

## Research Essay

*The Research Essay is worth 20% of your final grade.*

The Persuasive Essay allows you to demonstrate your writing skills and ability to organize ideas effectively. As discussed in the instructions for the Research Essay Outline, you must choose an issue\* on which people's opinions may differ. Then, you must make an argument for your position that is well supported by logic and facts.

\*The following topics cannot be used for the essay: abortion, euthanasia, death penalty or religion.

## INSTRUCTIONS

These instructions have two parts:

1. Grading criteria and rubric for essay components
2. Sample essay sections to use as writing guidelines.

### 1. Grading Criteria for Essay Components

#### 2. Content

- Content is well developed, 700-1,000 words, not including direct quotations and bibliography.
- Points are supported with solid research.
- Researched information is illustrated with relevant examples and supported quotations where applicable.

#### 3. Organization of Facts and Ideas

Your organization of ideas must

- Be logical and appropriate to the document's audience and purpose.
- Show a clear progression from the introduction through to the conclusion.

### **SPECIFIC GRADING CRITERIA**

- **Essay** has a three-part structure: introduction, body, and conclusion.
- **Introduction** contains the thesis statement, i.e., a clear, controlling idea of what will be in the essay and an overview of the points that will be discussed.
- **Body** is divided into paragraphs according to the overview in the thesis statement.
- **Paragraphs** are unified in their content.
- **Conclusion** takes reader back to controlling idea/overview (no new information.)

### **3. Style Elements**

Your tone, flow, paragraph structure and word choices must be skillfully employed to suit the audience and purpose of your essay.

### **SPECIFIC GRADING CRITERIA**

- **Transitions** within and among paragraphs are well done.
- **Word choice** is correct and relevant.
- **Phrasing** has little or no awkwardness.

### **4. Grammar, Etc.**

You demonstrate that you have mastered sentence structure and have a good knowledge of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

### **SPECIFIC GRADING CRITERIA**

- **Sentence formation** does not include run-on sentences, sentence fragments, and faulty construction (syntax).
- **Verb use** does not include subject-verb disagreement, incorrect tense, and overuse of the passive voice.
- **Pronoun use** does not include incorrect pronoun case (subject, object, and possessive) and noun-pronoun disagreement.
- **Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation** are done correctly.

## 5. Format

- **Title page** includes title, your first and last names, course code, and course section.
- **Pages** are numbered.
- **Double-spacing** occurs between lines and paragraphs.
- **Font** is either 12" Times New Roman or Arial.
- **Margins** are set at 2.54 cm (normal range).

## 6. Research Sources

You correctly integrate research information into your essay and use APA style for in-text citation and your bibliography.

### SPECIFIC GRADING CRITERIA

- **In-text citations** for quotations, paraphrases, and summaries from researched information are done correctly.
- **Bibliography** contains at least three sources and is the last page of the essay.

## Research Essay Rubric

	TOTAL POINTS	YOUR POINTS
<b>Content/Research:</b> Appropriate essay content supported by solid research.	6	
<b>Organization/Style:</b> Main idea flows logically, concisely, and smoothly from intro, through body, to conclusion.	6	
<b>Grammar/Punctuation:</b> Few errors	4	
<b>In-Text Citations/Bibliography:</b> At a minimum, <u>three sources</u> are documented correctly in APA style.	3	
<b>Format:</b> Follows course instructions	1	
<b>Grade</b>	20	

## 2. SAMPLE RESEARCH ESSAY SECTIONS

These sample essay sections expand on the samples provided in the Outline instructions and provide explanations of the paragraphs' structures. As well, this section includes a Sample Bibliography.

### Sample Essay Introduction with Sources Cited in APA Style

Have you ever listened to parents when they talk to their infants?<sup>1</sup> They pitch their voices high, use baby words rather than regular ones, e.g., “moo” for “cow,” and speak more slowly and repetitively than normal (Royster, Ratner, Newman, McColgan, & Tuit, 2011).<sup>2</sup> The Talaris Institute (2009) provides this example: “Hellooo, sweetie. How’s my baaabee? Ooooh, you’re sooo cute! You are sooooo cuuuute!”<sup>3</sup> This type of language, used worldwide, is called “motherese” and may sound silly and even stupid to some people.<sup>4</sup> However, research shows that baby talk actually benefits infants’ learning<sup>5</sup> by attracting their attention, teaching them about social interaction, and helping them build language skills.<sup>6</sup>

1. Opening question to “hook” the reader.
2. Describes the topic.
3. Provides an example of the topic.
4. Provides one stance on the topic.
5. Introduces the writer’s opposing stance.
6. Outlines the basic elements or a “road map” of what will be in the essay.

### Sample 1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph with Sources Cited in APA Style

Research into child development has shown that infants pay more attention to “motherese” than regular conversation.<sup>1</sup> First, motherese attracts a baby because it is “linguistically simplified and characterized by a high pitch and exaggerated intonation” (Fernald, 1985, p. 181).<sup>2</sup> According to Spenader (2006), motherese is also characterized by slower tempo, clearer articulation, simpler sentence structure, many repetitions, full names instead of pronouns, complete sentences, and non-abstract references.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, research has found that infants would rather listen to motherese

than regular talk.<sup>4</sup> Fernald's (1985) testing of 48 four-month-old infants demonstrated that they preferred motherese to "a variety of natural infant-directed and adult-directed speech" (p. 181).<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, motherese evokes physical changes in infants' brains.<sup>6</sup> Dewar (2014) reports on studies which demonstrate that motherese 1) causes a higher electrical activity in baby's brains; and 2) increases blood flow to the frontal area of the brain even when an infant is sleeping.<sup>7</sup> In other words, motherese has the power to alter a baby's cognitive functioning, which in turn affects their social and language development.<sup>8</sup>

1. Topic sentence that introduces the focus of the paragraph and develops the idea previewed in the introduction.
2. First supporting fact with source.
3. Additional fact with source that expands on first fact.
4. Transition sentence to second fact in the writer's own words.
5. Second fact with source.
6. Transition sentence to third fact in the writer's own words.
7. Third fact with source.
8. Paragraph conclusion in the writer's own words that sums up the paragraph and provide a transition to the next paragraph.

### Sample Essay Conclusion

In conclusion, this essay has demonstrated that motherese, rather than being ignored as just something parents do, stimulates infants and is a significant factor in their social and language learning.<sup>1</sup> As brain researchers continue finding out the way humans develop cognitively, talking "silly" to babies may turn out to be as important to learning as a college education.<sup>2</sup>

1. Rephrases the Thesis Statement as expressed in the Essay Introduction and ties together the point the writer set out to prove and the main ideas in the paragraphs' topic sentences.
2. Takes the reader beyond the initial idea presented in the Introduction and provides a broader scope for the concept.

## Sample Bibliography in APA Style

- Dewar, G. (2014). Has natural selection wired your brain for baby talk? Retrieved from <http://www.parentingscience.com/baby-communication.html>
- Fernald, A. (1985). Four-month-old infants prefer to listen to motherese. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 8, 181-195.
- Talaris Institute. (2009). Talking to baby: The magical sounds of “parentese” make it the preferred language for babies [PDF file]. Retrieved from <http://www.parentingcounts.org/information/documents/talking-to-baby-100-705-200907.pdf>
- Royster, C., Ratner, N., Newman, R., McColgan, K., & Tuit, L. (2011). “Meow” or “kitty?” Mothers’ onomatopoeia, naming, and child language growth [Conference poster]. Retrieved from [www.asha.org/Events/.../2011/Royster-Ratner-Newman-McColgan-Tuit/](http://www.asha.org/Events/.../2011/Royster-Ratner-Newman-McColgan-Tuit/)
- Spenader, J. (2006). Child language acquisition [Slide presentation]. Retrieved from [http://www.ai.rug.nl/~spenader/teaching/ATW/ATW\\_Lecture\\_7\\_P306\\_JS.pdf](http://www.ai.rug.nl/~spenader/teaching/ATW/ATW_Lecture_7_P306_JS.pdf)