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| **WR 121 -- Chris Riseley**  **GUIDELINES FOR THE INFORMATIVE PAPER**  The 3-5 page informative paper that you are writing for this class asks that you educate yourselves about a single topic so that you can share what you have discovered about that topic with your readers. Many other classes during college will require that you write an informative paper. The skills that you learn while you work on this paper will likely be used again in your psychology, history, criminal justice, or biology courses, just to name a few.  **This informative paper asks us to formulate a relevant question and then discover what experts have to say about it.**  Examples:  How safe is Facebook for young women?  How addictive are video games like *World of Warcraft, HALO* and *Call of Duty*?  How has texting changed the way teenagers develop face-to-face, interpersonal social skills?  **You must explore a question that you are genuinely interested in.**  The informative paper is no different than any other paper in this one sense: if you are writing about a topic that is truly driven by your own authentic curiosity, you are certainly going to write a stronger paper than if you write about something you are not interested in.  An informative paper can be written on any topic, so your first task in writing one will be to begin narrowing down your topic so that the question you choose to explore will be narrow enough that you can discuss it thoroughly in just three to five pages.  One of the steps in writing your paper will be to discover what we will call an **“anchor essay.”** This anchor essay will be one of the minimum of four essays or articles that you will reference in the works cited page of our essay. This essay should be about exactly what you want to write about. This essay will be the starting point for your research.  **YOUR INFORMATIVE PAPER IS NOT THE LAST WORD**  Your paper does not need to definitively answer the question you ask that guides your thinking and exploration. **Your paper should show what some experts in the field are saying about the question you are pursuing.** In a sense, you are informing your audience not so much about the topic itself, but about what experts who have studied the topic are saying about it.  As you do some research, one of your articles might be about how supportive Facebook friends are when compared to real friends. You might examine how the author has discovered very thoughtful quotes by experts and how she used those quotes to give us the sense that experts are not in complete agreement about how supportive Facebook friends might be. To give a more complete picture of the conversation, she might use quotes from experts who seem to be enthusiastic fans of Facebook and quotes from experts who seemed cautious about it at the very least.  Your informative paper should attempt to achieve a similar balance.  Example:  Let’s say you are exploring the question “how does using Facebook affect our personal privacy?”  You should attempt to find two articles that feature information from experts about the dangers of paying too little attention to our online privacy.  You should then attempt to find two articles that feature information from experts who believe that protecting our privacy isn’t as big a priority as some make it out to be.  That is something of an oversimplified example, but I hope it illustrates that the informative paper you are writing here really is just a chance for you to show that you have listened in on *the conversation* about *privacy* and that you are informing us about what experts happen to be saying about it at this point.  You will be using **signal phrases** to integrate the information you discover, and you will be helping your readers understand where you found your information by including an APA style **works cited page**. Your paper needs to be at least three full pages of written text. The works cited page does not count toward page length.  To encourage you to be thorough as you read through each of the articles you will be using as a source for this paper, you will need to include an APA style **annotated bibliography** after your regular works cited page.  Your paper will offer an introduction that informs readers about what the paper will cover. You will also need to include a clearly identifiable **thesis statement.**  The body of your paper will focus on the different perspectives experts hold regarding the topic that you discovered while you were becoming informed.  Your conclusion will tie together much of the information you have already shared and offer a restatement of your main idea.  **DISCUSSING THE CONVERSATION**  So what topic can you write about?  That’s not the correct question to ask about this paper. The correct question to ask about this paper might be something like this:  What question is appropriate to explore for this paper?  It is my hope, since many of the articles you will be studying during this unit deal with technology, that some of you will choose to investigate one of the following questions that deal with technology, or a similar question of your own:  What are experts saying about how changing technology affects the older generation?  What are experts saying about how the older generation is dealing with the rapid changes in technology?  What are experts saying about how social media changes the way people interact?  What are experts saying about how using Facebook affects our personal privacy?  What are experts saying about how safe Facebook is for young women?  What are experts saying about the dangers of video game addiction?  What are experts saying about how we are dealing with video game addiction?  How has texting changed the way teenagers develop face-to-face, interpersonal social skills?  What are experts saying about the state of courtesy, manners, and etiquette in contemporary culture?  That is just a tiny list of the questions that might be explored for this paper. All of those questions circle around conversations that have to do with technology.  Here’s a question that a student might want to explore but that would be troublesome for this assignment because the page length for this paper is only five pages:  What are experts saying about how the fiscal policies of the early 1980s contributed to our present economic situation?  A paper exploring that question would have to offer sufficient background to help our audience understand what the fiscal policies of the early 1980s were, and after that the paper would need to explore the consequences of those choices. This would take far more than five pages.  If a student was absolutely in love with this topic, this question could be focused even more specifically to something like this, depending on the student’s interests:  What are experts saying about how the firing of the air traffic controllers in the early 1980s has contributed to the weakness of labor unions today?  That’s still quite a meaty question but it is narrower than the first of the two.  Remember that your paper will be introducing the words of experts into your paper so that you can help readers understand what experts are saying about the topic that you are exploring.  Here are some examples of ways that experienced writers integrate summary, paraphrase, and quotes into their papers:  Many experts consider \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a troubling development in the field of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  Researchers studying \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have found a correlation between \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_.  Conventional wisdom has it that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but five scientists from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ believe they have discovered exactly what everyone else is wrong about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  Sometimes you can use signal phrases to let readers know why a certain expert is credible:  Dr. Angus Spaghetti Monkey from the University of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, pointed out that “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_…”  If you are quoting an article that has a quote by an expert in it and all you want to do is quote the expert, you can use a structure like this:  James McKinneybob, in his article entitled “The controversy about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_,” quotes Dr. Jaime Silkworth, lead neurologist on from the University of Nevada, as saying, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”  As you read the essays you discover about your topic, notice when writers use structures like these to introduce the ideas of experts.  Another note about plagiarism:  To help you avoid plagiarism, at least two of your sources will need to come from the online databases that we have access to here via our LBCC Library.  To search the online databases:  1. <http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/library>  2. Click the “Find Articles” button on the left and then click the “All Databases (A-Z) link.  This will show you far more databases than you need. Don’t get overwhelmed. The three databases that will do all the heavy lifting for this assignment are these:  Academic Search Premier,  Masterfile Search Premier  and  Lexis Nexus for news items.  You are of course welcome to poke into any of these databases, but you’ll find plenty of quotes by experts in just those.  Remember, your informative essay seeks to find articles that cite experts who are making statements about the conversation or question we are exploring.  Here is an example inquiry. The article “[Why the U.S. is Destroying its Education System](http://www.commondreams.org/view/2011/04/11)” is obviously biased. But is there evidence out there to support the claims that Chris Hedges is making? What are experts out there saying about this conversation?  First we will visit our library databases:  1. <http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/library>  2. Then we’ll click Find Articles and All Databases A to Z: <http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/library/find-articles/all-databases-a-z>  3. Now we might select Masterfile Premier database or Academic Search Premier. I want to go with a more mainstream assortment of experts today, so I am going to select Masterfile Search Premier. The articles I get back will be from reliable but less academic sources. (Hint: They will be easier for me to understand hopefully.)  4. After entering my last name and birthday I am free to do some keyword searching.  5. I entered these words into the search field:  United States Destroying Education  Look at the number two Item I got back!  Why an Undemocratic Capitalism Has Brought Public **Education** to Its Knees: A MANIFESTO.  Authors: GIBBONEY, RICHARD A.  Source: Phi Delta Kappan, Sep2008, Vol. 90 Issue 1, p21-31, 11p, 1 Color Photograph, 1 Chart  Document Type: Article  Subject Terms:  EDUCATIONAL law & legislation -- United States  UNITED States. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001  FEDERAL aid to education  PUBLIC institutions -- Law & legislation  BILLS, Legislative  POOR children -- Education  Geographic Terms:  UNITED States  Abstract:  The article discusses public **education** in the **United** **States**. According to the author, an undemocratic capitalistic policy is **destroying** the nation's public schools, with the No Child Left Behind Act being especially harmful. The legislation hurts schools because of its emphasis on accountability, which penalizes schools in poverty-stricken cities and rural areas. According to the author, in order to fix the problem the country must support policies designed to reduce poverty among the population and its negative effects on the ability of children to succeed.  This is exactly the starting point I needed to begin exploring some of the ideas that Hedges brought up in his biased essay. Hopefully the author of this essay will cite more experts that can explain to me more of what’s happening in this conversation.  **ORGANIZING YOUR PAPER**  If you have read our annotated example paper [“Pitbulls: Both Sides of the Fence,”](https://docs.google.com/a/linnbenton.edu/document/d/1urkMR09euUZB1SmEPMdhLHbY4rj-XmxLf9hdV8flUPM/edit?usp=sharing) you have noticed that this writer organized her paper in the following way:  Introduction: She offered background related to the full spectrum of the conversation regarding Pitbull bans.  Next Section: She offered a summary of an article that included many of the voices that are against Pitbull bans.  Next Section: She offered a perspective about a middle ground that fell in between full Pitbull bans and total freedom for the owners of Pitbulls.  Next Section: She offered voices of experts who are in favor of Pitbull bans.  Conclusion: She summed up the conversation and left readers with a feeling that we were more informed about the conversation but that it would be continuing.    **AVOIDING PLAGIARISM**  Please feel free to use our library databases and online resources, but be aware that using someone else’s words or ideas without proper acknowledgement can result in plagiarism which is a form of academic dishonesty. If plagiarism is detected, you would be held accountable and your grade on this paper and in the overall class would suffer.  Please consult our handbook for guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism so that you can be successful in your research and writing, not just for this class, but for all of your courses at LBCC and beyond. |

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