CAS 300
Dr. Janna Kim

CAS 300 Thematic Paper: Assignment Guidelines (Sample)

Introduction

All CAS 300 students must demonstrate an ability to write a thesis-driven paper that synthesizes research from high-quality, scholarly sources about a particular topic and demonstrates correct use of APA style. These are key learning goals of the course; your instructors in CAS 325A, CAS 325B, and other core courses will expect that you have mastered these lessons before entering their classes!

Your thematic paper will be 3-5 typed, double-spaced pages in length and present library research addressing **the effect of school start times on sleep and other developmental outcomes.** The paper will demonstrate correct use of APA-style citations and references and draw from at least six sources; at least four must be scholarly journal articles (including the assigned article below) and two must be web-based sources.

Scholarly Journal Articles

Plan on retrieving your scholarly journal articles from an academic database via the CSUF library (e.g., PsycINFO). During a class session, a librarian will guide you through the process of finding articles that will meet the research requirement of this assignment.

Every student must incorporate the following scholarly journal article in his or her paper:

McKeever, P. M., & Clark, L. (2017). Delayed high school start times later than 8:30 a.m.

and impact on graduation rates and attendance rates. *Sleep Health, 3,* **119-125.**

doi:10.1016/j.sleh.2017.01.002

Web Sources

Your two web-based sources must be of high quality. They could come from reputable, nonprofit organizations (e.g., National Sleep Foundation, Kaiser Family Foundation), professional organizations (e.g., American Psychological Association, Society for Research on Adolescence), academic institutions (e.g., Harvard, The University of Michigan), or government agencies (e.g., Surgeon General, National Institute for Health).

They should NOT consist of the following:
- Wikipedia or similar websites,
- Online articles from the popular press (e.g., *Time, The LA Times, CNN, Psychology Today*),

- Scholarly research articles (these would count toward your four scholarly articles),
- Electronic books or electronic book chapters
- Press releases or science briefs that are very short in length and substance (e.g., *Science Daily*)

Where to Start

Once you have read and understood the assigned article, do some library research to decide on the specific focus of your paper. There are many interesting directions you may take in this paper. For example, you could evaluate the effects of school start times on one specific developmental outcome (e.g., sleep habits, academic performance, or internalizing or externalizing behaviors) or examine the issue from different sociodemographic perspectives (e.g., gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status). You could provide a cross-cultural perspective by evaluating what the research has found in other countries compared to the research in the United States. Finally, you could discuss parent attitudes or obstacles to implementing an earlier school start time. Whatever your focus, make sure your primary focus is on the effects of school start times from a developmental perspective and that your ideas are backed by research evidence. Please choose sources that are centered around a coherent theme.

Deadlines and Practical Information

We will work on this paper for several class sessions, and given the paper's brevity, I expect you to polish each paragraph and sentence to near perfection! Please keep track of the following due dates and point values of various elements of this paper.

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Article summary paragraph		5
APA title and reference page (1st draft)		2
APA title and reference page (final draft)		5
Notes on articles and web sources		5
Partial draft of thematic paper		20
Final draft of thematic paper		100

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Grading Criteria

	E	M	A	F
A correctly formatted APA title page is included.				
The introduction is interesting and ends with a thesis statement.				
The thesis statement is clear and substantive and reflects the content of the paper.				
Topic sentences are content rich, use the same "buzz" words as the thesis statement, and are in the correct order.				
The content paragraphs begin with a topic sentence and develop its idea; the paragraph stays on task by explaining, describing, and exemplifying.				
The goal of the paper is to inform and explain, using research evidence to back every claim; the author does not express opinions or advocate.				
The author discusses the research findings with accuracy and in adequate depth.				
The author synthesizes the information presented (i.e., makes connections among the different sources).				
The author paraphrases the research effectively and has not plagiarized from the original sources. **Any plagiarism of sources will result in a zero on the paper and disciplinary action.**				
The conclusion summarizes and integrates the main points but does not introduce new ideas.				
APA Style is followed for in-text citations. All citations are referenced, and all references are cited in the text.				
APA Style is followed for references.				
Correct grammar is demonstrated.				
Correct punctuation is demonstrated.				
Typos, spelling errors, and formatting errors are avoided.				

E = Exceeds expectations; M = Meets expectations; A = Approaches expectations;
F = Fails to meet expectations

Score: **out of 100 points**