

## Cultural Relevance Project: Honoring Disruptors

### Part 1. Selecting the Research Focus

This project requires deep reflection, critical thinking, and the ability to make connections. This is a layered research project. To broaden your understanding, think about the guiding questions below:

- What is your culture?
- What are some things relevant to you and your community?
- What are some things, such as laws, events, or policies, that impact you and your community?
- Who are some people that have influenced laws, events, or policies that impact you and your community?
- Have those individuals positively changed the laws, events, or policies that impact you and your community?

***A disruptor is someone who drastically changes or destroys the structure of something. Think of disruptors who are not from the United States.***

- How have those individuals disrupted laws, events, or policies that negatively impact you and your community?

Brainstorm the names of some disruptors in the box below:

Carefully reflect on your responses to the guiding questions. Think about the disruptors you listed.

- Which disruptor have you heard most about?
- Which disruptor do you feel strongly connected to?
- Which disruptor has had the biggest impact on you or your community?

Think about your responses to the questions. ***Remember, you are arguing for what this person has accomplished and how this person is relevant to your culture and your community.*** Select the disruptor you would like to research and make a case for.

Complete this statement:

I am selecting \_\_\_\_\_ because he/she has impacted my culture and community by \_\_\_\_\_  
(list two to three reasons to make your case).

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### Part 2. Developing Your Research Question

**A research question is an answerable inquiry into a specific issue or concern.** After you have decided what you want to research, the research question is the first step into diving into research. For this project, you have selected a person of interest—a disruptor who has impacted your culture or community. Now, you must craft a question that will guide the information to build your case.

Research questions have the following qualities:

- answerable
- concise
- clear
- complex
- focused

Consider these examples.

Exemplar	Nonexemplar	Explanation
<i>What effect does daily use of social media have on the attention span of high school students?</i>	<i>What effect does social media have on teenager's minds?</i>	The question, <i>What effect does social media have on teenager's minds?</i> is not clear enough or complex. However, the exemplar question is very concise. That question clearly states a specific audience to be studied and the specific use of social media.
<i>How does racial diversity in young adult literature build empathy and social awareness in high school students?</i>	<i>How do diverse books help students?</i>	The question, <i>How do diverse books help students?</i> is answerable, but it is too broad or not focused enough. The exemplar question is very concise and focused. That question centers on a very specific type of diversity and a specific genre of literature. It is a complex question because the answer is not easy to find.
<i>How did Nelson Mandela's fight for racial equality influence social justice work in African American communities?</i>	<i>How did Nelson Mandela influence change?</i>	The question, <i>How did Nelson Mandela influence change?</i> is very broad and very simple to answer. However, the exemplar question is focused on how Mandela's fight influenced a specific group of people.

Now think about your disruptor and the change he or she influenced. *In making your case, what question will help that focus? What else would you like to know about that person?*

Draft your research question: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Part 3. Gathering, Evaluating, and Sorting Sources

Now that you have an inquiry question, it is time to gather information. There are several things to consider as you collect information to help you answer your research or inquiry question.

For this project, you should have a balance of both primary and secondary sources. You may have more secondary sources because they might be easier to access. **Consider maintaining a 60–40 percent ratio (secondary–primary).**

When conducting your search, whether using an internet search engine such as Google Scholar, a library online catalogue, or an academic database, **you must use concise keywords.** Typing in your research question will not lead to a wealth of sources. Take note of the keywords in your question and the key things you hope to explore.

Question	Possible Keywords and Searches
<i>What effect does daily use of social media have on the attention span of high school students?</i>	“social media” “effects of social media on teens” “teenage attention spans” “high schoolers brains”
<i>How does racial diversity in young adult literature build empathy and social awareness in high school students?</i>	“racial diversity in YA literature” “literature building empathy and social awareness” “empathy through literature” “literature and high school students” “representation in literature”
<i>How did Nelson Mandela’s fight for racial equality influence social justice work in African American communities?</i>	“Nelson Mandela” “racial equality” “African American communities and social justice” “social justice in America” “Nelson Mandela and racial equality”

You can use one search phrase or multiple phrases. Play around with different combinations to yield results. As you begin to examine sources, it is important to collect credible sources. Use the following questions to evaluate source reliability.

**Currency:** *Is the information current or recent? When was the edition or website last updated?*

**Relevance:** *Is the information relevant to your topic or research task?*

**Authority:** *Where is the information published? Who is the author or publisher? Who are the researchers and their affiliations? Have they been cited in other works or sources?*

**Accuracy:** *Where does the information come from and is it supported by evidence? Are all links working or linked to current or active information? Are facts presented or biased views?*

**Purpose:** *Why was the information published? Was it to educate the audience, sell a service or product, or convince the audience of a certain perspective?*

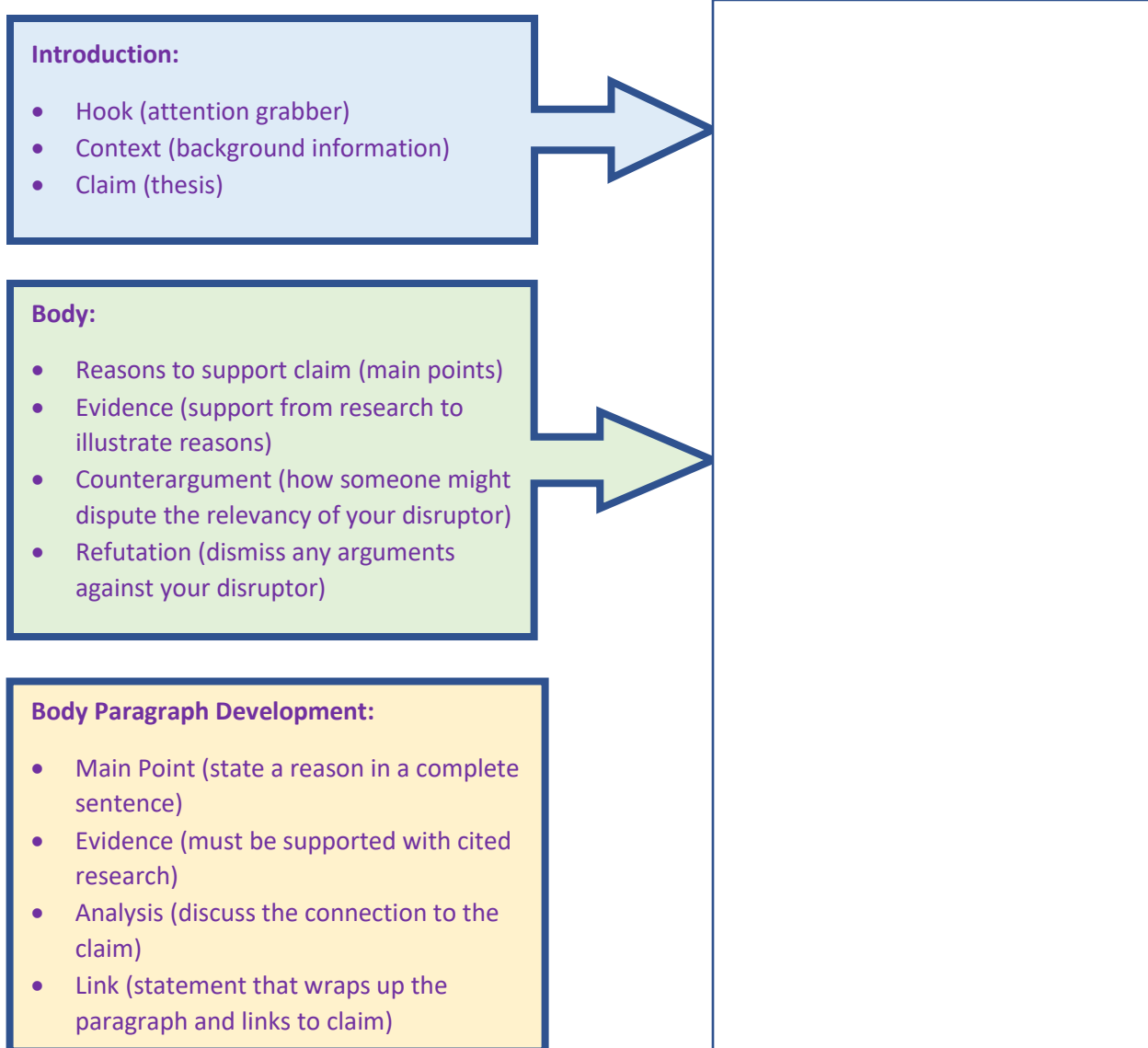
After collecting credible sources, **you must evaluate their relevance**. Some sources may contain information about your topic, but the information does not clearly or strongly offer evidence to support answering the question. **Synthesize sources** that you plan to use and **highlight key details** that can be used as evidence in the body of your paper. **You should aim for a minimum of eight sources.**

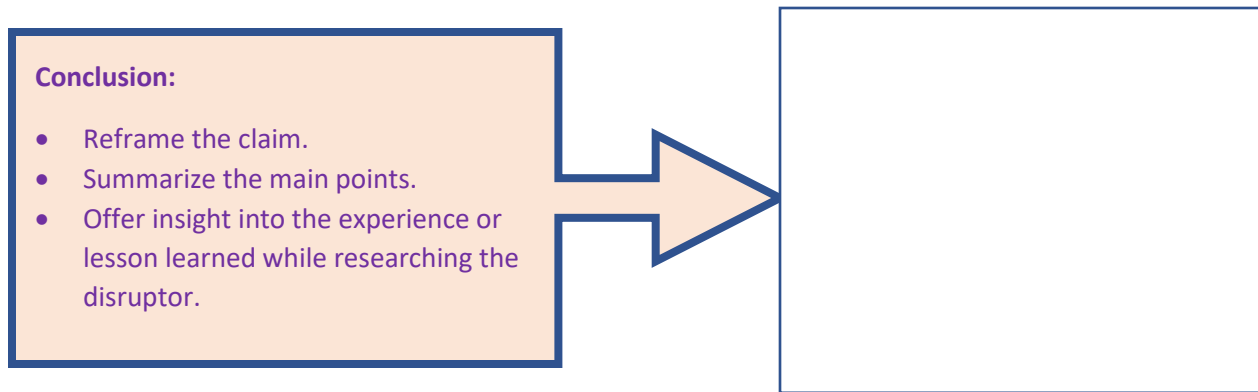
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### Part 4. Outlining and Drafting the Research Paper

An outline serves a blueprint for a paper. It lays the foundation for presenting your argument to the audience. Think back to the task at hand—**argue for the cultural relevancy of your disruptor. *How did this person impact my culture and my community?***

You will be composing an argument paper to present your research. It is important to consider the following elements as you plan your work:





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### Part 5. Finalizing the Research Paper

In this final stage of this project, it is important to revise and edit your draft before submitting a polished product.

**In your revision stages consider the following questions:**

- Is the claim clearly stated in the introductory paragraph?
- Is there sufficient context or background information on the disruptor in the introductory paragraph?
- Are there at least three main points or reasons for exploring the impact of the disruptor on your culture or community?
- Is each reason supported by cited information from credible sources?
- Does each paragraph link logically to the next paragraph?
- Are there points that should be removed or rearranged?
- Is there another reason that could strengthen the argument?
- Is there a clear, evidence-based refutation?
- Is there a fair balance between primary and secondary sources?
- Is the literary representation of the disruptor clearly explained and linked to the claim?

**In your editing stages consider the following questions:**

- Are you adhering to Modern Language Association (MLA) citation and formatting guidelines?
- Are your grammar, spelling, and mechanics correct and appropriate?
- Have you used several sources such as a dictionary or spellcheck to ensure minimal errors?

**Before submitting:**

- Be sure to check your work using a platform that assesses the originality of your work. Plagiarism is a serious offense.
- Review the Research Project Checklist.