The Dumbest Generation Ever

In his provocative new book *The Dumbest Generation*, Mark Bauerlein argues that "the digital age stupefies young Americans and jeopardizes our future" by turning out hyper-networked kids who can track each other's every move with ease but are largely ignorant of history, economics, culture, and other subjects he believes are prerequisites for meaningful civic participation. (Why Young Americans are the dumbest generation Or, don’t trust anyone under 30!) [http://www.reason.tv/video/show/478.html](http://www.reason.tv/video/show/478.html)

**So: Are teenagers today “the dumbest generation ever”?** You will write a research paper (using MLA citation) using six print sources, a visual text, and an interview where you will BOTH Defend and Challenge Bauerlein’s claim that teens today are “the dumbest generation ever”.

**NOTE: YOU MAY ONLY USE THE RESOURCES THAT I HAVE INCLUDED BELOW:**


[http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=342de668-6463-4c24-a2c4-5ad2ea5d1d9c&k=37842](http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=342de668-6463-4c24-a2c4-5ad2ea5d1d9c&k=37842)


[http://radio.nationalreview.com/betweenthecovers/post/?q=Yjk1OTEyMDZlMWU0YTQ0MjY1ZTY1YTUzM2MxZTgwZWI=](http://radio.nationalreview.com/betweenthecovers/post/?q=Yjk1OTEyMDZlMWU0YTQ0MjY1ZTY1YTUzM2MxZTgwZWI=)


[http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/articles/2008/05/12/dumbest_generation_readers_beg_to_differ/](http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/articles/2008/05/12/dumbest_generation_readers_beg_to_differ/)

[http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/item_CQHG33zNU8YIBzgUf8t79H;jsessionid=964EC641B1BB9533309D5CBC5FB41979](http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/item_CQHG33zNU8YIBzgUf8t79H;jsessionid=964EC641B1BB9533309D5CBC5FB41979)


[http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/TVAPSA99.PDF](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/TVAPSA99.PDF)

[http://www.salon.com/2008/03/14/kids_and_internet/](http://www.salon.com/2008/03/14/kids_and_internet/)
Interview for Essay:

As one of your sources, you will interview someone who is at least 20 years older than you. You may select a member of your family, a co-worker, a friend, a teacher – as long as the person is a generation (or older) than you. You may conduct the interview in person, on the telephone, or via the internet. You should develop questions ahead of time (which we will discuss in class); make sure they are not yes/no questions. I suggest you record the interview, and you need to get permission from your interviewee. *(Created by the co-author of your textbook: Renee Shea)*

In your essay, I expect you to paraphrase and quote from your interview source just as you would another (print or web) source. If the person agrees with your position, that’s more support; if the person does not, that’s an opportunity to explore counterargument.

A Reminder: Reference to and quotations from at least six written sources along with one visual. *(The Levi’s “Go Forth” ads are the likeliest candidate, but you may use another advertisement or even a political cartoon if you’d like) www. youtube.com- enter Levi+ title in search. (Watch Levi’s “go forth” and “o pioneers” ad on YouTube. Watch these ads on YouTube. What do these say about today’s generation? How do they appeal to this generation?)*

Checklist for essay: This is what I will be looking for in your essay:

Your essay is indeed your opinion – and you can use your personal experience to develop your ideas – but it is an informed argument that shows how effectively you can interact with sources (that is, other people’s ideas).

- Critical and creative thinking – not just a re-hash of what is in the articles
- A strong and clear thesis statement that include some reference to the counterargument
- A series of topic sentences that relate clearly and logically to the thesis statement
- An explanation of the counterargument (probably Bauerlein’s position) that details specific issues he raises, such as mentorship, consumerism, isolation, attention span.
  Fully developed paragraphs that emphasize your own viewpoint and opinion but are supported and illustrated with information from your sources.
- Accurate in-text citation of sources. Inclusion of a Works Cited Page
• Clear and concise sentences – no fragments, run-ons, or comma splices
• Correct grammar and punctuation throughout
• No use of “you” or “your” – though some “I” and “we” is fine

Due Dates for all research components/requirements will be addressed in class. A “clue” to the requirements can be found on this blog.