

The Final Research Article (FRA) asks you to put forward and support an academic argument related to your narrowed social science topic. In the FRA you will put the pieces together from previous assignments, including revised versions of your Background Essay (BE) and Literature Review (LR), but you will also add new material. Throughout the research and writing process of previous assignments up till this point, you have not put forth your own opinions or viewpoints but focused on reporting the information, analyses and conclusions of other scholars. The FRA is the place where you will showcase and present your own insights, interpretations, and viewpoints.

Your Argument: An academic argument should include the following elements: a main claim, reasons, evidence, and warrants. Although you are likely to include a great number of observations, interpretations and insights throughout your essay, your main claim will be a response to your research question. In a large sense, the originality of your overall contribution to the shared scholarly understanding of your topic will depend on the originality of your research question.

Revising the Research Question: In your Literature Review you presented what had already been researched and published by scholars on your narrowed topic and related issues. By the conclusion of that essay, you were supposed to develop an original research question. You may find that you need to revise the formulation of your research question again now that you are actually trying to answer it in the FRA. Again, do not choose a research question (or main claim) that takes a yes/no, good/bad, for/against, pro/con, either/or, or right/wrong form, nor should your research question or claim attempt to predict the future. Instead develop a question that explores and explains cause-effect relationships; non-obvious connections and consequences; complexities in identities, definitions or categorization; the effectiveness of past programs or initiatives; challenges in managing issues; political differences; etc.

Developing an Hypothesis: Try to come up with a one-sentence answer to the research question from the conclusion of your Literature Review, which will be the main claim in your academic argument. If you can't imagine what a good one-sentence answer to the research question would look and sound like, consider refining or revising the question further. Since you will not be conducting an original research study, your one-sentence answer will be your hypothesis. Your goal is to support, not prove, your hypothesis (main claim) with reasons, evidence, and relevant warrants. Consider your main claim as your supported interpretation rather than an opinion. If you are having a difficult time coming up with a research question, you can begin by trying to list all of the insights, interpretations, and connections you came up with as you read through various articles and websites throughout the quarter. What claims do you feel are able to make regarding your narrowed topic. Which of the claims appear significant and original? You can work backwards from a main claim to a research question as well.

More Research: You need a minimum of 12 sources for the FRA, so keep on browsing, surfing, researching, and asking questions. In developing your argument and trying to support an answer (hypothesis) to your original research question in the FRA, you will of course draw upon your Background Essay and Literature Review. However, the way in which you have narrowed your topic and the questions you are now asking may have gone through substantial changes as you moved through the various assignments, so you might also end up having to do new background research or to find new scholarly articles/chapters for the literature review section of the FRA.

Required Elements of the Final Research Article

Length: 3000-3750 words (12-15 pages of text, not including the cover page or the pages for the abstract, references, illustrations (optional), or appendixes (optional)).

Coversheet & Title: Include the title, your name, the course number, instructor name, and date on the coversheet (see a handbook or website on APA document format). Your title should be narrow rather than broad, and should reflect your research question or hypothesis. Spend some time developing a title that is interesting, informative and/or innovative.

Abstract (include section heading): On a separate page after the cover page, write a one-paragraph summary (150-200 words) of your research paper with the following items: your narrowed topic; the main subtopics of your background section; the key scholarly issues from your literature review section; your original research question; your main interpretive claim (hypothesis that tries to answer your own research question); and, optionally, a brief statement about the significance of your original research question and hypothesis. Center the word Abstract on the top of this page and then begin the abstract paragraph on the next line.

Introduction (no section heading needed): Include the title of your essay again on the first page of your essay (after the Abstract page); it should be centered on the top of the page; begin the text on the next line. While your introductory section may be one or more paragraphs long (probably not more than two), pay special attention to your very first paragraph, which should capture your reader's attention (while remaining academic and professional rather than sensationalist, overly sentimental or melodramatic). Your introductory section should clearly state your original research question and hypothesis. This section can also include an explanation of the relevance or significance of the issues and/or a brief discussion of what led you to formulate your question (without using "I" or other forms of first person).

Background Section (include section heading; additional subheadings may be useful): This section is the revision of your Background Essay (probably excluding the introduction and conclusion of that earlier essay). Note that revision can mean omitting, expanding or condensing what you wrote earlier, as well as adding new relevant information and subtopics that you hadn't included at all in the earlier assignment. Again, the following elements are suitable for this section: relevant history, contexts, legislation and court cases, key parties and figures, statistics, organizations and programs, debates or disagreements, and/or unresolved issues and questions, etc.

Literature Review (include section heading; include subheadings for summary and discussion/evaluation of sources): This is the section in which you report on the relevant research and writing that other scholars have published in scholarly journals. While you should plan on using what you can from your earlier Literature Review essay, you may need to revise what you wrote there since your research question may have changed, and you will have looked at many new sources; while you will still need an introductory paragraph for this section, a revised version of the conclusion from the Literature Review essay can move to the next section. Again, note that the summary paragraphs of the literature review section should be divided according to issue rather than one for each source; describe what the authors of your scholarly articles have researched, reported, argued or concluded. In the discussion/evaluation section, help us understand the commonalities and differences among scholars, including their questions, methods, assumptions, priorities, etc.; and give your evaluation of these sources, including their strengths or usefulness as well as their weaknesses or limitations. (Make sure that your literature review includes an adequate and representative range of scholarly views; one of the most damaging mistakes you can make for your credibility is to reveal that you are not familiar with some important and relevant arguments or studies in your field of specialization.)

Your Original Argument/Contribution (include section heading; should be at least three pages of new writing): Begin this section with your own original research question along with its justification, which should emerge out of the scholarly sources in the lit review section, especially those areas or questions that you believe have not yet been adequately addressed or answered. The overall purpose of the FRA is to support your main interpretive claim (hypothesis), the answer to your original research question. In this section, make sure you are engaging in dialogue with and building upon your 12+ sources. If you agree with one or more of them, how are you taking the discussion further? If you disagree with one or more of them, why is that? Acknowledge and respond to possible questions and reasonable objections that readers might raise to different aspects of your argument. While you may not be able to anticipate every possible objection, consider questions a skeptic might ask to challenge your positions. Be honest and fair in how you respond to questions or possible opposing views, and be willing to acknowledge questions you can't answer or limit the certainty of your claims if appropriate.

Conclusion (include section heading): Synthesize (do not summarize!) the main information, explanations, debates and argument that your paper has offered. Restate, in different words to avoid repetition, your original research question and hypothesis. What is the significance of the work you have done, the research you've uncovered, the questions you've asked, and the arguments you have made? This is the famous "So what?" question. Your conclusion should give your reader reasons to continue thinking about your essay and its arguments. For example, you can offer suggestions for further research, which refers to new questions or directions that other researchers might wish to pursue based on the work you have done.

References (include section heading): You need a minimum of 12 sources. Begin a new page with the word References centered on the top of the first page of the list of sources that you quoted or cited. Each source should appear in APA format which means that you have to pay attention to details of punctuation, indentation, spacing, capitalization, italics/underlining, sequencing, etc. Because it is very difficult to memorize all of the detailed conventions of citation, refer often to either your handbook or other web-based resources for determining correct

APA format. Also provide a 3-5 sentence annotation for each source. Your References pages should follow the numbering of the entire manuscript; if your last page of writing falls on page 15, then the first page of your references would be page 16.

Appendixes: Include any supporting materials such as archival material, statistics, graphs, expert interviews, survey results, etc. in an appendix. If you have more than one Appendix, use letters to differentiate them: Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.