

ITW: Developing a topic, drafting a proposal

March 22, 2018

For some examples, here are a few sample titles of papers students developed in my ITW sections on related themes:

Different Ways of Speaking for Nature: Rachel Carson and Edward Abbey

Romantic Childhood: Wordsworth's Legacy in Winnie-the-Pooh

"What is a life, anyway?" Charlotte's Web and the Stages of Nature-Awareness

Ecological Awareness in the Music of Nick Drake

Endangered Ugly Animals: Why Our Obsession with Cuteness is Bad for the Environment

Nature and Play: Understanding Scout's Education in To Kill a Mockingbird

"We'll be inside for this": How Changes in Girl Scouting Reflect Shifting Attitudes Towards Nature

Nature-Deficit Disorder and its Evil Twin: A Study of the Meaning of Into the Wild

"Why do the trees end here?" Land Preservation and the Future of Childhood in Maine (about a state park near the writer's home that's been under threat of "development" and that has had its funding cut)

School Choice and Environmental Awareness: What Happens When Kids on One Street Don't Know Each Other

Those are just examples. Part of my role is to remind you to be ambitious. Please see me with questions.

Moving from a topic to a claim: Please use these prompts to help you write out your ideas in the form of a proposal. Please send this proposal (at least one page, and you may choose to do more than one topic), along with a list of three POSSIBLE reputable sources if you went in this direction to class with you on Tuesday March 27th. At that class we will discuss required steps in the timeline over the next several weeks in the development of this project.

Name it:

I am trying to understand/investigate/learn more about:

1. I am trying to understand/investigate/learn about this because I want to discover
A

B

C

3. Ultimately, understanding more about

a.

b

c

will help us get to the bottom of _____

4. So far, I expect that reading

A

B

C

Will help me on the path to this understanding, and this is what I'm reading and taking notes on.

In the course of answering these questions you should keep in mind the terms "debatability," "meaning," "significance" and "scope." You are writing an informed essay, with debatable conclusions, not a book report.