**English 11/12 Honors: Tolkien Name:**

**Mr. Fisher**

**Your Last High School English Research Paper…Or Your Next-to-Last, Depending on Your Current Situation**

Introduction: No two words in the English language, when spoken by an English teacher to his or her students, elicit more groans than “research paper.” Why do we hate these word? Separately, each are positive terms. “Research” is the process that led to us curing polio! “Paper” is what we use to wrap presents. These are good words! And yet, joined together, students despise them. Sure, they are long, time-sucking mountains that are exhausting to climb, and all it takes is one small misstep and suddenly a writer can fall down that mountain and break a leg or two. Yet, think of that wonderful feeling of accomplishment one can feel when he or she reaches the top of that mountain! Not only that, but I don’t think there is any project I can give you, as an English teacher, that will better prepare you for life after Greylock (which is, of course, also a mountain!). So, yes, you are getting a research paper, so you might as well embrace the task.

Assignment: You must:

* Write a one-page paper proposing a research paper idea. You are free to write about any topic that you would like, as long as it connects to the class. In that proposal, you should:
  + Clearly state your proposed thesis.
  + Explain your motivation for choosing this topic.
  + Explain the connection between your project and the seminar.
  + Convey your plan for researching the paper, including where you plan to find your information.
* Meet with me to discuss your proposal. At the end of this meeting, I will hopefully approve your proposal. If I do not, you will need to resubmit a proposal within a week of our meeting.
* Failure to submit a proposal or a re-proposal on time will result in a 10 point reduction on your research paper grade.
* You cannot write a research paper without first submitting a proposal and getting it approved.
* Write a basic outline of how you plan to structure your research paper. (**worth 10 points**)
* Write the actual research paper.
* Hand in the research paper and earn a passing grade.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Research Paper Requirements:

* It must contain a thesis. This means that you must have an opinion and make an argument in the paper. Some examples are:
  + - Without Tolkien’s novels, South African apartheid would have never ended.
    - The extensive use of chocolate in *The Hobbit* led to an epidemic of pediatric cavities.
    - Norse myths helped shape the U.S. Constitution.
    - *The Lord of the Rings* is now used today as Satanist propaganda to recruit a new generation of Devil lovers.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* You must follow all MLA guidelines, and therefore include a properly-formatted Works Cited. **Failure to do so will result in an automatic failure.**
* You should write a **four-to-seven-page paper**.
* You must use at least **five different sources**.
* You must include at least **five direct quotations**.

Also:

* **All** “tear” rules are in effect!
* You may NOT cite Wikipedia. You should use reliable sources.

**PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is using another person’s thoughts, ideas, words, or work and claiming it as your own. **Any person caught plagiarizing on this assignment will earn a zero; further disciplinary action may also be taken.** In order to avoid plagiarism, you should use parenthetical documentation to cite any ideas that are not common knowledge and that you received from an outside source. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to

* Using someone else’s exact words without citing the source
* Paraphrasing someone else’s exact words without citing the source
* Attributing a citation to the wrong source
* Submitting a paper that you previously submitted for a different class.
* Soliciting another person to write your paper or a piece of your paper
* Using a paper or section of a paper written by someone else
* Using the same notes as another student
* Photocopying another student's paper, whiting out his or her name, and replacing it with your own.
* Using ESP. You laugh…but I know what you're thinking!

Remember, one of the goals of research is to gather and analyze for yourself the ideas of the best scholars on your topic. Citing other scholars gives your paper credibility and is the sign of a mature writer. Few people intend to commit plagiarism willfully (Okay, more than a few). If you are concerned about mistakenly committing plagiarism, check with your teacher (me) or a librarian (not me). [[3]](#footnote-3)

**A Word about Punctuation Direct Quotes and Citations with Parenthetical Documentation…[[4]](#footnote-4)**

**1. Quotation ending in a comma or a period**

Drop the comma or period, close quotes, open parentheses, citation, close parentheses, end with period

“Bob Dylan hugged Mr. Fisher, and called him his biggest fan” (Adams 34).

**2. Quotation ending in a question mark or exclamation point**

Keep the question mark or exclamation point, close quotes, open parentheses, citation, close parentheses, end with period

“Dylan then invited Mr. Fisher to go on tour with him!” (Johnson 26).

**3. Quotation which includes dialogue**

Begin the quotation as usual, begin dialogue with “half-quotation marks” or apostrophes, close entire quotation with regular punctuation

“Mr. Fisher responded, ‘Oh, Bob, I couldn’t take that much time away from my students.’ Instead, Mr. Fisher asked Dylan to dedicate his next album to him” (Adams 78).

**4. A citation or quotation does not end the sentence**

Punctuate as usual but save citation for the end of the sentence

Dylan called his next song “the best song I had ever written” and dedicated it to Mr. Fisher (Twill 23).

**5. Several consecutive sentences contain paraphrased information that needs to be cited**

Wait until the last sentence that contains borrowed information and include the citation at the end of that sentence.

**Essay Rubric:**

Failing Poor Flawed Good Nearly Perfect

Information and Detail 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Organization and Structure 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Argument and Analysis 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5

Conclusion 1 2 3 4 5

Use of Quotations 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Works Cited/MLA 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Grammar, Punctuation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

and Syntax

Grade: /100 🡪 /200

**Due Dates:**

Proposal Due: Friday, November. 17.

Outline Due: Wednesday, December 6.

Rough Draft due: Wednesday, January 17.

Final Copy due: Monday, January 29.

1. Note: Complimenting Mr. Fisher regularly might help you earn this passing grade. It also might not help at all. But how will you know unless you compliment him regularly? Think about it…and wasn’t this an awesome footnote [wink]? [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Don’t even think of using any of these. They are completely untrue. Well, you might be able make an argument for the last one, but for your safety, I’d stay away from the Satanists! [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Those of you who had me in 10th grade will notice how I cut-and-pasted the plagiarism paragraph. This is okay because I wrote it myself, and because I am coming clean, honestly, in this footnote, and naming my source. This is not an example of plagiarism. There is no irony! [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Source: My 10th grade research assignment (All rights reserved). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)