

Research Step 1: **Timetable and Guidelines** *American Literature*

YOU WILL NEED YOUR DEVICE EVERY DAY!!

The agenda for this unit will assume and follow a traditional five-day school week, regardless of your actual time in class.

Week 1: Preparing—The Process

- Day 1: Overview: Timetable and Guidelines
- Day 2: Overview: Bibliography, Sources, and Cornell Notes
- Day 3: Create Bibliography Entry, Read, and Take Notes: Source 1 (Textbook Anthology)
- Day 4: **Due:** Source 1 Bibliography Entry and 5 Cornell Notes
- Day 5: Questions

Week 2: Reading and Notetaking

- Day 1: Lecture: *Scarlet Letter*—Your Primary Source (Novel)
- Day 2: Read and Take Notes: Chapters 1-3
- Day 3: Read and Take Notes: Chapters 4-6
- Day 4: Read and Take Notes: Chapters 7-9
- Day 5: Create Bibliography Entry, Read, and Take Notes: Source 2 (Encyclopedia)

Week 3: Reading and Notetaking

- Day 1: **Due:** Source 2 Bibliography Entry and 5 Cornell Notes
Read and Take Notes: Chapters 10-12
- Day 2: Read and Take Notes: Chapters 13-15
- Day 3: Read and Take Notes: Chapters 16-18
- Day 4: Read and Take Notes: Chapters 19-21
- Day 5: Create Bibliography Entry, Read, and Take Notes: Source 3 (Newspaper)

Week 4: Gathering—Notes and Bibliography

- Day 1: **Due:** Source 3 Bibliography and 5 Cornell Notes
- Day 2: Read and Take Notes: Chapters 22-24
- Day 3: Create Bibliography Entry, Read, and Take Notes: Source 4 (Website)
- Day 4: **Due:** Source 4 Bibliography and 5 Cornell Notes
- Day 5: **Due:** Source 5 Bibliography and 25 Cornell Notes

Week 5: Organizing—Thesis and Outline

- Day 1: Overview: Working Thesis and Working Outline
- Day 2: **Due:** Working Thesis and Working Outline
- Day 3: Overview: Formal Thesis and Formal Outline
- Day 4: Developing Your Formal Outline
- Day 5: **Due:** Formal Thesis and Formal Outline

Week 6: Drafting—Writing, Revising, and Polishing

- Day 1: Writing: Rough Draft
- Day 2: Writing: Rough Draft
- Day 3: Writing: Rough Draft
- Day 4: Writing: Rough Draft
- Day 5: **Due:** Rough Draft

Final Week

- Day 1: Writing: Final Draft
- Day 2: Revising: Final Draft
- Day 3: Polishing: Final Draft
- Day 4: **Due:** Final Paper

** All dates are tentative, as accommodations must sometimes be made in response to unexpected interruptions*

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the research paper is to provide a *literary analysis* of a chosen work and genre. *Analysis* is the key the word. A literary analysis is an argumentative analysis of a literary work. Although some summary is needed within the argument, the objective is not to write a book report. Instead, a literary analysis discusses your interpretation of a text through careful examination of the author's technique: diction, syntax, themes, motifs, as well as many other literary devices. You are expected to rely upon your own reasoning, as well as the primary text, to give evidence in support of your interpretation.

REQUIREMENTS

Listed below are the various steps you must accomplish (along with their point values) in order to satisfy the research unit. Each step must be submitted by the established deadline, completed entirely, and formatted properly (MLA Style) in order to receive full credit. To be certain you've satisfied every step, fill in the open bullets as you go. Refer to the *Purdue OWL* (a link is on my website), as well as this packet, for more detailed instructions. The research process leading up to the final paper will account for 100 of the 125 total points involved in the project—these are the easy points, so don't fall behind. These are the points that will prop you up should your final paper fall short of the mark. Get them all! And a final reminder: Those who refuse to seek help with the Writing Center do so at their own peril!

1. Working Bibliography (25 points)
 - You must have five **quality** sources
 - Of your five sources, you must have at least three different types
 - Only one Internet source allowed
 - No Wikipedia
 - If an online source is merely a copy of a traditional paper source (and can be cited as such), you do not have to count this as an Internet source
2. Cornell Notes (45 points)
 - Minimum of **five** substantial and relevant notes from each of your **first four secondary** sources
 - Minimum of **25** substantial and relevant notes from your **primary** source (the novel)
 - Cornell Note-taking system must be used
3. Working Thesis (5 points)
 - Must include author, title of work, genre, publication date, and unifying idea
4. Working Outline (5 points)
 - Divided into at least **five** solid, separate, and clear ideas
 - "Intro" and "Conclusion" are not clear ideas
5. Formal Outline (10 points)
 - Use the "**topic**" outline format
6. Rough Draft (10 points)
 - "Peer Review" must be stapled on top of draft
 - Must include revised formal outline **and** in-text citations
 - Must be at least **four full pages** (not counting outline or works cited)
7. Final Outline, Final Paper, and Bibliography (25 points)
 - Final paper **must meet required number of pages** (not counting outline or bibliography)
8. All previously graded materials must be returned when submitting final paper
9. Final paper must be stapled and submitted in the following order
 - Final Revised Outline
 - Final Revised Paper (including bibliography)

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SOURCES

Good sources are the lifeblood of a paper. And if *meaningful* notes are taken, such sources can help build a thesis, spark ideas, and lend the authority of outside scholarship to your own informed analysis. The best sources are primary (directly from the artist via interviews, essays, or the work itself). However, secondary sources from reputable institutions (universities, trade magazines, scholarly journals, et al.) can be equally valuable. Though sources come in all varieties, some general rules apply.

Good sources:

- are transparent: *if you cannot find all the necessary information to cite your source, move on to a better one*
- have credentialed authors: *academic degrees, publications, expertise in his or her field*
- are well-reasoned and supported: *refers to facts, figures, and evidence to support the argument*
- are accurate: *the more recent the source, the more accurate the information*
- have a balanced tone: *uses substantiated evidence instead of inflammatory, emotional, or biased language*

A number of items must first be identified before you can determine whether a source is useful and credible:

- 1 Author.
- 2 Title of source.
- 3 Title of container,
- 4 Other contributors,
- 5 Version,
- 6 Number,
- 7 Publishing House,
- 8 Publication date,
- 9 Location.

If you follow the above template in content, order, and punctuation, creating your bibliography will be considerably easier. For example, if you were to cite Mark Twain's short story "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" from the school's American Literature textbook:

1. Twain, Mark.
2. "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County."
3. *Prentice Hall Literature: The American Experience*,
4. Ellen Bowler et al,
5. _____
6. _____
7. Prentice Hall,
8. 1994,
9. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

These items must then be organized into a properly formatted (MLA) citation for your bibliography page:

Twain, Mark. "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." *Prentice Hall Literature: The American Experience*, Ellen Bowler et al, Prentice Hall, 1994, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

For this paper you will be required to find, cite, take notes on, and use the following sources:

- Source 1 (Textbook Anthology): *Prentice Hall Literature: The American Experience*
- Source 2 (Encyclopedia): <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nathaniel-Hawthorne>
- Source 3 (Newspaper): <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jan/06/scarlet-letter-nathaniel-hawthorne-100-best-novels>
- Source 4 (Website): <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/scarlet/>
- Source 5 (Novel): *The Scarlet Letter*

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THESIS

Thesis Statement

A sentence that expresses the main idea or position of a longer composition is the thesis statement. It is located in the introduction and reveals the main idea of your topic. A thesis statement is of crucial importance to a written work because it controls what will be discussed. Therefore, the better your thesis statement, the better your paper. While thesis statements can differ in format and style, some basic observations are generally applicable.

The thesis statement should:

1. Be located in the introductory paragraph
2. Identify the subject: author, work, idea, etc.
3. Express a main or unifying idea developed from the information you have gathered
4. Answer three questions: What am I talking about? Why is it important? Why is it true?
5. Be clear and concise
6. Develop a new slant or approach on a familiar topic

The thesis statement should not:

1. Be a simple statement of fact that requires neither proof nor support
2. Be a statement of belief or faith (beliefs cannot be substantiated by reason)
3. Be a question
4. Be too short to allow development of complex ideas
5. Be so broad that it cannot be defended within the required perimeters of the paper

“Insta-Thesis”

For your working thesis, you’ll be using the “Insta-Thesis” template. This should make the wording easier and provide you with a firm foundation so long as you choose good information with which to plug into the provided template. You may later expand this idea while fine-tuning your formal thesis, but for now the “Insta-Thesis” will help guarantee a solid starting point.

Thesis Paragraph

A thesis paragraph expands upon your thesis statement, suggesting further points you’ll be making and mentioning other ideas you’ll be exploring, as well as outlining some of the examples you’ll be using in support of your thesis statement. Think of your thesis paragraph as a menu—a brief descriptive introduction to the dinner that will follow.

Topic Sentences

A single sentence that expresses the main idea of a paragraph is a topic sentence. The reader should be able to determine through this sentence what the paragraph is about. Usually—but not always—the topic sentence is the first sentence of the paragraph. A topic sentence also helps the writer to focus on one topic rather than wandering into other areas.

Not every paragraph needs a topic sentence. For example, paragraphs that describe, narrate, or detail the steps in an experiment do not usually need topic sentences. This is particularly true of fiction. Topic sentences are useful, however, in paragraphs that analyze and argue—two things upon which research papers are founded. Most paragraphs written to stand-alone require a topic sentence to express the main idea. Paragraphs that are part of a longer piece of writing need topic sentences to identify their individual ideas and to relate those ideas to the thesis of the paper as a whole. Good topic sentences utilize solid transitional words (*however, consequently, nevertheless, since, although, despite, additionally*, et. al) and language that help the reader move smoothly from one paragraph or idea to another.

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OUTLINE

The formal outline is an expansion of your working outline (“Insta-Outline”). Good outlines are the backbone of a paper. An outline provides organization and can help develop depth of analysis. A good outline makes the paper that much easier to write. For this research paper, **use a topic outline**. Topic outlines do not use complete sentences. They are organized by concept or idea, using only a few words (perhaps as few as one or as many as five). As a consequence, you must choose the perfect word(s) to convey your idea effectively. With any luck, this will help focus your thought process. Make sure to adhere to the following rules concerning the writing of formal outlines.

1. Paginate **in the header** by using your last name and lower-case Roman numerals. (e.g., i, ii, iii, iv, v)
2. Give the outline a title (in Title Case).
3. Begin the outline with your revised thesis statement.
4. Make items at the same level of equal weight or significance.
5. Always supply at least two subdivisions for a category, since nothing can be divided into fewer than two parts. For every A, there must be a B; for every 1, there must be a 2.
6. Capital letters support Roman numerals, numbers support capital letters, small letters support numbers, numbers in parentheses support small letters, and small letters in parentheses support numbers in parentheses.

Example:

I. First main idea

A. First subdivision of main idea

1. Reason or example
 - a. Supporting detail
 - b. Supporting detail
2. Reason or example
 - a. Supporting detail
 - b. Supporting detail
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (a)
 - (b)

B. Second subdivision of main idea

1. Reason or example
 - a. Supporting detail
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Supporting detail
 - (1)
 - (2)
2. Reason or example

II. Second main idea

7. Capitalize only the first word of every phrase unless other rules of capitalization apply.
8. Keep the outline in parallel structure (the first word of each section should be the same part of speech).

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WRITING THE PAPER

Analysis *requires* explanation and elaboration; it does not simply identify “what,” but also attempts to uncover and demonstrate the “how” and “why” behind something. Analysis is *not* a list of facts; do not simply collect all your note cards and insert them into your paper. Keep these tips in mind as you write your paper.

Facts inform; analysis helps us understand. The research paper is about analysis.

Analysis

- Analysis is digging into a subject/work and **interpreting** its plot, technique, or theme in order to assign **value** and **meaning**. Think of analysis as a formula: **assertion + explanation + example + interpretation = analysis**
- List-making is **not** analysis; it’s space-filler that does nothing to support your thesis.
- Biographical information is **not** analysis unless **you** connect it to your thesis.
- Historical facts and figures are **not** analysis unless **you** connect it to your thesis.
- Nothing is relevant to your thesis unless **you** establish the connection—don’t expect the reader to do your work.
- All information must relate to your thesis. Even when discussing the artist’s life, make sure to establish the connection between his or her background and the work he or she later produced. If an idea or fact doesn’t apply to and support your thesis, then it shouldn’t be in your paper—get rid of it!
- Make smooth and meaningful transitions so the reader understands what you mean, where you’re going, and how each sentence relates to the one before and after. Use transitional words like *because, due to, so, if . . . then, in order*, etc. that orient the reader and help to establish cause-and-effect relationships between ideas.
- To establish how an author fits into the pantheon of literature, you must define and explain the **genre** and **culture** in which he or she wrote.
- To establish that an artist/work had influence, you must discuss those who have been influenced by his or her work, and how this influence shows itself.
- To establish that an artist/work is different, you must discuss those artists from whom yours is distinguished and compare their work.
- Examples (actual lines from a novel, play, poem, etc.) are often the most direct and concrete way to illustrate whatever it is you are asserting. Such examples should always be accompanied by interpretation and analysis on your part.
- Support all assertions with evidence. (Just saying it, doesn’t make it true—**prove it**.)