**Assignment 2: Background Research & Narrative Planning**

Now that you have selected your case study question and identified key stakeholders, it’s time to dive deeper into the scientific background of the issue and begin shaping the narrative framework of your case.

This assignment has **three parts**:

1. Getting started (research, content map, and identifying key peer-reviewed sources)
2. Scientific Background Summary
3. Narrative and Context Planning

# Part 1: GettingStarted

You’ve already chosen your case study question—now it’s time to dig into the science behind it. Follow these steps to generate a focused, meaningful list of key terms that will form the

## Step 1: Review Your Case Study Question

Re-read the question you selected in Assignment 1. Ask yourself:

* What scientific ideas or processes are central to understanding this issue?
* What kind of evidence would someone need to make an informed decision about it?

Jot down a few words or phrases that immediately come to mind.

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## Step 2: Revisit Your Brainstorming & Mind Map

Look back at the work you completed in the Developing a Research Question tutorial and answer the following questions. You can build on these early ideas and refine them with more focused research.

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| Did you already identify any relevant scientific terms or themes? |

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| Are there related social, political, or ethical ideas that connect to the science? |

## Step 3: Start Reading and Collecting

Use peer-reviewed sources and reliable science communication outlets (e.g., government agencies, scientific organizations) to explore your topic. As you read, make note of:

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| Scientific terms that are defined or frequently used. |

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| --- |
| Concepts that are central to understanding the issue. |

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| Any models, processes, or data types mentioned. |

## Step 4: Narrow Down Your List

Aim to select **8–12 key terms** that:

* Appear across multiple sources
* Are essential for explaining your issue
* You could see yourself defining, connecting, and explaining in your map

Avoid vague or overly broad terms (like “health” or “environment”) unless they are central to your topic.

Before finalizing your list, ask:

* Could someone understand the core science of my case without knowing this term?
→ If yes, maybe cut it.
→ If no, keep it!
* Can I explain how this term connects to my case study question?

Write your list of **at least 8** key terms here:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.

As you collect terms, notice how ideas are related:

* Are some terms part of the same process or system?
* Do some terms contrast with others (e.g., bacterial vs. viral infection)?
* Are there cause-and-effect relationships?

These connections will be helpful for your content map.

Using all the terms above, create a Content Map with your science topic in the center of the map. You may include an image of your map below, or you can attach it at the end of the final pdf document.

# Part 2: Scientific Background

Write a brief summary (300–500 words) of the relevant science behind your topic. This section should:

* Clearly explain the scientific concepts, findings, or debates that are relevant to your question (e.g., the Big Bang Theory, evolution, stem cell research, etc.).
* Focus on **positive claims** that use **evidence-based reasoning**, drawing from **credible scientific sources** (peer-reviewed journals, reputable science communication, etc.).
* Include **at least 3 sources** (one must be peer-reviewed), cited in **MLA format**.
* **Refer to the mind map you created earlier (Part 1)** and use it to help guide the organization and selection of scientific concepts you choose to summarize.

# Part 3: Narrative and Context Planning

Now that you’ve selected your case study question, brainstormed relevant stakeholders, and done some preliminary background research, it’s time to begin planning the **narrative** of your case study.

Your goal is to define the **setting**, the **characters**, and the **flow of conversation**, making sure that your story presents the problem, includes scientific evidence, and builds toward a decision.

Please answer the following prompts:

1. **What is the central question** your case study will explore? *This is the question you selected from Assignment 1.*
2. **Who are the key stakeholders featured in your case study?**
(Choose at least two. These should be individuals or roles—like a school board member, parent, healthcare worker, policymaker, etc.—who represent relevant perspectives on the issue.)

Stakeholder 1:

Stakeholder 2:

*(Optional: List others if needed.)*

1. **Where and when is the conversation taking place?** *(e.g., a school board meeting, a family dinner, a legislative hearing, a teacher’s lounge, a town hall forum)*
2. **What makes this moment important?** *Briefly describe what has happened to bring the stakeholders together to discuss the issue.*
3. **What kind of tone or format** do you imagine for your narrative? *(e.g., A serious conversation between policymakers? A classroom discussion? A social media exchange?)*
4. **Dialogue Outline: Plan the flow of the conversation.** *Fill in the chart below to outline how your case study dialogue will unfold. This doesn’t need to be full dialogue yet—just describe the purpose and content of each speaker's contribution.*

| Character | Contribution (opinion, scientific evidence, personal experience) | Notes on how the conversation develops |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Person A |  |  |
| Person B |  |  |
| Person A |  |  |
| Person B |  |  |
| Person A or B (Decision) | What decision is made, or what stance is taken based on the conversation? |  |

1. **What is the main piece of scientific evidence you plan to include?** *Briefly describe or cite a piece of scientific data, a graph, a key finding from a study, etc., that you will integrate into the conversation.* ***Include the source reference in MLA format.***
2. **Explain why the data is important and how it will be incorporated into the case study.**