

# WA-2: Ethnographic Proposal

## What subculture are you going to study?

By ENG1302RachelCantrell.com

A discourse community is a community with a common language and literacy practices around a shared goal or interest. There are two prominent scholars who define discourse community in different ways. You may have read these articles in ENG 1301.

James Porter defined the discourse community as: “a local and temporary constraining system, defined by a body of texts (or more generally, practices) that are unified by a common focus. A discourse community is a textual system with stated and unstated conventions, a vital history, mechanisms for wielding power, institutional hierarchies, vested interests, and so on” (106).

John Swales established six criteria. According to Swales a discourse community:

1. has a broadly agreed set of common public goals.
2. has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members.
3. uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback.
4. utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims.
5. in addition to owning genres, it has acquired some specific lexis.
6. has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discursal expertise.

How do online subcultures operate as discourse communities? Investigate websites for your chosen field site. Pick a minimum of 3 websites or/and YouTube channels related to your chosen online subculture and explain how those sites operate as a discourse community.

Look at the main websites they gather on and see how they communicate, how they construct membership (who gets to call themselves a true

fan), look for specific words or phrases, etc. Is the membership limited? Who is excluded (if anyone)? Are there restrictions on what kind of content can be uploaded and shared? It is a member only (invitation only) site?

Go through each of Swales criteria and explain how that fanfiction archive meets that criteria. List specific websites that you are talking about. Remember to put quotation marks around word for word text that you take from a website. You always need an in-text citation in MLA format when you are summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting something AND you need to list that source on your works cited page in MLA format. Provide the name and URL of the websites you plan on observing and explain how they illustrate Swale’s criteria.

Why do think the sites you choose will be productive for your research? In other words, describe the websites and what members or contributors are doing there. Explain how these sites are appropriate for your research. In interest of conducting ethical research, explain your connection to this site (i.e. Are you a member of this website? Do you contribute content? etc.). You should also explain what you anticipate you will learn about literacy on these sites. See an example on the class website.

Work Cited Citations:

Porter, John. *Audience and Rhetoric: An Archaeological Composition of the Discourse Community*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1992. Web. 30 January 2014.

Swales, John. *Genre Analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Web. 30 January 2014.

# WA2 Requirements

## Final Draft Due March 2

By [ENG1302.RachelCantrell.com](http://ENG1302.RachelCantrell.com)

- 2 page minimum (to the bottom of the second page) not including the works cited page
  - Quote and cite either Swales or Porter while you are defining what a discourse community is and how your chosen websites or YouTube channels meet that criteria. See the example essay on the class website to see how this is done.
  - Have in-text citations & a works cited page in MLA format
  - Paper and citations should be in MLA format
  - 12 point Times New Roman Font, double spaced
  - Must discuss at least three websites or/and YouTube channels to illustrate how your chosen subculture acts as a discourse community online. Add these websites to your works cited page in MLA format.
  - Remember: Only 1/3 of your paper should be other sources. The rest needs to be you! If you use these extra sources your paper should be 3 or more pages to adjust for this.

Remember: You can't list sources on your works cited page unless you actually used it in your paper with an in-text citation. Every source you use in your paper needs to have an in-text citation and be listed on the works cited page.

**There is an example of this essay on the class website.**