**Interdisciplinary Research/Analysis**

Suitable for many different disciplines, including in both social and hard sciences

**Purpose**

Your task is to illuminate a particular literary work by providing [scientific, historical, sociological, or psychological] context. This paper will be your introduction into the research you will be using in your discipline. You will also continue working towards other course outcomes: inquiry, organization, clarity, and integration of sources.

**Situation**

You should pretend that you are writing this paper for inclusion in Writers Across Disciplines, a web log dedicated to showing how fiction writers use, abuse and manipulate historical and scientific fact.

The creator (and editor) of the blog is interested in how researching science and history can make stories more meaningful. He values diligent research in respected sources and logical organization. He is also lazy and doesn’t want to spend his days correcting someone’s grammar and punctuation mistakes. He values correct citations and a correctly formatted bibliography—both in the format appropriate for your major—so he can use your paper as a springboard into further research. He is keen on writers having a specific point.

You should assume that your reader has read the story or novel.

**Procedure**

Choose an area of focus from the novel [or any story in the course pack, textbook, etc.]

Identify one specific aspect or element of the story that can be illuminated by [historical, scientific, sociological, or psychological] research. You should choose a topic in your area of interest.

Conduct research and categorize your findings.

Write an informative paper explaining how your research contributes to an understanding of the writer’s overall purpose or theme or of a particular character’s motives.

**Research requirements**

* Primary source: your selected literary work.
* Secondary sources: a minimum of three legitimate sources. Avoid general web searches. You’ll need to find articles from the appropriate databases for your discipline.

**Paper Requirements**

* A minimum word count of 1000 (roughly four pages of text)
* Correct use of MLA, APA, or Chicago style
* Correct use of in-text citation
* A correctly formatted works-cited page
* A draft for peer-review

**Justification**

Students would conclude this assignment with at least one experience with the kind of research and citation style they will be using in future assignments in their major.

Many English Department faculty members will be looking for ways to continue to assign papers connected to their main area of interest and expertise. This assignment gives an option for those who believe in the value of literature in the writing classroom.