

The English Junior Research Paper 2006-2007: Impact: The United States at War

In its new incarnation, the English Junior Research Paper is a literature-based, research-driven exploration into the impact of war. Over the next eight weeks, you will be responsible for reading, evaluating and synthesizing material from three sources:

- 1. a book-length work of fiction: a novel, play or collection of short stories**
- 2. a book-length work of non-fiction: biography, autobiography, memoir, or collection of letters or speeches**
- 3. a full-length film—fiction or documentary**

You will also use a minimum of two sources to research background information on the war you choose. You will produce a six to eight page paper that presents your research and reflects upon how various aspects of war have been represented in literature, film, and nonfiction. Your final product (worth 50% of your quarter grade) must answer the following question: **To what extent was US involvement in this war worthwhile?** What this means for each of you will be a product of the research that you conduct.

Overall

Objectives:

Develop Research Skills:

- find relevant information
- evaluate the reliability/ credibility of information
- identify main points and the validity of supporting details.

Develop Critical Thinking Skills:

- compare and contrast different viewpoints
- assess the value and importance of information and ideas
- recognize the difference between fact and opinion, objective vs. subjective analysis, and logical vs. illogical reasoning.
- synthesize material gleaned from research to use in support of your argument
- learn to make informed judgments by weighing evidence.

Develop Writing Skills:

- select and organize material
- structure an effective analysis and argument
- use factual detail to support an argument
- use logical reasoning and specific detail to persuade an audience

- carefully cite all sources used according to MLA format.

Purpose of the Paper: Explain how a war, or a particular aspect of a war as it pertains to an issue, population, or individual, has been represented in a work of fiction, nonfiction, and film. Evaluate the credibility and merit of these multiple views and determine the positive or detrimental effects of the war on your focus issue, group or individual. Persuade your audience as to what extent the war was a worthwhile endeavor, based on the research and analysis you have conducted, and the conclusions you have drawn.

Basic Requirements: papers will be six to eight pages typed, double spaced in standard twelve point font, with a title page, last name and page number in a header, one inch margins on all sides, bibliography of ALL sources consulted in the format of the Modern Language Association of America (MLA). All source material must be cited as it is used throughout the paper in parenthetical citations, also in MLA format. Before drafting your paper, you will be required to submit a basic outline. Note: at least one of your main three sources must come from an American author.

Papers will be written in clear, correct English, free of errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. In addition to revising carefully and thoughtfully for content, you are expected to edit and proofread with meticulous attention to the details of language.

Timeline:

| | |
|---|--|
| Select Topic by: | <u>January 10th (recommended)</u> |
| Read books and watch film by: | <u>January 30th (recommended)</u> |
| Submit outline to English teacher by: | <u>February 8th (required)</u> |
| Submit final, revised paper with ALL components by: | <u>March 8th (required)</u> |

NOTE: late papers will not be accepted. Computer malfunction of any kind is not a valid excuse. Save all work on disk and do not wait until the night before to print your final copy.

Method: 1) Examine three in-depth studies of ONE war in which the United States has been involved that present different views of that war.

(Steps) 2) **Required:**
Consult two to three background sources and synthesize the information into one to two pages of contextual background in your paper. Discuss the duration, nature and objectives of US involvement, as well as the outcome of the war: who “won”?

3) Recommended:

Use additional sources, such as speeches, letters, interviews, articles, public documents, or excerpts from other books to help you evaluate the reliability of the information and ideas presented in your major sources

4) Analyze the views presented by each author:

- What issues are raised?
- What is the author's perspective on the war?
- What does the author consider important and why?
- What was good about the war? What was bad?

5) Choose a focus for your paper, i.e. a question that was raised for you about the impact of war on a particular issue, group or individual. Consider the question as you expand your research, and as you read and begin to write. How did various authors present their views on this topic? How were your own views changed by evaluating the information presented? For instance, you may narrow your focus to:

- Reasons for US involvement
- Relationships with allies
- Goals and strategies
- Underlying motivations
- Effects on particular minority or majority groups
- Impact on environment, economy or infrastructure
- Impact on US relations with other nations, or view of US by world community.
- Influence of particular individuals within the context of the war.

6) After carefully reading and watching each of your core sources, you will evaluate the different views or presentation of each author/ filmmaker on your particular aspect. The specific perspective of each author on the war must be clearly articulated in your writing.

7) In your paper, you will take your own position on this aspect of your chosen war, and persuade your audience of its validity with research-based evidence. You must include one to two pages of background information as context for the works evaluated (sources for this must be independent from three primary works).

8) Conclusively, you must examine what can be learned from US involvement in this war as it relates to your particular topic, and (when applicable) if the lesson HAS in fact been learned in light of present circumstances.

