

Sample intensive reading assignment

HC 204: Inquiry project and annotated bib. Instructions (for a 200-level Honors College course on the history of literacy)

In your inquiry project, you will need to begin as with all research projects, with a question or series of questions to which you want to know the answer. Your question should focus on some aspect of the history of literacy that is of interest to you; it should be tied to the core question in the course: what are the lessons from history that can help us understand contemporary literacy practices? There are several possible general directions you may find of interest, but keep in mind that this project should have some kind of “hands-on” component: interview, case study, observation/ethnography, experiment, etc. Two different options are to consider literacy issues for a different language or literacy issues in a different country. Overall, I hope you will choose some aspect of our topic that you find personally engaging. We can set up individual meetings on topic choices if you like.

The first step will be to decide on the question(s) you want to answer. You may want to arrange a research consultation in the library to get some help with finding sources in print and online. For some topics, government documents will be an important resource. We will have a library lecture with Beth Kraemer (to be discussed in class), and she can be of help to you individually, or you can consult any other reference librarian.

You must keep a research notebook for this project. The notebook should contain both a running commentary on your work as your project unfolds and a compilation of your source materials. You will want to write down your question(s) and preliminary sources in your research notebook, and you should plan on bringing your notebook to class every day from now to the end of the project. If you keep the notebook electronically, you'll need your gizmo, and you will need to print out the notebook to submit with your final report. For at least three of your sources, in your research notebook, you will need to complete a process designed to help you read and understand the sources fully and make effective use of them in your report.

The process is as follows:

1. Choose your three sources carefully; only sources that have citations and a Reference or Works Cited list should be used.
2. Evaluate each source for these issues: authority, accuracy, currency, relevancy, bias, appropriateness. We will discuss how to make these judgments.

3. Read the source carefully and present in a few paragraphs or pages a summary of at least 5 key ideas relevant to your topic. These can be your notes on your reading of the source.
4. Compare and contrast the ideas presented in each source with other material you have examined. Enumerate two similarities or differences between this source and your others.
5. In 100–200 words, write out your plan for deploying this source in your paper. Follow this process for at least three of your sources and include your notes in your research notebook.

Begin work at once actually or virtually, in the OU library and/or in your local library. Keep careful notes, recording full bibliographic information on everything the first time you look at it; for Works Cited or References, see the additional directions for the Annotated Bibliography assignment.

Keep your research notebook up to date, writing in it both during the in class time and also as you are working. Use it to make notes, ask questions of yourself or me, record what you do when you do it, and note brilliant insights about your topic. You will also need to include in your notebook all your source materials or reasonable portions of them—copies of useful pages from printed books and all materials examined electronically. Make sure you print out at least the first page of relevant websites, articles and/or any other materials you find. All materials used in the paper should be included in your research notebook and must be submitted with your final paper in order to get credit for the inquiry project and report.

This paper is to be 8–10 double spaced pages of text, plus Works Cited or References. It should present a detailed answer to your research question, and you should have research evidence both from published sources and your own work to support your thesis. The paper should focus on presenting a cohesive argument for the point you want to make. Use the MLA or APA style or the style appropriate for your major, giving in text citations to your sources and giving full bibliographic information in the alphabetical list of Works Cited or References at the end of the paper. Include on your list **ALL AND ONLY** works you actually refer to in your paper. In class, we will review all dates pertinent to the inquiry project.

Annotated Bibliography

For this assignment, you are to prepare an annotated working bibliography of all sources collected thus far for your inquiry project. My intention is for this task to help you move forward on the project and also to get you to begin preparing your Works Cited or Reference list entries even before you have begun drafting the paper.

For each item you cite, give the full citation in proper form in the format you are using. Then, in fifty (50) words or less, describe each source in terms of whether it is primary or secondary, in terms of its content, and in terms of how it answers your research question.

You should have a minimum of eight (8) sources on your annotated bibliography; there is no

maximum. Remember that not everything you include in this working bibliography will necessarily be cited in your paper or appear in your final report. Due date for this piece and all parts of the project as noted below. This Annotated Bibliography will be reviewed and returned, and must be included with your Research Notebook and folder of materials for the project when you turn in your paper.

NOTE: You cannot receive credit for the inquiry project unless you submit the annotated bibliography and all other parts of this project as required.