

Details: Literature Review (Paper 2)

We use language to express ourselves, to communicate with each other, to associate with certain people, to set ourselves apart from others. Sometimes, as Harvey Daniels observes in *Famous Last Words*, we also use language “as both a channel and an excuse for expressing some of our deepest prejudices” (1983, p. 5). Though language is one of the tools that we use most frequently on any given day, many of us could stand to learn a great deal more about the actual nature of our language and the various ways in which it is used. This project kicks off our study of English language practices, policies, and politics as they relate to our writing and work in the world. Along the way, we’ll look at language as it relates to gender, geography, age, race and ethnicity, and other sociocultural factors. In the end, I hope that you’ll be on your way to a more informed and developed perspective on the gift of language and its role in our everyday lives.

Overview: Your task for this paper is to present a knowledgeable overview of themes, trends, or debates that you observe in scholarly literature on one issue pertaining to the nature and uses of the English language. To complete the assignment, you will need to

1. choose a narrow topic relating to the nature and uses of the English language;
2. gather sources from a variety of scholarly perspectives on the topic;
3. read with an eye to understanding each of your individual sources, as well as themes, trends, or debates that emerge across your collected sources; and
4. compose an essay that presents your explanation of the themes, trends, or debates that you observe across the readings.

Goals: The main goals of this project are for you to learn more about

- writing in academic situations where you are asked to understand (e.g., to comprehend, connect, explain, or interpret) and to synthesize (e.g., to construct, formulate, assemble, or combine);
- finding, choosing, and reading scholarly sources;
- genre analysis as a tool for your writing; and
- the nature and use (or structure and direction) of the English language.

It is likely that for most of you, this is your first attempt at a literature review. We won’t attempt to write literature reviews that “cover” all of the available scholarship on a given topic. Instead, the emphasis will be on finding relevant sources, reading them actively, and making meaning by reading “across” texts.

Audience: Your primary audience is other ENG 101 students; you are to provide your classmates with a scholarly guide to one specific issue regarding the nature and uses of the English language. You and I are also audiences for this paper. This is a writing-to-learn project, and your writing should formalize what you learn about scholarly perspectives on one issue regarding the English language. An additional audience to keep in mind is the public, since a version of your paper may also be posted to your Web portfolio for this course.

Procedures and Requirements: To compose your literature review, complete the steps below. Keep all notes, outlines, graphic organizers, and drafts of your work.

1. Choose a narrow topic relating to the nature and uses of the English language. To do this, start with the guide that I have provided online (see the Course Documents section of our Web page). Choose one of the broad categories from the list, and then narrow the topic further so that you can focus your discussion tightly enough for an insightful, 4-5 page guide to the issues.
2. Gather sources from a variety of scholarly perspectives on the topic. Use the required readings listed online, as well as three additional sources from academic books and peer-reviewed journals. (Need help finding and evaluating sources? Review *Write for College* chapter 29 for advice. Then, check the college library catalog as well as databases such as EBSCO and JSTOR to find relevant sources. Review the SearchPath tutorial for help with using these resources effectively. Avail yourself of help from the reference librarians, too!)

3. Read your sources with an eye to understanding each of the individual pieces—as well as themes, trends, or debates that emerge across your collected sources. As you read, take notes on important information and insights from each source (see *Write for College* pp. 440-447 for tips on effective note taking). You should also create a working APA-style bibliography as you read (as described in *Write for College* pp. 438-439 and chapter 34).
4. Construct either a sentence outline with thesis or a graphic organizer with thesis. Show how you plan to organize your discussion of the themes, trends, or debates that you observe as you read across the sources. Will you approach the sources chronologically or thematically? How will you categorize the sources?
5. Compose a formal literature review that presents to your classmates your explanation of the themes, trends, or debates that you observe across scholarly literature on your selected topic. In this scholarly guide to your selected topic, support your claims with references to your sources, and demonstrate an accurate understanding of the texts you read. The final draft should be 4-5 double-spaced pages and should meet the standards listed in the grading section below.

Due Dates: The final draft of this paper is due on Thursday, October 12. Due dates for workshop drafts are listed in the syllabus. Meeting the due dates for the workshop drafts is important for you and for your classmates who will be learning with you. Each time that you come unprepared for a workshop will result in a .5 reduction (on a 4.0 scale) from your grade on the final draft of this paper.

Grading: The literature review paper is worth 15% of your final grade. I will grade your paper holistically, taking all of the components together into account—with attention given to content and rhetorical moves as well as to structure, coherence, and conventions of format, style, grammar, and usage.

A quality literature review for ENG 101 will:

- ✓ Present a thorough, accurate, and insightful explanation of themes, trends, or debates that you observe across the scholarly literature that you collected on your selected topic.
- ✓ Demonstrate an accurate understanding of the texts you read.
- ✓ Use rhetorical appeals (to logos, ethos, and/or pathos) that support the purposes of the paper and facilitate communication with the intended audience.
- ✓ Structure the organization of ideas in a clear, cohesive manner that supports the purposes of the paper and facilitates communication with the intended audience.
- ✓ Employ appropriate conventions of format, style, grammar, and usage to support the purposes of the paper and facilitate communication with the intended audience.
- ✓ Document in an appropriate, consistent style any and all sources whose words, ideas, or illustrations are cited or used in the paper.
- ✓ Demonstrate an ethical approach to writing processes and products.
- ✓ Exhibit a developed and accurate understanding of the principles addressed in class and workshop sessions, in the assigned readings and activities, and in my responses to your work.



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