

## Research Essay, First Instructions

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Print these pages (single-sided), keep them in your binder, and bring them to class *EVERY* day.  
There will be new pages to print for Quarter 4 concerning the next assignments.

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### PROMPT

**Research an influential person from world history (non-American).  
Examine his/her life, experiences, and/or accomplishments  
and explain how or why they are significant.**

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**(Fill in after reading pages 2-4)**

Chosen and Approved Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Research Question:

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# Understanding “The Big Picture”

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## What is an Expository Research Essay?

Expository = analyzing facts and drawing conclusions to answer a key question

Research = the gathering of facts from reputable sources and experts

Essay = the communication of ideas through organized writing centered around a thesis

## How is an Expository Essay different from a Persuasive Essay?

- A persuasive essay PROVES. In a persuasive essay, the writer first presents an arguable position and then builds support in an attempt to convince the reader to agree with the writer’s viewpoint.
  - Example: Prove that Joe Burrow should be named the NFL’s Most Valuable Player this year.
- An expository (or analytical) essay EXPLAINS. In an expository essay, the writer first presents a central question to explore and then neutrally shares facts related to that question. Once the facts are presented, the writer uses critical thinking to form his/her own conclusions that *explain* how the facts answer the key question.
  - Example: Explain why Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol*.

## How is an Expository Essay about a historical figure different from a Biography?

While both a biography and an expository essay will discuss facts about a person’s life, they do not serve the same purpose.

- A biography is a narrative (story) of a person’s life. It is usually a chronological record of events that simply informs the reader about what happened.
- An expository essay aims to answer one or more key questions about a person’s life. It presents only the facts that are related to those questions and explains why those facts provide the answer. Most often, an expository essay aims to answer “how?” “why?” and “so what?” questions.

Here are sample key questions about a historical figure that can guide an expository essay:

- How did Martin Luther become a key figure in the Reformation?
- Why did Elie Wiesel dedicate his life to humanitarian causes and how did he do so?
- How did C. S. Lewis develop into a talented author of children’s literature?
- Why did Amy Carmichael dedicate her life to missions and how did she serve others?
- How did Queen Elizabeth II leave a legacy of dutiful and humble service?
- Why and how did Charlotte Mason influence the world of homeschooling?
- Why did William Wilberforce seek to end Great Britain’s slave trade and how did he accomplish it?

You will need to focus your research essay around answering a central question like one of these.

## ESSAY TOPIC & RESEARCH QUESTION

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- ❖ First, discuss topics (people) and research questions with your parent(s) and get parental approval.
  - ❖ Then, email the name of the person you have selected, his/her home country, and your initial research question to your tutor. You may email any time prior to the deadline.
  - ❖ Essay topics are awarded on a first come, first served basis. To see which world figures have already been selected, go to Weebly – Core B – ‘More’ and click the link at the top of the page.
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What kind of person should you choose? There are many, many options, and just a few are listed below.

|          |                  |                    |              |               |
|----------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Artists  | Biblical Figures | Inventors          | Missionaries | Teachers      |
| Athletes | Entrepreneurs    | Mathematicians     | Philosophers | Theologians   |
| Authors  | Explorers        | Military Personnel | Scientists   | World Leaders |

Choose your non-American\* historical figure wisely! This essay is a long project, so the key to success is to study a person who interests you. In fact, selecting someone with whom you are unfamiliar will give you something new to learn. Keep in mind that obscure historical figures may be more difficult to research. If you choose a person for whom you cannot find adequate information, you must start over with a new topic.

As you are discussing different world figures with your parents, you also need to develop an **initial research question** to explore. It should be broad and open-ended. See example questions on page 3 and below:

### The “How did s/he become” Question

Examples:

- *How was Winston Churchill qualified to be the British Prime Minister during World War II?*
- *How did Princess Diana change from a fashion icon to an ambassador for the sick and poor?*

Your research will focus on the influences and decisions that helped the individual achieve his position in the world. You might research how his childhood, education, training, faith, peers, personality, advantages, traumas, etc. shaped him on his way to accomplishing his goals.

### The “Why is s/he remembered” Question

Examples:

- *Why does Betsie Ten Boom remain an inspirational example of true Christian faith and love?*
- *Why is Peter the Great remembered as a ruler who both helped and hindered his country?*

Your research will focus on the person’s work, achievements, and perhaps impact. You might research how her career, mission, accomplishments, awards, mistakes, failures, passions, personality, faith, etc. led to a noteworthy life or created a legacy.

Question idea:

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You are not limited to these two question formats. And remember, this is only an initial question to help guide your early research. As you begin studying the individual, you may find a more interesting question to pursue.

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\*What defines “non-American”?

America is a land of immigrants. For this essay, “non-American” is any person whose place of birth AND life’s work/accomplishments took place outside of the USA. Examples:

- David Livingstone = NON-AMERICAN: born in Scotland, worked in Africa
- Peter the Great = NON-AMERICAN: born in Russia, became Czar of Russia
- Jim Elliot = AMERICAN: worked in Ecuador BUT born in America, US citizen
- Elon Musk = AMERICAN: childhood in South Africa BUT educated/works in USA, became a US citizen

## Assignment: TOPIC TO THESIS and Research Question CHART

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❖ You will start this chart in class and finish it at home.

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**Who is my essay topic?**

**Why does this person interest me?**

**Take Inventory**

*What facts do I already know? What are the key events, accomplishments, traits in this person's life?*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

## Ask Questions

*What about this person raises my curiosity? What might my reader be curious to know?  
Ask open-ended questions; not Yes/No questions.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Develop a Central Question to Analyze and Answer

*When you first selected your topic, you also wrote an initial research question. Copy it here:*

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*Now, examine the facts and questions on the first page. Do they support your research question or do they indicate that you should switch to a different main idea?*

- I will keep my initial research question.
- I will revise or write a new research question that will better guide my essay. (Write it below)

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*Examine the facts and questions on the first page again. Which of them best support your research question? Which are the most important? Are any related to each other? Can any be grouped together under one main idea? Write the top 4-6 subtopics below that you can use to answer your research question.*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

**Assignment: Type a DRAFT Thesis Statement on a separate, MLA-formatted document**

Your thesis should (a) name your subject, (b) address the key question you plan to analyze, and (c) preview the major subtopics/attributes you will use to answer the question.

Thesis Examples

Question: *How did Eddy Merckx become professional cycling's most decorated rider?*

Thesis: Fueled by challenges in his early life, the passionate and perseverant Eddy Merckx became cycling's most decorated rider through a commitment to elite training and athletic versatility.

Question: *Why is Katherine Johnson remembered as an important figure in the NASA space program?*

Thesis: During her career at NASA, Katherine Johnson, a brilliant African American scientist and mathematician, created a legacy of advancement not only in space travel but also in equal rights.

**Edit and Improve Your Draft: REWRITE the Thesis Statement in a Stronger Form**

- One complete sentence with proper grammar and punctuation?
- 3<sup>rd</sup> person?
- Strong word choice and no be verbs?
- No list or prongs?
- Have you avoided subjective or vague language?
- Have you avoided universal, superlative, or highly judgmental claims?
- Have you experimented with word choice and phrasing to craft the strongest sentence possible?

**Finally, type your FULLY REVISED Thesis Statement on the same document as your DRAFT. Print and staple to the front of this chart.**

*You will print one page with both your DRAFT and REVISED thesis statements on it. Label them clearly.*

*\*To be clear, type your first thesis draft, then copy and paste it below and edit the new one until you and your parent feel it is finished. Label this one the Final draft and submit. It may still need to be 'tweaked', but give it your best try!*

## Sources- Information

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For this essay you must quote information from a minimum of 4 different sources. Two of those 4 sources must be books. The Bible may be used as a source, but it does not count toward your 2-book minimum.

It is better to gather more sources than the minimum as not all sources will have high quality information. Gathering 6-7 sources now will guarantee that you have at least 4 good sources to use in the end.

### **Possible Book Sources:**

- Textbooks (including your own World History textbook)
- Encyclopedias
- Biographies
- Other Non-Fiction Books
- Juvenile literature is acceptable if it is written at a young adult reading level. Picture books and other low-level children's books are not permitted.

For some subjects, you may need to search for books with a larger focus in order to find a chapter or section within that book about your historical figure. For example, if I am researching the Belgian cyclist, Eddy Merckx, it is unlikely I will find an entire book about him at my local library. Instead, I might search for books about "Cycling Champions" or "History of Professional Cycling" in which there will likely be information about him.

### **Published Periodical Articles:**

- These are magazine and journal articles published by reputable periodicals. Rather than borrowing print copies, most can now be accessed through online databases.

### **Primary Sources:**

- A document written by the historical figure him/herself.
- A speech, interview, or other performance given by the historical figure him/herself.

### **Internet Articles:**

As a last resort, you may use ONE (and only one) article from a *reputable* internet website.

- Articles from .gov or .edu websites are acceptable.
- Articles from .com or .org websites must have a named author (preferably with an author bio that explains who the author is and what his/her qualifications are for writing about this subject) and a publication date. Ideally, the author will also share his/her own sources of information in the article.
- Blogs or personal websites published by an individual and not a larger organization are not permitted.
- NEVER Wikipedia



## Assignment: (See pacing guide for due date) 4 (or more) Source Cards

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### Source Card Tips:

- For books, examine the front cover, the early inside pages, and the back cover to make sure you find ALL the source information.
- For articles from EBSCO, you may use the citation creation tool. However, it can and does make mistakes, so always double-check the citation yourself.
- For webpages, examine both the top and the bottom of the page for source information.

### Source Cards must contain...

- ✓ a number assigned to each source: 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.
- ✓ all relevant works cited elements in MLA format. There are 10 possible elements to look for in a source.
  - Author(s)
  - Title
  - Container
  - Contributor(s)
  - Version
  - Number
  - Publisher
  - Publication Date
  - Location in Container
  - Date of Access

### Example source card:

The diagram shows a rectangular box representing a source card. Inside the box, the text reads: "Source #2" in the top right corner, and "Thomas, Geoff. 'John Bunyan: His Life, Writing, and Influence.'" Puritan Reformed Journal, vol. 6, no. 2, July 2014, pp. 53-64. EBSCOhost, URL." in the center. Two callout boxes with arrows point to specific parts of the card. The top callout box points to "Source #2" and contains the text: "Assign each source a number." The bottom callout box points to the citation text and contains the text: "Write all source elements in MLA order and format. Since you cannot italicize handwriting, underline the items that will need italicized on your Works Cited page. You also do not need to copy URLs. Just write 'URL' or 'LINK' as a placeholder on your source card and save or bookmark the link elsewhere."

## 40 NOTE CARDS

- ❖ Submit cards in a small, sealed zipper bag with your name written on the outside of the plastic bag.
- ❖ Typed cards are fine- there are templates online you can use! If you type them, you can copy/paste your quotes later (bonus)

### Note Card Tips:

- Choose your facts wisely. Remember your research question and choose evidence that helps to answer that question.
- Specific examples and events are typically better than broad, general statements about the person.
- As you are note-taking, sort your quotes into subtopics. Aim for 8-10 subtopics total. *Subtopic examples: childhood, family, education, training, faith, values, beliefs, passions, inspirations, advantages, traumas, personality traits, habits, reputation, relationships, mentors, other influencers, career, mission, accomplishments, awards, mistakes, failures, challenges, impact then/now, legacy, etc.*
- Be thorough in your research. Read, read, read.
- Avoid repetitive note-taking. Do not copy the same fact from two different sources.

### Note Cards must contain...

- ✓ the subtopic in the upper left corner.
- ✓ the source number in the upper right corner.
- ✓ the page number in the lower right corner. (if applicable, or "W" for websites)
- ✓ "One direct quote of one fact or idea"
- ✓ (a personal note/analysis about why the quote is useful to you)
- ✓ neat handwriting that is easy to read and free of grammatical errors.

### Example note card:

The diagram shows an example note card with several callout boxes explaining its parts:

- Subtopic:** "Bunyan's Struggles" (in the upper left corner)
- Source Number:** "#2" (in the upper right corner)
- Quote:** "His realization of the depth of God's grace in his own life gave Bunyan an ability to speak to many people, even generations, of their own spiritual state."  
(Bunyan's experiences help him encourage others who struggle with the truth of God's grace.)
- Page Number:** "p. 55" (in the lower right corner)
- Personal Comment:** (Bunyan's experiences help him encourage others who struggle with the truth of God's grace.)

Annotations and instructions:

- 1**: Each note card must have a subtopic listed in the upper left corner. This will help the sorting process. Your goal should be 8-10 subtopics.
- #2**: You will assign each source a number in order to keep track of which quotes are copied from which
- CHOOSE QUOTES WISELY!**: Always copy full, direct quotes within quotation marks. Do not edit or change the quote. Do not omit words with an ellipsis.
- p. 55**: Remember to cite the page number! For electronic sources with no page numbers, write a W.
- 1**: Place your own comment in parentheses. What is the importance of this quote? Why did you copy it? What is the context of the quote? What question might it answer?