

Grades 9-12 Introduction to a Literary Research Paper

Strand Research

SOL 9.8 b, c; 10 a, b; 11.8 a, b, c; and 12.8 a, b, d

Materials

Projection screen/board [or Available Technology]

Hand-held scanner [or blank index cards]

Chart Paper or Dry Erase Poster board [or Available Technology]

High lighters [Various Colors]

BOOLEAN SEARCH ENGINE Graph

THESIS INDEX Cards

FOCUS TOPIC Template

SO WHAT? Online Game

Lessons

DAY 1 [45 min lesson]

1. Prepare with students a list of 5-8 potential literary-inspired research ideas [one or a few words] and display for students to review.
2. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each potential research idea. The goal of the discussion should be to determine how broad the idea is and what is needed ultimately to focus an idea into a viable research topic and, subsequently, a research thesis statement.
3. Place students in small groups and ask students to create a list of possible key words to help them support one research idea from the list.
4. Ask students [after students have generated further key words] to debate whether all the information needed on their topic is identified. Have them brainstorm a list of possible research sources of information that could help them expand their information and knowledge on the topic. [Ex: Journals, Scholar Articles, Books, etc.]. The list should be posted on the chart paper or dry erase poster board. Give each group a distinctive color from the others.
5. Display each group's list. Allow students time to walk around and read each group's list of key words and research idea. As the groups reconvene, randomly assign a group to another group's word list. [They are now the "guest" group.] Ask the "guest" group to validate which words are necessary to further expand the idea into a research topic. They should circle each word they feel necessary to focus the idea with further research. Conversely, have them cross off any word they feel may not validate the topic with research. Select one student representative from each "guest" group to address why they identified the key words they did.
6. Determine the final list of key words for each topic by turning the key words into various Boolean search statements using the BOOLEAN SEARCH ENGINE graph [see attachment A]. As a group or individually, ask students to identify possible

sources for their topic. Also ask students to think about the literature of focus they could use to connect the idea and the key words on the list considered most valuable as a potential topic. Make a list of all potential literary references [teacher can provide a model example for each idea]. A few of their Boolean searches should include the literary reference.

7. Students will not be gathering research but rather evaluating if their topic is FOCUSED enough or needs to be expanded or narrowed to help them begin their formal research on their topic.

DAY 2 [45 min lesson]

8. Demonstrate to the students, after the final key words list is made and the literary text is identified, a variety of sample thesis statements for literary research papers. [Preferable to use actual student samples from past years cut/pasted on index cards—try to have one sample per student].
9. Provide these samples on index cards and hand out to each group [as previously assigned in Day 1 or with new groups] one sample. Have them use their high lighters to color code three key aspects of the thesis statement: the topic [ex: Green]; the key word[s] that validate[s] the topic [ex: Yellow]; and the commentary or writer's statement of opinion on the topic [ex: Blue].
10. Encourage volunteers to share what they marked for each sample thesis statement. Display a clean copy of each statement and allow students to mark the visual for the class to review.
11. Review the importance of identifying key words that best validate a topic and how to formulate those into a FOCUSED TOPIC. Ask students to summarize in a few words what is the focus of each thesis statement sample. This will help emphasize to students that key words are important for providing all the language necessary to focus research that stems from one broad idea or main topic. If students have difficulty summarizing the broad idea or main topic, then the thesis statement did not have a clear focus. [Teachers may want to provide samples of thesis statements that do not have a clear focus to show in contrast to samples that do provide a clear focus.]
12. Ask students to use the FOCUS TOPIC Template [see Attachment B] which helps them categorize key words for research writing into the following [students can use the key word list/s from their Boolean Search Engine]:
 - a. F=FOR WHOM is the writing intended? [AUDIENCE]
 - b. O=How can the details be ORGANIZED? [ORGANIZATION]
 - c. C=Is the topic CLEARLY stated with all relevant terms? [CLARITY]
 - d. U=Will the reader/audience UNDERSTAND what is the scope of the research topic? [UNDERSTANDING]
 - e. S=SO WHAT will a reader learn or grow to understand from the research topic? [PURPOSE]

13. Take one or more of the sample thesis statements and have students deconstruct it using the FOCUS TOPIC Template. This will become their sample guide as they begin to construct their own Literary Research Thesis Statements. Have students construct a first draft of their research thesis statement to share the following class session.

DAY 3 [30-45 min lesson]

14. Solicit student volunteers to share their thesis statements. Scan sample thesis statements [or have them re-write their thesis on an index card or poster board] and display for the class to review or pair students to exchange their index card.
15. Play the “So What?” Online game as a class or as partners. Have them complete the “So What?” on line game [see Attachment C for sample link] that will encourage students to modify the language of their statements making a topic statement stronger or to validate the strength of their thesis statement. You can create the questions and answers ahead of time or have students create the content with their own samples for other students to play.
16. Allow students to modify any statements with suggestions they receive from their “So What?” game and present final thesis statements that will focus the student’s research writing to the class.

Attachments, Links, or Resources

Attachment A Boolean Search Engine Fill-in Graph

Attachment B FOCUS Topic Template

Attachment C "So What?" Focus your LITERARY RESEARCH topic! [Online Game Board]

[Sample link: <http://www.superteachertools.com/boardgame/online/game1763.php>]

To create an Online game:

<http://www.superteachertools.com/boardgame/makegamehtml.htm>

Literary References used in Online game:

Hosseini, Khaled. The Kite Runner. New York: The Berkley

Publishing Group, 2003. Print.

Shakespeare, William. Hamlet (The New Folger Library Shakespeare). Simon &

Schuster; New Folger Edition, 2003. Print.