

DOINGWHATWORKS



SAMPLE MATERIAL

Research Review Assignment

University Park Campus School, Massachusetts

Topic: Helping Students Navigate the Path to College

Practice: Prepare Students Academically

As a major component of instruction, teachers at University Park Campus School (UPCS) create assignments that require students to attend to their thinking. In English and history, students shape their opinions by considering different perspectives on the topics studied. This *Research Review Assignment* asks students to find and critically analyze a piece of academic writing focused on the work of one of two authors they have studied. Students use their own pathways to select a document and then compare the author's viewpoint to their own.

Research Review

The academic world is full of all sorts of people who make it their business to analyze existing information and discover new things about literature, history, science, the economy... everything! Our studies of Orwell and Douglass have bridged the fields of literature and history, and we've done some of our own thinking about how these domains intersect. Now we'll take a look at what some others think...

Your task is to find an academic article/essay/chapter that deals with the work of Orwell or Douglass, and to provide the class with an in-depth review of it. Skim many pieces before selecting the one you will work with. Read the tables or contents, the title, and the first couple pages of a few different pieces so that you can find one that seems interesting.

- I. What is the central thesis of this piece? What is it arguing about Orwell or Douglass?
- II. Summarize the main points and concrete examples of the essay. Explain what quotes the author is using and his/her commentary about them. You should use formal, present-tense language ("Zwerdling asserts that..." or "Smith argues...").
- III. Your analysis of the analysis. Do these argument makes sense to you. Is the author missing anything? Can you argue against this thesis? Does it present something you hadn't considered? What are the most interesting and powerful points?

Some of the language in these articles may be tough, but work through it! This is necessary for the type of intellectual perseverance you will need in the coming years! Good luck. ☺

Due: _____

I am **NOT** requiring an essay for this project. Rather, you will be graded on your oral presentations. Take approximately 3-5 minutes to explain your piece in a relatively professional manner. Stand in front of the class, speak loudly and clearly, and **make us understand** what your piece is all about!

Content of the article _____/50 (Accurately describe who the author is and what his/her thesis is. What examples is s/he using?)

Your analysis _____/25 (Do you agree with the author? What are the most and least effective points? Can you think of additional examples that would support the argument, or examples against it?)

Your professionalism _____/25

- Standing confidently
- Perhaps include some key quotes/ideas on a handout or overhead
- Loud, clear voice (Stay on task, no giggling, etc...)
- Know the material—notecards are OK, but reading from a paper is not
- Between 3 and 5 minutes