Assignment Guide – ENGL 1301: Writing an Essay
LSC University Park Library

BACKGROUND

Marriage Rates Fall to New Low - watch this 2 minute news report about today’s marriage rates.

SAMPLE ESSAY used for this assignment guide: “First Comes Love then Comes Marriage? The Evolution of Marriage in the United States”

It is fascinating to note that the institution of marriage in the United States has evolved over the ages from being primarily, an unequal religious and economic union between a man and a woman of the same race to include interracial, interfaith, and civil unions, same sex marriages and cohabitation(in 15 states). It may also interest you to know that in the U.S. early experiments with group marriage and polygamy were attempted. A common condition of those early marriages included few rights for women, whose husbands became the owners of their property and wealth. Today, experts continue to debate the causes for the rise in the divorce rate in this country and the future of marriage.

STAY IN TOUCH

CONTACT YOUR LIBRARIAN
John.Powell@LoneStar.edu,
Begin your library research by scanning this assignment guide. Use the expertise of the librarians who have selected rigorous, peer-reviewed and scholarly digital resources for this research project.

CONTACT YOUR PROFESSOR:
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Email: Sharon.Mignerey@lonestar.edu
ASSIGNMENT

An explanatory synthesis essay is an essay that discusses a topic drawing from two or more sources. For this assignment, students will select an explanatory synthesis essay topic from *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*. Find an article in a library news or journal database on the same topic as the selected essay. Synthesizing the topic requires that you make inferences about the relationships between the sources. In cases where the author doesn’t specifically refer to the subtopic, explain the connections between the sources that you have discovered.

ABOUT YOUR TOPIC

**KEYWORDS:** Using keywords allow you to find information more quickly and efficiently. Search terms like the ones below will save you time and enable you to find relevant sources. The keywords here match the topic and essay the library has chosen as an example, *The Evolution of Marriage*. Try several combinations on your subject in order to get the best results.

- Marriage, evolution of marriage, divorce, same-sex marriage, interracial marriage, monogamy, polygamy, common law marriage, civil unions, cohabitation, marriage statistics.

DATABASES

Use databases to find journal articles, essays, and video on current issues. Journal articles reviewed by peers ensure scholarly integrity. The following databases are excellent resources for your research. Remember, your assignment is to synthesize and explain what you’ve found. It’s important to have valid sources with academically accepted, accurate information.

- **Academic Search Complete**
  Full text of articles from journals, magazines and newspapers, plus image collections.

- **CQ Researcher**
  An excellent source for full text examples of “original, comprehensive reporting and analysis on issues in the news.”

- **Issues and Controversies**
  Full-text articles from different points of view on important issues in today's news, plus statistics and images.
INTERNET

Evaluating internet sources is vitally important for the success of your assignment. Check for citations at the end of the article. Check for accuracy and currency. Is the site reputable? Was it written by another student or someone with proper credentials? Also identify and comment on any biases you may find in the article. Try these sites for research:

**CDC Faststats – Marriage and Divorce**
Marriage and divorce statistics in the United States.

**CDC NCHS Data Brief - Who Marries and When? Age at First Marriage in the United States: 2002**
Analysis of trend of people marrying later in life and increased percentage of those who never marry.

**Findlaw - Developments in Same-Sex Marriage Law**
Examination of same sex marriages, civil unions, domestic partnerships, and legal decisions between states.

**CBS News - Interracial Marriage Rising but Not as Fast**
An article regarding the rise in interracial marriages in the U.S. since 2000.

EBOOKS

this project does not call for the use of a book. Still, good to know...LSC-University Park library is a virtual library. eBooks can be accessed using your ID barcode. Use the catalog to order books from [http://www.lonestar.edu/library](http://www.lonestar.edu/library). Use the eBooks collections for online reading or downloading.

**SAMPLE:** *The Ties That Bind: Perspectives on Marriage and Cohabitation (Social Institutions and Social Change)* edited by Christine Bachrach and Linda J. Waite

GETTING HELP WITH YOUR PAPER

1. Use the MLA paper guide or online [MLA Guide](#).
2. Watch for the tutor in the library during research time.
3. Use the Writing Center.
4. [About Student Success](#) in Angel is a short course on study skills, research, using technology and more.

Chat line is open when the library is open. Contact us. Reference Librarian: 281-401-5390. Email at [UPLibrary-ref@lonestar.edu](mailto:UPLibrary-ref@lonestar.edu)

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