

DISCUSSION PAPER

THE GEOGRAPHY OF LONG ISLAND, NY Geographic Issues Facing Long Island

A discussion paper is an essay that looks at a question, a point of view, or findings about a situation - past, present or future. Its purpose is to ponder a situation and get dialog going.

It is **not** a detailed research report, a broad summary of the topic, a collection of questions or observations, a criticism of a point of view or situation, or your personal feeling (off the top of your head) about the topic. Pros and cons need to be addressed.

It addresses the impact on people or earth environment within the framework of the five fundamental themes of geography. In addition, it addresses the topic within the political, cultural, economic and/or social context that it is found.

Begin by identifying a topic and summarizing and discussing the major findings from your initial research. Present them simply and in an easily understandable manner, citing the author or the source material. (Many times the abstract of a professional paper provides this for you.)

Describe why the findings are important or meaningful or distressing or encouraging. This is an opportunity to interject what the results mean to you and what they contribute to both the specific area of study and the bigger picture.

Think critically. Discuss the limitations and possible alternative explanations for the results you found. No study is perfect.

End by indicating any future directions the research can take or what you would like to see studied. This is a good way to finish the written discussion and to get a verbal discussion going.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- 1. Identify** a situation/issue/problem/potential problem facing Long Island, NY for **each** of the following areas: physical, historical, population, environmental and economic.
- 2. State** this in the form of a hypothesis, thesis statement, observation or “talking points” within the first paragraph of the essay.
- 3. Find** several articles/books/professional papers/presentations that address the topic.
- 4. Comment** upon the situation in discussion format within 2-3 pages of text. This can be from your point of view or that of the geographic community or a field of experts. No discussion is wrong. All discussions have at least two points of view. However, any statement made needs to be backed by facts and presented in a logical way.
- 5. Include** a bibliography of works consulted on a separate page.