

Eng 53 Short Paper: *The Soloist*

(850-900 words)

Important Dates:

Students take notes on movie: **Tues., Sept. 29.**

Students meet in BC library (L-217) and take notes for quiz; two topics due: **Thurs., Oct. 8.**

Library article and thesis due; library quiz: **Tues., Oct. 13.**

First page of paper due: **Tues., Oct. 20.**

Paper and Research Peer Review; paper conferences begin: Tues., Oct. 27.

Paper conferences continue: **Wed., Oct. 28.**

Final Paper and Research due (Turnitin by 7:30 a.m.) **and to me** (start of class): **Thurs., Oct. 29.**

Papers returned w/comments: **Tues., Nov. 10.**

Revised paper due: Tues., Nov. 17.

Papers returned: **Thurs., Dec. 3.**

You will write a short research paper that makes an argument related to any issue discussed in Steve Lopez's book, *The Soloist*. The only topic you can't write about is the issue of panhandling since you've already discussed this in your essay. Your paper will include these sources: an objective news or scholarly article (minimum of 500 words) from one of the BC library's online databases; a 2010 documentary to be shown in class about Skid Row called *Lost Angels: Skid Row Is My Home*, directed by Thomas Napper; and short passages that you did not use in your essay from three different chapters of *The Soloist*.

You will use the same writing process (research cards, a draft with corrections, and a revised, typed version in MLA format that is submitted to Turnitin) that you used for your essay. Like your essay, you will come up with a topic that can be argued and supported by sources, and you also will include a counter-argument or opposing viewpoint in your paper to acknowledge an opinion that differs from your thesis. We will discuss how to incorporate a counter-argument into your paper in class.

Select two possible topics to argue and let the library research determine which is the best to write about. It is research, and not your opinion, that determines what you argue in your paper.

Possible topics are listed below, but you can come up with your own if you find research to support an argument. Examples of topics include:

- Nathaniel calms down when he plays music. Is music therapy effective in treating mentally ill patients?
- Why are some people homeless by choice?
- Can friendship cause physical changes in the brain so a mentally ill person is more open to treatment?
- Should taxes be raised to pay for housing programs for homeless people? Why or why not?
- Nathaniel refuses to see a psychiatrist or to try any more drugs. Should mentally ill, homeless people be committed and treated against their will? Why or why not?
- How do media depictions of mental illness affect Americans' attitudes about the disease?
- Should attacking a homeless person be considered a hate crime? Why or why not?
- Do homeless people on Skid Row enjoy the same civil rights as other citizens? Why or why not?
- Was the Los Angeles mayor's 2006 Safer Cities Initiative a success? Why or why not?
- Which housing programs are most effective in reducing homelessness and why?
- Are prescription drugs better than street drugs for mentally ill individuals? Why or why not? .
- Who suffers the most: mentally ill individuals or their families?
- Did Steve Lopez exploit Nathaniel's situation by writing about him? Why or why not?

Why You Write This Paper: This paper is the centerpiece of the expected Student Learning Outcomes for Eng 53. Because this short research paper prepares you for college-level writing in Eng 1A, if you decide not to complete it as assigned, the highest grade you can hope for is a "D" in this class. In other words, not writing this paper tells me that you enjoy Eng 53 so much that you plan to take it again 😊.

In-text Citations and Works Cited page: You will have a total of five one-sentence in-text citations (three

paraphrases and two quotes). Here's what you should use:

- Passages from *The Soloist* that you did not use in your essay. Each passage should come from a different chapter in the book.
- A passage from an objective news or scholarly article (at least 500 words long) found in the BC library. Opinions, columns, first-person stories, abstracts, editorials, or book reviews aren't allowed.
- A one-sentence paraphrase from the film with an in-text citation using the director's last name (Napper).

You will have a special library orientation to help you find news or a scholarly article that relates to your topic. The final page of your paper will be a Works Cited page that includes sources in MLA format.

Organizational Tips:

- ☑ **Write out your thesis or argument (including why or how) on a Post-it note.** Paste this in a corner of your computer screen to help stay focused on your argument. After each in-text citation, explain how the passage supports the thesis.
- ☑ **On another Post-it note, write out the counter-argument.** Paste this in another corner of your computer screen to help you acknowledge the other side. After you discuss the counter-argument, rebut it so you bring the essay back on track to your own thesis. (Do not make the counter-argument your first or second source. Instead, prove your thesis first.)
- ☑ **Always introduce and explain a source before quoting or paraphrasing from it.** Introduce the article first by author and article title and briefly explain what the story or article is about before discussing it. Keep all references to a source in one section of your paper. Explain after the in-text citation how this supports your argument. Use transitions between sources to connect ideas.

Writing Tips:

- ☑ **Do not repeat a question above and then answer it.** Instead, follow the HIT formula to write an interesting hook or beginning for your paper. Your first sentence or two should capture the reader's attention.
- ☑ **Introduce each source with a signal phrase.** This should include the author and title and a brief summary of what the source is about the first time you mention it.
- ☑ **State your argument or thesis clearly by the end of your second or third paragraph.**
- ☑ **Use quotes and paraphrases as instructed and in context,** which means you attribute to the speaker and to the source and explain briefly what led to the statement.
- ☑ **If you have the choice between using a pdf (an article with page numbers) and the same story as a text document without pages, use the pdf version.**
- ☑ **Check each in-text citation from a published source to ensure you have included a page in parenthesis after each one.** Not including a page citation is a form of plagiarism. (We will discuss what you do if the source has no pages.)
- ☑ You will need to cite your **three sources in MLA format on the Works Cited page, the last page of your paper.**
- ☑ **Write first and correct later. Print a rough draft of your paper and read it out loud. Write all of your corrections on the draft.** Try to improve the essay's organization, transitions between ideas, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Check for fragments and run-on sentences and correct these. Make sure your argument is logical and presented well. Use a spellchecker, Hacker, and a dictionary to look for errors. Using your corrected draft as your guide, revise your paper on the computer. Print this and turn in both the corrected draft and your final version.
- ☑ **Write in the third person** (no "me," "myself," "I," "in my opinion," "we," "our," "your," or "you").
- ☑ Write a creative title that ties in with your thesis **after** you finish the paper.
- ☑ **Length is 850-900 words, not counting the Works Cited.** Short papers or those more than 900 words lose points.
- ☑ **Include a Word Count** from the title to the last line of your essay, not including the Works Cited.

Paper Format: Your paper should be typed using MLA format. Use only black ink, 12-point Times or Times Roman Font. Double-space on 8.5 x 11 inch paper with one-inch margins. Include a Works Cited page as your final page. No cover sheet should be used. Staple the paper together in the top left-hand corner.

Turnitin: Submitting your paper and Works Cited as one document to Turnitin is required.

Tutoring: I encourage you to work with the Tutoring Center or the Writing Center before turning this in to me.

What you turn in on Tues., Oct. 27, for the Research and Paper Peer Review in your envelope:

- A total of five typed research cards (three from the book, one from the article, and one from the documentary) with passages and bibliographic information for each source attached.
- Your documentary research card will be attached to notes you took of the documentary with the passage highlighted. MLA for the documentary will be discussed in class.
- A rough draft of your paper that shows your own corrections on it.
- A typed draft of your paper in MLA format that is built from the research cards that explains what you will argue and why. The last page should be your Works Cited page.

What you turn in on Thurs., Oct. 29, in your envelope:

- Final version of your research following peer review, with final stapled on top of previous versions.
- Final version of your paper, following peer review and paper conference, with final version stapled on top of previous versions.
- Research and Paper Peer Review forms.
- **REMINDER:** Your paper and Works Cited page should be submitted as one document to Turnitin by 7:30 a.m. on Thurs., Oct. 29.

What you turn in on Tues., Nov. 17, in your envelope:

- Your revised paper based upon my suggestions.
- The corrected paper and grade sheet I gave back to you with comments.
- **REMINDER:** Be sure to submit the paper to Turnitin again.

How you can lose points on this paper:

- Turning in a paper without a draft that reflects substantial corrections.
- Not submitting the paper and Works Cited as one document to Turnitin.
- Turning in work that is not yours or deliberate plagiarism.
- Not turning in each section of this assignment when it is due.
- Not following directions.
- Length is 850-900 words, not counting the Works Cited. Short papers or those more than 900 words lose points.