

Expository Research Paper: Detailed Instructions

Before you begin:

- Make sure you understand your story and have completed all the activities related to it.
- Make sure you have taken notes from the materials contained in the research packet.
- Make sure you understand the structure of the paper.

Structure of the paper:

- I. Introduction (that describes pulp writing in general) with thesis (thesis: the story is a good example of either a pulp genre or pulp writing in general)
- II. First body paragraph (one characteristic of pulp writing shared with your story)
- III. Second body paragraph (another characteristic of pulp writing shared with your story)
- IV. Conclusion (summing up your argument about how pulp writing conventions relate to your story)

Introductory Paragraph

Purpose:

An introductory paragraph provides the necessary background and establishes what it is that the paper is going to accomplish. This is the last sentence of the introduction, and it is called the **thesis**.

Directions:

The introductory paragraph should have the following characteristics:

- A general overview of what pulp fiction is, when it was produced, and how it is characterized
- If you have enough material you, you may make this overview specific to your genre (e.g., an overview of pulp detective fiction or pulp fantasy fiction or pulp horror fiction, etc.
- At least one source cited
- A **thesis statement** that claims the work you read in class is either a good example of pulp fiction in general or is specifically a good example of its specific type of pulp writing (choices: adventure, crime, detective, fantasy, horror, science fiction).

Example thesis statements:

Keeping this in mind, Raoul Whitfield's "About Kid Deth" displays several important characteristics of pulp crime fiction.

H.P. Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu," then, is an excellent example of pulp horror writing.

Example Introduction (discussing dime novels in general and using *California Joe, The Mysterious Plainsman* as an example):

The United States in the nineteenth century saw rapid increases in literacy rates with corresponding increases in print materials to fuel the new consumer demand (Wilkerson 393). In an era before radio, television, and film, the most popular reading material of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the dime novel (Bleiler 302): stereotyped, romantic novels with Western settings, printed on cheap pulp paper, and often, but not exclusively, available for a mere ten cents (Durham 288). Even as the Western frontier was disappearing, the dime novel paid nostalgic homage to the “hardships and struggles of early western life” (Chilcoat and Gasperak 100), recording a partially historical, partially imagined conflict between civilization and savagery dramatized as a stark struggle between the forces of good and evil (Rosenberg 67; Chilcoat and Gasperak 100). They were fast-paced, adventure-packed, and easy to read-- designed for quick consumption by working class people (Chilcoat and Gasperak 100) and, increasingly, adolescents (Wilkerson 393), a disposable literature for marginally-literate populations that were seen, even at the time, as low-brow and mildly disreputable (Patton 102). One such example of this type of writing, *California Joe, the Mysterious Plainsman*, is in many ways typical of dime novels in general.

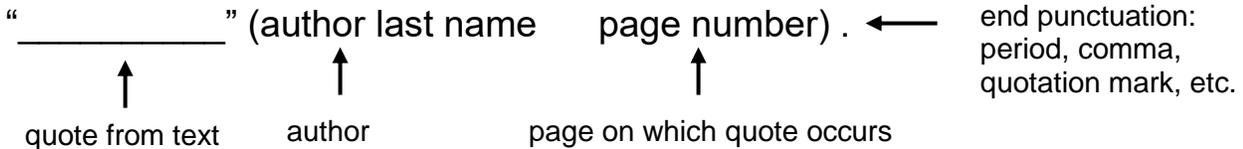
BRIEF BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

Mine is about dime novels; yours will be about pulp fiction. Notice that I use very little actual quotation, that it is mostly a summary of what I learned in my research put into a logical order.

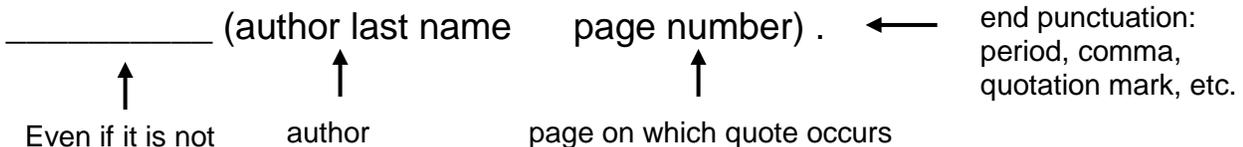
THESIS

The reading done in class is a good example of its type.

Parenthetical Reference Format (Quotation):



Parenthetical Reference Format (Summary of Sources):



No author? Use the title instead.

No page number? Use the author only.

Parenthetical Reference Example:

The United States in the nineteenth century saw rapid increases in literacy rates with corresponding increases in print materials to fuel the new consumer demand (**Wilkerson 393**). In an era before radio, television, and film, the most popular reading material of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the dime novel (**Bleiler 302**): stereotyped, romantic novels with Western settings, printed on cheap pulp paper, and often, but not exclusively, available for a mere ten cents (**Durham 288**).

This fact was taken from Marcus Wilkerson's review in *The Journal of Southern History* (p. 393).

This fact was taken from Everett Bleiler's review in *Science Fiction Studies* (p. 302).

These four or five facts were taken from Philip Durham's article in *The Huntington Library Quarterly* (p. 288). **Notice** I can have more than one parenthetical reference per sentence. **Notice** that, as long as I do not change sources, I only have to cite a reference once; which is to say, I do not have to have one parenthetical reference per fact.

What NOT to Do, Or How NOT to Make an Automatic "F":

- Do **NOT** string together quotes from various sources; put the facts in your own words.
- Do **NOT** use the language of the original sources and pretend like it is your own (quoting without using quotation marks); if you use more than three or four identical words in a row, use quotation marks

Body Paragraphs

Purpose:

Each of the body paragraphs will discuss a defining characteristic of either pulp fiction in general or your specific genre of pulp fiction (fantasy, horror, crime, etc.), concluding with a discussion of how your specific reading is a good example of this defining characteristic.

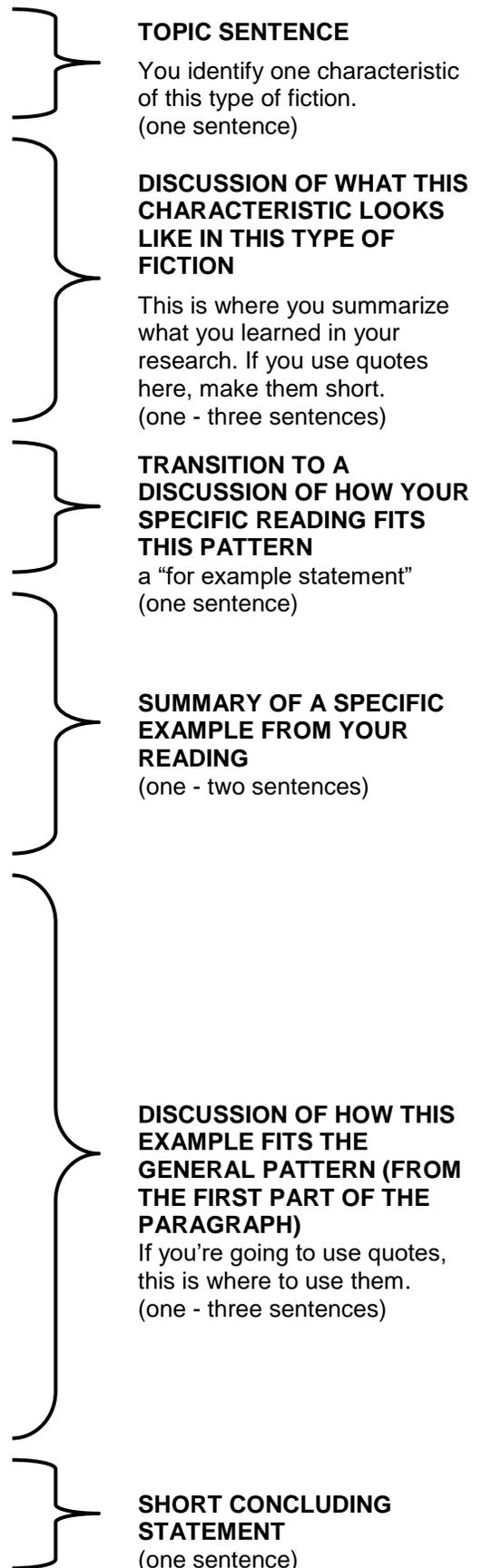
Directions:

Each body paragraph should display the following characteristics:

- A transitional word or phrase to indicate you are beginning a new idea
- A **topic sentence** that will indicate to the reader what you will accomplish in that paragraph (that something is a defining characteristic of this type of writing)
- A discussion of what this defining characteristic looks like in general
- At least one source cited
- A discussion of what this defining characteristic looks like in your selection
- You will have **TWO** of these with **TWO** different characteristics of pulp fiction

Example Body Paragraph (discussing dime novels in general and using *California Joe, The Mysterious Plainsman* as an example):

To begin, one of the most obvious attributes of this kind of writing is the highly stereotyped gender roles of their characters, a trend that becomes more marked as the genre evolves. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the typical heroic male in these novels changes from a rugged individualist who respects (but stands apart) from traditional “womanly” values to a violent alpha-male who lives by the law of the gun (Johnson 501), reacting to what Susan Lee Johnson calls the “late nineteenth-century ‘crisis of manliness’” in which the Western frontier was no longer perceived as an exclusively “male preserve” (497). Correspondingly, female characters (to the extent that they are present at all) shift from passive objects of veneration to passive objects of rescue, the clichéd “damsel in distress” (Rosenberg 67). Although *California Joe* cannot be dated with any certainty (dime novels are often undated and unsigned), it straddles these worldviews, occupying a transitional state between the two extremes. For example, in a curious episode toward the end of the novel, California Joe rescues a white settler, twelve-year-old Maggie Reynolds, held captive in a Cheyenne village. As the rescue occurs during a rare moment of peace between the two cultures, California Joe agrees to pay the Cheyenne ransom: “the ears of the white warrior.” Even though Maggie objects to the gruesome trade (“No, no, let me stay here, for I am happy here; I do not wish to go home!”), California Joe stoically submits to the operation, retrieves the captured child, and returns Maggie home to her grateful parents. Although Maggie is portrayed as completely helpless, notice that California Joe does not intrude upon the Native village six-shooters ablaze. Instead, in a near-parody of the ideal gentleman, California Joe suffers in silence, even replying, “Thankee, Injun,” when the operation is complete. Such behavior is only comprehensible in light of nineteenth century gender norms that locate women as the “angel in the house.” In such a view, Maggie is worth the price, and California Joe merely restores the child to her rightful place at home (where presumably she will resume her domestic function). The casual violence is, of course, all the more striking by California Joe’s resignation to its pain, confirming his masculine role as both protector and agent of action within the narrative. That California Joe does not claim the child as his own (a reward for male bravery), perhaps indicates an earlier date for *California Joe*’s composition; were it later, Maggie would likely be older, and there would probably be some degree of sexual tension between the two, even if it ultimately remained unconsummated. Still, in its essentials (active male protects passive female), *California Joe* fits the general dime novel pattern.



Example Transition Statements to a Specific Example (your story)

- one way/example
- this is like
- for example/instance
- these characteristics can be seen in
- along these lines
- specifically
- thus/hence

YOU NEED TWO BODY PARAGRAPHS FOR THIS PAPER, SO THAT MEANS YOU NEED TO ENGAGE TWO SEPARATE CHARACTERISTICS OF PULP FICTION.

Conclusion

Purpose:

A conclusion sums up your arguments and expresses what has been accomplished through the course of the paper. Do this in step-by-step order of what you proved. For this paper, the conclusion will almost certainly be your shortest paragraph.

Example Conclusion:

In sum, *California Joe, The Mysterious Plainsman* is, in many respects, a typical example of dime novel writing. In the way that it reproduces sexual stereotypes, reinforces the racist assumptions of the dominant culture, and captures the underlying tension between urban and frontier moralities, *California Joe* ably fulfills the purpose of such literature: to reaffirm bourgeois cultural norms through a nostalgic representation of an idealized past.



A CONCLUSION SHOULD RE-STATE OR REFERENCE THE THESIS IN SOME WAY AND ESTABLISH WHAT THE ESSAY HAS ACCOMPLISHED.

Example Language to Introduce a Conclusion

- Ultimately
- Hence
- To conclude
- Thus
- Fundamentally
- In brief
- In closing
- Therefore
- As a consequence of

Works Cited

Purpose:

A works cited page lists the sources used by an author. It goes at the end of your paper. Yes, this is part of the grade.

Directions:

A works cited page should display the following characteristics:

- After the conclusion, label and underline the Works Cited. It should be in the center of the page.
- Put all the sources (including the sources for paragraph one) into **alphabetical order** by first letter of the citation (usually the author's last name).
- Use **MLA form** (copy the format I use in the research packet).
- **Indent** at the second line (and beyond) if a citation takes more than one line.
- **Skip a line** between citations.

Example Works Cited:

Works Cited

Bleiler, Everett F. "Review: Indispensable Survey." Science Fiction Studies, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2001, pp. 302-303.

Chilcoat, George W. and Joan M. Gasperak "Young Adult Literature: The Dime Novel or How to Vitalize American Literature Classes." The English Journal, Vol. 73, No. 3, 1984, pp. 100-103.

Durham, Philip. "A General Classification of 1,531 Dime Novels." The Huntington Library Quarterly, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1954, pp. 287-291.

Johnson, Susan Lee. "A Memory Sweet to Soldiers": The Significance of Gender in the History of the American West." The Western Historical Quarterly, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1993, pp. 495-51.

Patton, Lewis. "Review." American Literature, Vol. 2, No.1,1930, pp.102-104.

Rosenberg, Bruce A. "Review." The Western Historical Quarterly, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1989, p. 67.

Wilkerson, Marcus M. "Review." The Journal of Southern History, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1951, pp. 393-394.

Things to Keep in Mind:

- Copy the cite exactly as you found it in the research packets
- Indent after the first line
- Skip a space between sources
- Alphabetize

Don't overcomplicate this paper. All you're doing is looking for general characteristics and connecting them to specific examples. It's no different from most of the writing we have done all year.