Double-check the requirements. Make sure your paper meets the Requirements for All Papers for formatting, structure, and evidence, as well as the specifications given above for what's expected for this assignment.

Once you're sure your paper meets the requirements, upload it as DOCX or PDF to BlackBoard.