ENGL211 – FINDING INFORMATION FOR YOUR LITERARY-BASED ESSAY

Name: ____________________________________________

🌟 While completing this activity, and following today’s session, refer to the online research guide ENGL 211: Writing About Literature for reminders and more information!

Brainstorming for topic ideas

Use the strategies that we’ve discussed to brainstorm for an idea for your essay. Gale Virtual Reference Library and Literature Research Center are both great online collections to use to find a topic and also gather some background information. Draw a map if that will help you connect some of your ideas.

Before you search

Think about the topic that you have selected. Before you start searching, write down the main concepts of your topic below. Consider different words that have the same or similar meanings to the main concepts of your topic and words such as criticism, analysis, movement, etc. that will lead you to relevant sources. Write your search statement to start with (it may change as your research evolves) below.
Explore relevant databases

Conduct some practice searches using two of the databases that we talked about today in order to become familiar with their content and features.

1. Search for articles using **Literature Resource Center**. From the *Advanced Search* you can easily combine your search terms. Make sure to use the drop down to define which field you want your search terms to occur in. Use the *by document type* menu to specify your search. Try finding a biography and/or work overview of an author you like or who you are writing about. If you are stuck search for: **Literature Criticism and Topic and Work Overviews of Sylvia Plath**. When you find a promising piece, write the citation information below.

   **Title of the work:**

   **Author(s):**

   **Publisher:**

   **Date:**

   **Page #**

2. Next, try using the *Literary Criticism* feature of the **Academic Search Premier** database to find articles on your topic. If you are already familiar with Academic Search Premier, try out **JSTOR** (instead of limiting your search to *Literary Criticism*, add the term *criticism* to your search. If you are stuck, search for *ellison AND “battle royal” and limit to Literary Criticism in Academic Search Premier*, or search for *ellison AND “battle royal” AND criticism in JSTOR*. Judging from the title and perhaps the abstract, select one article or document that you think looks interesting. Provide the citation information below.

   **Article title:**

   **Author(s):**

   **Periodical title:**

   **Date, vol. #, issue #:**

   **Page #s:**