

***Freakonomics* Formal Assignment**

In the spirit of Levitt/Dubner's ponderings of the "dark side of everything" posited in *Freakonomics*, your task for your first formal writing assignment will be to ask your own question. Using your reflection and brainstorm from your Summer Reading Assignment, you will need to choose a cause-effect relationship, evaluate the correlating factors and hypothesize an alternative theory of causation. Some outside research will be necessary, but the majority of this paper will be about practicing the investigative methodology used in *Freakonomics*.

1. **Part I: Context of Issue** Choose a cause-effect relationship which interests you or with which you are familiar. This is the 30% of your paper which will require some additional outside research in order to establish a solid foundation for your thinking process.
2. **Part II: Correlation & Causation** Is there a commonly accepted theory of causation for your chosen issue? What are the different correlating factors which might make determining causation difficult? What variables come into play when attempting to differentiate between causation and correlation? Ultimately, you will be theorizing why the causation for your given issue is difficult to pinpoint.
3. **Part III: Determining Causation** Hypothesize a theory of causation and identify what evidence or research would be necessary in order to prove your theory. You don't need to actually determine causation, but you do need to answer the following questions: How would you study this? What information would you need to determine causation? How would you isolate causation from other correlating factors? What variables would you need to control and how would you do that?

EXAMPLES:

Do charter schools improve student performance?

Which has a more detrimental affect on student achievement, television or internet?

What role does experience play in being a successful president?

DUE DATE: MONDAY, September 22 (Final Draft)

<i>Freakonomics Formal Assignment Rubric</i>

Argument/Thesis: _____/5

Introduction/Conclusion:

Introduction: _____/5

Conclusion: _____/5

Body:

Part I: Context of Issue _____/10

Part II: Correlation & Causation _____/10

Part III: Determining Causation _____/10

Formatting/Organization/Style:

Organization: _____/3

Flow/Transitions: _____/3

Syntax/Diction: _____/3

Mechanics: _____/3

Bibliography/MLA Formatting: _____/3

Total: _____/60

Argument/Thesis:

The paper takes a CLEAR position. Contains a well developed thesis statement, which is succinct, focused and directly related to the prompt. Be sure that you cause/effect relationship and your question are CLEAR.

Introduction/Conclusion:

Ideas in the introduction are clear, original and focused; moves from general to specific. Main idea is introduced, and examples are laid out along with limited details. Author and book are introduced.

Conclusion restates thesis and main points, and explains the significance of the topic. Leaves the reader with insights gained. Brings closure.

Body/Evidence:

The paper contains evidence which is MLA formatted where necessary.

Evidence is appropriately introduced, well connected and effectively applied to the thesis statement and argument. Discussion includes insightful and logical support for the thesis statement and argument. All three sections of paper assignment are addressed within the body.

Formatting/Organization/Style:

The paper is clearly organized and formatted into introduction, body, and conclusion. Paragraphs are introduced with topic sentences and concluded with concluding sentences.

The paper flows well, demonstrating effective use of transitions both within and between paragraphs.

Syntax and diction are appropriate, interesting and provocative. Sentence structure is varied; no use of the personal "I" or starting sentences with conjunctions.

Spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct. Proof-reading is evident.

Proper MLA formatting is utilized (12 pt, Times New Roman font, double-spaced the paper, one inch margins). Heading and page numbers are correctly formatted. Proper use of parenthetical documentation or footnoting. 2-3 pages (no more, no less). Bibliography is correctly formatted; Wikipedia is not an acceptable source.