

Week 14 Agenda: U4 Student-Led Inquiry

India and South Asia: From Area Studies to Ethnic Studies

Now that students have chosen a topic and learned a bit about it, they'll spend this week engaged in deeper research as they work to answer their research question.

LESSON #1: Developing a Thesis Statement

Optional Bell-Ringer: If my research question is "Which animal makes the best pet?" what is the answer? Is it possible that there is more than one answer? How will you set the criteria for "best" – and how might the way you choose to set the criteria shape the answer?

Purpose

- Even though students have been learning how to make a claim and support it since elementary school, they tend to still need a lot of scaffolding in each new class setting. Expectations are different at different grade levels, the language used can change between classes, individual teachers and disciplines set up the goal posts a little differently, and the way students think about complex issues and processes changes as their brains develop. So, in this lesson we'll ensure students are comfortable with answering their research question with a thesis statement in the way it's expected for this project. You should of course feel free to change the set-up to match your own expectations or department/school requirements!

Prep

- Have a copy of the Developing a Thesis Statement handout (below) available for each student
- Be prepared for students to have a short discussion in pairs or small groups

Procedure

1. Students should first read the Developing a Thesis Statement handout (below) to themselves
2. In pairs or small groups, have students discuss the research questions they chose and speculate about what the thesis statement that responds to it might look like

Developing a Thesis Statement

For an argumentative paper or project, your thesis statement – sometimes called a claim – is the answer to your research question.

A thesis statement depends on research beyond just the context/background on your topic and often changes a few times as you investigate further.

You may already have a sense of what your thesis statement will be (or you may not).

This week you'll start digging in search of a solid answer to your research question – an answer that you can argue is correct based on at least three different supports.

It is possible that there will be counter-arguments to your thesis statement. That's OK, as long as you fully support the position you've chosen to take.

You are not expected to become a scholarly expert on your topic or reach publication-quality perfection! We are practicing an academic skill.

LESSON #2: Research

Optional Bell-Ringer: What is your favorite way to find information when you have a question about a topic you don't already know much about? Does it lead to academic sources that you can trust?

Purpose

- Students just need to spend some time flailing around in their research – reading, taking notes, considering a good thesis statement. By next week they may be ready to start preparing their presentation (which does not have to be a research paper).

Prep

- Have copies of the Research Support handout (below) for each student
- Students need access to research materials – likely digitally through your school or public library's databases

Procedure

1. Have students read the Research Support handout (below) and ask any questions they may have.
2. Ensure students have a plan for keeping track of their references (like using the format of the References: Supporting Your Thesis Statement handout – below).
3. Research!

Research Support

Your goal is to answer your research question by developing and supporting a thesis statement.

Once you have an idea of what your thesis statement is, you'll be looking for at least three ways to support it. That may include evidence that proves your thesis statement is correct or evidence that proves alternative answers are incorrect.

If you're having trouble with shaping three different ways to provide support for your thesis statement, consider using the multiple perspectives we've talked about to organize your thoughts. Your thesis statement could even be that the answer to your research question depends on which lens you use! These are the lenses we've talked about throughout the course:

- ❖ Economic
- ❖ Social/Cultural
- ❖ Political

OR

- ❖ Class
- ❖ Race/Ethnicity/Caste
- ❖ Gender

You should start with academic databases like Gale or JSTOR, but if you'd like to expand your search out into the wilds of the Internet you'll need to be extra careful to consider the scholarly quality of your sources. Notice that the template for keeping track of your sources asks you to note where the source creator's authority on the topic comes from.

Name _____

References: Supporting Your Thesis Statement

You should keep track of the references you use because the information you find to support your thesis statement may not be general knowledge – it is more likely to depend on statistics or the conclusions drawn in particular sources.

For each reference, record a citation using the style you've been given assigned or chosen: _____ Style

Also for each reference, make note of what sort of credentials the author has (why are they qualified to provide information on this topic?). If it's a website with no particular author you'll need to pay particular attention to this notation.

This is not the final product so the citations do not need to be in alphabetical order.

There is not a required number of sources, you are just required to support your thesis statement in at least three different ways. Keep adding to the list as needed.

General knowledge (lots of sources have that same information) does not require a footnote or in-text citation, so you don't need to tie your notes back to a particular reference *unless* you write a direct quotation (more than three words in a row from your source and should be in quotation marks), a statistic, or if your source makes an unusual point you won't find elsewhere (not likely to happen at this stage of your research). If you do end up with one of those three things in your notes, make sure you've assigned your reference citation a number and put that number in parentheses or a circle right where you write/type your notes in case you end up putting it in your final product.

Citation 1

Why is this an authoritative source?

Citation 2

Why is this an authoritative source?

Relevant Washington State Standards

SSS1.9-12.3 Explain points of agreement and disagreement that experts have regarding interpretations of sources.

SSS1.9-12.4 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

SSS2.9-12.1 Create compelling and supporting questions that focus on an idea, issue, or event.

SSS2.9-12.2 Evaluate the validity, reliability, and credibility of sources when researching an issue or event.

SSS2.9-12.3 Determine the kinds of sources and relevant information that are helpful, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

SSS2.9-12.4 Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge.

SSS3.9-12.5 Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past and its relationship to the present.

SSS4.9-12.1 Evaluate multiple reasons or factors to develop a position paper or presentation.

SSS4.9-12.2 Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple and reliable sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.

SSS4.9-12.4 Create strategies to avoid plagiarism and respect intellectual property when developing a paper or presentation.