



Asian & Middle Eastern Studies

Task

In the field of literature, scholars often refer to social, historical, and economic context to better equip readers with the knowledge required to navigate their research. This is called interdisciplinarity. This task asks you to discuss the benefits and problems of interdisciplinarity. Make sure to consider the consequence of delving too deep or too shallow into the above. You can submit your response in any form you would like. Feel free to include images if you find them helpful to your argument.

Brief explanation

This task has two sections:

Task 1. Come up with your own research question about a literary work of your own choosing, explain why this enquiry is important and answer your question by using evidence to justify your arguments.

Task 2. Reflect on your research question and discuss interdisciplinarity.

Finding your way

A. Come up with a research question.

1. Start by choosing an area of literary works you are interested in (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, etc.)
2. Ask yourself why you are interested in works produced within this specific area (e.g. because of their dynamic style, the vibrant and/or sacred language, historical heritage, etc.)
3. Choose one specific literary work within this spatial framework (can be from classical times to the present day) and come up with a research question you want to explore

Before you start answering your research question, try to think:

1. Is your enquiry culturally specific or does it speak to a global context?

If your enquiry is culturally specific, what are the features that make your chosen work of literature different from the books of other areas?

If your enquiry speaks to a global context, how does your enquiry relate to other areas?

2. Do you think your research question touches upon other ranges of disciplines (e.g. history, politics, economics, etc.)?

B. Try to answer your question by using evidence to justify your arguments.

C. After answering your question, start the second task on the discussion of interdisciplinarity.

1. When you were answering your research question about your chosen work of literature, did you have to investigate a wider range of disciplines (e.g. history, sociology, economics, environmental studies, etc.)? If so, do you think the focus of your answer is still on the literature?
2. Go back to your research question and ask yourself this question again. Did you change your answer about whether you think your research question touches upon other disciplines?
3. Write a paragraph about the balance between interdisciplinarity and the focus on a specific field. How do you think interdisciplinarity benefits scholars? Or do you think interdisciplinarity brings more problems? And finally, how do you think we should keep the balance between the two? For all of these questions, you can write about your own experience from doing this task.

D. Submit your research question, answer to your research question, and your paragraph about interdisciplinarity. Remember that your response can be presented in any form you like.

Resources

Here are some links that can help you learn more about interdisciplinarity and its potential and importance in academia:

- https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academy/keythemes/interdisciplinarity/
- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/arts-sciences/prospective/faq/interdisciplinarity>
- <https://review.gale.com/2022/05/17/the-potential-and-importance-of-interdisciplinarity-in-academia/>

Here are some links to guide you in writing a good research question:

- <https://www.monash.edu/library/help/assignments-research/developing-research-questions>
- <https://research.com/research/how-to-write-a-research-question>

For your chosen literary work, you can choose to read it in an English translation or in its original language. If you choose to read in its original language and need help with translation, try to use dictionaries or other reference material before turning to automatic online translation.