

Research Proposal and Research Question Assignment

Introduction

Contrary to popular belief, research is not about having a result in mind and then finding research that supports your presupposed ideas about a topic. No my friends, research is really about coming up with a question that you want to pursue and following it through in a way that makes sense—particularly when you are looking at hoaxes, urban legends and conspiracy theories. Research into hoaxes, urban legends and conspiracy theories demands both an open mind and a certain form of intellectually sophisticated skepticism.

Thus, for this assignment, you will write out a research question, plot out an approach, and even do a little preliminary research to see what you actually want to **discover, not prove**. You will also **narrow down a topic so that is manageable**. Thus, you will not do your research on “conspiracy theories surrounding the Kennedy assassination”; you will narrow your topic to looking at something particular about this topic —such as the role that the “magic bullet” might have played in the creation of “conspiracy theories.”

Components

For this assignment you will write out the following:

- A research question. (A one sentence statement of what you want to look at in your research.)
- A two paragraph written introduction and justification for your project. (In this explain why you will be looking into your question, its significance, and what you hope to learn. **It also must have a provisional explanation of why your hoax, conspiracy theory, or urban legend is worth looking at.**)
- An annotated bibliography of three good sources. (This will involve three citations—MLA, CMS or APA format—and a short paragraph summarizing the source.)

Audience

You are writing this, primarily, for yourself. However, you want to keep in mind that I and others will be reading this—so you cannot assume much prior knowledge on the subject from this.

Evaluation Points

You will want to make sure that you do following as you do your Research Proposal:

- Write a good, coherent, and researchable research question.
- Create an introduction that justifies and explains the significance of your subject.
- Do three annotations of sources that you find.
- Ensure that your sources are reliable and solid.

Due Dates

- **First Draft:**
- **Final Draft:**