

How to Research a Congress Topic

By Daryl R. Hall

You will be researching a topic in-depth for about 7 days. You will then type up the results of your research. This is a major assignment worth 100 points. All typed hard-copies are due in class the Wednesday before the tournament. That is the day we will make copies of everyone's research so that all competitors may have a couple of days to look it all over. You will turn in one topic researched but you will get a copy of all topics researched.

Format:

1. Your name, your period, and the date go in the upper right corner.
2. The entire paper is typed, 12 point font: Times New Roman, Courier, or Arial.
3. The full bill title is at the top of the page.
4. Affirmative or Negative under the title.
5. Use a bullet format.
6. Each argument and quote must be followed by the source citation.
7. One page for affirmative, one page for negative.

Research:

1. Use only approved Internet sites from the School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC).
2. Opposing Viewpoints is particularly useful (SDPBC website: Click: ***Students, Learning Tools, High School, Opposing Viewpoints***) **User Name:** palmbeach **Password:** palmbeach
3. Read at least three separate articles on each side of the topic. (minimum of six articles total). You can print them out if you wish. Become familiar with the major arguments for each side.
4. Present those arguments (in your own words!) and then use quotes to prove those points.
5. **ANY PHRASES OR SENTENCES QUOTED FROM A SOURCE MUST HAVE QUOTATION MARKS. FAILURE TO MARK DIRECT OR INDIRECT QUOTES IS CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM (CHEATING) AND MAY RESULT IN GETTING A ZERO ON THE ASSIGNMENT AND A REFERRAL!**

Evidence:

1. Some evidence is stronger than others. The strongest evidence is empirical evidence. Empirical means “observed” and is usually stated as numbers, statistics, or percentages. A good type of empirical evidence is the “juicy story”. This is a particularly dramatic example that is primarily persuasive because it is emotional.
2. Professional opinion is the second strongest type of evidence. When it is difficult to quantify facts, experts may explain things. Please note that some experts are more respected and qualified than others so always strive to get the best experts.
3. An assertion is the weakest form of “evidence” because it has nothing to back it up. It is basically a statement without evidence or logic.

Do's and Don'ts:

1. **DO NOT** simply “cut and paste”
2. Study the arguments for the bill and against the bill.
3. Restate those arguments in your own words. Then provide the evidence to support that argument. You must then put the full citation after the argument and quote.
4. A citation should have the author's name, the article, book, or website name, the magazine or journal name, and the date of the source. The full website address is not necessary.