

AP Research Summer Assignment

Assignment 1: Field Research

Your primary goal this summer is to brainstorm topic ideas and narrow your focus so that when you come back to school, you have a topic – even though it will most likely need fine-tuning. We're all at different places with this, so start where you personally need to start. Below is the **research** part of your summer assignment: read through and complete (if applicable) each category before moving on to the next one:

Category 1: *I Have No Idea What My Topic Will Be:* Take the first few weeks of the summer and every day, pick a few stories to read from a credible news source, like the *New York Times*. Don't only read the news section: read Arts and Entertainment, Sports, etc. – whatever interests you. Rotate your news source (NPR is an excellent source for less main-stream topic ideas). Create a jot list of articles (including date and author) that pique your interest and add to that list each week. At some point, try to start narrowing your field and only reading articles in that field. By the beginning of July, look through your list of articles and narrow to 2-3 topics that really appeal to you. Move on to category 2.

Category 2: *I Know My Field* If you know the academic field or area of research you want to pursue, spend some time looking at topics within that field. Read and listen to various news sources, do some digging, and identify 2 potential topics within your field of choice. For each topic option, do some reading and reflecting. Maybe even make a trip to the public library! Write a paragraph about each topic and include 1) what seems to be out there in the way of usable material, 2) benefits to researching each topic, and 3) drawbacks to researching each topic. Move on to category 3.

Category 3: *I Know My Basic Topic* Begin searching to see what's already been written on your general topic. Your goal is to search for an untapped/ unexplored angle – where is there a gap or a hole in the conversation on this subject; what needs to be added? How can you make it original AND feasible? Create a 3-source annotated bibliography (you'll be able to add on to this next year) that includes at least 2 peer-reviewed articles or case studies. All 3 sources should be credible enough to use down the road. In addition, type answers to the following questions on your topic:

- ☐ Is this topic feasible to research (is there existing, credible research on this topic that I can draw from)?
- ☐ What kind of study could I conduct on this topic?
- ☐ What are some options for making my study *original*?
- ☐ What might impede my being able to conduct a study on this topic in 7 months?
- ☐ Would my study be best executed with human participants or with strictly content?
- ☐ What resources or support would I need to be able to conduct a study on this topic?

Assignment 2: *Practical Research Reading (start this in June, as these chapters will help you narrow your topic)*

Read chapters 1 and 2 of *Practical Research*: **Chapter 1: The Nature and Tools of Research / Chapter 2: The Problem: The Heart of the Research Process**

Take detailed notes as you read (typed or handwritten). I'll check these for a grade the first week of school, but you'll want them to refer back to also, so make sure you are thorough!

So, to recap: here's what you should walk in with on the 2nd day of school:

- ☐ 3-source annotated bibliography, APA format (typed)
- ☐ Answers to the 6 questions above (typed)
- ☐ Detailed notes on chapters 1 and 2 of *Practical Research* (typed or neatly hand-written)