The Three Search Essay

Counts as a 200-point assessment grade for Fourth Quarter

I. The three search essay begins with a personal concern or area of interest where you can use yourself as a source. This should be a topic to which you have a connection. Start by thinking about what intrigues or matters to you. What excites you? What causes you anxiety? What relaxes you? What makes you happy? What offers escape or pleasure? What fascinates you? What do you wish you could learn more about? The answers to all of these questions make for great research topics. In this paper, you will be writing descriptive scenes from your perspective that show your knowledge, familiarity, and/or interest in this topic. These scenes will be mixed with information from your research, along with quotes from an interview you’ll conduct.

II. The second element of the three search paper is direct research in the form of a personal interview. For example, if your essay is about overcoming anorexia, and you chose this subject because you or a friend were anorexic, you would need to interview someone with a different perspective on your topic – a counselor who works with anorexics, perhaps. I will help you locate appropriate people to interview if you’d like. It is generally not appropriate to interview family members or friends. The goal is to find someone who is a professional in a field that relates to your topic. Once you know your topic, we can discuss this further and figure out who would make for an appropriate and helpful source.

III. The third component of your three search essay is library and internet research. You need to find defendable, relevant, academically sound sources that will give you the information you need. The completed three-search paper should blend these three elements in a cohesive finished product, with sources cited using internal citations within the document (Like This) according to MLA format, and a Works Cited page at the end. For this element of the paper, you will need at least three authoritative, academically sound sources. You may not use Wikipedia as a source, although its external links may be OK, depending on their content and how they fit with your topic. I can help you determine which sites are appropriate.

When citing from a source directly, use quotation marks and internal citations. When paraphrasing, remember to put internal citations after the info you paraphrased, because even though the words are your own, the ideas are not. Remember that plagiarism is using ideas that aren’t yours without properly attributing them to the original source. Plagiarism is idea theft. Be sure to write down all the sources you use on your Works Cited page, and use internal citations in your essay any time you use ideas that aren’t yours. Students who do not use internal citations or include a Works Cited page will earn an automatic zero (0) on this essay. Don’t be an idea pirate!

Required elements: Your essay should adhere to the following: 1) 1,000 words, give or take (roughly 4-5 double-spaced pages, excluding your Works Cited page), 2) contain at least three academically sound sources, 3) contain quotes from an interview with a well-chosen, authoritative source, 4) include present-action, descriptive, first-person scenes that tell a story, 5) include relevant, well-researched information on your topic that compliments your narrative, 6) adhere to MLA format (double spaced, sources cited using internal citations, title page, header, etc), 7) contain a Works Cited page, 8) be proofread to the best of your ability.

Your essay will be evaluated according to the high school writing rubric. Essays that do not meet all of the required elements above will be docked points prior to assessment depending on the level of deficiency. You will post your essay to the Three Search Research Essay Google Drive folder. You will be given a separate timeline detailing how much time you’ll have to complete each aspect of the essay, and when the final draft will be due. Please let Mr. B-G know as soon as you have any questions about any aspect of this essay, as he is happy to help and wants this to represent your best writing and research of the year!
Three search essay checklist/questions for success

_____ Integration – How well did you integrate the three types of sources (personal, research, and interview) in your paper? How smooth are your transitions? How well does the paper flow? Were you able to avoid “chunking” your information?

_____ Focus – Does the paper have an overall main idea, or main point to develop? Does all of the information relate to this main theme? Does the paper leave loose ends or unanswered questions that detract from the focus? The piece should display unity and purpose. The paper should create a tension that makes the reader want to read on.

_____ Lead/Ending/Title – The lead should grab the reader's attention and draw the reader into the piece, and at the same time be honest and relate to what follows. The ending should leave the reader with something to think about and not just restate what has already been shown in the essay. The ending should follow naturally and not read as if it had been tacked on. The title should catch the reader's attention and make her/him want to read it. Like the lead, it should be honest. The paper should be well organized and easy to follow.

_____ Meaning – The paper says something which introduces a new or unique perspective. The meaning is universal enough to draw the reader in and make her/him care about what happens in the piece. There is a significant subject and some meaning which is somewhat unpredictable and/or unexpected, introducing an element of surprise.

_____ Language and form – The essay has a definite style which draws the reader in. The paper is clearly written without mechanical errors and is economical in that the writer avoids unnecessary words which do not advance the paper's meaning. The essay is comprehensible in that the language allows the meaning to come through. The paper consistently follows the MLA style of internal citations. The paper uses multiple paragraphs and line breaks/spaces to provide the reader with sufficient white space to aid in the digestion of information.

_____ Information – The essay supplies specific details, examples, facts, and anecdotes that back up generalizations. Details are appropriate to the focus of the piece and carefully selected. Information comes from the author’s thoughts/experiences, academic research, and the interview.

_____ MLA Format/Works Cited – The essay contains a title page with student, teacher, course, and date information on the left, and a heading and title. Essay is double-spaced, sources are properly cited using internal citations. A minimum of three academic sources and an interview are
correctly cited in MLA format at the end of the essay in a Works Cited page. Remember to organize sources alphabetically.