Organizing the Research Paper

CONFERENCE #1 (MANDATORY)
BE SURE YOU HAVE SIGNED UP FOR A TIME with the Doodle link I sent to your Hawkmail!

Class will not meet Tuesday, October 6, because of conferences. Conferences will take place in YADM 108 unless I tell you otherwise. Bring ALL your RP materials, including your outline and thesis! Also, bring your graded essays with my comments so that we can discuss your writing skills.

Why is organization important in making your point?
- It guides an audience through your reasoning process
- It offers a clear explanation of each argued point
- It demonstrates the credibility of the writer

Organizing your paper
- Title
  - Introduction
    - Thesis statement
  - Body Paragraphs
    - Constructing Topic Sentences
    - Building Main Points
    - Countering the Opposition
  - Conclusion

Title: Why do you need one?
- Introduces the topic of discussion to the audience
- Generates reader interest in the argument
- Try to grab attention by
  - offering a provocative image
  - picking up on words or examples offered in the body or conclusion of the paper
  - asking a question
- Avoid titles that are too general or lack character

What is an introduction?
- Acquaints the reader with the topic and purpose
- Generates audience interest
- Offers a plan for the ensuing argument
- Ways to create an introduction:
  - personal anecdote
  - example--real or hypothetical
  - question
  - quotation
  - shocking statistics
  - striking image
Organizing the Research Paper

What is a thesis statement?
- The **MOST IMPORTANT SENTENCE** in your paper
- Lets the reader know the main idea of the paper
- Answers the question: “What am I trying to prove?”
- Not a factual statement, but a **claim that has to be proven** throughout the paper

Body Paragraphs and Topic Sentences
- Organize body paragraphs with topic sentences that illustrate each main point.
- Only if necessary, offer a brief background (no more than two paragraphs!) of your topic within the early body paragraphs to familiarize the audience with your topic.
- Organization of paragraphs may vary, depending upon the topic and purpose:
  - General information to specific information
  - Most important point to least important point
  - Weakest claim to strongest claim

Incorporating research into the body paragraphs
- Researched material can aid you in proving the claims of your argument and disproving oppositional claims.
- Use your research to **support** the claims made in your topic sentences; make your research work to prove your argument!
- Do not let the research do all the “talking” for you.

Offer a Counterargument
- Addressing the claims of the opposition is an important component in building a convincing argument.
- It demonstrates your **credibility** as a writer -- you have researched multiple sides of the argument and have come to an informed decision.

Conclusion -- The Big Finale
- Your conclusion should re-emphasize the main points made in your paper.
- You should **look at the big picture** or speculate on the future of your topic.
- Avoid raising new claims or making new points in your conclusion.

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSIONS
Get into **groups** with the classmates who read the same RP novel or play that you did. You will not be writing together, but **share ideas** for your research papers to provide one another with some **insight and inspiration**. You can use the questions on the handout as a starting point if you like.