

Appendix 15.2. Cultural Connections Research Essay Assignment

Assignment Context

Though themes such as competition, determination, and teamwork certainly are common among most sports, marked cultural differences also exist. To better equip you with skills that will help you understand the cultures you'll encounter in your school, career, and lifetime, examining a sport's place in a particular culture can help you develop and practice skills in researching and examining cultural norms. Your task is to write a research essay that examines a particular sport's place in a particular culture. To do this, you'll research and compile sources from a variety of genres (i.e. not just media articles). As with other traditional media sources, these sources should be relevant and credible.

There is a variety of approaches you can take to this assignment:

- Examine a sport's place in a foreign culture. Examples: bullfighting in Spain, *buzkashi* in Afghanistan
- Examine a sport's place in a particular geographic culture. Examples: lacrosse and hockey in the Northeast, surfing in the West, hunting and fishing in the South
- Examine a sport's place in a particular social culture. Examples: golf as a sport for the wealthy, auto racing as a blue-collar sport

Have fun and be creative with your choice. The only sports you cannot choose are baseball, basketball, and football, but you also might want to avoid other popular and traditional sports unless you take a specific and fresh angle. Examining another sport will make your work more interesting and will show me that you are eager to learn something new.

Guidelines for Writing

1. Examine only ONE sport. You'll need to conduct extensive research about the sport and the culture, and you don't want to overwhelm yourself by trying to compare two or more.
2. Your thesis should make a clear point, examining how the sport you're discussing connects to its culture. You may BRIEFLY describe/explain your sport, but do not attempt to explain all of the rules. The bulk of your essay should be an analysis of your sport's place in and impact on a particular culture.
3. Incorporate at least **five sources** into your essay. Do NOT use encyclopedia sources, including Wikipedia. Your sources should come in a variety of genres. Examples include:
 - a. Nonfiction and journalistic sources such as articles, essays, or memoir/biographies
 - b. Literary sources such as short stories, fiction excerpts, poems, or plays
 - c. Multimedia sources such as websites, interviews, or films/documentaries

Format

When completed, your essay should be 5–6 typed pages, double-spaced, in a 12-point font such as Times New Roman, and adhere to MLA guidelines.

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