“Research is what I’m doing when I don’t know what I’m doing.”
--Werner von Braun (Inventor of V2 Rocket, 1940s)

“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prodding with a purpose.”
--Zora Neale Hurston (Prominent Writer from Florida during Harlem Renaissance, 1925)

One of the major components of this course is learning to write an argumentative research paper. *Argumentation*, according to *Merriam-Webster*, is defined as “the act or process of forming reasons and of drawing conclusions and applying them to the case in discussion.” *Research* is defined as “studious inquiry or examination; especially: investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories and laws.”

Before writing this essay, read in your textbook all the pages related to argument as a writing strategy.

If your text is *Odyssey*, read Ch. 13 pp. 146-159, in Ch. 14 pp. 164-188 and Ch. 15 pp. 214-221. Pay attention to the terms in bold, the examples, the tables, and the checklists.

If your text is *Foundations First*, read Ch. 13 pp. 173-183 and note the terms in bold and the charts with definitions and lists.

According to most textbooks, the **purpose of writing** an argument is to **persuade** a reader that your position is the better path to follow on a controversial issue. In addition, according to *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook*, an argument has **four main elements:** subject, claims, evidence, and assumptions.

1. **A subject** must be controversial and narrow enough to research and argue in the time and space available.

2. **Claims** are statements or opinions that require support, and your central claim about a controversial subject is your **thesis**.

3. **Evidence supports** your central claim or thesis. Types of evidence are facts, statistics, examples, expert opinions, and appeals to readers’ beliefs or needs.

4. **Assumptions** are beliefs that connect evidence to claims. For example:
Claim: Prep Students are succeeding in college-level classes.
Evidence: Grade point averages above 2.5 (C+) for students who passed the final exam in prep and have taken college-level courses for at least two semesters.
Assumption: Grade point averages are one of the best ways to determine the success of prep students in college-level classes.

Guidelines and Organization for an Effective Argumentative Essay:

- **Introduction** catches readers’ attention, establishes importance of the subject, and provides background. Thesis is typically located at end of introduction or later in body of essay after some support has been presented.
- **Body** of essay contains one or more paragraphs that develop or support thesis (central claim) with clear, relevant evidence (facts, statistics etc.). See #3 above.
- Towards end of body, writer states major opposing views, gives credit to the strong points, but demonstrates that writer’s views are better overall. NOTE: Odyssey does not include this ingredient of stating opponent’s views, but most writing textbooks do stress the importance of giving credit to the other side wherever possible.
- **Conclusion** wraps up the argument by restating thesis (although not always in exact words as above), briefly summarizing major evidence, and making a final appeal to readers to uphold the central claim or follow a specific course of action.

**Final Draft** should include informal outline (one page max) stapled above final draft of 600-800 words (two to three pages), typed in 12 pt. font and double spaced. Place your last name in the upper right.

A title page is not necessary, but you should create a title that is centered on the first page of text. See formatting examples in Odyssey p. 69 and in Purdue Owl (online link in LibGuide). Your whole name should appear only once in the upper left of the first page of text. Type your last name and page number in the upper right of each page of text and the Works Cited page.

All information from research, whether exact quotes or paraphrase (research put into your own words) must be credited by According to... (title of article or author’s last name). No other credit is necessary unless your instructor requires more.

Include a Works Cited page of all research mentioned in the essay by using one of the automatic systems linked in the LibGuide.
Summary of the Research and Writing Process

First, choose one or more topics from the Issues tab on the website Opposing Viewpoints (OV).

Next, after reading at least two articles on the topics in order to become better informed, you should decide on one topic, frame your argument (often in the form of a question or pro and con sides), and then do some prewriting to develop a thesis (your position) on the controversy.

Ultimately, you use the research to discover what you think about a controversial issue, and then you provide evidence in the form of facts, examples, statistics, logical reasoning, or experts’ testimony to convince your reader that your views are better than the opposition’s views, which you have clearly stated towards the end of the body of your essay.

Length of the essay is 600-800 words (two to three typed, double spaced pages). To avoid plagiarism, you must credit all information (quotes and paraphrase) taken from research with the statement According to (title of article or author’s last name).

Using one of the automatic systems under Citations tab in the LibGuide, you create a Works Cited page (last page) for all sources mentioned in your essay.

Step-by-Step Directions

Link to Libguide for this assignment: http://libguides.hccfl.edu/prepwriting_br.

1. Click on the above link or go to HCC Home, Library, Brandon, LibGuides, ENC 0025 Brandon. For logon, you need your student number; for pw, try last four digits of your student # or social security #.

NOTE: If you have a problem logging in to the HCC Library Online System, go to HCC Home Page, click Library; then on right side of page labeled HCC Libraries Online, click Hawk Card—HCC-ID/Library Card.

Next, in right hand column, click and fill in On-line Access Request Form. You should receive help soon.

2. If you log in successfully, on the “LibGuide for ENC 0025… Brandon,” click the upper tab labeled Where to Start.
   Watch the video and consider viewing the second video for which link is given at bottom of page.

3. Next, in left column of Where to Start page, go to left column and click Opposing Viewpoints (OV). On Home Page of OV, click Issues.

   (If the above steps do not work, go to HCC Home, Library, Article Databases, A-Z. Then scroll down to Opposing Viewpoints and log in.)
4. Read through list of subjects under **Issues** and choose at least two or three that you find interesting.

5. Click on each subject and read through at least two articles on each subject to learn about the issues involved.

Example: Subject: Japan and Whaling Industry

6. **Frame the argument** into a question or two clear for and against positions. (This may take a few tries and some help from instructor and/or Prep Lab in BACA 207).

For example, after reading several magazine or journal articles on Japanese whaling practices, One student came up with this topic.

Ex. Should the Japanese whaling fleets be allowed to continue killing and processing a number of whales beyond international limits?

7. Next, go back to left column in Where to Start and check Britannica and Infotrac to see what kind of information is available. **Look for articles expressing views in favor or against your framed argument.** Bookmark or print one article from Brittanica and one from Infotrac. Write down or print a citation of your source that includes author, title, place and date of publication, page or paragraph numbers.

8. After reading the articles carefully, plan your essay as suggested below:

Plan/Informal Outline:

Par 1 Intro par. Hook or Lead-in to subject—why should reader want to know about this subject and its controversy?
General background on subject (Ency. Brit article should help.)
Thesis in one sentence that takes a position on the topic

Par 2 & 3 Body pars that support position with facts, statistics, quotes from experts—all from research sources and all with parenthetical reference that gives author’s last name and page or par # in parentheses; if no author is given, use title of article and page or par #.

Par. 4 Acknowledge opposing view and why it has merit but is not as appropriate as writer’s position

Par 5 Conclusion that may include source of more info or call to action
Create Works Cited page. Click Citation Tab on Libguide: Better one seems to be KnightCite (enter Web Article) or Easybib. Another option is to create Works Cited by studying models given under Citation Tab in Libguide.

1. Write a rough draft, double spaced, about 600 words (two pages, typed, 12 point font).

2. Get feedback from at least two of these three:
   - Group Editing in class
   - Prep Writing Lab
   - smarthinking.com

3. Revise into final draft.

4. Proofread and polish final draft.

5. Order of Docs:
   - Informal Outline on top (thesis stated in complete sentence)
   - Final draft (with Works Cited page at end) goes below
   - Evidence of group editing, Prep Lab Tutoring, or smarthinking below
   - Rough draft with instructor’s comments and suggestions

6. Upload only the final draft of your essay to one of the source checkers required by your instructor. Currently, the two available source checkers are in MyWritingLab (preferred) and Ephorus.com, but these are both Ephorus powered sites. Directions for the MWL site are as follows:

   Log in to MWL. (Note: if your class did not use MWL all semester, you cannot log in without an access code that comes with the text)

   Click on Research Tools on bottom right of Home page. This puts you in MySearchLab.

   Click on Research Tools on right. Drop down menu shows Pearson Source Check.

   Click on Pearson Source Check and follow directions to upload your essay.

The Source Checker will list all sources on the internet that match parts of your document. Some of these sources may contain only an insignificant common phrase or sentence that appears both in your paper and on the internet. Do not be concerned with creating parenthetical reference for these common expressions; however, you must use parenthetical reference for all quotes and paraphrases taken from your research.

Check the list of sources given in the Source Checker against each of your parenthetical references to see if the two match. Revise as needed.

Good Work!