

CGW4U
CANADIAN AND WORLD ISSUES

CULMINATING ACTIVITY
THE RESEARCH ESSAY

INTRODUCTION

The Research Essay is by far the most important independent assignment in this course. This is because competent exercise of research and reporting skills – from topic selection and problem definition through hypothesis testing, document structure and writing – is the ultimate measure of success in most field of academia and the work world. Most important of all, it may well be that research and reporting skills have become the indispensable tools of the current information age. These skills will only improve with experience and practice.

REQUIREMENTS

You are required to complete a research essay on a topic of your choice relating to the Canadian and World Issues. Topics of interest may include current global economic, social, political or environmental issues, or issues connected with Canada's international role and responsibilities. **The topic selected approved by the teacher.** You must probe a single well-defined problem, and after a careful gathering and weighing of evidence, present a clear, convincing and coherent point of view. The sources of information and ideas you use to develop and substantiate your argument must be properly documented. Remember, "NO ARGUMENT, NO ESSAY"!

The Research Essay: A Guide to Essays and Papers authored by Hugh Robertson (2001) is considered to be the official source of research and reporting methodology. As such, any work that does not conform to the guidelines in the Robertson manual will be deemed unacceptable and returned for revision.

PROCEDURE

While most of the time you will need to complete this assignment will be out-of-class time, some scheduled class time will be available for the culminating activity. This time allocation reflects the importance placed on independent study in the course. It is also designed to allow you to complete their work in small, manageable stages and, by the same token, to permit the teacher to monitor your progress, or the lack thereof, on a more or less continuous basis.

Your research essay must also satisfy a set of specific conditions. These steps and their respective due dates are listed below.

I. **STUDY PROPOSAL**

Due: Tuesday November 4 (10 marks)

Do preliminary research and reading to help with topic selection and to determine if sufficient resources exist. Relevant sources located at this point will form initial entries in your working bibliography. Choose a topic that is interesting to you and justifiably significant. In less than two pages (not including title page or bibliography) provide the following information:

1. Topic: must be approved by the teacher and stated on your title page.
2. Background: in one paragraph, provide a general description of the topic selected. This will help to set the context of your essay.
3. Focus: clearly identify one specific aspect or feature (issue) of your selected topic and explain (give reasons) why it is significant.
4. Purpose: explicitly state the objective of the essay by asserting the research question. This will define the scope of your essay.
5. Thesis: indicate the range of viewpoints on your research question and clearly state your paper's position or point of view (in one or two sentences). The thesis provides an answer to the research question. Then give a brief description of the three main structural components of the essay. These are your main arguments that will form the body of your essay.
6. Bibliography: provide a preliminary list – minimum 8 – of sources of information (books, articles, journals, magazines, online, etc.). These must be presented in the APA documentation format.

Begin your search by perusing its wealth of electronic and print resources.

II. **DETAILED OUTLINE** Due: Monday November 17 (10 marks)

1. Research Notes

Develop a systematic method for recording information and ideas (please refer to Robertson p. 17-28 for examples). Remember your task is to develop a thoughtful and convincing answer to your research question. This is what guides your research. Find information relevant to the purpose, select and record all relevant information, and identify the source and page number. Be sure to include both information and **ideas that support and contradict your personal position**. Refer to a varied range of print and online sources.

2. Outline

Once the recording of information is complete, the next step is to develop the structure of your essay using the "ABC" model as outlined in the Robertson manual (p.30-38). It is expected that you will follow this model, and create a detailed point-form outline. The point-form outline is meant to be flexible and used as a guide in the writing process.

3. Research notes, point-form outline, and a **working bibliography** will be submitted for marking. A student-teacher conference will then take place in class to evaluate progress and provide feedback.

E.g. Essay Outline

- A. Introduction (one paragraph)**
- background
 - focus
 - purpose
 - thesis
 - plan of development
- B. Body (content of essay that develops and verifies thesis)**
- I. First and Strongest Argument (first section)**
- main point that connects to your thesis (will be the introductory paragraph)
 - supporting details (form paragraphs containing a mix of qualitative and quantitative information drawn from a variety of sources)
 - cite authors from which the supporting details have been derived
- II. Second and Second Best Argument (second section)**
- main point that connects to your thesis (will be the introductory paragraph)
 - supporting details (form paragraphs containing a mix of qualitative and quantitative information drawn from a variety of sources)
 - cite authors from which the supporting details have been derived
- III. Third and Weakest Argument (third section)**
- main point that connects to your thesis (will be the introductory paragraph)
 - supporting details (form paragraphs containing a mix of qualitative and quantitative information drawn from a variety of sources)
 - cite authors from which the supporting details have been derived
- C. Conclusion (one paragraph)**
- restate thesis and summarize your arguments
 - DO NOT introduce new arguments or evidence
 - overall summative statement
- D. References**
- on a separate page, list all sources of information used to write the paper in alphabetical order using the APA documentation format

III. ROUGH DRAFT Due: Friday December 5 (10 marks)

Upon completion, the rough draft will be revised and edited both individually and by a peer. Peer evaluation is an important element of the writing process. Critically examining the work of someone else is also an effective way of learning the art and skills of written expression.

IV. **FINAL COPY**

Due: Friday December 12

50 marks

The final product must be 1500-2000 words in length (roughly 6-8 double-spaced pages) and include the following:

- **TITLE PAGE**
 - use an appropriate title (should reflect the purpose of essay)
 - name, course, instructor, school, date submitted

- **INTRODUCTION**
 - background
 - focus
 - purpose
 - thesis

- **BODY**
 - three main arguments
 - each argument must be logically consistent with the stated objective
 - supporting details must include a relevant mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence (e.g. facts, examples, figures, expert opinions) that supports the thesis
 - citations of evidence must be provided according to the APA author-date documentation system
 - label and cite any diagrams, tables, and maps

- **CONCLUSION**
 - sum up and link the major supporting arguments that support your thesis
 - give insights on your topic as a whole (i.e. connect the issue to a wider context and/or identify unresolved questions, suggest new questions, or indicate interesting aspects for further investigation)
 - **DO NOT** include new information

- **REFERENCES**
 - only list sources of information you used in writing the essay
 - do not number your sources, place alphabetically by author's last name
 - all sources must be in the proper APA documentation format

NOTE: Number all pages except for title page and first page of the essay.

Include five subheadings (i.e. *Introduction, Argument 1, Argument 2, Argument 3, Conclusion, References*)

Include figures (maps, data tables, pictures):

- clearly referred to in text of essay
- correctly numbered
- support ideas presented (caption)
- show evidence of further development
- minimum of one map to show geographical context

CRITERIA	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	MARK
Introduction Defines problem or issue Statement of thesis Statement of direction, introduces main points and that leads to following paragraphs	Problem or issue not defined No thesis, simple statement No statement of development	Problem or issue stated, but unclear Thesis stated, but unclear Main points are unclear	Problem or issue defined with moderate clarity Thesis is stated Main points introduced with moderate clarity	Problem or issue clearly defined Thesis is precisely stated Clear statement of development	/5
Supporting Arguments Arguments are logically structured, analyzed, and contribute to thesis development	Arguments are unrelated to the thesis	Arguments are unclear and not logically related to the thesis	Arguments are usually clear and logically related to the thesis	Arguments are clear, logically structured, and strongly support the thesis	/10
Supporting Details Substantiates arguments with relevant and specific evidence including facts, figures, and examples	Limited support of main ideas, evidence mostly irrelevant Limited or unrelated facts, figures, examples	Some main ideas are supported, some evidence not relevant Insufficient facts, figures, examples	Most ideas are supported with relevant evidence Sufficient use of facts, figures, examples	Main ideas supported with relevant evidence Substantial facts, figures, examples used	/15
Conclusion Restates thesis Summary of supporting arguments No new information	Abrupt ending, limited summarizing of main arguments	Thesis restated, but unclear Some arguments not summarized	Thesis restated and arguments are summarized	Thesis restated; main arguments summarized effectively; no new information or data; topic is brought to an appropriate end	/5
Sources of Information Use of a variety of sources correctly cited and documented	Over-reliance on one/two sources Citation and documentation method not followed or absent	Few sources of information Citation and documentation used, but with significant errors	Required minimum number of sources used Minor errors in citation and documentation	A wide variety of print and online sources used Precise use of citation and documentation method	/5

Style Structure (title page, page numbering, subheadings, maps, data tables, paragraphing, grammar, spelling)	Limited accuracy and effectiveness	Some accuracy and effectiveness	An appropriate level of accuracy and effectiveness	A clear, accurate, and effective use of grammar and spelling, and structural components	/5
English expression	Limited vocabulary, unclear use of language and inappropriate tone	Vocabulary not varied, simple language, and informal tone	Good vocabulary, use of language, and tone	Varied vocabulary, clear and formal language in a scholarly tone	/5

Comments: