

Researched Essay Brainstorms Worksheet

Brainstorming is a fundamental process to research and writing. More time fine-tuning ideas leads to better research which leads to better researched writing. This worksheet is designed to 1) help you identify topics that interest you, questions you have, and views you already hold; and 2) get you started on some quick research to gauge how “researchable” one of your prospective topics is. These are two strategies

FYI: If it helps, feel free to download and reread the Phase 2 Brainstorms HANDOUT that we reviewed in class. It’s on BB in the “Course Materials” folder.

STEP 1: Brainstorm Interests (if you already have a strong interest, skip to STEP 2)

List/freewrite here the various authors/topics/ideas you’ve found yourself drawn to when learning about the politics of language so far this semester.

Gather and reread your various responses to course texts (at the end of your Rhetorical Situation Worksheets as well as the written responses you wrote for the last three classes). In what ways do your reflections overlap with your list/freewrite above, if at all? What sorts of topics/concepts did you focus on?

Try here to construct a question or two that captures what you may want to investigate for this project.

STEP 2: Identify Topics that (You Feel) Need to be Exposed to Audiences

What is a topic/issue related to our class that you feel needs to be further investigated and shared? Why do you feel this way?

How are different accents perceived in society?

STEP 3: Brainstorm Sources/Evidence (adapted from *Writing Arguments*, p. 102)

What personal experiences have you had with this issue, if any? What details from your life or the lives of your friends, acquaintances, or relatives might serve as examples or other kinds of evidence?

After coming to the US I picked up the “New York” accent. It wasn’t on purpose, but I just naturally learned it just by being around other. My speech has become a mix of both where sometimes I can speak in standard English and other times where I

would speak in a “New York” accent. When I use the New York accent with people I just met or when I’m visiting my cousins upstate they always give a weird look as to say “why’re you talking like that”.

What evidence/information might you hope to find in encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, scholarly journals, and/or statistical resources (such as U.S. Census Bureau data or *Statistical Abstract of the United States*)?

I would hope to find articles talking about different accents and how certain accents came to be.

Which of our course texts might you draw on and why? What specific ideas might you paraphrase or quote?

I can draw to “Nobody Mean More to Me Than You And the Future Life of Willie Jordan” by June Jordan because she talks about her experience teaching Black English and how her students thought of it as improper.

STEP 4: Do Some Quick Research Online

Try searching via google.com a phrase that captures one of the topics you’ve identified so far. Some examples include: language politics; language diversity; immigrant English; World Englishes; speaking English with an accent; English-only ideologies; prescriptivism; prescriptive language ideologies; language and race; linguicism; language discrimination; language and culture; etc. Add multiple phrases/terms together with AND (must capitalize) to fine-tune your search (e.g., “language diversity” AND “education”). Try searching with and without quotation marks. How many hits did you get? What are the titles of some of the more promising websites that populated? Save or bookmark any keepers. Jot down here the phrases you used that seem to capture your idea.

How many hits: 30 million

Titles of promising sources: “The Influence of Accents on Social Perception”, “Accent Bias: How Can We Minimize Discrimination In The Workplace?”

Repeat the above search through scholar.google.com. How many hits did you get? What are the titles of some of the more promising scholarly sources that populated? Save or bookmark any keepers.

How many hits: 526k

Titles of promising sources: “The Influence of Accents on Social Perception”, “A Market of Accents”, “Language Learners’ Perceptions of Accent”, “The Perception and Evaluation of Job Candidates with Four Different Ethnic Accents”, “American

Dialects”, “Attitudes toward American Dialects”

Select one or two promising sources or websites that you’ve found so far through your searches. Skim through it. In what ways does it provide information or perspectives that relate to or differ from your own stance?

“The Influence of Accents on Social Perception” relates to my own stance because it talks about how an individual’s voice and pronunciation of words can reflect how other perceive you.

STEP 5: Reflections

How strongly do you feel about adopting for your Exploratory Essay assignment the topic(s) you’ve been researching in this worksheet? What questions/concerns do you have, if any?

My only concern is being able to effectively use all the sources since there are many.