

sustained inquiry: primary research and inhabiting a stance

“Unless the inquiry has been so exhaustive as to explore every possibility, the lack of evidence should never be used to ground a statement of fact. Unlikelihood certainly, but no more. A prematurely assumed fact blocks further inquiry.”
– Jonathan Renshaw

Timeline: Major Deadlines

3/8 (W)	Primary Research Proposal (Saved to Google Docs)
3/22 (M)	Field Notes Due (to Google)
3/27 (W)	Half Draft Due (to Google and hard copy to class)
4/10 (W)	Final Draft Due (to Google)

Assignment Description

I'd like us to remember that research as “inquiry” refers to an understanding that research is iterative and depends upon asking increasingly complex questions whose answers develop new questions or lines of inquiry in any field. The act of inquiry begs the researcher to engage in creative and critical thinking. It demands a hunger for the quest.

We've satisfied a great deal of our inquiry surrounding our topics through literature review. The next step is to identify what is still unsatisfied and look to the “real world” for answers. There may be a question that you were unable to satisfy in project 2. Perhaps you have identified a gap in the available research. Maybe you'd like to challenge a finding or examine something from a new angle. Now is the time to do this. Your primary research question will likely transform into your thesis statement, but not until you have analyzed your findings.

Field Notes

You will dedicate a file in your Project 3 Google folder to this small project (named “your last name_ sustained inquiry log”). In this space, you will upload your field notes. The process of transcription often opens us up to noticing things that we may not have otherwise seen. Though the process may feel tedious, take heart in the fact that it is vital to the process. Like your Sustained Inquiry Log, these “notes to self” will become the building blocks of your paper. Make them as detailed as possible.

Just like the Sustained Inquiry Log: You may also use this as a collection space for other notes and new citations pertaining to your project. Expect this to be your “file of chaos.” You may find yourself shuffling things around a bit, adding more ideas and connections as the weeks go by. This is as it should be. Just do not delete any ideas or notes. Push them to the bottom of the log, perhaps, but keep them in your log. You never know when a particular thought might become your most valuable morsel!

Inhabiting a Stance

The purpose of a literature review was to see what is already being said about your interest. Your findings in Project 2 will support and supplement the stance that you will take in Project 3. This does not mean that your paper will begin with a copy/paste of your literature review. Rather, after you collect your own field notes, you will begin to synthesize your findings in a way that compels support for your stance. You may or may not reuse everything that you presented in Project 2.

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Your final draft will be 8-10 typed, double-spaced pages. To support your sustained research inquiry, you will need to include a minimum of **five** sources:

- At least two scholarly sources
- At least two popular sources
- At least one primary research source

Conventional Formatting

Your research account will be drafted in Google Docs, in at least 2 iterations (Half Draft, Final Draft). Projects should be typed, double-spaced, with 12-pt Times New Roman font. MLA style and formatting conventions should be followed. For additional information about using MLA, please refer to chapter 49 of *Writing in Action* or the OWL of Purdue.

Grading Criteria

1. **Inhabiting Stance:** Your final draft will show evidence of argumentation from an intellectual headspace. That means there is no room for deep-seated opinion or premature conclusions. Your stance should be clear, arguable, and presented using rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos, kairos, etc.). While you are free to utilize pathos as an appeal to your reader, you will need to separate yourself from your own emotions in constructing your intellectual argument. Everything that you include in your paper should support your stance. If it is absolutely necessary, you may address another opposing stance, but it is typically enough to stick to your own theory. I do not expect that many of you will need to give attention to the “other side.”
2. **Specificity:** Your research account should be specific. Not only should you include specific evidence from sources, you should specifically discuss why and how those sources are relevant to your overarching research efforts. Remember, sources do not prove your stance; *you* must do that by discussing source material in relation to your argument. Also, remember to do your definitional work – any time you are using specific terms that might be unfamiliar to a reader outside of your field, you will want to explain. All statistics and other collected data must be presented in its true context.
3. **Development:** Your project should feel complete. Your research account should include a minimum of five sources, and should thoughtfully and thoroughly discuss the varying arguments connected to your selected research topic. Your project should also develop between drafts, and your field notes should thoroughly document notes from possible sources—remember that you’ll need to cite your conducted research as a source.
4. **Cohesion:** Your research account should read as a cohesive text. Your research project should be built logically, and your transitions between paragraphs and sentences should smoothly connect your ideas. Most importantly, every idea that you present must feel as if it needs to be there. There should be no fluff or unnecessary inclusions.
5. **Correctness:** Your project should follow MLA guidelines for both formatting and citation standards. Additionally, your research account should be proofread for spelling, capitalization, and syntax errors. Reading aloud can help you catch these errors, as well as repeated phrases and unfinished sentences.

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Rubric

	NA	NI	AC	EX
Inhabiting Stance				
Specificity				
Development				
Coherence				
Correctness				
Invention Portfolio				
Participation				

EX: Exceptional. The writer has applied the criterion with distinction.

AC: Acceptable/Meets Expectations. The writer has applied the criterion to an acceptable degree.

NI: Needs improvement. The writer has minimally applied the criterion in the project.

NA: Narrowly applied or not applied. The writer has not applied the criterion in the project.

Grading

Most broadly, the project will be graded as follows:

Research account: 70 pts.

Invention portfolio: 20 pts.

Participation: 10 pts.

Total: 100 pts.