**AP English Language: Futurist Project**

**Research Paper**

"A professional futurist is a person who studies the future in order to help people understand, anticipate, prepare for and gain advantage from coming changes.  It is not the goal of a futurist to predict what will happen in the future.  The futurist uses foresight to describe what *could* happen in the future and, in some cases, what *should* happen in the future. A futurist’s analytical process falls into five general areas:

[Framing](http://profuturists.org/futurists#framing) - understanding the current state of affairs  
[Scanning](http://profuturists.org/futurists?mode=0&css=0&ver=4.5.2clouds_dark_blue0d89306d6349508679400000000#scanning) - looking for indications of the future  
[Describing](http://profuturists.org/futurists#describing) - explaining or reporting on possible futures  
[Visioning](http://profuturists.org/futurists?mode=0&css=0&ver=4.5.2clouds_dark_blue0d89306d6349508679400000000#visioning) - opening the range of possibilities  
[Planning](http://profuturists.org/futurists#planning) - creating/implementing a future direction

Generally a futurist is called upon to help make a decision, solve a particular problem, adapt to a coming change, or identify paths toward innovation."[[1]](#footnote-2)

"The World Future Society is the first membership organization in the world for people who research, envision and create potential futures. Our mission is to improve decision-making about the future by empowering futurists, fostering networks and advancing knowledge and action on future critical issues. The organization was founded in 1966 by Edward Cornish, who went on to write *Futuring: Exploring the Future*, a foundational text still used in many classrooms today." [[2]](#footnote-3)

**Task: Frame your argument around a specific claim (you can’t tackle the *entire* future, but you can point to specific events that may contribute to one perspective of a complicated problem)**

1. Considering current events, modern media, and lifestyle **make a prediction** for the future. Using reputable evidence and academic research, make a case for …  
   For example:

A thesis could be that more states will legalize marijuana in the coming decade to stimulate additional tax revenue for cash-strapped municipalities and state governments. Legalizing recreational marijuana will ultimately have a damaging effect on an entire generation as young people will become even more dependent on cognitive inhibitors as a coping mechanism.

To be successful with this assignment, think critically about the connections you are always making about our time and then try to correlate all of your thinking (and research) into a cogent thesis and prediction for the future.

Example:

**Concept**: Young people are viewing pornography younger than ever. The internet has created a climate in which young people see and experience intense sexual imagery before the onset of puberty.

**Thesis/Prediction**: As an entire generation reaches sexual maturity, young men (primarily) will struggle with relationship building and creating rewarding partnerships. *Remember: you can only reach your thesis after you think about our time (frame your ideas) and complete some research.*

Research Guidelines

The goal of this project is twofold: to think critically about the future and to sharpen research skills. It will culminate in a 5-7 page paper in correct MLA format.

* You will begin by completing an annotated bibliography of 8 sources (see the next page)
* The paper (5-7 pages) will be peer reviewed prior to final submission. The final paper needs to include:
* Four—six scholarly sources. You will use the works you cited in the annotated bibliography (you'll notice that you don't need all of them).
* An introduction that defines your predictions (or explains your focus) for the future and a body that proves your thesis through logos, pathos and ethos as well as parenthetically cited sources.
* You may consider making connections between Huxley or Atwood, but it is not necessary that you do so. Instead, think critically about our time and frame a prediction about an observation you’ve made from 2019.

Peer draft is due: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Final draft is due: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

See me for assistance, and plan your research time effectively. You will have *some* time available in class, but the bulk of the work will take place outside our meeting time.

Stumped for a place to begin? Consider the topics listed below.

**Disappearing Languages**

Language is the soul of a culture. The survival of a culture may depend on the language used for rituals and to describe cultural ideas, beliefs, and understandings. What is the impact on culture when its language disappears? By some estimates, of the six thousand languages left on Earth, 90% are expected to disappear or be endangered before the end of this century. In New Zealand, government and community initiatives are trying to revive the language of indigenous people, but even so it is in a precarious state. Many indigenous peoples around the globe don’t have support to prevent their language from disappearing. Will anyone be able to read the rich literature embodied in the disappearing languages in the years to come? What oral traditions will be lost? What responsibilities, if any, do governments, institutions, and communities have towards preserving endangered languages?

**The Global Workplace**

The world today is increasingly interdependent with the advent of interconnectedness. The internet brings individuals living in diverse places together for innovative opportunities in global collaboration. Physical space may no longer define a workplace. Many local and international corporations are able to employ people without them having to step out of their homes or countries. Developed countries outsource jobs to other countries where labor may be cheaper and labor laws less regulated. How might a more global workplace affect local and national economies? Some firms downsize their workforce in favor of automated systems that require less human input. These changes create a pool of workers who, besides being out of work, are often unprepared for other jobs. How might employers develop innovative ways to work globally? Is the growing trend of working globally online benefiting current workplace trends? How might this affect the world economy? What economic or educational changes might better prepare governments, businesses, and workers for a global workplace?

**Social Isolation**

Feelings of social isolation have increased in populations around the world since the early 1900s. The disabled, the mentally ill, and the elderly are especially susceptible to feelings of isolation and loneliness, as are those in rural areas, those with low self-esteem, and those without a confidant. Recent research points to deleterious effects on the brain from social isolation, which in turn contributes to a myriad of health problems. Those who are socially isolated have shorter life spans and suffer from more illnesses than those with active social lives. Is our fast-paced society contributing to this increase in isolation or do our busy lives allow for more social interactions? Is the internet permitting more social contact through social networking sites or interfering with it by limiting more intimate friendships? What measures need to be taken to reverse this trend? How will advances in technology open up possibilities for increases or decreases in social isolation?

For more topics, Google “future problem solving topics” 2017 (or 2014, 2012, etc)

**AP Language Annotated Bibliography  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

1. **Individual Annotated Bibliography**  
   Choose eight sources. Follow the format below to explain why each source is (or is not) worth using. **Eight sources are required; three of these must be peer-reviewed.** For peer reviewed sources, it is recommended that you use JSTOR and Academic OneFile, two databases that can be found on the library webpage.

**Each Annotated Bibliography Entry should answer these four questions.**

* **Summary of Main Purpose**: What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this article/book is about, what would you say?
* **Evaluation of Source and Qualifications of Author**: Is it a useful source? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Is this source biased or objective? What is the goal of this source? Who is the author, and why are they qualified to write about this topic?
* **Relation to Other Works:** How is this source similar to other information on the topic? To other information you have read? How does it differ from an opposing viewpoint?
* **Reflection:** Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to ask how it fits into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

**This is an example of an annotated bibliography. NOTE: MLA no longer requires URLs, but it is always best to ask the instructor.**

Annotated Bibliography by Lisa St. John for Research Question: “What is the Future of American Poetry?”

"About Us." *Poets.org*. Academy of American Poets, 2010. Web. 18 Feb. 2010. <http://poets.org/page.php/prmID/1>. Date of Access 4 Jan 2010.  
This helpful site has poets, poems, non-fiction written by poets, and online resources; it declares their mission statement and lists the many programs they offer. Although a bit of a novice site, it does provide crucial background information that is objective—they are a non-profit organization. This site has many outside links and teacher resources, unlike the Poetry Foundation site which is purely academic. I would use this as a starting point for both the historical data I need and what is going on in the contemporary poetry scene.

Bain, Marc. "The End of Verse?" *Newsweek*. N.p., 25 Mar. 2009. Web. 13 Feb. 2010. <http://www.newsweek.com/id/191012>. Date of access 30 Jan 2010.  
This is an interesting article from the Culture section of *Newsweek* that discusses the apparent demise of poetry. Bain’s poetry is referenced in the piece, which makes his thesis surprising. From his point of view, it sounds like he studied Whitman pretty thoroughly. I would use him as a source to show what is getting published in the mainstream press regarding poetry.

Dick, Bernard. "American Poets in the 21st Century: The New Poetics." *World Literature Today*  82.2 (2008): 71 72. Platinum Periodicals, ProQuest. Web.  13 Feb. 2010. Date of Access 15 Feb. 2010.

He describes new poets and their poetry. He sees the future of poetry as disjointed, and this is a valid point of

view considered his is a professor of Literary Studies at Bard. I do not think I can agree with all of his points. I could use him as a concession for opposing points.

*When you forgive, you in no way change the past - but you sure do change the future.* Bernard Meltzer

*Technologists and futurists call the mashup of digital info and physical space 'blended reality.'* Jamais Cascio

*We futurists have a magic button. We follow every statement about a failed forecast with 'yet.'* Alvin Toffler

*I'm a futurist. Technology is our way out of almost every problem we have. Technology can create a new sense of community.* Hal Sparks

*Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.* Arthur C. Clarke

*“Death gives meaning to our lives. It gives importance and value to time. Time would become meaningless if there were too much of it.”*   
― Ray Kurzweil

1. http://profuturists.org/futurists [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. WFS.ORG [↑](#footnote-ref-3)