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English 107

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Identifying
information

Date

A Research Proposal: The Lincoln Memorial

Title, centered

A General Framework

Heading

I have been fascinated by Washington, DC, since I started grade school. I loved the look of the huge government buildings and was fascinated by the layout of the Mall, the area located between the Capitol Building and the Lincoln Memorial and between the White House and the Jefferson Memorial. Everything seemed so grand, and I often imagined what it must be like to walk through the parks going from one building to the next. I read books, looked at magazines, and even paid close attention when these locales were the backdrops of events I saw on the news.

Create a
comment in the
opening
paragraph.

My dream of visiting Washington, DC, came true when the band from our school marched in a parade. In the months before the trip, I participated in fund-raising events and began a more earnest kind of research about the city than I had done before. I read encyclopedia articles, I checked out books (particularly the oversized ones with beautiful pictures), and I talked to people who had been to the Capital. And I became increasingly aware of the buildings, monuments, and memorials and what they represent to different people. My mother, I discovered, was a secret fan of the White House (she'd donated baby-sitting money to Jackie Kennedy's restoration efforts); my dad was very critical of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, he said, until he visited it while on a business trip; and Mr. McFarlan, my history teacher, was fascinated by the presidential memorials. In the months before we traveled to Washington, I began to notice that these famous structures were used repeatedly in films: *No Way Out*, *A Few Good Men*, *Forrest Gump*, *Dave*, *JFK*, and, of course, *The American President*.

Discuss your
special
perspectives.

Provide
interesting
details.

When I and my fellow band members arrived in Washington, I think I was the most excited person on the bus, but it was worth the kidding from my friends when I finally got to walk on the Mall and see the places I'd only read and heard about. What surprised me was that

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my favorite place was not one of the ones I'd expected; instead, I found that the Lincoln Memorial made the greatest impression on me. I still remember walking up the giant staircase to face a building that I had seen in pictures a hundred times before, and I still remember how overwhelmed I felt.

Comment on early, informal research.

Acknowledge your readers' perspectives.

My interest in the Lincoln Memorial has increased since that Washington trip. I've scouted sites on the Internet, and I've even bought some Lincoln Memorial souvenirs from Web sites, but I've never had the chance to do serious research on the topic. Therefore, I want to use this opportunity to learn about this national memorial and share that information with readers who probably recognize the Lincoln Memorial—and perhaps have seen it—but know few of the interesting details about its history.

Heading

A Specific Focus

Clarify your approach to the narrowed topic.

It is crucial for me to incorporate some history of the Lincoln Memorial itself, which was not built for decades after Lincoln's death. The information about its design and construction and restoration are helpful in clarifying for readers why the Memorial looks the way it does today. However, my special focus will be on the way the Memorial has been used over the decades as a location for many important historical events. Starting with Marian Anderson's singing on the Memorial steps in 1939 and continuing to recent events, I hope to show how the Memorial has become a symbol of protest and celebration.

Heading

A List of Potential Sources

"Civil Rights: March on Washington." *Facts.com*. 2001. Web. 22 Feb. 2010.

"D. C. Rally Protests Racial Profiling." *Facts.com*. 2001. Web. 22 Feb. 2010.

Glazer, Nathan. "Monuments in an Age without Heroes." *Public Interest* 123 (1996): 22–40. *ProQuest*. Web. 18 Feb. 2010.

Griswold, Charles L. "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography." *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy*. Ed. Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster. Washington: Smithsonian Inst., 1992. 71–100. Print.

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- Hall, Cindy. "Washington's Great Gatherings." *USA Today*. USA Today, 2000. Web. 6 Mar. 2010.
- "Lincoln Memorial." *Encarta Reference*. Encarta, 2000. Web. 26 Feb. 2010.
- McGee, Elaine S. *Acid Rain and Our Nation's Capital: A Guide to Effects on Buildings and Monuments*. US Geological Survey. Dept. of the Interior. Washington: GPO, 1997. Print.
- . *Colorado Yule Marble: Building Stone of the Lincoln Memorial*. US Geological Survey. Dept. of the Interior. Washington: GPO, 1999. Print.
- Roth, Leland M. *Understanding Architecture: Its Elements, History, and Meaning*. New York: Icon-Harper, 1993. Print.
- Sandage, Scott A. "A Marble House Divided: The Lincoln Memorial, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Politics of Memory, 1939-1963." *Journal of American History* 80.1 (1993): 135-68. *ProQuest*. Web. 18 Feb. 2010
- United States. National Archives and Records Administration. "Civil Rights March on Washington, DC." National Archives and Records Administration. 13 May 1998. Web. 11 Mar. 2010.
- . ---. "The Unfinished Lincoln Memorial." *National Archives and Records Administration*. 13 May 1998. Web. 11 Mar. 2010.
- . National Park Service. "Lincoln: The Memorial." *Lincoln Memorial*. 30 July 2000. NPS. Web. 5 Feb. 2010.
- . ---. "Stones and Mortar: The Statistics of the Monuments and Memorial on the National Mall." *National Park Service*. 8 Aug. 2000. NPS. Web. 5 Feb. 2010.
- "Vietnamese War Protests: Washington Demonstrations." *Facts.com*. 2007. Web. 22 Feb. 2010.
- Wiener, Jon. "Save the Mall." *Nation* 13 Nov. 2000: 8. *ProQuest*. Web. 18 Feb. 2010.

Provide full citations for the sources you have collected so far.

Arrange sources in alphabetical order and follow citation patterns carefully.

Give special attention to complicated citations, like those for government documents.

searching, planning, and writing await you. So what better time is there to describe your research plan?

Use the following guidelines to prepare a research proposal:

- **Create a general framework.** First, describe the context for your research activities by answering several questions: (1) Why do you want to research your chosen topic? (2) What special experiences have prepared you for the research (work experience, reading, classroom work, hobbies)? (3) What will you learn through your research? (4) How much can you expect your instructor and classmates to know about the topic? By answering these questions, you clarify how and why you began your work.
- **Establish a specific focus.** Second, describe your narrowed topic, answering questions (many of which helped you narrow your working thesis statement) to establish the focus for your research: (1) How have you limited the time period of the topic? (2) How have you limited the topic geographically? (3) What special circumstances limit the topic? (4) What is its historical or critical context? (5) Is there a question or a set of questions you hope to answer through research? By answering these questions, you clarify the methods used in narrowing the topic.
- **Describe research sources and strategies.** Third, describe the sources and any special techniques you intend to use to gather information. Source materials may appear either in a list divided according to type (Books, Articles, Other Sources) or in a list with all sources arranged alphabetically. (See Chapters 14–16 for sample works-cited forms.) By presenting a list of potential sources, you establish the scope of your research.

The research proposal allows you to pause in the middle of your research to describe (and perhaps re-evaluate) your choices and to get a response to the plan from your classmates and teacher. Once you and your readers have confirmed that the proposal suggests a promising research project, you can proceed with primary research work.

EXERCISE 8.2 *The Research Proposal*

Prepare a formal research proposal of approximately 750 to 1,250 words (three to five pages). Follow the manuscript style appropriate for your course (see Chapters 14–16 for alternative manuscript styles); provide your name and course information and a title for the proposal, probably a brief description of the topic.

Use headings (*A General Framework*, *A Special Focus*, *A List of Sources*, or similar descriptive labels) to divide the large elements of the proposal. Under the first two headings, provide answers to the questions noted above (see sample proposal). Under the third heading (and perhaps under subheadings), include publication information about sources, presented according to accepted citation forms (see Chapters 14–16). ■■