

## PAPER #1: PERSUASIVE ARGUMENT (15%)

*Due Mon 3/18*

**For your first paper, you will write a 1000 word (minimum) persuasive argument essay, using outside research to prove the existence of a well-known mythical creature. Together with a partner, you will present your research to the class in a 5-7 minute oral presentation**

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. First, choose a partner in the class. You and your partner will be researching the same creature and doing your oral presentation together, though you will write two separate papers.
2. Next, you and your partner must choose a mythical creature. You may choose from the list at the end of these guidelines, or come up with your own idea.
  - a. Note: this mythical creature must be one that is at least somewhat well-known and has an established cultural history. Monsters of your own invention and/or satirical monsters are off-limits. However, any creatures of urban legends (including internet-based ones) are up for grabs, as long as there is an element of “this *could* be real!” in the stories.
  - b. Also note: *you* yourselves do not have to actually believe in the existence of this creature. In fact, it’s preferable that you don’t.
3. Research your creature. You are required to have a **minimum of 6 sources** for this paper. You and your partner can (and should) research together, and may share the same sources in your papers. Focus especially on sources that include “eyewitness accounts,” historical records, or scientific studies, as those kinds of things will come across as more persuasive.
  - a. Your sources can be a variety of different types. You can use websites and journal articles, but you are also free to use video “documentaries” as well, as long as they are presented as real life and not as obvious fiction.
  - b. All sources, including *both direct quotes AND paraphrased information*, must be **properly cited in MLA format**, with a **Works Cited page** at the end.
  - c. Please do not use Wikipedia, Yahoo!Answers, or any other crowdsourced website as a source. (You may, however, use Wikipedia’s footnotes to find other possible sources). If you find a source and you aren’t sure if it will be acceptable, feel free to ask.
4. Write a persuasive argument trying to convince me that your creature is real. You and your partner should be writing separate papers, even if you use the same sources.

The goal here is for you to be a sophist: you (probably) don’t believe in the existence of this creature, but that’s not the point. The point is to use your genius argumentative skills to try to persuade *me* that it could be real. It’s not about truth, but about *persuasion*.

Organize your points using the elements of argument we discussed in class:

- a. **Claim:** Your thesis, the main point you are trying to prove (e.g. “Sasquatch is real”)
- b. **Grounds:** The grounds are the basic persuasive points you use to support your claim (e.g. “Sasquatch is real because people have seen him”)

- c. **Backing:** Backing is the all the details, evidence and appeals you use to make your grounds seem more believable (such as cases of people who have seen Sasquatch)
- d. **Counterargument/Rebuttal:** Acknowledge what the skeptics would say, and provide a strong argument against them.

Also make use of the **3 appeals**, when you can. You are not strictly required to use all three, but keep in mind how you might incorporate them in your argument. I will be paying attention.

- a. **Logos:** logic-based arguments
- b. **Ethos:** arguments based on your own trustworthiness, or the trustworthiness of others
- c. **Pathos:** arguments based in emotion

This paper should hopefully be a fun one to write, but remember to take the writing itself seriously and be professional. Even if you are laughing as you write, your paper's tone should still be as professional as it would be with any other topic.

#### PAPER REQUIREMENTS:

- 1000 words minimum
- Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double spaced; no extra gaps between paragraphs
- Include an MLA style header on the first page, and page numbers in the top right corner
- Your paper should have a clear **thesis statement** somewhere near the beginning, clearly declaring what your main argument is.
- Your paper should be organized into distinct paragraphs, separated by topic.
- At least 6 sources, cited in MLA format
- Include a properly formatted Works Cited Page at the end, listing *all* of the sources you used. If you have more than 6 sources, you still must list them all.
- Use direct quotes and paraphrasing from *all* of your sources, somewhere in the paper. If you have a source that you never cited, then it shouldn't be listed on the "Works Cited" page.
- **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.** If you use an author's exact words, you must put them in quotation marks and cite your source. Otherwise, you must paraphrase.
  - NOTE: I take plagiarism very seriously in this class. Papers that receive higher than a 20% score on Turnitin.com will have major points taken off, and anything that receives over a 45% score will be an automatic zero.

#### DUE DATES (REQUIRED):

- You must let me know who your partner is and what monster you are researching no later than **Friday 2/15**.
- A list of the 6 sources you are planning to use for your paper will be due online on **Friday 3/1** at midnight. You are free to change this list later if you need to, but the point is just to make sure you are not waiting till the last minute to do your research. Work with your partner on this part; if you find a really good source, don't be shy about sharing it.
- You must submit **both an online and hard copy of your final paper** by **Monday 3/18**.

- The online copy helps me check your originality and word count. You will submit it online through the Turnitin.com assignment link. The hard copy is what I will actually mark up. If you aren't going to be in class on the day it's due, you still must make sure I get a copy of your paper on time (either physical or electronic). Anyone turning in a paper hours after class is over will have late points deducted. After midnight, I will not accept any papers at all, and you will receive an automatic zero for the assignment.

**OTHER DUE DATES (OPTIONAL):**

- You may email an electronic copy of your rough draft any time to have me look over it for you. However, I will not look at any rough drafts sent to me less than 24 hours before the final due date. And depending on the load of rough drafts I receive, I can't guarantee I will get around to looking at yours -- so send it early, if you really want my feedback!
- If you are dissatisfied with your grade, you may revise your paper again and turn it in to me any time before the end of the semester (5/12). You will also need to give me back the original draft that I marked up, so that I can compare the two. How much work you put into revising your paper and following my comments will determine how much your grade on the paper improves.

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LIST OF MYTHICAL CREATURES

- |                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Space aliens      | 12. La Llorona              |
| 2. Vampire           | 13. Slenderman              |
| 3. Zombies           | 14. Demons                  |
| 4. Werewolf          | 15. Jinn/djinni/genie       |
| 5. Ghost/poltergeist | 16. Fairies/elves/fair folk |
| 6. Mermaids/Sirens   | 17. Wendigo                 |
| 7. Sasquatch/Yeti    | 18. Krampus                 |
| 8. Loch Ness Monster | 19. Bloody Mary             |
| 9. Chupacabra        | 20. Dragons                 |
| 10. Jersey Devil     | 21. Kraken                  |
| 11. Mothman          | 22. Unicorn                 |

If you think of a creature that's not on this list, feel free to ask if you can write about it!

## ORAL PRESENTATION

*Monday 3/18 - Friday 3/22*

After writing your mythical creature papers, you and your partner must put together a 5-7 minute oral presentation for the class, using research you found to try to persuade us that this creature is really super duper totally real, you guys.

Since you and your partner wrote separate papers, you will need to work together to create the strongest possible argument, using points and research from both of your papers. Collaborate with each other and strategize about which evidence and appeals are most effective, and what is the most effective way to present all these points to the class.

These presentations should be both entertaining and informative, so be creative! And remember, your goal is to try to persuade the audience. If you can leave the class wondering, at least a little bit, if maybe the creature *is* actually real after all, then you will have succeeded.

You will be graded in 5 different categories:

1. **PRESENTATION:** how creative & entertaining your speech is.
2. **INFORMATION:** how fresh, interesting & thorough your research is, and how well you seem to understand your topic.
3. **PERSUASIVENESS:** how effective your speech is at convincing us that your creature might actually be real.
4. **EFFORT:** how much work & thought you put into your presentation.
5. **TIME:** how well you stayed within the 5-7 minute range.

You are not required to use visual aids, such as a Powerpoint, though of course you can if you want. However, keep in mind that Powerpoints can also end up being boring. So whatever visual aids you use, make sure they are interesting!

**TIMING:** Your presentation should be somewhere in the range of 5-7 minutes. You will lose points for being under 5 minutes. You will not lose points for going over (unless you go *way* over), but I may have to cut you off, so try not to do that. At the end of your presentation, there will be 1-2 minutes for questions from the class.

You may use video clips, but no longer than 1 minute. Video clips do not count toward your total time, so if your presentation is 7 minutes exactly, but you used a 1-minute video clip, your time will actually be 6 minutes and you will therefore lose points.