

Your Paper; The Nuts and Bolts

Divide the body of your paper into three parts. The first $\frac{1}{4}$ should be about what you know about your ancestors: where they came from and who (grandparents, great grandparents, etc.) Trace the side of your family that you know the most about. You do not need to trace both sides.

The middle $\frac{1}{2}$ of your paper is dedicated to:

Describing the culture of the country of origin

Describe the 2-3 aspects of your heritage that are important to you, how you learned it and how you carry out the tradition. Explain how you are defined by your heritage.

The last $\frac{1}{4}$ of your paper should focus on why it is important in our world to understand cultural differences. How will understanding and recognizing differences impact how you deal with others.

Your paper should be 4-5 double-spaced typed pages. Use 12 pt. font and 1 in. top and bottom margins and 1.25 in. left and right margins.

Follow the APA format for your paper. (See separate handout for APA guidelines)

A minimum of 4 qualified sources are required (not including your text).

Your paper will be graded on both content and style. Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling are expected. Carefully proofread your paper before turning it in. Your paper need not be in a binder or folder, but must have a cover sheet (which does not count as one of your pages), and must be stapled.

Due: Beginning of class _____. **Come prepared to discuss your paper in class that night as part of your grade.**

Late papers are docked points for each day late.

Research Paper #2

A Study of My Heritage

So what is culture? Typically when we think of what defines culture we think of such things as food, clothing, language, appearance, religion, economics, music, politics, etc. Those are starting points, but as you will discover culture is so much more than that. So, why is it important that we understand our cultural heritage as well as the heritage of those around us? In a world as complex as ours, each of us is shaped by many factors, and culture is one of the powerful forces that acts on us. Anthropologists Kevin Avruch and Peter Black explain the importance of culture this way:

“...One’s own culture provides the ‘lens’ through which we view the world; the ‘logic’...by which we order it; the ‘grammar’...by which it makes sense.”

Culture is central to what we see, how we make sense of what we see, and how we express ourselves. The United States has become known as the great Melting Pot. Daily we rub shoulders with people from different cultural groups, which can be both exciting and challenging. A lack of understanding of cultural values can lead to conflict.

Before I can truly understand others I must first understand myself. The purpose of this paper is to help you understand you; not just who you are, but perhaps the rich heritage that has helped shape your views and values.

The first step will be trace your heritage. Go as far back as you can. Did your ancestors come from Ireland, Germany, France, Africa, or the North Pole? Was it your parents, grandparents, great grandparents who immigrated?

Once you have identified the origin of your ancestors do some research on that country. What is the culture of that country? In addition to the items listed above, here are more ways in which culture defines itself.

Daily living, views on family hierarchy, legal system, sports, marriage, sexual equality, views on age, power, achievement and competition, conflict, long term orientation, individualism vs. collectiveism, uncertainty avoidance, and communication style.

This is not an all-inclusive list of how we define culture, but it is a beginning point. Please do not try to write about all aspects of culture. Identify 2-3 aspects of your heritage that are important to you. Why is it important? How did you learn it? In what way(s) do you carry on the tradition? Be thinking about how your heritage has defined you.