## Assignment #2: Exploring & Informing

## English 150- Spring 2012

## (600-700 words)

**Peer Response:** Wednesday, February 15th

**Date Due:** Wednesday, February 22nd

**Paper Presentations:** Friday, Feb. 24th

**Topic Options**

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| **Predictions of the End of the World** | **Natural Disasters** |
| Mayan culture & predictions of end of the world  Nostradamus  Harold Camping | Global Warming  Shifting landmass/tsunamis  Major Volcanic Eruptions (supervolcano)  Solar Storms  Collision of Earth and Space Matter (meteoroid, planet, debris, etc) |
| **How Warfare Could Change the World** | **How Biology Could Change the World** |
| Nuclear Attacks  Biological or Chemical Attacks  Survival 101: Nuclear Bombs | Pandemics  Survival 101: Pandemics |

**Getting Started**

This assignment combines material from Chapters 5 and 6 in *The McGraw-Hill Guide.* Unlike Assignment #1, in Assignment #2 you will *not be relying solely on your personal experience* as the primary material and support for your main points; you will be seeking outside background information to help you grapple with a question (exploring) and provide information that others can use to gain more insight into a topic (informing).

Notice further that this assignment is *not asking you to try to persuade your readers*; you are not choosing material, then, that supports only your point of view on the matter. In fact, *CMHG* points out that exploring “various perspectives on issues, concepts, places, or people will help you to work your way through ideas and problems in college and in the professional, civic, and personal areas of your life” (85). Closely related to exploratory writing is informative writing, in which your goal while sharing information is “to be as neutral as possible, so it is the writer’s responsibility to present information impartially” (121)

After choosing a topic, you need to consider what information you need. In the case of both exploring and informing, providing multiple perspectives is central to this paper; this means being sure that you are giving your readers (and yourself) the opportunity to see the topic from several vantage points, some of which will almost certainly not be your usual or most comfortable way of thinking about this topic. This information also needs to meet the criterion of being relevant, and explanations must be clear and accurate.

Your text recommends that you ask yourself these questions to help you explore your topic to be sure that you have fully gathered information and sufficiently considered how you can help interest your audience in the topic and help them understand it:

* What do I know—and what more do I need to know-- about the topic I am exploring or providing information about?
* What preconceptions do I have about the topic? (Getting these out into the open in your planning stage is very important.)
* Since I am not relying heavily on personal information, where would I get additional information to provide the multiple perspectives I need on this topic?
* Why might my audience be interested in reading my exploration/informational paper? How can I engage (interest, motivate) them?
* What details will help my audience understand my exploration and information?
* What visuals would help my audience understand my topic?

# Evaluation Criteria

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| Context |
| * Thoughtful and perceptive treatment of topic; original approach; scope sufficiently narrow. * Purpose for writing is clear (educate, entertain, persuade) and consistent throughout the paper. |
| * Clear sense of audience and consistent attention to audience’s needs. * Introduction engages audience’s interest. The “So what?” question is answered! |
| Substance |
| * Content is fully developed, relevant, and substantial; detail carefully chosen and specific. * Uses sources (at least five) to support main idea. * Gives clear credit to sources. |
| Organization |
| * Focuses on a precise, interesting and insightful point or thesis, which guides development and organization. |
| * Sequence follows a logical arrangement for this material appropriately organized into paragraphs. Relationship among ideas is clear; coherent; transitional devices used to guide reader |
| Style |
| * Expression is clear and concise. Good choices in use of dialogue, details, visuals. |
| * Vocabulary is precise, vivid and appropriate |
| Conventions/Correctness: Writing is free from sentence-level errors and word choice errors.  * Uses MLA or APA citation style for giving credit to sources. |
| Delivery |
| * Consistency in typography, headings. Visuals aptly integrated within text. |
| * Appearance of document adapted to needs and expectations of audience. |