

8th Grade Project

Much like the senior project, the 8th grade project consists of a research paper and a presentation on a topic of the student's choice. The research paper will be graded as a composition, while the presentation will be graded as a homework grade. Papers will be written in the first half of the third trimester, and presentations will be given in the second half of the trimester. This is formal and academic assignment. An appropriate tone that reflects the serious nature of this assignment should be used in both the written paper and in the presentation. This project is intended to reflect the professionalism and academic capability of the student, and the assignment will be graded accordingly.

Research Paper

A research paper is different from other essays we have written this year in that it requires the author to use outside sources. A research paper attempts to answer a question, to investigate an issue, or to defend a position, using both the author's original ideas and the ideas of others. This means that a research paper is more than a bland reporting of facts; *it also analyzes and interprets those facts*. It presents innovative conclusions, and it is as much an expression of the author's ideas as it is a reflection of the sources the author used.

For your research paper, you will pick a topic of your choice, research it, interpret it and report your conclusions in a 3-6 page MLA style research paper.

Due Dates:

- Three possible topics *due Friday, March 24th*
- Preliminary thesis *due Monday, March 27th*
- Five sources in class *due Friday, March 31st* (sources can be obtained from the Tempe Library on our field trip— if the student has a library card)
 - 3 internet sources (bring printed off copies of your articles to class)
 - 2 print books
- Bring sources and notecards to class every day the weeks of April 3rd and 10th
- Preliminary bibliography *due Monday, April 3rd* (should be completed in class Monday, March 28th)
- Notes *due Tuesday, April 18th*
 - At least 20 note cards
 - Note cards will be checked for use of the three research note taking styles: summary, paraphrase, and quotations
- Rough draft outline *due Tuesday, April 25th*
- Rough draft research paper (with one in-text citation per source) *due Friday, May 5th*
- Final draft *due Friday, May 12th*

Requirements for the **final draft** of the paper (to be turned in using the following order):

- MLA formatted coversheet
- Outline
- Body of the paper
 - Last name and page number in the upper right corner of each page
 - Title centered at the top of the first page
 - Double spaced
 - 1" margins
 - Size 12 font, Times New Roman
 - Left justified
 - Use of MLA in-text citations, at least one per source
- Bibliography
 - Alphabetized by author
 - MLA format

The Presentation

The presentation is your opportunity to share what you've learned from your research (and yes, your presentation must cover the topic from your research paper). Think of this as a mini-senior project—one that is only presented to the other 8th graders. Students will be graded on both content and presentation style. Requirements and grades will be based on the following criteria.

Presentation Content:

- **Topic choice:** The topic should be appropriate for the audience and reflect what was researched for the second trimester papers.
- **Subject knowledge:** Students should have a solid grasp of the topic. Information in presentation should go beyond "Wikipedia" level research. Students should be able to answer questions during a Q&A section after the presentation.
- **Content:** Presentation should demonstrate why this is a significant topic. Content should reflect the specifics of the research and focus on "advanced" knowledge as opposed to "general" knowledge.
- **Organization:** Material within the presentation should be arranged in a logical manner, making it easy to follow. Just as the paper contains an introduction, thesis, and conclusion, these elements should be evident in the presentation.
- **Preparedness:** The presentation should be obviously rehearsed. It should be apparent that students have practiced their presentations multiple times at home, prior to presentations in class. Students should demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of their subject and a minimum of five sources should be referenced throughout the presentation. Include a works cited page with presentation.

Presentation Style:

- **Attire:** Students should be dressed in "business formal" attire.
- **Eye Contact and Body Language:** Students should make eye contact with the audience. This means they should avoid reading directly from any notes or PowerPoint slides. Good posture and appropriate hand gestures are necessary. Students should avoid fidgeting.
- **Speech and Language:** Students should speak clearly and at an appropriate level. Students should use formal academic language and avoid filler words or slang terms.
- **PowerPoint Slides and Multimedia:** A visual aid is required. PowerPoint is preferred (these presentations may be e-mailed the day before your presentation to mlambert@madisonprep.org or students may bring presentations to school on a memory stick). Other forms of media are encouraged (e.g. video clips, sound bites, visual aids, etc...). Students are strongly encouraged to test their presentation materials on a school computer prior to their presentation date, in order to anticipate any possible technical problems that may occur.
- **Time Limit:** The presentation (not including Q&A) should last between ten and fifteen minutes. **You will be dropped one letter grade for every minute you are outside of the time frame.**

Presentations will begin Wednesday, May 24th and will end Friday, June 2nd. Dates will be assigned according to a random drawing.