Hi All,

Tomorrow we begin Week 4! We are already halfway through our 6-week course! You are all doing a great job working through the content of the course. Here’s what we are doing this week:

1. Please click on the Week 4 link on our course homepage. Here you will find information for Week 4. Under the Resources link, you will see the learning resources and documents you need for our fourth week together. **There is NO discussion this week, so take the time you would normally devote to discussion and use it to work on your paper (more information is below).**

1. You will also see two assignment links. Each of these links contains information for completing Week 4’s assignments. Please click on the Week 4 Assignment 1 link. During Weeks 2 through 5, you will work on your Personalized Learning Plan. Once you connect to your Plan, you will find further instructions for completing it. Please work on this diligently throughout the next few weeks. The Plan is very long, and it will be very difficult to complete at the last minute. **Your completed Personalized Learning Plan is due next week**!

1. Then, click on the Week 4 Assignment 2 link. This week, you also have your first full draft of your 5 page paper due. **The essay should be 5 pages in length (not including the title page or References page, written in the third person (i.e., use he/she and not I, me, my), and a minimum of four outside source materials should be cited on the References page using APA formatting.**

Please make sure you have the following components in your essay:  
  
**Introduction with a Thesis Sentence:** A thesis is your stance on the topic—preferably a one sentence statement expressing your stance on an argumentative topic that you will explore, prove, expand upon, develop and provide a thorough discussion of in your essay. Remember, a thesis must be **arguable**. It includes a map of the main points (at least 3) to be discussed in the body of the essay. **There are thesis notes in the Doc Sharing link on our course homepage for you to review**.

**At Least 3 Body Paragraphs:** A strong body paragraph should directly support the thesis, have one central point that directly supports the thesis sentence, have evidence to support that point, explain how the evidence supports the point, and, in turn, how it supports the overall thesis statement. Each body paragraph should be a minimum of 6 sentences in length.

**Topic Sentences:** A topic sentence, the first sentence of each paragraph, has two functions:  
  
1. It states the point (topic) of the individual paragraph.  
  
2. It states how the point develops the thesis statement (for an essay). In other words, it is a supporting reason for your thesis.

**Explanation:** The explanation illustrates to the reader why the information is relevant to the topic sentence. All ideas within a paragraph must clearly connect back to (and support) the topic sentence. Remember, you are writing for someone who disagrees with you; therefore, you cannot assume you can make a claim and your reader will simply understand that claim and agree with it. You must be sure to fully explain your ideas.  
  
  
**Sources:** Provide outside information to support your topic sentence. Please include at least 4 outside academic sources, preferably journal articles and books. **Remember that Wikipedia is not an acceptable academic source.**

**About the Introduction:** Introductory paragraphs should accomplish two tasks:  
  
1. They should secure the reader’s interest in the topic so that he or she will want to read more.  
  
2. They should let the reader know what the writing is going to be about (that’s the thesis statement, which should be the last sentence of the introduction). Find a creative way to introduce the topic at hand. Provide necessary background information. End your introduction with your thesis. Ensure your introduction is no longer than one page/one paragraph in length.

There is more information about introductions in the Doc Sharing link, under the Writing Elements posting.

**Transitions:** Transitions should lead one body paragraph into the next body paragraph, using a variety of transitional methods. They should be smooth and more than a one-word mechanical transition. If you're unsure about transitions, please see following link in Walden’s Writing Center for further information:

<http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/paragraphs/transitions>

There is also more information about transitions in the Doc Sharing link, under the Writing Elements posting.

**Conclusion:** The conclusion is a separate section of the essay, a kind of counterpart to the introduction. It has the same purpose as the introduction—to assist the reader in understanding your information and thinking. However, it is a look back instead of a look ahead. That is, you ask the reader to “step back” from the body part of the essay and reflect on its significance by restating the main points and central thesis. **You don't need to use the "In conclusion," as this is often over-used and can cause readers to lose interest.**

There is more information about conclusions in the Doc Sharing link, under the Writing Elements posting.

**APA Formatting Includes:** A cover page, properly formatted APA in-text citations, a References page, a consistent font style and size throughout (Times New Roman, 12 point font), double-spaced, 1 inch margins all around, aligned to the left (no justification), and no bolding. Please see the following link, from Walden’s Writing Center, for further information:

<http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/apa>

**Research:** You should include strong academic research with at least four outside sources.  All research should be documented on the References page and also with parenthetical in-text citations in the body of the paper to indicate where you actually used the source in your paper. **Remember that Walden does not accept Wikipedia as a research source.**Please see the following link, from Walden’s Writing Center, for further information:

<http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/apa/citations>

**In addition to submitting your paper to the dropbox located in the Week 4 Assignment 2 link, this week you will also submit this same draft paper to the peer review forum**. You can find a link to the Peer Review Forum in the Week 4 Assignment 2 link. You can also find a link to the Peer Review Form on our course homepage, under the Assignments link.

I hope these notes help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you need any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me. Happy writing,

Jennifer