“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.” Zora Neale Hurston

**Purpose:**
In your first assignment, you learned how to craft a personal story so that its significance was clear and engaging to your audience. For this assignment, you will research a topic that has a personal significance. You must keep your mind open to new perspectives as you summarize, analyze, and assess multiple perspectives. You will learn how to evaluate texts offering different and sometimes contradictory information about a topic and share your authoritative assessment of these texts to your audience. This project will ask you to use many skills you are already practicing, but instead of writing from the personal “I,” you will be writing as the authoritative “I”: a thinker and writer who has carefully weighed and evaluated different perspectives of an issue or topic. Being able to critically evaluate and assess information is a skill you will use not only in your classes, but also in your career and in your personal life.

**Audience:**
As with your last project, you will need to define your audience for this project. Keep in mind:
- What do you want to learn from the research you conduct? What type of audience might you want to share what you have learned?
- What if you chose stakeholders in the issue who haven’t decided their position on the topic? How would you support your assessment rationally with credible evidence to assist them in taking a position?

**Conventions**
This project asks you to evaluate multiple perspectives of the same topic as presented in four different articles; these articles need to include at least two different points of view. The rhetorical emphasis is on synthesis of the information in these articles and evaluation of the ideas presented. In addition, you will also use rhetorical appeals to establish your authority and credibility as a writer and thinker. When considering a topic to choose, you’ll want to pick something that interests you, but also one that you are able to evaluate fairly and expansively. Here are two possible directions you might take within the parameters of this course:
- Our visit to the West Virginia and Regional History Center (WVRHC) will give you ideas about past and current topics and issues that affect or have affected West Virginia. You could choose a topic based upon one of the West Virginia archives, or take a more global view of the topic or issue. In this way, you could examine something in your major, future chosen profession, or even a hobby.
- You could also examine a topic or issue that has come up in your readings from ENGL 103. For example, perhaps you want to learn more about dialects and how they create or dismantle communities. Your foundation might be Giardina’s story “No Scapin’ the Booger Man.”

One last note:
While this assignment might take the form of an essay, please consider other genres that would be applicable to your audience(s)—such as a newspaper opinion piece, a blog post, a literature review, or some other piece that allows you to bring disparate points of view together in conversation.

**Trouble Spots:**
Potential areas to watch:
- Is this an issue that you are able to evaluate rationally or is it one to which you have a strong emotional reaction? Remember, it is okay to be passionate about your chosen topic/issue, but you still need to be able to see clearly as you read each source.
- Have you synthesized and incorporated sources effectively to support your evaluation?
- Have you effectively incorporated information from multiple sides of an issue?
- Are you citations in correct MLA citation format?
Additional Resources

• Visit the Eberly Writing Studio. See the Syllabus for details.

• We’ll be visiting the WVRHC on Tuesday, January 23. We will meet on the sixth floor where the WVRHC is housed. You will need to print and fill out the registration form found under our eCampus “Readings and Links” tab. You also may want to talk a look at the collections housed in the WVRHC before we visit to get some ideas about all the materials to which you have access. Here is the link for the WVRHC: https://wvrhc.lib.wvu.edu/collections/

• On Thursday, January 25, we will be back in the library, but this time we will be on the lower level to meet with a research librarian to learn how to use the WVU databases to look for articles and books and other sources to help you find your four articles. Here is the WVU Library Guide for ENGL 103. The assignment sheets are from another section of ENGL 103 and they have some differences from your assignment, but you may find useful the other information in the library guide: http://libguides.wvu.edu/c.php?g=418710&p=2856008