



Teaching Tips

Assignment Design: Alternatives to the Term Paper

There are many different ways to have students go through the research and writing process without relying on the oft-assigned term paper. Assigning something different will generate enthusiasm for the assignment and encourage original work. Be creative!

- ⑧ **Reflections on the process** – at various times students turn in written descriptions of their research process
- ⑧ **Problem solving approach** – what steps would be taken to solve a problem
- ⑧ **Literature review** – evaluative annotated bibliography
- ⑧ **Science in the news** – find evidence in literature for news release claims
- ⑧ **Event initiated examples** – evaluate a current event based on literature findings
- ⑧ **Web assignment** – design an informative webpage
- ⑧ **Evaluate thinking** – have students discuss what they found and compare sources
- ⑧ **Read and find facts** – read an editorial, article, reflection and find facts to support it
- ⑧ **Create a webpage** – select a topic to do with course content
- ⑧ **Biography** – select a scholar/researcher in field and report on career, influences, major ideas, moods and trends in research program
- ⑧ **Evaluate a website**
- ⑧ **Follow a piece of legislation through parliament** – What groups are lobbying for/against it and why?
- ⑧ **Follow a current foreign policy issue as it develops** – Have students adopt the perspective of one of the various groups involved and predict the next move.
- ⑧ **Nominate someone for a Nobel prize** – Justify nomination.
- ⑧ **Adopt a persona** – write journal entries, letters, commentaries from that person's perspective
- ⑧ **Write an exam** – Provide answers and justify rationale for questions asked.
- ⑧ **Write a review** – Of a performance, a movie, a book, a journal article, a guest speaker lecture...
- ⑧ **Write a newspaper, magazine, webpage story** on a topic.
- ⑧ **Describe your dream job** – Have students research careers in the field and justify their choice of company, location, job, etc.
- ⑧ **Compare and contrast primary and secondary sources.**
- ⑧ **Compare and contrast the state of knowledge** on a topic in two different decades or eras.
- ⑧ **Conduct research** – but don't write the final draft.
- ⑧ **Prepare for a hypothetical interview** – Background research on company, job offer, how they fit with job description.
- ⑧ **Compare and contrast** – content, style, and audience of three different scholarly journals in a field.
- ⑧ **Compare and contrast** – a scholarly journal article with an article from a popular magazine.
- ⑧ **Prepare for an interview with a top figure in the field** – Justify questions, provide background notes.
- ⑧ **Compare and contrast** – the ways different disciplines deal with the same subject matter.

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