



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
United States Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy
Senior Leader Course
Fort Sill, Oklahoma 73503

ATSF-WD

6 November 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR SLC STUDENTS

SUBJECT: Essay Basic Guidelines

1. Purpose: Noncommissioned Officers are required to write two essays while in SLC; one essay on a Cultural Awareness topic and the other on Branch History and Battle Analysis Methodology in order to complete the SLC TRADOC requirements for each of these areas IAW writing and correspondence. These writing projects will enable NCOs to develop their research and writing skills to become more effective leaders. This policy will outline guidelines with how each of these essays will be written and detailed instruction on those topics and ideas.

2. Essay Guidelines. Essays are graded on a GO/NO GO basis. Prepare one individual essay and one essay as a group, each with a main body of 3-5 pages in length (length does not include title or reference pages) using the American Psychological Association (APA) format/writing style. The essays will include the following in this order:

- a. Title Page. Your essay will not contain an Abstract.
- b. Header with the title of the paper in all caps and page number (the words "Running Head:" appear before the header title on the title page only).
- c. 3-5 page main body that begins with an introductory paragraph and ends with a concluding paragraph.
- d. Reference page with a minimum of three references.

General Guidelines:

- a. Conduct library/internet research from credible sources (Wikipedia is not credible).
- b. Type your essay on a computer and print it out on standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
- c. Double-space the text of your paper; use Ariel or Times New Roman with font size 12 pt.
- d. Leave two spaces after the end of each sentence.
- e. Set the margins of your document to one-inch on all sides.
- f. Indent the first line of a paragraph ½ inch (five spaces or press tab) from the left margin.
- g. Follow the guidelines provided by your instructor.

3. Evaluation. Your essays are evaluated on content, use of active voice, structure, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and clarity. In order to receive an overall superior score, you must have the correct format, have conducted research from multiple sources, and the ideas presented must be original and written clearly. The due dates are final and non-negotiable, so plan accordingly. Plagiarism will result in negative counseling, removal from Honors consideration, and possible dismissal from the course.

4. Obtain information from various sources to assist in formatting. Here are two examples:

- a. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- b. <http://psychology.about.com/od/apastyle/a/apageneral.htm>

5. The following are the topics for the essays:

- a. Branch History and Battle Analysis Methodology Essay (Group project).
- b. Cultural Awareness Essay (Individual project).

6. Branch History and Battle Analysis Methodology Essay.
 - a. The goal for this essay is to assist in the goal of Instruction of Military History IAW TRADOC Regulation 350-13 in order to focus students on history and heritage of their branch. The context for the essay illustrates the applications of military history to training and leadership and a sense of branch significance.
 - b. Objectives.
 1. Provide Soldiers with a program of basic military heritage and history instruction that is sequential and progressive.
 2. Stimulate an interest in continuous study of military and branch history beyond the classroom through individual reading programs, to assist future leaders in forming mature judgments about the profession of arms.
 3. To know and understand the evolution and historical contribution of the NCO in the U.S. Army; the role of the NCO during the evolution of combined arms warfare; and the uses of history in military leadership.
 - c. Guidelines for a Branch History & Battle Analysis Methodology Essay. The following serves as a guide with which to research, outline, draft and type your final essay:
 1. Write an essay on a topic concerning a battle related to your branch discussing the history and the outcome or effect relative to what the branch had on that topic and how it relates to the evolution and contribution towards today's military operations.
 2. Bring a historical perspective to contemporary military problems and leadership.
7. Cultural Awareness Guidelines and Topics.
 - a. The goal for this essay is to meet TRADOC and the Fires Center of Excellence Commanding General's intent of implementing Cultural Awareness training into NCOES using the following goals as set by TRADOC:
 1. Cultural Expertise – Culture professionals and leaders who possess an advanced level of cross-cultural competence pertaining to a specific geographic area. These Soldiers will be able to evaluate and synthesize terms, factors, concepts, and regional information into plans, programs, and advice to commanders.
 2. Cultural Understanding – Soldiers and Leaders who will be able to apply relevant terms, factors, concepts and regional information to their tasks and missions, as well as analyze situational requirements.
 3. Cultural Awareness – Soldiers who have foundational cross-cultural competence with comprehension and knowledge to identify and describe key terms, factors, and concepts associated with culture fundamentals and cultural self-awareness.
 - b. Learning Objectives. The purpose of this assignment is to prepare a socio-cultural analysis of an assigned nation/region as discussed in FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency.
 1. Define the meaning of culture
 2. Explain at least five major characteristics that define a culture
 3. Describe the common culture characteristics of a region of the world
 4. Overview of the assigned nation's/regions physical geography and military conflict history, significant past military conflicts and their impact on the society, weather analysis, civil considerations (ASCOPE), and a detailed discussion of the people (Society, Social Structure, Culture, Language, Power and Authority, and Interests).

8. POC for this memorandum is the undersigned at (580) 442-2619 or david.r.hickman4.mil@mail.mil


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Essay Grading Rubric

Rating	Superior	Standards Met	Standards Not Met
APA Format Superior <input type="text"/> Standards Met <input type="text"/> Standards not Met <input type="text"/>	No formatting errors: Double-spaced with 1" margins; 12-pt font Times New Roman or Ariel; title, name, class centered & double-spaced; all pages have title in all caps upper left; page number upper right; Two spaces after each punctuation ending a sentence	1-2 errors in formatting listed in Superior block	Three or more errors in formatting listed in Superior block
References Superior <input type="text"/> Standards Met <input type="text"/> Standards not Met <input type="text"/>	In-text citations include necessary info in parentheses; References on separate page; References are alphabetical by author or title if no author; Minimum of three credible sources; References include all info required for APA format; Hanging indent used; Quotes of more than 40 words are in block paragraph format	1-2 reference formatting errors; References not on separate page	Three or more reference formatting errors; less than three references; unreliable reference used
Main Body Superior <input type="text"/> Standards Met <input type="text"/> Standards not Met <input type="text"/>	Begins with concise thesis statement that clearly states idea; Meets length requirement; Essay is focused on theme; Author demonstrates an understanding of the subject; Logical progression of ideas; Essay meets all requirements outlined by instructor	Essay is focused on thesis but contains ideas loosely related to topic; Thesis statement too vague; Essay lacks logical progression; Most requirements met	Essay is off topic from thesis; Does not meet length requirement; Author does not show an understanding of the subject; Ideas unrelated to topic; Parts or all of essay plagiarized; Essay is confusing and disorganized
Style Superior <input type="text"/> Standards Met <input type="text"/> Standards not Met <input type="text"/>	Essay is formal; Free of slang, contractions, or text speech; Excellent transition between paragraphs; Mature word choice; Good variety of sentence structures; Essay written at the proper academic level; Use of third person perspective	Essay has a semi-formal tone; Good transition between paragraphs; Sentence structures somewhat varied; Essay written at a lower academic level than what the class is; Questionable word choice	Essay tone is casual; no transition between paragraphs; Simple sentence structure throughout; Inappropriate or offensive tone; No transitions; Essay contains slang; Use of first person perspective
Grammar Superior <input type="text"/> Standards Met <input type="text"/> Standards not Met <input type="text"/>	No run-on sentences; No sentence fragments; Proper tense; No homophone errors; Correct capitalization; No misspelled words; Essay reads easily with no grammatical distractions	1-2 misspelled words; 1-2 capitalization errors; varying tense; Minor errors do not distract from essay	Three or more misspelled words; Multiple capitalization or homophone errors; Enough errors that make the paper difficult to read or follow

	Number of Superior ratings
	Number of Standards Met ratings
	Number of Standards Not Met ratings

Overall rating of essay		
2-5 Standards Not Met ratings = NO GO	<input type="text"/>	Superior / GO
1-5 Standards Met ratings = Satisfactory / GO	<input type="text"/>	Satisfactory / GO
5 Superior ratings = Superior / GO	<input type="text"/>	NO GO