

English 101
Assignment III
Microfilm Research Paper
Due March 22

Probable Topics and Possible Sources Due March 3

You will complete this microfilm research assignment in several steps. The first step is to go either to Hornbake or to McKeldin library and to look up the microfilm version of the New York Times from the day that you were born (e.g., April 10, 1961). Ask the librarian for help if you need it. Read through the entire paper (using one of the microfilm scanners), and decide on one article which especially interests you. If you can't find an intriguing article from the day you were born, look around in papers from days near the day you were born. (Another acceptable alternative would be to go back 100 years from the day you were born--this might place you somewhere in the Civil War.) You may choose your article from any section of the paper except the sports page, but I recommend that you choose from the articles about national or international news.

Once you've chosen an article, think up a topic for a paper you could write for the class that connects, closely or loosely, with your article. You might, for example, contrast some stories which indicate racial attitudes then and now; you might show how union and management stubbornness led to a long strike that neither anticipated; you may be led to try to figure out why a certain event happened; you may show how several magazines or newspapers treated the same issue very differently. I don't want you to tell me something that I could find out just as easily by looking in an encyclopedia. I'm curious about how people and events were viewed by the journalists of their own time.

On Thursday, March 3rd, bring to class a handwritten sheet of paper with the following information on it:

- 1) your date of birth
- 2) a summary of the article you have chosen to work with
- 3) your probable topic
- 4) your intended audience
- 5) your purpose in writing such a paper

*On a separate sheet of paper (which you'll give to me) make a list of 8 sources that you might use to learn more about your chosen topic. You will have gotten those 8 sources from 3 places: The New York Times Index (for newspaper articles), The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature (for magazine articles), and the Subject Card Catalogue of the Undergraduate Library (for books). In class we'll discuss your potential topics and you can get more ideas and learn from what your fellow students have done.

Finally, you'll write your paper and bring it, typed, to your reading session (if we decide to go on with that method). You probably won't use all the sources you listed as possible sources, and you may stumble onto other useful ones as you work. The final revised version is due on March 22, after spring break.

Note: As you research and search, and as you sort through your notes, you may want to decide on an organizational pattern (cause-effect, comparison-contrast, narration, problem-solution) which best accommodates your evidence.