

## **Issue Background Report**

**College Composition II – Spring 2015**

### **What the Background Report Is**

This background report is exactly what its name implies. It is an informative report—an overview of the current issue you have selected to research and write about this semester. It is objective and informative: you offer no opinions or actual arguments here. The purpose of this report is to summarize your research and insight and provide THE BIG PICTURE of your issue. This report should be as comprehensive as possible and the more comprehensive it is the better your arguments will be (and easier to write!).

The major premise of this report is that by presenting your information in a coherent manner to an outside reader, you will reach a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of it. In doing so, you will create strong, sophisticated, and well-informed arguments.

### **Why a Background Report**

- To help you organize and synthesize your research
- To help you understand your topic more thoroughly
- To help you see the complexity of your topic
- To help you identify additional information you need to find
- To help you to identify and develop ideas for your argumentative papers

### **What Should Be in the Report**

This report should answer the following questions and should include and reference specific sources so that you can identify where the information came from.

- How is the issue defined and what is its historical context (include multiple perspectives and biases)?
- What is the significance of the issue from multiple perspectives
- Who are the multiple constituencies/audiences involved/affected by the issue? Why they are engaged in the issue and how does the issue affect them?
- What are the major points of debate surrounding the issue and why is the debate is still unresolved?
- What is the long term effect of the issue, or why it is important (or why any one should care).

A report is a different writing genre than an essay, and we will discuss the formatting and citation expectations of the report in class.

### **Guidelines**

- Organize this as a report with headings to group your information. You may use bullets to present information, however information should follow sentence and paragraph expectations.
- The report needs to be informative and understandable to an outside reader unfamiliar with your topic.
- Be sure to cite and refer to sources to support your information throughout this report. You can use footnotes to conclude each section with a listing of relevant sources (this will be useful when you go to write your arguments and need to cite your information).
- Be sure to introduce quotes and references with attribution/signal phrases.
- You must turn in a print bibliography along with the report, with all the sources summarized.