

# ENGLISH 122: COMPOSITION II

~ Ancillary Materials ~

## Research Paper Guidelines

### INTRODUCTION

To write the Final Research Paper for this course, you must choose one writing prompt and develop a position. Your thesis statement forms the basis of your position and guides your argument to a logical conclusion. The thesis statement will answer any question(s) presented in the writing prompt in one to two clear sentences.

In the body of the paper, you will examine issues that are relevant to your thesis statement and use research to support your claims about those issues. Each claim or assertion must be supported by scholarly research in the form of summaries, paraphrased information, or direct quotes from published, credible sources. Each paragraph should address one topic that directly supports your thesis statement.

Research is an analytical process, so you are expected to discuss multiple viewpoints and to present research results in an impersonal manner. It is also important to remember that a persuasive essay does not simply report information or summarize sources; it uses research to develop an argument and/or prove a point.

At the end of your paper, you will need to provide a conclusion that features a closing argument, a paper summary, and a rephrased thesis statement.

*It is important that you select a single writing prompt that interests you. You will spend the next five weeks researching and writing about that subject.*

### PROMPTS: ARTS, MEDIA, AND PHILOSOPHY

1. Should organized religious groups be allowed to act as political advocates or should they focus only on the spiritual needs of people? Is it possible to strike a balance? Research all sides of this debate and defend a single position in your persuasive essay.
2. The word “hero” is culturally-specific and is often applied to sports figures, celebrities, and cultural icons. Define how the term is currently and most commonly used in mass media, and decide if you agree or disagree with who is considered heroic. If you agree with its current usage, explain to readers why you feel it is appropriately applied. If you disagree, make the case for the people you would define as heroic and explain your reasoning.
3. In 2012, three of the top-grossing action films featured female heroes: *The Hunger Games*, *Breaking Dawn*, and *Brave* (IMDB, n.d., “Most Popular Feature Films Released in 2012”). Do you believe it’s noteworthy that so many recent films have female heroes, or do you believe that female role models have always been present in American movies? Explain your position through examples and analysis of these characters. Finally, are these depictions important?

4. In an age of information, are Americans more or less literate than they used to be? Persuade the reader to agree with the paper's position while exploring the consequences of this trend. With advances in technology, more and more people are becoming digitally literate. What is "digital literacy"? Research and define this term, and decide whether or not this is a necessary skill in today's society. Be sure to support your opinion using researched facts and thought out reasons.
5. Consider the value of historical architecture across America. Is historic preservation inhibiting growth in our cities and towns, or is it adding value to our communities? Research historic preservation and urban planning in an area near you, and explore the best city planning and historic preservation balance for the future.

## PROMPTS: SCIENCE, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT

1. From the fictional worlds of *Flash Gordon* to *Star Trek*, humans have long been fascinated with space exploration. But exploring outer space is a complex endeavor that requires developing not just advanced science and technology, but also economic investment. With so many other problems on this planet, why do people support space exploration? Research various angles on the debate, identify organizations that support it, and include arguments that question or oppose space exploration. Establish your own position in a clearly stated thesis. If you support space exploration, explain how it will benefit humanity. If you question its value, explain why.
2. What is the impact of disposable products and packaging in the marketplace and on the environment? Research and explain why new government regulations should be developed to curb over-packaging, or persuade the reader to believe that the environmental hazards are being overstated.
3. Some argue that electric cars protect the environment and that the government should, therefore, offer subsidies and incentives for manufacturers and consumers of these vehicles. Alternatively, some studies indicate that electric vehicles do not have any positive impact on the environment due to the pollution caused by testing and manufacturing. Build a strong position on the issue of government subsidies and incentives for electric cars, and state whether they should come to an end.
4. The National Football League (NFL) has come under fire for the long-lasting medical consequences of players' game-related head injuries. Is the NFL to blame for the deaths of former players Junior Seau, Jovan Belcher, Ray Easterling, and/or O.J. Murdock? Research the medical and scientific factors in addition to legal liability to support your position.
5. Obesity is a hot topic, from Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative to rising childhood diabetes rates to economic repercussions like "fat taxes." Should a person's weight be a matter of public discussion? Are the arguments that obesity is considered an epidemic sound? Provide research debating all sides of the issue and conclude with a personal decision on how obesity should be addressed in society.

## PROMPTS: THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

1. American prisons have a disparate number of minority inmates in their populations. Is this trend due to a higher rate of minority crimes or the manner in which the judicial system operates? Research the possible answers, and defend a single cause of this disparity.

2. The United States used to be called a melting pot, wherein different groups supposedly blended into one. Now a more popular term to describe the United States is “salad bowl,” wherein different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups maintain their identities as both non-European immigrants *and* Americans. Discuss the history of immigration in the United States and how it has transformed the nation. Why do you think this new term is in fashion? What do you think of it? Support your position by considering voices debating all aspects of this discussion.
3. Is the use of military force the only way to prevent terrorism? What are the other possible alternatives? Research possible strategies for prevention of terrorism and propose the best choice for today’s American policymakers.
4. As a representative democracy, America’s popular vote can be undermined by the Electoral College in presidential elections. Should the United States move to a popular vote electoral system or keep the current system intact? Research the rationale, technology, and policies involved in presidential elections and persuade the reader to agree with your assertions.
5. Privacy was once valued and protected. Diaries came with locks to keep the writer’s privately recorded thoughts from being read by others. Public telephones were enclosed in booths so that conversations would not be overheard. But now with so many new and convenient technological advancements, is privacy in the 21st century possible? Write a well-researched paper, which defines “privacy,” and discusses whether or not it is possible in American society today.

## PROMPTS: BUSINESS AND BUSINESS ETHICS

1. Telecommuting (working from home) is a growing trend in the work world. Many people are attracted to the idea of not reporting to an office. While there might be positive impacts to telecommuting, such as preserving the environment and saving the cost of office space, there could be negative impacts as well. Working at home challenges both business management practices (how businesses will organize work flow) and individual worker’s behavior (it requires self-motivation and discipline). Explore the topic by researching various angles to telecommuting and how it potentially the workforce. Identify studies that support it, and why. Identify arguments that question or oppose widespread telecommuting. Based on your research, establish your own position in a clearly stated thesis. If you support telecommuting, tell why and how it will benefit businesses. If you question its value, explain why.
2. In American today, statistics indicate that there is a gender income gap where men and women do not make the same money for the same job. Research the gender income gap and its causes. Is there a solution to this inequality? Support your conclusion.
3. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) oversees prescription drug advertising with the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and associated regulations. Should the FDA ban direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs? Argue for or against the use of direct advertising by pharmaceutical companies in a well-researched essay.
4. Should “sin taxes” on alcohol and tobacco be increased to help pay for the increasing costs of medical care? Present a strong position that is supported by academic research.
5. Should an American business be permitted to claim it is an ethical firm if it ignores unethical practices by its international suppliers? Research issues such as the use of child labor, manufacturing production in sweatshops, health/safety/environmental standards, etc. in the outsourced manufacturing of American goods, and defend a strong position on this issue.

## PROMPTS: EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

1. Some educators and parents have expressed doubts about the benefits the No Child Left

- Behind Act (NCLBA). Write a well-researched paper defending or rejecting No Child Left Behind.
2. Common Core State Standards are the newest reforms in the field of education. Research your own state's Common Core Standards and defend or refute the program based on your research.
  3. Popular news has reported on the risks of daycare as a potential cause of damage to children's cognitive development and social skills. Conversely, recent studies have shown no correlation between daycare attendance and negative child development. Conduct research and argue the case for or against daycare for babies and young children.
  4. Distance learning, also known as online learning, for the high school student population has been increasing as an alternative model of education. Define and explain how this distance learning environment is different from the more traditional model of a high school. Research, discuss, and explain several of the pros and cons of this type of learning for this specific population. Make your own argument either for or against online learning for high school students and support your viewpoint by using the research you have found to support your argument. Finally, explain why this is an important issue to discuss.
  5. Many public schools now require students to wear uniforms. Discuss this topic by explaining some of the possible reasons for or against this requirement. Do you feel that school uniforms should or should not be a requirement? Support your viewpoint with relevant scholarly research that will support your reasons for making this argument. Finally, discuss why this is an important issue to consider.