**Nineteenth Century Novel Research Paper Guideline**

**How to Brainstorm Ideas:**

The key to generate ideas about your topic is to **read critically**. Do not just passively read the page; engage with the text, ask questions, take notes. Think about what most interests you in the readings ; what you respond to the most. Have a notepad at hand and jot down any thoughts you have. Don't worry about being disorganized or not exactly knowing what you are writing, just put it in paper and it will come in handy later.

Start **annotating** **the text**; underline or highlight what you think are relevant points to your ideas. Identify patterns; what elements are most repeated? Are there any recurrent motifs, symbols, or themes? Outline the text; write headings on top of the page summarizing the main events. Use divider flags to help you navigate the text easily. Recognize character traits and follow character development. Identify important quotations; know who says them, why they say it, when and where, and why is it important. Remember you are writing a literary analysis paper so you will provide quotations and examples from the text.

As soon as you become familiar with the text, begin a process of **free flow writing**; that means writing without thinking twice. Pour all your ideas on the page. This helps de-clutter your mind and give a chance to see what is actually going on in your mind. Look at what you wrote and begin to identify your ideas, cross out the sentences that are repeated or that don't support the ideas you have about your paper.

**How to Formulate an Argument:**

Once you have some ideas about your paper ask yourself why they are important. With a literary analysis paper your goal is to **convince your reader** that your argument (your main idea) is valid (correct) and you need to back it up with evidence from the novel in the form of quotations, examples, and events; as well as evidence from academic sources that support your argument. You also have to write as if your reader doesn't know what you are talking about but be sure not to summarize the plot; explain the context of the example you are using for the novel but do not make it long and make sure it supports your argument. Remember that your focus is on analysis (detailed explanation) not summarization.

Your argument is your thesis statement and it serves as the basis of your paper. It focuses on a *single* and *specific* aspect of the novel or both novel if you decide to do a comparison essay. Before you formulate your thesis statement, be sure to **examine your academic sources** and have enough evidence to support your paper. Scholars may have the same opinions you have about your topic or they may have different ones but either way you can borrow their ideas to strengthen your own or you can disagree with what they are saying and prove them wrong with evidence from the novel. Either way, your thesis statement must be specific and has to be supported by the research you have done. Instead of saying "Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* is an example of writing about social problems" you should say "Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* reflects the social tensions of 19th century London through the class conflict between characters...etc", and then you build your essay around explaining these social tensions and conflicts, giving examples for them, and using what other scholars have said about social problems in the novel or in 19th century London.

**How to Find Academic Sources:**

The typical place to find sources is through the you **public library**. There is a small library on the second floor of building 1 that may have English books and you have the campus library as well, which definitely has. There is also your local public libraries: Prince Salman library, King Fahad library, King AbdulAziz library. When you research physical books, be sure to make copies of the pages you need in case you need to go back to them later. When you find a book that may support your argument, don't attempt to read the whole book; what you can do is look at the table of contents at the very first pages and read the title of the chapters, or look at the index at the end of the book for keywords and the pages you can find them. Furthermore, when you have a book with many chapters or chapters with different authors, each chapter can count as one source. This means that a book can have up to three academic sources, depending on the book of course.

Nonetheless, the easier way is to find sources through the **digital library** link on your blackboard and online libraries. When you search for items make sure to check the boxes on the side where it says available online and narrow down your search by choosing to search only within literary criticism, social sciences, literature, and humanities. Only look through (academic) journal article and books, do not look at newspaper articles or book reviews. You also have the option to log in to online libraries such as Questia.com and Google Scholar. Other useful free search engines include:

[JSTOR Early Journal Content](http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch?ModifySearch=Modify+Search&wc=off&acc=on)

[INFOMINE](http://infomine.ucr.edu/about/index.shtml)

[InterDok - Directory of Published Proceedings](http://www.interdok.com/search_paper.php)

[Intute - Home](http://www.intute.ac.uk/)

[DOAJ Directory of Open Access Journals](http://www.doaj.org/)

**How to Write a Proposal**

Your proposal will consist of three paragraphs and a list of your sources . In the first paragraph you will state and explain your argument and describe how you will develop you essay around it and how it is structured; what is the outline you have planned and in what way will you organize it?

In the second paragraph you will briefly discuss your academic sources, mention why they are relevant to your argument and how you plan to use them.

In the third paragraph, you will explain what you hope to achieve with this paper and what are the particular questions you want to ask and answer about the novel.

**How to Format your Paper**

All stages of your paper (including drafts) should be printed on white plain paper using a Times New Roman font size 12 double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Your name, student number, course name and number and date should be typed in at the top left-hand corner of the page. The title of your assignment should be indented in the middle in the same font and size as the rest of your document.

To avoid plagiarism, you have to credit your borrowed information. If you are taking sentences and phrases as they are you must put them between quotations " …" and put the name of the author and page number from where you took the information between parentheses (...). If you are using a source's ideas but are using your own words, then you don’t need to quote and should only cite the source e.g: (Smith 19).

**Tips:**

- Go to the English department's writing center, which is located at the third floor of building one, to help you with your work. It is a great resource that you should take advantage of.

- Start writing as you read, not after you finish your reading.

- Remember that any work that is plagiarized will receive an automatic zero. Even if it is a single sentence.