

Helpful Advice on Projects

1. Projects are scored on a points basis. As I review your projects I look to see if you understand everything that I'm asking. The better you demonstrate this understanding, the more likely I am to add points to your score.
2. Organize your projects incrementally. The students who have done the best over the years are those who've followed the outlines that I've given. Though this is not the requirement, the better organized your project is, the easier it will be for me to grade. This also cuts down on the possibility of you missing something in the final product.
3. Use the jargon. When you are using terms like "cultural lag" or "role strain" that is one way for me to assess your understanding of the subject. The more of these terms I see, the better I feel about your understanding. (That is, of course, assuming you are using the terms correctly).
4. Tie theories into your projects. One of the best ways for you to demonstrate that you understand the perspectives is to tie in the many theories we've discussed with your topic. For instance, if you are studying teen sexuality, how does Ecological Systems Theory, or Social Construction Theory help explain what you are seeing?
5. If you cannot tie in an aspect of the project do not just leave that aspect out. At least mention that aspect so I know that you understand it. For instance, you are doing your project on illegal immigration, but you can't find any qualitative research on this topic. Don't just leave out qualitative research. Tell me why you think you can't find qualitative research on the topic. In this way I will know that you understand qualitative research.
6. Stylistic tips
 - a. Any writing you do should be Standard English. Have someone proofread what you have written before submitting.
 - b. Never use the term "needless to say," or "obviously," or any such cliché. It's a pet peeve of mine. If it's needless to say, or obvious, then you are insulting my intelligence by pointing it out.
 - c. Avoid redundancies. "I was by myself, alone in the house." "By myself" means alone, get rid of one of them. Or. "When studying the past history..." You can't study the future history. And my favorite from a textbook... "Find a visual image of..." Images are visual; you can't find a non-visual image of anything. Redundancies reduce the readability of your work...Don't be redundant and repetitive.
 - d. Preclude grandiloquent expositions...Just because you use big words doesn't mean you know what you are talking about, and it makes your writing a labor to read. Also, the chances are that you are simply overusing the thesaurus program on your word processor. Words often have more specific meanings and connotations. If you do not understand the connotations of the words you may be using the word incorrectly even though the grammar check does not catch it. "One may prompt an equine quadruped to an aquatic impression; but one cannot coerce said equine to partake of the contents thereof." Or "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." Decide what you want to say, choose the appropriate words, and say it.