

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Public Policy Research Paper

**Purpose:** To research a current issue in America and determine what policy approach is best

## Research Step #1: Pre-Research

What are you interested in? What would you like to learn more about? What intrigues or baffles you about America today? Pre-research is about investigating possible topics and seeing where your interests lie. Do some internet searching, read the news, or talk to people – remember, you are going to spend a LOT of time reading about your topic, so choose wisely.

## Research Step #2: Formulate a Research Question

Ok, so you have a general idea of what you want to write about. The next step is to focus your research by creating a research question. For this assignment, your task is to focus on a **policy issue** related to your topic. For example, pretend you are interested in learning more about military drone strikes. A research question could be: Should the U.S. military continue its use of drone strikes to combat terrorists?

**First Research Deadline: Do pre-research and write two or three research questions. You must have them approved by me IN PERSON by Monday November 4. (20 points)**

## Research Step #3: Research

Use a variety of credible sources to answer your research question and to understand how this issue is important to America today. Because you are researching topics that are current, it is important that you have up to date information. Use news sources and periodicals, but pay close attention to bias as to not confuse opinion for facts. Do NOT use Wikipedia or other lame sites like ask.com or howstuffworks.com – college professors will laugh you straight out of the university. Instead, come join the world of academia. I am going to ask our lovely librarians to put together some school resources that could be of use to you, so stay tuned!

To effectively research your topic, think about everything you need to order in order to adequately answer your research question. For example, in order to answer my question about the use of drone strikes, I would want to know:

- What is the U.S. Military's current drone policy?
- To what extent has the use of drones allowed the U.S. to achieve its military goals in the War on Terror?
- What alternatives are there to drone strikes?
- What are the unintended consequences of using military drones?
- How does the international community perceive America's reliance on drones?

I strongly recommend that you write smaller, more focused research questions like the ones above before you “dive in.” Research can be overwhelming, so the more directed you are the better.

## Research Step #4: Write a Thesis Statement

After doing substantial research, you should be able to answer your research question. Do it! In the form of a thesis statement. Example: Although drone strikes often result in unintended civilian deaths, the United States should continue its use of military drones because it is the most effective way to target high profile terrorists who pose a threat to national security.

**Second Research Deadline: Do research to answer your research questions and write a thesis statement. Your thesis statement IN ADDITION to an annotated bibliography (MLA) is due Wednesday November 13. (20 points)**

### Research Step #5: Make an Outline

I am a firm believer in outlines. Therefore, this step is mandatory. Creating an outline is like weeding; it forces you to go back through your research and decide what is necessary to prove your thesis and what is not. Newsflash: You are not going to include every single thing you read about your topic in your paper. Take the time to organize your ideas and think through the structure of your paper.

Your paper should have the following components:

I. A **background section** that introduces the issue your paper explores and provides context for the reader. This section should provide a little history to explain why your topic is controversial and why it is relevant to Americans. (1-2 paragraphs)

II. A **concession section** that discusses and evaluates possible answers to the question with which you disagree, but which some—perhaps even most—Americans believe. You should provide specific information from your research and explain why this evidence convinces many people to support these positions. (2-4 paragraphs)

III. A section on **your answer** to the question. This is the most substantial section of your paper because it is here that you defend your thesis statement. Why is your policy view the correct one? You should provide specific information from your research and explain why this evidence supports your answer to the question. (3-5 paragraphs)

IV. A section on which **political party** is more likely to implement the policy you prefer and why you believe this to be the case (1-2 paragraphs)

**Third Research Deadline: Create a complete outline of your paper. This is due Friday November 22. (50 points)**

### Research Step #6: Write Your Paper

Need I say more? Your paper should be formatted according to MLA standards: Times New Roman, double spaced, one inch margins. It should be 6-8 pages.

**Fourth Research Deadline: Submit your final paper and bibliography to “turn it in” by midnight on Friday December 6**

