



Conspiracy Theories

Research Essay

For this assignment, you will research a popular conspiracy theory. These theories have not been proven due to their lack of concrete evidence, which is why they are still considered a theory. Your task is to select a popular conspiracy theory, provide background information on the topic, research three of the more well-known reasons behind the theory and then provide the flaw(s) in each of those reasons.

To put it simply, a conspiracy theory is an alternative explanation to an event. In order for a conspiracy theory to first begin, there has to be some lack of evidence or something that may not make sense. Unfortunately, what makes it a conspiracy and not reality is the lack of hard evidence. This is why it's difficult to prove a conspiracy theory.

These are important questions when looking at any conspiracy theory:

- Does it make sense and/or is it reasonable?
- Is there a means or motive available?
- Is there enough evidence to support the theory?
- Does the conspiracy theory actually explain what happened?

Process:

- Select your conspiracy theory.
- Begin researching the theory.
- Find three reasons/sources to support the theory.
- Find three reasons/sources to discount the theory.
- Evaluate the credibility of the sources (worksheet).
- Begin the rough draft of your essay.

Expectations:

- Your essay should be a minimum of 3 pages and a maximum of 5.
- Your essay should have an introduction, three body paragraphs and a conclusion.
- Your introduction must have a thesis statement that indicates three clear, unlike reasons for your theory.
- Double-space your essay
- Type out your essay
- Write in third person
- Include a captivating title
- Indent each paragraph
- Keep paragraphs balanced (include the approximate number of sentences in each)
- **ALL** sources needed to be cited accordingly.

CHECK OUT THESE YOUTUBE VIDEOS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED

The 25 Most Popular Conspiracy Theories



- You Tube
- 8:25
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VGC8YXigVU>

25 Conspiracy Theories That Actually Ended Up Being True



- You Tube
- 10:41
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3ZzokglcgQ>

HERE ARE SOME OTHER POSSIBLE TOPIC IDEAS

- 9/11
- The earth is flat.
- The moon doesn't exist.
- Electronic banking is being used by the government to steal people's identities.
- The AIDS virus is an artificial disease.
- JFK assassination
- The FDA is withholding a cure for cancer.
- Dungeons and Dragons is a cult.
- Michael Jackson is still alive.

Conspiracy Theory Brainstorm

What is a possible area or topic that you might like to explore?

What makes this area or topic so interesting to you?

Narrow your focus. What specifically are you planning to research?

What do you already know about this topic?

What do you want to learn more about?

(PRO) Source Evaluation Checklist

- Locate three different sources (one for each theory) that claim to **prove the point** (support the theory).
- Aim to include a variety of different text sources (print, web, newspaper, etc.).

SOURCE	Credibility (Can you trust the source?)	Accuracy (How true is the information?)	Rationality (Is the information biased?)
Support Point #1: <hr style="width: 100%;"/> Source: <hr style="width: 100%;"/>	Is the author listed? Does the author have authority on the subject? Are there mechanical errors (spelling, grammar, links that do not work, etc.)?	What other sources confirm the facts or information listed? Does the source contradict themselves? What is the date of publication?	Does the author or host of the information have a bias? Does the author or host of the site have any motivation or purpose to create the information?
Support Point #2: <hr style="width: 100%;"/> Source: <hr style="width: 100%;"/>	Is the author listed? Does the author have authority on the subject? Are there mechanical errors (spelling, grammar, links that do not work, etc.)?	What other sources confirm the facts or information listed? Does the source contradict themselves? What is the date of publication?	Does the author or host of the information have a bias? Does the author or host of the site have any motivation or purpose to create the information?
Support Point #3: <hr style="width: 100%;"/> Source: <hr style="width: 100%;"/>	Is the author listed? Does the author have authority on the subject? Are there mechanical errors (spelling, grammar, links that do not work, etc.)?	What other sources confirm the facts or information listed? Does the source contradict themselves? What is the date of publication?	Does the author or host of the information have a bias? Does the author or host of the site have any motivation or purpose to create the information?

(CON) Source Evaluation Checklist

- Locate three different sources (one for each theory) that claim to **disprove the point** (do not support the theory).
- Aim to include a variety of different text sources (print, web, newspaper, etc.).

SOURCE	Credibility (Can you trust the source?)	Accuracy (How true is the information?)	Rationality (Is the information biased?)
<p>Disprove Point #1:</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Source:</p> <hr/>	<p>Is the author listed? Does the author have authority on the subject? Are there mechanical errors (spelling, grammar, links that do not work, etc.)?</p>	<p>What other sources confirm the facts or information listed? Does the source contradict themselves? What is the date of publication?</p>	<p>Does the author or host of the information have a bias? Does the author or host of the site have any motivation or purpose to create the information?</p>
<p>Disprove Point #2:</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Source:</p> <hr/>	<p>Is the author listed? Does the author have authority on the subject? Are there mechanical errors (spelling, grammar, links that do not work, etc.)?</p>	<p>What other sources confirm the facts or information listed? Does the source contradict themselves? What is the date of publication?</p>	<p>Does the author or host of the information have a bias? Does the author or host of the site have any motivation or purpose to create the information?</p>
<p>Disprove Point #3:</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Source:</p> <hr/>	<p>Is the author listed? Does the author have authority on the subject? Are there mechanical errors (spelling, grammar, links that do not work, etc.)?</p>	<p>What other sources confirm the facts or information listed? Does the source contradict themselves? What is the date of publication?</p>	<p>Does the author or host of the information have a bias? Does the author or host of the site have any motivation or purpose to create the information?</p>

Essay Outline/Organization

Paragraph 1 – Introduction

- Explain your conspiracy theory.
- Provide background information about your theory.
- Include three of the more well-known reasons (thesis statement).

Paragraph 2 – Reason 1

- State one reason behind the conspiracy.
- Explain why people state this reason as “proof” of a conspiracy.
- Provide one flaw in your reasoning.
- Explain why that reason doesn't “prove” a conspiracy.

Paragraph 2 – Reason 2

- State one reason behind the conspiracy.
- Explain why people state this reason as “proof” of a conspiracy.
- Provide one flaw in your reasoning.
- Explain why that reason doesn't “prove” a conspiracy.

Paragraph 3 – Reason 3

- State one reason behind the conspiracy.
- Explain why people state this reason as “proof” of a conspiracy.
- Provide one flaw in your reasoning.
- Explain why that reason doesn't “prove” a conspiracy.

Paragraph 5 – Conclusion

- Re-state the conspiracy theory.
- Summarize why it does not hold up as truth.
- Leave the reader thinking.

Conspiracy Theory Marking Guide

Outcome	Grade
Identify Sources Determine audience characteristics and needs; uses topic, and purpose to identify a range of primary and secondary information sources.	
Evaluate Sources Evaluates factors that affect the credibility, reliability, validity, accuracy, and bias of information sources for inquiry or research.	
Generate Ideas Use a variety of techniques to generate and select ideas for oral, written, and visual texts.	
Organize Ideas Identifies and uses a variety of organizational patterns from oral, written and visual texts; uses effective transitions.	
Language Use and Arrangement Experiments with a variety of sentence patterns and figurative language; uses supporting details when revising to enhance clarity and artistry.	
Mechanics Analyzes and edits texts for word choice, grammatical structures, and register to achieve clarity, artistry, and effectiveness.	

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Teacher comments:
