

Final draft due Wednesday, November 19, 2008, at class time

For this assignment, you will analyze a question or problem in the study of the development of modern English and present your findings in journal-article format. This **research-based analysis** involves analyzing the scholarly literature that addresses your selected issue, and making an original argument in support of your conclusions about how to reconsider or resolve the issue.

All papers, regardless of topic, must include the following:

1. Original analysis, based on a research question to be answered by an arguable thesis, developed with original argumentation and supported with scholarly research on your topic. Papers with no arguable thesis or original analysis will not be considered an appropriate response to the assignment. *This paper is not intended to be merely a report on the status of a particular issue or problem in English-language research.* Your project should involve asking and answering a question by researching the literature and should propose and argue your own original interpretations of and/or solutions to the issue or problem.
2. Support for your original analysis in the form of properly incorporated and cited material, to include journal articles, books and book articles. You need to show your audience that you are familiar with the current state of research in your topic area. All sources consulted must be **scholarly, vetted sources**, as we will discuss in class. Electronic books and articles from scholarly journals that are available online via the library's databases are accepted and encouraged; these are peer-reviewed, scholarly sources. Internet sources are not considered scholarly sources because they undergo no professional vetting or peer review. A major goal of this assignment is to produce a scholarly study in journal-article format for an audience of advanced undergraduates like you, graduate students, university faculty, and other researchers interested in the English language. To do this successfully, you will need to be well versed in the scholarship on your selected topic.
3. Evidence that you are incorporating knowledge gained from course texts and discussions into your work.
4. Parenthetical citations and works cited list, according to MLA, Chicago, or LSA (APA) guidelines, for all source material used. Needless to say, all work must be the student's original work. Please remember that I have a zero-tolerance policy for any kind of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty. Refer to course syllabus and Office of Student Conduct for details of academic integrity policies.
5. Professional manuscript formatting according to MLA, Chicago, or LSA guidelines, including double line spacing, 1" margins, correct paper heading style, page numbering style, block quotation format, and reasonable print size (such as Times New Roman 12).
6. Please discuss your ideas with me before launching the project, and I will ask later that you report your progress on the assignment.

Ideas to consider. This project represents an opportunity for you to pursue your own interests, so I hope you will make the most of it. If you choose one of the following suggestions as a starting point, be sure to apply your own unique interests and make it your own rather than limiting yourself to the confines of my imagination. Regardless of your topic, though, all papers must be centered on our course's focus on the *historical contexts for language use and language change*.

1. Explore the divergences between British and American varieties of English, making an argument to explain how and why the varieties have diverged over time while remaining mutually intelligible. Also, do you think these two national varieties will remain mutually intelligible, or might they become two distinct languages in the future? You can look at linguistic features as well as the linguistic, historical, social, geographical, nationalistic, political, and literary influences that affected the rise of American English as a distinct variety.
2. Look at the history of standardization and prescriptivism in the history of English and make an argument that defines "standardness" and/or "correctness" in language and situates these concepts in social/historical contexts. If you'd like, you can also address how ideas about standardness and correctness affect students and educators, paying particular attention to the potential challenges facing children who come from homes where the prestige variety of American English is not spoken nor necessarily valued. Remember that the argument needs to be based in language history.
3. How does English function as a global lingua franca? In other words, for what historical reasons has English become ubiquitous around the world? What is its impact on the survival of other languages? Looking at specific historical, linguistic, and social contexts, including globalization, make an argument that takes into consideration the external influences on language adoption. For example, you could consider focusing on a specific part of the world, such as India, where British varieties of English have long been dominant because of British colonization there, but now changes in the Indian economy and business ties with the United States are compelling more Indians to learn American English, with perhaps a distinct and influential Indian English on the rise as well.
4. Make an argument that primary and/or secondary teachers of English should or should not have to learn about the historical development of the English language. For what kinds of potential classroom issues might such knowledge be useful, or not?
5. Consider the impact of media on the diffusion of English. How has it contributed to language change over time in English? How does it contribute to the increase in the number of global speakers of English as a native or foreign language? Remember that you will need to take a position and make an argument in support of it as you explore this (or any) topic.