

Your introductory paragraph(s) should include:

- An indication of your topic
- The scholarly and historical context of your research
- The problem and question you are addressing
- Your thesis statement
- An indication of the significance of your topic and question (the “so what?”)

Your question should be:

- Open-ended
- Amenable to scholarly research
- Appropriate to the course concerns and the contemporary period

Your thesis should be:

- An answer to the question that you pose
- Arguable with scholarship
- Amply supported with evidence (that should come from scholarship and credible outside sources)

Your concluding paragraph(s) should:

- Summarize your argument
- Reiterate and elaborate on your “so what?”
- Explain the significance of your thesis

When presenting your evidence you should:

- Explain *which* of your claims each piece of evidence supports
- Explain *how* the evidence supports your claims
- Acknowledge the credibility of your sources clearly and correctly.
- Acknowledge your sources whether you quote or paraphrase an author’s words or merely draw upon an author’s ideas
- Use direct quotations sparingly and only when necessary
- Present information and make claims that are factually correct and from credible sources

When addressing counterarguments or alternative interpretations you should:

- Acknowledge the scholars whose positions differ from yours and the credibility of your sources
- Explain how each counterargument differs from your own claims
- Present the evidence that supports each counterargument
- Rebut each counterargument (i.e., explain why your claims are stronger)

Overall, your paper will succeed you:

Identify a conceptual problem that begs a question that can be answered with scholarship
Situating yourself within an ongoing academic conversation

Present a persuasively argued point that is amply supported with relevant evidence
Acknowledge equally valid points of view other than your own or a point of view you are supporting

Discuss the significance of your claims
Organize your paper well and write with your readers' needs in mind (e.g., by providing transitions and topic sentences to help readers to follow your train of reasoning, defining unfamiliar terms, providing vivid, concrete examples, and so forth)
Check the Guidelines for MMW Papers for all formatting issues

Works Cited

Your paper must have a list of **Works Cited** that includes complete MLA-style citations for all of the works you cite in your paper. You do not have to include entries for works you do not cite, but bear in mind that "citation" means not only direct quotations and paraphrases but also all statements of observation and opinion that are in your own words but that are indebted to other authors for their content. In other words: when in doubt, give credit to your sources.

Sources

Mark, highlight, scan and submit the sources that you use and cite as indicated above.