

ASSIGNMENT DESIGN

Alternatives to the Term Paper

There are many different ways to have students go through the research and writing process without relying on the oft-assigned term paper. Assigning something different will generate enthusiasm for the assignment and encourage original work. Be creative!

- **Reflections on the process** - At various times students turn in written descriptions of their research process.
- **Problem solving approach** - What steps would be taken to solve a problem.
- **Literature review** - Evaluative annotated bibliography.
- **Science in the news** - Find evidence in literature for news release claims.
- **Event initiated examples** - Evaluate a current event based on literature findings.
- **Web assignment** - Design an informative webpage.
- **Evaluate thinking** - Have students discuss what they found and compare sources.
- **Read and find facts** - Read an editorial, article, reflection and find facts to support it.
- **Create a webpage** - Select a topic to do with course content.
- **Biography** - Select a scholar/researcher in field and report on career, influences, major ideas, moods and trends in research program.
- **Follow a piece of legislation through parliament** - What groups are lobbying for/against it and why?
- **Follow a current foreign policy issue as it develops** - Have students adopt the perspective of one of the various groups involved and predict the next move.
- **Nominate someone for a Nobel prize** - Justify nomination.
- **Adopt a persona** - Write journal entries, letters, commentaries from that person's perspective
- **Write an exam** - Provide answers and justify rationale for questions asked.
- **Write a review** of a performance, a movie, a book, a journal article, a guest speaker lecture...
- **Write a newspaper, magazine, webpage story** on a topic.
- **Describe your dream job** - Have students research careers in the field and justify their choice of company, location, job, etc.
- **Compare and contrast primary and secondary sources.**
- **Evaluate a website.**
- **Compare and contrast the state of knowledge** on a topic in two different decades or eras.
- **Conduct research** but don't write the final draft.
- **Prepare for a hypothetical interview** - Have students do background research on a company or job offer and how they fit with job description.
- **Compare and contrast** the content, style, and audience of three different scholarly journals in a field.
- **Compare and contrast** a scholarly journal article with an article from a popular magazine.
- **Prepare for an interview with a top figure in the field** - Justify questions, provide background notes.
- **Compare and contrast** the ways different disciplines deal with the same subject matter.