

Historical Letter / Diary Research Project
Mr. Jeffers

Each student will imagine that they are a person living at some point in one of the historical periods we will be studying this fall (the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Age of Discovery, roughly 900-1600 CE). Students are responsible for deciding upon the livelihood of their character, and will research what life in general was like during the period as well as what it would be like for a person of your character's vocation.

Students will do research to find out about (among other things):

1. what they ate, wore and did for fun
2. what their class obligations (if medieval period) would be/what was expected of them
3. what activities they would have done on a regular basis
4. what work was like/how they went about doing their job
5. what their homes and communities were like

From this information, students will write a letter or diary of their experiences. Students will create the story line, **but it must be about events that could have actually taken place**. Your diary will have a total of five entries, and **EACH PARAGRAPH (if letter) OR ENTRY (if diary) MUST HAVE EVIDENCE OF THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SOME ACTIVITY.** Simply put, each entry must describe something that the reader can instantly identify as being set in the time period you chose.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FIVE ENTRIES, IF DOING DIARY: (You do NOT have to follow these, they are only suggestions)

1 entry: describe what foods your person ate, what clothes they wore and what their home was like

1 entry: describe them doing something in public like playing a game, going to the market, attending an event or performance

1 entry: describe what their family life was like, talk about which class they were in and what that meant

2 entries: describe their work and what is involved in it

The Project:

The letter or diary itself will be 5-6 pages (plus the cover and bibliography pages) in length (size 12 font) with the following format:

Cover Page: This will have your name, character's name and occupation, and scenario. This is page one.

The Letter/Diary: (5 Entries if diary) – the entries do not have to be consecutive days, so if you want to follow a page up through knighthood, or the building of a castle, or a monk's routine throughout the years, you can do that.

Bibliography: This will contain annotations (your descriptions of what was useful in the source, how you knew the information was reliable) be on a separate page at the end of the project and properly formatted using MLA advanced

The annotations must be written in the third person.

There will be an annotation for each of your sources. The annotations start with the actual bibliographic entry for the source and a summary that answers the **three following questions**:

1. **Evaluate:** Why do you believe that this is a credible source of information? What do you consider reliable about this source?
2. **Synthesize:** What is the main idea of the article, website or book that you read?
3. **Reflect:** How has this source been relevant to your research task?

Possible scenarios:

For all scenarios, make sure you describe what your character's family life was like; explain which class they were in and what that meant as you describe the scenes.

The bullet points for each scenario are intended to be a starting point for your research. Yes, you need to address them in detail, but your research should result in more information that extends beyond them.

Each of the following is a possible scenario, **choose one**:

Castle under siege

You can describe the siege from the vantage point of a defender, the lord of a castle, an attacker or a civilian within the castle. Regardless you **must describe and explain**:

- The layout of the castle and how its defenses work
- Weapons and tactics that would be used
- How the castle is positioned on the land and any additional defensive facets inside or outside the castle
- How many people on both the offensive and defensive would be involved
- How long a siege would last
- What types of supplies they had beyond weapons (food, clothing armor, medical care for injured)
- Who is responsible for which tasks
- The different types of soldiers (archers, foot soldiers, etc.)

Medieval Banquet / or Wedding (of nobility)

You can describe the event from the vantage point of a host, guest, bride or groom (if wedding), servant or entertainer at the event. Regardless you **must describe and explain**:

- what foods people ate, what clothes they wore
- what the home (or wherever the event was held) was like
- what the entertainment would be
- the order of events, how the guests were served
- dancing and music
- if it's not a wedding, why the event was held
- what went into the planning of the event and who was responsible for
- Remember, if your person is a peasant and you want to have them describe something a noble did (such as attending a banquet) you would have to describe these things as a servant observing what the people you are serving are doing.

Tournament / Joust

You can describe the event from the vantage point of a participant, spectator, servant or entertainer at the event. Regardless you **must describe and explain**:

- The order of events as well as what happens during each event
- How does a participant win, what are the prizes
- How long does the full tournament/joust last
- How does one become a participant
- What is the frequency of when these contests are held / is travel involved
- Who plans these events, how are they officiated
- how many people attend, what social class(es) are they
- What foods and entertainments are offered to spectators beyond the contest itself
- What the participants as well as the spectators look like (how are they dressed, what are the expected behaviors)

Life on a Medieval Manor or Life in a Medieval a Town

Choose one and then describe life from the vantage point of a either a peasant or the lord of the manor (if choosing manor) or the life of a merchant or trades person (if choosing the town). Regardless you **must describe and explain**:

- the routines of work, what was involved in it, what tools and equipment they had
- What games they played, what clothes they wore, what foods they ate
- going to the market, attending an event or performance (if town)
- the other people they would interact with (and the nature of those interactions) on a regular basis
- their home-how big it was, what was it made out of, what was in it
- what regular routines they had outside of work
- class obligations (if manor) and what they involved

An Apprentice to a Famous Renaissance Artist

Choose one artists that you will be working with and research their life. You will be writing from the vantage point of their apprentice/helper or some other eyewitness to their life. Regardless you **must describe and explain**:

- the work as an artist and the significance of it
- what materials they used
- work habits
- what they did for leisure, what you would do for leisure
- living arrangements for you and artist
- other people that would be regularly encountered
- significant achievements

Sailor with a Famous Explorer

Choose one explorer whose ship you will be on and research their life. You will be writing from the vantage point of a member of their crew. Regardless you **must describe and explain**:

- What it was like to be onboard a ship in the 1500/1600s
- What equipment was on the ship and how it was used
- What life was like on board ship/ routines, various jobs that would need to be done
- Where you sailed to/what was “discovered” or explored-describe what you saw
- Describe the personality of the famous explorer
- Describe the ship itself and how it was sailed
- Describe peoples you would have encountered, how they would be treated and why they were treated that way

Person of the Protestant Reformation period

You can either be a reformer, someone within the church who was for or against the Reformation, or someone outside the church observing what is happening. Regardless of who you choose, you will be describing your attitudes towards religion and why you have them. So you will need to research the life of a monk, priest, bishop, cardinal or lay person so you can write accurately from their vantage point. Regardless you **must describe and explain**:

- Your person and what life was like for someone in their position in the first half of the 1500s
- Explain the religious values and attitudes that your person would have and why you had them
- Describe and explain where you are and what the situation, religiously speaking, is : are you in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, England, et cetera, are your for or against the Reformation, explain why you would be for or against it

- You could be someone working with Martin Luther or John Calvin, or you could be a clergyperson within the Catholic Church trying to stop them. You may be at the Council of Trent, so explain what you would be doing and thinking
- Describe the everyday facets of your life, what you ate, your living arrangements
- Describe the attitudes of the time
- Explain how the experiences of your person fit into the larger event known as the Protestant Reformation

Research Process

Information will be recorded on NoodleTools note cards along with the source citation. Remember only one source per note card and one piece of information per notecard.

- Any note card with a direct quote must have the same information expressed in your own words in the paraphrase section. **Note: There should be no reason to direct quote.**
- The “my ideas” section should indicate how you will use the information in your letter.
- All sources indicated on a note card must be cited in the bibliography.
- Minimum of 5 sources used not including the textbook or any general reference source.
- Five sources must include books, databases and free websites (at least one of each)
- All note cards will be checked.
- Bibliography with annotations that you created will be checked and must be imported into your Google Docs before you upload it into Turnitin at the end of the project.

FORMAT RULES

- Letter is to be typed, double-spaced, with one inch margins all the way around.
- No additional space between paragraphs, the spacing between paragraphs should be the same as it is between lines.
- The letter must be in size 12 font, no use of boldfacing in the text, and a font like Ariel, Calibri, or Times Roman.
- Use past tense.
- **5-6 full pages for the Diary, not including cover and bibliography. Pages need to be numbered, with a cover page and a separate page for bibliography.**
- Students must use at least five different sources, including at least two books, not including general encyclopedias or the textbook.
- Each main body paragraph will have a description of something that could have happened in the historical period of your project.
- Because each paragraph will have historical information, all paragraphs will contain MLA citations indicating the source of that information.
- If you use any illustrations, maps, drawings, et cetera they should be at the end of your letter, **and are not part of the 5-6 pages.**
- Follow all rules of formal grammar.
- Proper MLA citations in text to indicate the source of information used

Scoring:

Letter/Diary

- Cover page _____/ 5 points (*This is an all or nothing grade*)
- MLA citations _____/ 5 points
- Bibliography _____/30 points
- Letter/Diary itself _____/80 points (*16 points for each of the 5 entries- if diary*)

Total for Letter/Diary _____/120 points

Upload Notecards to Turnitin! _____/10 points (By the end of class period on Nov 11, 2016 – This is an all or nothing grade- if you upload to wrong Turnitin! Assignment there will be a 5 point deduction. **MAKE SURE YOU UPLOAD TO THE TURNITIN! ASSIGNMENT THAT IS LABELED “NOTE CARDS-HISTORICAL PROJECT.” (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE)**)

Annotated Bibliography _____/10 points (By the end of the class period Dec 2, 2016 – This will be checked in NoodleTools)

Upload Letter to Turnitin! _____/10 points (By the end of class period on Dec 16, 2016 – This is an all or nothing grade. **MAKE SURE YOU UPLOAD TO THE TURNITIN! ASSIGNMENT THAT IS LABELED “HISTORICAL LETTER”**)

Grand Total _____/150 points

Directions: How to upload NoodleTools Notecards to Turnitin!

The objective of this assignment is to print all of your completed notecards without any “unnecessary” information into a Word Doc.

Follow the steps below to successfully upload your NoodleTools Notecards:

1. Go to your “Notecards Tabletop” – you should see the total number of notecards available there. Click on the “Print” button in the upper left corner.
2. An “Options” box will appear – click the 2nd option: “Export to Google Docs” (Doc. File) – click “Submit.”
3. The print box will appear with “Export all Notecards” already “checked” before clicking “Submit” see step 4 below
4. In the print (same) box appears that asks you what you want to print.

<p><u>Uncheck</u> ALL notecard items to print EXCEPT:</p> <p>Source</p> <p>Quotation</p> <p>Paraphrase</p> <p>My Idea(s)</p>
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5. Click “Submit.”

Now open your Google Doc Document. You will be prompted to allow access to your Google Drive, so click allow. You should find the information from all of your notecards there. This is the file that you will upload to Turnitin!.

**MAKE SURE YOU UPLOAD TO THE TURNITIN! ASSIGNMENT THAT IS TITLED
“NOTE CARDS – HISTORICAL PROJECT”**