

## Teacher's Example *Writing in the Works* Homework Nine

### Homework Nine

Prewrite around your topic. Write out your existing thoughts (assumptions, known facts, opinion). Develop your specific focus by categorizing your topic into smaller units. The key to successful reading, writing and research is a narrow focus.

Draft a list of possible research questions. Research starts with a question and sometimes leads to more questions. Research is the hunt for answers.

The first essay/ inquiry argument uses one good question to launch the essay. The second essay/ book review answers the question *What does the book do for readers?* The third essay/ argumentative research paper should begin with solid research question/s. Arrive at your thesis argument *after* you've informed yourself.

Use this exercise to isolate your main research question/s.

Topic: reading rates and habits

Reading is becoming the lost art, I fear. I don't see enough signs that people are actually doing it much. Not in school or out of school.

*How much reading is actually going in the average high school English class? In the average college English class? Is anyone keeping track?*

Parents should model good reading behavior in the home.

*If parent's don't read, are children more likely not to read, too? What effect does a parent's reading have on the child's adulthood reading habits?*

Some teachers tell me that I shouldn't read every word of every student's paper. I've been advised that I should skim some papers in some sections or sometimes in full to ease the burden of reading so many papers.

*If teachers don't read student papers in full, doesn't that teach the students not to read in full what teachers assign? Is anybody really reading anything?*

When I ask students to discuss reading and writing, they often say people are reading less now due to technology, button pushing, text messaging and pretty pictures. I'm not sure that people are reading less now in 2009 than in 1959, 1909, 1859 or any other time in U. S. history. Small numbers of people probably have always read a lot while much of the population abstains beyond the daily minimum (hence the term "educated class"). The public school system is only about 100 years old. My grandparents did not complete grade

school; my dad did not graduate from high school. Education for all people in all classes is a relatively new development without precedent.

*Can the U.S. really expect every citizen to receive a college degree, as President Obama has urged? **What is the history of reading?** Its future?*

I worry because we seem to granting more college degrees, meaning a greater percentage of the population is attending college, but reading rates are not going up.

*Do high school and college teach students how not to read? If so, what does a degree represent?*