

**Paper 5 Instructions: Things Americans Do (final paper – due last day of class)**

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**The Task:**

Choose “something Americans do”—a cultural practice—depicted in the movie *Boyhood*. Identify a question related to that practice. Do research in which you explore that question to the best of your abilities. (Your research must include **at least one interview**.) Write a paper in which you explain what you learned.

**Some possible forms this essay might take:**

(Note that the same essay could do more than one of these things, or even all of them.)

Making sense of a paradox:

- It’s often said that \_\_\_\_\_ (*common stereotype or generalization*). If that’s true, then why \_\_\_\_\_ (*thing you observed people doing in the movie*) \_\_\_\_\_?

Demystifying something:

- In the movie *Boyhood*, we see characters doing \_\_\_\_\_ (*mysterious, inexplicable thing that is hard for a non-American to understand or relate to*). Why is that? What’s going on here? What are the “unwritten rules” that govern this behavior?

Creating a taxonomy:

- What are the different types of \_\_\_\_\_ (*thing that is complex*) \_\_\_\_\_?

Definition:

- What is a \_\_\_\_\_ (*thing that is hard to define*) \_\_\_\_\_? (What makes a \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_?)

**The “moves”:**

(A successful paper will almost certainly have to do these things, probably in this order.)

*Description:* Describe the behavior you’re focusing on. (Paint a vivid picture in the reader’s mind.)

- In the movie *Boyhood* one often notices \_\_\_\_\_
- In the movie *Boyhood* one striking detail is that \_\_\_\_\_
- In the movie *Boyhood* one striking scene is when \_\_\_\_\_

*Inference:* Explain what you infer about this behavior.

- Seeing this [detail or behavior], one might conclude that \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_.

*Raising questions:* Articulate the question or questions you’re interested in, and explain why you’re interested.

- This raises an interesting question: \_\_\_\_\_? This is interesting because \_\_\_\_\_.

*Analysis:* Attempt to answer the question(s). (*This is the body of the paper.*)