

Short Assignment (SA) 1: Word Inquiry Essay

Taking Gross's "Bitch" essay as an inspiration, follow a line of inquiry about a word that has been commonly used in the discourse of language, literacy and identity: for example, They speak "ghetto"; You sound "gay"; They are so "FOB" (fresh off the boat). Examine how the word has evolved in terms of the ways people in different communities have defined, used, and valued it differently.

As the basis of your analysis, you should consult a variety of dictionaries and conduct a short survey with randomly selected 10 people on campus or off campus in the U-District area. The purpose of the survey is to inquire people's attitudes toward and use of the word.



Your essay should have a central argument/thesis statement about the significance of the word in historical, cultural and/or social aspects. The analysis in the essay should cover how the word has changed in its meaning, significance, connotations, associations, and power dynamics in society.

Rhetorical Situation

Purpose: to examine how words are given meaning by people, their social and cultural values and changing historical contexts

Audience: academic audience, audience who are interested in multilingual issues

Content: Select ONE of the following as your word inquiry. If you have another word in mind, please talk to me:

"FOB" (fresh off the boat) "illegal immigrant" "alien" "queer" "fag" / "faggot" "man hater" "feminist" "retarded" "nerd" "geek"	Speaking "ghetto" "urban" Sounding "gay" "Uptalking" What is "English" anyway? What is "American English"? What does it mean to "speak American"? What is "Broken English"?
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Logistics:

2-3 pages in Microsoft Word document (at least 2 full pages); 12-point Times New Roman

Use 1-inch margins and double-spacing consistently (Refer to the "Sample Paper for Formatting" on Canvas)

Include a Works Cited page and an Appendix of your survey questions and answers

Upload your essay as a Word document on Canvas **before midnight on Apr 2nd (Sun)**.

Here are some suggestions for dictionaries that you can consult:

Oxford English Dictionary (OED), available online on Suzzallo Library website

Urban Dictionary: www.urbandictionary.com

Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* Odegaard: PE1628.J6 1963; Suzzallo reference: PE1620.J6 1979, also microform).

Farmer and Henley, *Slang and its Analogues* (1890-1904). Suz. ref. & stacks PE3721.F4

The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia (1889-1900), ed. W. D. Whitney. Suz. ref. PE1625.C4 1889a

An American Dictionary of the English Language, ed. Noah Webster. 423 W39a 1855

Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang, ed. J. E. Lighter. PE2846.H57 1994

Specialized Dictionaries:

Dictionary of American Regional English, ed. Frederic G. Cassidy. PE2843.D52 1985

Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner, ed. Geneva Smitherman. PE3102.N4 S65

A Dictionary of Catchphrases, American and British, from the sixteenth century to the present day, ed. Eric Partridge. PE1689.P29 1977

Dictionary of Jargon, ed. Jonathon Green. PE1689.G73 1987

A Feminist Dictionary, eds. Cheris Kramerae and Paula A. Treichler. HQ1115.K73 1985

Juba to Jive: A Dictionary of African-American Slang, ed. Clarence Major. Odegaard: PE3727.N4 M34 1994

Webster's First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language, "conjured" by Mary Daly in cahoots with Jane Caputi. HQ 1115.D34 1987

There are also links to dictionaries searchable online at:

<http://www.lib.washington.edu/research/dic.html>

A list of English language dictionaries can be found at:

<http://www.lib.washington.edu/subject/English/Dictionaries.html>

Targeted Course Outcomes: 1, 2 & 3

1. To demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that writers use in different writing contexts.

- The writing employs style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation.
- The writer is able to demonstrate the ability to write for different audiences and contexts, both within and outside the university classroom.
- The writing has a clear understanding of its audience, and various aspects of the writing (mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, tone, sentences, and word choice) address and are strategically pitched to that audience.
- The writer articulates and assesses the effects of his or her writing choices.

2. To read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully in order to generate and support writing.

- The writing demonstrates an understanding of the course texts as necessary for the purpose at hand.
- Course texts are used in strategic, focused ways (for example: summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the writing.
- The writing is intertextual, meaning that a "conversation" between texts and ideas is created in support of the writer's goals.
- The writer is able to utilize multiple kinds of evidence gathered from various sources (primary and secondary – for example, library research, interviews, questionnaires, observations, cultural artifacts) in order to support writing goals.
- The writing demonstrates responsible use of the MLA (or other appropriate) system of documenting sources.

3. To produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts.

- The argument is appropriately complex, based in a claim that emerges from and explores a line of inquiry.
- The stakes of the argument, why what is being argued matters, are articulated and persuasive.

- The argument involves analysis, which is the close scrutiny and examination of evidence and assumptions in support of a larger set of ideas.
- The argument is persuasive, taking into consideration counterclaims and multiple points of view as it generates its own perspective and position.
- The argument utilizes a clear organizational strategy and effective transitions that develop its line of inquiry.