

Congratulations! You've made it to the final step in high school—your 12<sup>th</sup> grade year, and you are about to embark on a journey that we call the "Senior English Project." This journey will provide you the opportunity to apply all that you've learned in those twelve years of school to a project that challenges and interests you, and leads you to personal, academic, and/or professional growth.

During the course of the semester, you will choose a topic, research it, design a project, and then present it to a panel of judges. You will need to read, think critically, and write and speak formally; and your ability to communicate effectively will provide evidence of the skills you have acquired and will use as productive citizens and leaders in the "real world."

The project has the following specific requirements:

- **Topic/Project Proposal** (approx. 2 page typed) – 100 points
- **Research Paper** (8-10 pages typed, APA style, 5 sources minimum) – final draft 300 points
- **Project Hours** (15 hours minimum to be completed outside of class) – points included in portfolio
- **Portfolio** (evidence of your project) – 300 points
- **Senior Boards** (10 minute presentation to a panel of judges to take place at the end of the semester) – 200 points

Now it's time to answer those questions that are most certainly racing through your mind. Let's start with what is most likely your first question...

***How am I going to do this???***

The answer is simple...DON'T PANIC! You will have the entire semester to do this and we will work on it one piece at a time.

***How important is this project to my grade?***

- If you decide not to participate in the senior project as a whole, it will be very difficult to pass the class, and you must pass 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature to graduate. A signed parental permission form is required to participate, even if you are 18 or over. Everyone needs to understand the importance of this project and the weight of the grading.

***What will my project be about? Who picks the topic?***

Here's the really exciting part—it's completely up to you! The goal is for you to find something that interests and challenges you, and that you feel will be of benefit to you. It might be a project that is focused on your career aspirations and could be used to give you a specific career experience as well as be used for your portfolio in college or job interviews; it might be a community service or civic project that focuses on a subject about which you feel passionately; it might be a personal goal—something you have never done before but always wanted to do. Here are a few examples:

- You have always wanted to work in advertising. Research advertising techniques and trends for specific markets, then find a local company and create an advertising campaign for them.
- You are interested in a career in the culinary arts (cooking). Research diet or restaurant business trends, then work with a local chef and learn new cooking techniques, or create your own recipes and develop a cookbook illustrating them.
- You have a passion for the outdoors and conservation. Research local building proposals and develop a plan to protect a local forest area or maybe do water quality testing in ground water.
- You have always wanted to hike the Appalachian Trail. Research the trail and the effects of pests like the gypsy moth, hike a portion, and create a field guide of the flora and fauna you see.

- Interested in a career in healthcare? Research an issue in a healthcare specialty that interests you and become certified in CPR or first aid.
- You're a car guy (or girl) at heart. Research potential fuels, then work with a mechanic to build a motor. Or maybe your family has an old, rusted out muscle car sitting in a field and you have a dream of what it may look like some day? Research the growing popularity in car restoration, then take this opportunity to plan and begin a restoration of your own.
- Love sports? Research public recreation challenges, then coach a local youth sports team.

Here are a few examples of what is NOT acceptable as a project:

- Group projects. Sorry. Individual projects only. If you have a project that is related to someone else's, you may discuss, encourage, and support each other, but you may not do the same project or research topic. Proposals unknowingly submitted for the same topic will require a conference with both parties and the instructor in order to work out suitable alternative plans.
- Easy projects. A poster is not an advertising campaign. A dish you've made to share with the class that you learned from a cookbook is not a relevant culinary experience. Taking a walk in the woods is not a challenge. Taking a refresher CPR course as you are already certified is not a learning experience. You must choose projects that are challenging and worthwhile.

### ***What is the Topic/Project Proposal paper?***

Once you've decided on a topic, you are to write a two page topic/project proposal which outlines five items:

- 1) what specifically you will be researching
- 2) why you chose that topic and what your current experience in that area is
- 3) what your project will entail
- 4) the expected challenges: resources (money, human, materials, time, etc.), design complexity, logistical, etc. and how you plan to overcome them
- 5) the expected benefits or value of this project.

This will be formatted in MLA style (4-line header, 12 pt. font, 1 inch margins, etc.).

This paper will be reviewed by your instructor and returned to you with one of the following marks: *approved*, *approved with changes*, *denied*. If your proposal is accepted, it's time to move forward and get started. If your proposal is approved with changes, you must speak with your instructor and determine together the appropriate changes needed before continuing. These changes are to be written on the paper and signed off by both you and your instructor. Finally, if your proposal is denied, you need to meet with your instructor to discuss why it is denied, and then work to find another topic. Once you've settled on another topic and project idea, you will need to write another proposal. This is to encourage you to spend the time up front and not throw together an idea an hour before it's due. A well thought-out topic and proposal will almost always be approved or approved with changes.

Once you have your approved proposal back, place it in your portfolio which will be turned in at the end of the semester.

### ***How long is this research paper and what do I have to do?***

You will write a 8-10 page paper (including the cover and reference pages) in APA format that uses a minimum of five credible sources, one of which must be a primary source. While you may use Wikipedia, dictionaries and encyclopedias to supplement your research, they do not count as any of your required sources. If you do use these references, you still must cite them. Reminder: Google, Yahoo, Ask, etc. are search engines, NOT reference websites.

This paper is an in-depth study of your chosen research topic, and not just a "how-to" guide for completing the project. You are to incorporate at least one chart or graph into your paper. Be sure this chart or graph is appropriate in size (in other words, don't blow it up to fill a full page if you don't need to. Graphics don't count towards your 8-10 required pages of text. Word Art and

clip art are not to be used as decorative elements. Papers are to be single-stapled in the upper left hand corner. No additional folders, covers, etc. are to be used.

You are also to complete a Research Paper Self-Evaluation Form (you will receive one in class prior to the paper due date). Attach it to the back of the research paper.

The instructor reserves the right to add additional point values to the steps of the writing process if he/she chooses to do so.

### ***What is required for the project part?***

Once you've done your research, it's time to put what you learned to use! There are several required elements of this project, including specific forms and procedures. These are listed as follows:

- An adult mentor not immediately related to you, who is an expert in your area and willing to act as a resource and guide, as well as verify the hours you work on the project. The mentor, however, does NOT have to be present as you complete the work. You must turn in a Mentor Agreement Form on \_\_\_\_\_. When you get this form back, place it in your portfolio.
- 15 hours (minimum) spent on the project outside of class. If you are DCT, CBE, or enrolled in the Mentorship class, you can use on-the-job hours toward this project if it is appropriate, relevant, and approved by your employer. Hours and project-related information must be logged on the Project Record, verified by your mentor, and kept in your portfolio.
- Two examples of business correspondence. For example, you may write a letter to the Department of Education requesting specific information, send a memo to your coworkers asking them to complete a survey, or email a veterinarian asking a specific question; these are examples of official correspondence. You are to make a copy of each and put them in your portfolio.
- The Project Self-Evaluation. Once you have completed your project, use this form to assess how well you did, what you learned, what challenges you faced, etc.

### ***What exactly is the portfolio?***

It is simply a folder that holds all the evidence of the project you complete. It is a collection of your correspondence, documents, receipts, and forms. It also holds physical evidence (pictures, sketches, designs, experiment results, surveys, etc.) or products of your project so that someone could look through the portfolio and get a good understanding of what you did, how you did it, and what the outcome was.

To create this portfolio, use a binder that has a cover insert that lists your name, English teacher's name, project topic, and class period. Inside, use page dividers for each major item (bold-type) listed on the following checklist:

- **Table of Contents** (use this list to help create the table of contents)
- **Letter of Introduction to the Senior Judging Board**
- **Approved Topic/Project Proposal**
- **Research Paper** (This should be a clean, revised copy of the paper. Include the Research Paper Self-Evaluation Form after the paper.)
- **Project Forms**
  - Parental Permission Form
  - Mentor Agreement Form
  - Mentor Verification and Completion Form
  - Project Record with mentor signature
- **Correspondence**
  - Correspondence #1
  - Correspondence #2
  - Additional correspondence if applicable

- **Project Evidence** (Include as many of the following as you can to convince your judges of how successful and authentic your project was, as well as to show evidence of how much you learned from this undertaking.)
  - Certificates of completion
  - Photographs, sketches, scripts, designs, etc.
  - Charts, diagrams, surveys, etc.
  - Receipts
  - Notes from classes, training, etc.
  - Interview notes
  - Sign-in sheets for any classes, training, etc. that YOU instructed or coordinated
  - Materials you created: If you created a product, turn it in with the portfolio.
- **Letters of Recommendation** (optional)
- **Project Self-Evaluation**

***What are Senior Boards? Is that some kind of lumber?***

No, not lumber. Senior Boards is a fancy way of saying you'll be presenting your senior project and portfolio to a board of judges who will be evaluating it. You will prepare an eight to ten minute formal (yep, you have to dress up) and rehearsed presentation which will be followed by a five minute question and answer period. In this presentation, you must outline your project, including the reasoning behind choosing it, your research, the "nuts and bolts" of what you actually did, and the outcome of the project. You should also address the challenges you faced and the personal growth you experienced. You must include a visual and/or audio aid to showcase the evidence portion of your portfolio.

Remember, we will be working in class to prepare for this. This will be a time for you to shine—your project will be completed and all you need to do is go in and brag about it!

***When is all this stuff due?***

You will be given a calendar during the first week of school that will detail dates and timeframes, and you will receive the forms and specific instructions for each part of the project as you progress through the semester.

***How is this project different than any I've done before?***

This is YOUR project—not one determined for you. You get to choose it. You get to design it. You get to do it. You get the rewards from this. Run with this, and enjoy the freedom, responsibility, challenge, growth, and FUN that this project can bring you! You are a senior, about to enter the "real world," so go out and do something real!