

Tips on Researching

Tips on Researching the War in Iraq

* This conflict officially began March 20, 2003. Wikipedia has a pretty good foundation article that includes the Gulf Conflict in 1991. Be sure you understand both conflicts.

* One of your biggest challenges will be to stay focused on the purpose of this activity, which is to examine the role of the media in shaping attitudes about this conflict and to increase your ability to access, analyze, interpret, and comprehend media messages.

* This conflict reflects the fears of those involved. What are the fears that fuel this conflict?

* Images of absolute good and absolute evil are necessary to create interest in conflicts such as this one. Be on the lookout for these portrayals in all the media you examine. What does the conflict look like if those images are removed?

* Below are three PBS Web sites that may be of some assistance to you:

Wide Angle: Exclusive to al-Jazeera

Consider the impact of al-Jazeera's uncensored coverage of the Middle East. Is al-Jazeera any different from Western news networks?

POV: War Feels Like War

Examine the controversial practice of embedded journalism during the war in Iraq, 2003-2004.

Reporting America at War

Explore the role of reporters and how they have shaped the ways that wars have been remembered and understood.

Tips on Researching Terrorism

* Terrorist attacks have been going on around the world for quite some time. Random attacks on the public have been used by groups from al Qaeda to the Irish Republican Army to radical environmentalists to direct public attention to their cause. You would do well to focus on attacks on America, such as the two World Trade Center bombings as well as attacks on our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the bombing of the USS COLE in 2000.

* Make it your business to formulate a solid definition of terrorism and provide a thorough report on the groups responsible and their stated motivation.

* It is almost impossible not to label such acts as "vicious" and "insane." See if you can find information about the desperation of people who would be willing to give up their lives in such a dramatic fashion.

Tips on Researching the Environment

* This topic has many facets that include animal extinction concerns, degradation of the rain forest, and global warming. It would probably be best to focus on the last topic, as it is commanding a great deal of attention, and the implications seem to supersede the others'.

* This is an excellent topic to use to analyze the variety of parties who have an interest in the environment. All the information you find will probably be in favor of preserving the environment, but be aware that most environmental measures are costly and often have a negative impact on business. The solutions proposed by the various groups you explore will indicate their interest in the topic.

* This is also a topic that attracts many "fringe" elements, providing you an excellent opportunity to closely scrutinize your sources.

Tips on Researching Decision 2008

* The elections of 2000 and 2004 were shrouded by controversy. Do some research on these two elections as background.

* Become familiar with the Electoral College and what revisions to the election process have been proposed.

* Do some research on voter turnout in the 21st century.

* Gather information on the potential candidates for the election of 2008.

* What issues will dominate the election of 2008?

Tips on Researching Immigration

* Because America is, for the most part, a nation of immigrants, this topic needs to be narrowed to debates over illegal immigrants: what rights and services should be accorded to them, how to define their status in America, what accommodations should be made for those who can't speak English.

* It would be helpful to have some background on other groups that have come to America, what they were seeking in this country, whether or not they intended to stay in this country, and how they went about acculturating themselves.

* Some call America a melting pot where immigrants merge themselves into American culture; some call it a salad bowl where cultures add their unique characteristics to the greater whole. Which is it? Which should it be?

* Some reports indicate that white people will be a minority in the United States by 2050. What are the implications of this prediction?

* Where are most immigrants coming from? Where are they settling?

* Become familiar with immigration laws and how they have changed over time. What changes have been proposed recently? Who favors these changes? Who opposes them?

Tips on Researching the Middle East

* Because of its location, this region has seen thousands of groups and cultures come and go over time. Invasion, migration, and conflict have characterized much of the history of the area, interspersed with periods of amazing harmony among diverse peoples. With that idea in mind, begin your research by becoming familiar with the whole region known as the Middle East since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918.

* Become familiar with the three major religions: Christianity, Islam, Judaism. What interest does each have any conflicts that have occurred?

* Become familiar with the geography and resources. What role do these two factors have in any conflicts that have occurred?

* Below are two PBS Web sites that may be of some assistance to you:

Wide Angle: Exclusive to al-Jazeera- Events in the Middle East reported from an Arab point of view.

Frontline/WORLD: In the Line of Fire Experiences of reporters in the Middle East.