**SSC 2030: First research paper**

Your first research paper is due at the end of week 5, and this assignment is designed to get you started. I want you to develop this first paper in stages, and to do this gradually with my input at each step of the process.

**Stage 1:**

Identify a topic or question about sustainable energy systems that you want to focus Find three articles or resources that address this question in a significant manner.

Week 3 short writing assignment should include:

* A brief summary of those three articles;
* Questions raised by those articles;
* A thesis (or several potential theses) for your first research paper; and
* A bibliography.

**Stage 2:**

Confirm or rework you thesis, identify additional resources, and create an outline. Please be sure that you present *differing opinions or points of view*.

Week 4 short writing assignment should include:

* The thesis;
* An outline of the research paper; and
* An expanded bibliography.

**Stage 3:**

Writing a solid draft of the research paper.

Week 5 writing assignment:

* Create a solid draft of the research paper that is at least five pages long.

**Suggestions when considering topics and theses:**

* I find that the students do their best writing when they are taking a stand or making a passionate **argument**. So, consider a thesis with punch!
* I want your research paper to analyze, to interpret, to compare and contrast, or to demonstrate cause and effect. So, find resources to support your thesis and be prepared to create an outline and arguments that persuade your reader.
* Don’t forget to present the other side of the argument: the opposing point of view. You may argue against it, but you must present it.

**Tips for writing a good thesis:[[1]](#footnote-1)**

A thesis statement:

* tells the reader how you will interpret the significance of the subject matter under discussion;
* is a road map for the paper; in other words, it tells the reader what to expect from the rest of the paper;
* makes a claim that others might dispute (***an argument***); and
* is usually a single sentence near the beginning of your paper (most often, at the end of the first paragraph) that presents your argument to the reader. The rest of the paper, the body of the essay, gathers and organizes evidence that will persuade the reader of the logic of your interpretation.

**Strong vs. Weak Thesis Statements[[2]](#footnote-2):**

1. A strong thesis makes a claim. The thesis should clearly convey your position on a subject. For example, if you are writing a paper for a health class, you might be asked to choose a popular weight‐loss product to evaluate. Here are two thesis statements:

Weak: *“There are some negative and positive aspects to the Strawberry Herb Tea Supplement.”*

This is a weak thesis statement because it does not take a stand. The phrase ‘negative and positive aspects’ is vague.

Strong: *“Because Strawberry Herb Tea Supplement promotes fast weight loss that results*

*in the loss of muscle and lean body mass, it creates a potential risk to customers.”*

This is a strong thesis because it takes a stand, and because it is specific.

2. A strong thesis states one main idea. If the paper has more than one main idea the reader might be confused about the paper’s subject.

Weak: *“Companies should maximize the marketing potential of the Internet, and Facebook pages can provide both advertising and customer support.”*

This is a weak thesis statement because the reader can’t decide whether the paper is about marketing on the Internet or Facebook pages.

Strong: *“Because the Internet is filled with an abundance of marketing potential, companies should exploit this potential by using Facebook pages that offer both advertising and customer support.”*

This is a strong thesis because the two ideas are related to each other to make one main idea.

**Creating an effective outline[[3]](#footnote-3):**

Make notes of important points while reading your resources and references. You can make notes in a digital document, on note cards, or on sticky notes. Sort your notes into categories and subcategories. Then, within each category, organize those notes in a logical order that helps support your argument. You may discover that you have more than enough resources in one area, but are lacking information in others. This is an opportunity to winnow and plug holes!

**Additional help:**

Considering structure and organization:

<https://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials-first-year-writers/considering-structure-and-organization>

Tools for mind-mapping, outlining and drafting:

<https://criticalthinkeracademy.com/courses/22120/lectures/315838>

**An example of a simple outline for an argumentation paper:**

A. Thesis statement & introduction

B. Body – Idea 1

1. Background

2. Supporting Information

3. Facts & Statistics

4. Conclusion

C. Body – Idea 2

1. Background

2. Supporting Information

3. Facts & Statistics

4. Conclusion

D. Body – Idea 3

1. Background

2. Supporting Information

3. Facts & Statistics

4. Conclusion

E. Counter Argument

1. Description of Opposing Views

2. Supporting Information from Opposing Views

3. Analysis & Conclusion about Counter Argument

F. Summary & Conclusion

1. Summary of Main Arguments & Counter-Arguments

2. Summary of Evidence

3. Conclusion

***Note that your outline will probably contain more detail: a, i, etc.,.***

1. https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/  
    http://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/thesis-statements/  
    http://hartness.vsc.edu/vtc/guides/research-basics [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.twu.edu/media/documents/write-site/Thesis\_Handout.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://hartness.vsc.edu/help/research-basics/outlining/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)