

Argument paper-- please keep your responses to the 250-word limit. A crucial component of writing well is writing succinctly. Make a strong statement, then back it up.

Field Research

Before you embark on your field research, be sure to set up your questions so that you can make smart connections to the book.

***Zeitoun* by Dave Eggers**

Topic Possibility 1 - "Interview an imam"

Abdulrahmin Zeitoun is a devout Muslim living and working in America. What role does Zeitoun's faith play in the events described in the book? Possible interview questions:

- What are the most common prejudices about your faith?
- How do you advise your congregants to cope with faith-based prejudice?
- What are some of the unique stresses that American converts to Islam face?

Topic Possibility 2 - "Interview a local small businessperson"

Abdulrahmin Zeitoun owns and runs a successful painting business. What was it that made Zeitoun so successful? Why does he stay behind? Possible interview questions:

- Can you describe your business?
- How long have you been in business?
- What are your biggest challenges as a business owner?
- How does your business affect your family?
- How do you protect your business relationships?
- How do you protect your customers' best interests?

Topic Possibility 3 - "Interview a local person who was severely affected by one of our recent local floods"

Abdulrahmin and Cathy Zeitoun faced the destruction of their home and business. How did the flood and its aftermath reveal the Zeitouns' characters?

Possible interview questions:

- What personal strengths did you discover as you dealt with the flood?
- What did you learn about your community and local government as a result of the flood?
- What aspects of your life were most changed by the flood?

***Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich**

Topic Possibility 1 - Interview a waitress or waiter, preferable someone who has been on the job for at least one year, or someone whose career is as a server.

Barbara Ehrenreich worked as a waitress as part of her experiment. What did she learn about the nature of work and power structures in this job? Possible interview questions:

- What part of your job would most surprise your customers?
- What would you change about the way servers are paid, if you could?
- How has working as a server changed you?

Topic Possibility 2 - “Observe and track the changes in a seasonal or clothing display at Wal*Mart”

Barbara Ehrenreich worked at Wal*Mart and noted that the displays are rotated to appeal to frequent shoppers. As you research this topic, make detailed observations and notes about the location, type, price and nature of the changing merchandise. Be sure to observe in at least three different areas, such as Men’s, Check-out, and Accessories, for example. Consider the following questions:

- What type of shopper is the merchandise meant to appeal to?
- Is the merchandise primarily items that people need or that people want?
- How much does the price level (price point) fluctuate in the locations you’re observing.
- What trends or patterns, if any, did you notice?

Topic Possibility 3 - “Interview a maid from a local cleaning service”

Barbara Ehrenreich worked as a maid for a cleaning service. What did she learn about the lives of the cleaners and the unique pressures of working for a franchised service? Possible interview questions:

- What have you learned about this type of work that surprised (surprises) you?
- If you became a supervisor in this business, what would you be sure NOT to do?
- What rule or requirement of your job goes most against the way you clean at home?
- Do you work as part of a team? What are the pluses and minuses of working with other cleaners? (or of working alone, if the interviewee is not part of a cleaning team).