

Brainstorming Ideas for Your Phase 3 Researched Essay

For our Phase 3 Researched Essay, you will investigate a theme that has emerged from our introduction to **language and literacy politics**. The first and sometimes most challenging step is to identify the topic you want to research and write about, a topic that falls under our umbrella concept of **language and literacy politics**. You may wish to examine an idea introduced in one of our texts or you may choose to identify your own issue (perhaps that you personally connect to) to highlight a perspective not considered or dealt with adequately in the readings.

One strategy for selecting a topic is to consider **language and literacy's relationship** with one or some of the following issues (or others!):

identity	socioeconomic status	family/community	accents
culture	educational expectations	language attitudes	L2 learning
race	social expectations	Standard English	immigration
gender	cultural expectations	racism	national policy
self-esteem	workforce expectations	prescriptivism	media
			representation

These are just broad themes. Your goal is to get specific. For example, you could investigate

1. the obstacles facing new immigrants when learning English in ESL classes
2. the ways in which language and race play a role in employers' hiring practices
3. how/why certain communities code-mesh and why it's prohibited in certain contexts
4. why there exists in the US a lack of empathy toward immigrants' language differences
5. the (social/family)/community costs of linguistic and cultural assimilation
6. the costs of the globalization of English
7. whether linguistic discrimination constitutes violence
8. how standard language ideology is infused in education and/or the media
9. what sorts of teaching practices might push against standard language ideology
10. why certain cultural/racial group's language is viewed as inferior

And these ideas are still broad! You can get even more specific by determining a specific **group** (Latinx, African American, working-class Caucasians, immigrants from a specific country, millennials, etc.); a specific **setting** (the U.S., another country, a specific city or school district, a classroom or home setting, etc.); a specific **example** (a public policy, a certain idea covered in the media, a specific or public example of a conflict or person facing a conflict).

A clarification: This is **NOT** a research paper where you ask a broad question about language. This is NOT a research paper where your purpose is to inform and merely report information others have found. Thus, topics like these will **NOT** work:

- How does one best learn a second language?
- What is the history of this word?
- What are the benefits of bilingual education?

Thus, don't forget the "**politics**" in language politics! Here are key words that will help you zoom in on power relations and other political concerns: politics, power, power relations, hierarchies, oppression, subordination, discrimination, acculturation, prejudice, racism, classism, sexism, ableism, xenophobia, (social or racial) (in)justice, ethics, hegemony, colonization, imperialism, equality, equal opportunity, privilege, human/civil rights, dominance, superiority/inferiority, etc.