**Research Project Process for Essay 3 [ENG 1101] Total Hours for Success: 12 - 25**

**Step 1: Start with an interesting place**

Time: 1 hour

Method: Select a place from notes, lists, class discussion

Pitfalls: too big or too small. The place must be able to support research meaning that students need to find books, newspaper articles, peer reviewed journal articles about the place.

**Step 2: Read about and learn the basics of the place**

Time: 1 hour

Method: Where is the place? What is the history of the place? Who are some people associated with the place? When does the place gain importance to your research? Why are you interested in this place? The answers to these questions should result in at least three pages of typed notes.

Make sure to record any vital, non-Wikipedia, information in your Annotated Bibliography.

Pitfalls: not spending adequate time on this vital step.

**Step 3: Develop “HOW” Research Questions**

These questions will lead to a provisional thesis. Make sure to include two sides to these questions.

Time: 1 – 2 hours

Method:

1. Using two or more newspaper articles about the place, outline one or two controversies or arguments concerning the place. Make sure to describe the important people and their views in your notes.

2. Fit the controversies or arguments into major subject fields such as health science, sociology, environmental science, real estate, labor, entertainment, economics, architecture, engineering. Often controversies do not fit neatly into one category; be prepared to list more than one subject field. This step will help when it comes to paragraph organization.

3. Make sure to record all quality research information in the Annotated Bibliography.

Pitfalls:

1. mismatching arguments to subject fields—this will be harmful to the essay when attempting to find evidence and counterclaim.

2. Selecting newspaper articles that are not interesting to you—or are not powerful or detailed enough.

**Step 4: Find more resources to answer the research questions**

This step creates claims and counterclaims to your argument.

Time: 5-8 hours

Method:

1. Use names, places, events from newspapers or encyclopedias when using the research indexes such as Academic Search Complete.

2. Use subject fields as keywords to make index searches more refined and relevant. The search is very important and students must be prepared the change the search terms.

3. find book chapter and articles and then inspect the footnotes, endnotes, works cited in order to track down other resources.

4. Make sure to record vital information in the Annotated Bibliography

Pitfalls: Skim each resource to make sure it is relevant. Read for the article annotations and the author’s thesis. Ask questions: is this article/book/chapter too old? Is it biased? Is the publication high quality or low quality? [Is it a university press or eHow?]

Pitfalls: Finding more than two sources is vital to a successful essay.

**Step 5: Outline or Map Sources**

Time: 2-3 hours

Method:

1. What is the main argument? Position 1 – sources

Position 2 – sources

Position 3 – sources

What is your argument? Who do you agree with (see positions above)? Sources? How do the

positions and claim relate? Make sure to balance claims against counterclaims.

2. Organization: Which position is the weakest? Strongest? The strongest typically goes last. Students must decide the most logical organization. For example, is chronology or theme the best way to lay out the arguments and positions?

Pitfalls: Try more than one type of organization. Don’t be afraid to sketch out the outline using a variety of colors and structures. Make sure to ask: how are the arguments and positions connected?

**Step 6: Thesis Creation and Drafting**

Time: 5–8 hours

Method:

\* Work on the thesis for at least 30 minutes. Do not rush this step. Review the controversies surrounding the arguments—and your own position. Make sure to review several examples. Use the thesis formula.

1. The first page must contain four pieces of information. Why did the student choose this place/project? What are the major positions that this essay explores? What is the student’s thesis? What is the student’s method?

2. Background: The student must not dwell on the entire history the place/project. Three sentences maximum is allowed for background. The background must be finished on the first page.

3. Each paragraph must begin with a clear and strong topic sentence. Example: “Of the three main positions connected to the argument to build the Brooklyn-Queens Connector, the weakest is weather resilience and storm protection.”

4. After writing a strong topic sentence, student may consider the value of freewriting the rest of the paragraph in order to get the main ideas into place. Editing can come later. [Paragraphs not perfection]

Pitfalls: Do not wait until the last minute to begin writing.

**Step 7: Revision, Editing, Proofreading**

Time: 2-4 hours

Method: peer review groups; writing lab, family, friends, software

Pitfalls: This step is often the difference between an A paper and a B paper.