

Senior English Research Project

This assignment is an opportunity for you to practice incorporating all the steps of the research process so that you will become familiar with the most effective ways to find, select, and incorporate information either for school projects or for your own needs. Being able to effectively research will make you better prepared for research in college and for addressing information needs in your own life.

For this assignment, you will take a stand on a social issue that interests you and follow the research steps to produce an annotated bibliography and poster that includes an outline and embedded concrete details.

The Process

Step 1: Select a Topic (you will also start planning)

Things you'll turn in for this step: Browsing Log, Brainstorm Sheet, and Topic Proposal

After exploring a variety of sources, choose a social issue and take a stand on that issue. It can be a specific issue that you oppose or support, or you can propose a specific solution to a problem. You must get your topic approved by your teacher. Your topic should be unique and specific.

Browse: Look through a number of sources to get ideas for possible topics. As you find broad topics that interest you, try to narrow them to something you can realistically research (instead of terrorism, look at the prevention of terrorism or, even better, the prevention of nuclear terrorism in the United States). Keep track of the places you search and what you looked for on your *Browsing Log*. You should browse for at least 3 hours.

For descriptions of these resources and links to the digital resources, go to the library webpage (www.canoqaparkhs.org, then click library), select the Class Links tab, then select Senior English Research Project. Or go directly to the Senior English Research Project page at www.seniorenglishresearchproject.blogspot.com.

Digital sources:

- Gale Opposing Viewpoints in Context (on LAUSD Digital Library)
- EBSCO Student Research Center—High School (on LAUSD Digital Library)
- NPR: National Public Radio
- PBS NewsHour Extra
- Other news sources available on the CPHS Library news links
- Pew Internet Research

Print Sources:

- *The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination* Ref 303.3 Psy
- *Social Issues in Science and Technology* Ref 303.48 Ame
- *Encyclopedia of the Environment and Society* Ref 304.2 Enc
- *Reference Library of Hispanic America* Ref 305 His
- *Women's Almanac* Ref 305.4 Wom
- *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Events* Ref 306.76 Gre
- *Gender Issues and Sexuality: Essential Primary Sources* Ref 306.76 Sci
- *Constitutional Rights Sourcebook*, Ref 342.73
- *Human Rights in the United States* R 342.73
- *Encyclopedia of the American Constitution* R 342.73 Lev
- *Great American Court Cases* Ref 349.73 Gre
- *Reference Library of Black America* Ref 973 Bla

Brainstorm: As you search and think of ideas, keep track of them on a *Brainstorm Sheet*. This is a piece of notebook paper with either a web or a list that reflects the ideas you have as you search. It should be substantial enough to show you have put thought into your topic.

Topic Proposal and Research Questions: Fill out the Topic Proposal and Research Question Form.

You will submit your *Browsing Log*, *Brainstorm Sheet* and *Topic Proposal* together.

****Get your topic approved before continuing. ****

Step 2: Plan Your Search

Things you'll turn in: Search Terms

On a piece of paper, create a list of *Search Terms*. These can be synonyms for your topic or terms you can combine using your research questions (for example, terrorism/prevention). You should have at least 6 to 10 terms.

Step 3: Find and Evaluating Your Sources

Things you'll turn in: Show your teacher your 6 sources

You must have 6 sources that include the following:

- 1 academic source
- 2 reference sources (each article is a different source; try to have 1 print)
- 1 print source (this can be a reference source)
- 2 sources from a database (these can include your academic source and your reference)

Before you Google, these are some sources you can use

- The sources you browsed through, both digital and print
- Gale Opposing Viewpoints in Context (a database: on LAUSD Digital Library)
- EBSCO Student Research Center (a database: on LAUSD Digital Library)
- Other databases specific to your topic. For example, Gale Science in Context or EBSCO Health Information (on LAUSD Digital Library)

Once you find sources, keep in mind that you will eventually do an annotated bibliography where you will have to justify their credibility and relevance.

Step 3: Select Information (you will also continue to plan research, evaluate sources and start organizing)

Things you'll turn in: Annotation or notes for each source, Preliminary Outline, Research Question Check

Read your sources and annotate. Mark up the main idea of each source, label facts and ideas you could use for concrete details (CDs) and commentary (CMs). As you do this, create a *Preliminary Outline* with just sub-points (probably based on your research questions) so you can start to keep track of the organization of your paper. Also, revise your research questions as necessary. In addition, you will submit a Research Question Check, where you list your questions and where you found the answers. As you read through your sources and start to organize, you will discover some sources don't work for your project (set these aside, you will still need them for your bibliography) and you will need to find others—return to the library.

Step 4: Formally Evaluate Your Sources

Things you'll turn in: Annotated Bibliography

You will create an *Annotated Bibliography*. In an annotated bibliography, you list resources you will use as you would for any MLA works cited page. Then underneath each entry, you list the following information:

- How you know the source is authoritative (background information on the author, included within the source, date, if using a website, sponsoring organization)
- Main idea(s) of the source
- How it relates to your project
- Generally, it should not be more than 150 words

In addition, you will add under a separate heading “Discarded Resources,” where you will include 2 sources, formatted as the others, but you will describe why you decided you could not use them. This must be based on CONTENT, not authority.

****Before submitting your final draft of your Annotated Bibliography, you will submit a rough draft for peer editing.**

Step 5: Organize and Synthesize Your Information

Things you'll turn in: Thesis/Topic Sentences and Poster

Organize: On a piece of notebook paper headed "Preliminary Thesis/Topic Sentences", list your thesis and your topic sentences in order.

Synthesize: You will create a poster that includes an outline, embedded concrete details, a chart, and an illustration or photo.

For the outline, include the following:

- A thesis
- 3 to 4 topic sentences; one should address a counter-claim
- Under each topic sentence, list 6-10 concrete details

For the 4 embedded concrete details:

- Chose 2 quotations and 2 facts to paraphrase
- For each one, write a complete sentence that includes a lead-in and parenthetical citation

For the chart:

- Copy or create a chart with statistics that support your thesis
- Cite the source(s) for you information beneath the chart

For the illustration:

- Copy an illustration or photo that supports your thesis
- Cite your source beneath the illustration

To create the poster:

Place all the information onto a PowerPoint slide and then make into a poster. Kinko's will create the poster for approximately \$5.00 (black and white).

Step 6: Evaluate the Process and the Product

Things you'll turn in: 1-page reflection

Now that you have methodically completed all the steps of the research process and submitted your project, reflect upon and evaluate the experience. How was this process different from what you have done before? Which steps of this process were especially beneficial? How do you think your final product was improved by having to follow all of these steps? Were you pleased with your final product? Why or why not? When you are able to make your own decisions about the research process, how will this experience affect what you do next time? Also, what would you change about this assignment?

Assignment Checklist, Criteria Chart & Deadlines

Browsing Log/Brainstorm Sheet/Topic Proposal

- Recommended sources were consulted
- Browsing was at least 3 hours
- Ideas for topics are listed and honed
- Brainstorm sheet reflects significant time, thought, and effort
- Description of background reading includes big ideas
- Topic is written as directed
- Topic is unique and not overly broad
- There are at least 4 research questions that address the topic

Due: ____

Search Terms

- Includes at least 6 to 10 terms
- Terms are based on research questions
- Best if there are combinations of terms

Due: ____

6 Sources

- Includes 1 academic source
- Includes 2 reference sources (each article is a different source; try to have 1 print)
- Includes 1 print source (this can be a reference source)
- Includes 2 sources from a database (these can include your academic source and your reference)
- All sources are credible and authoritative
- There are no obvious gaps in research

Annotation (The following items will be marked-up and labeled)

- Main idea of the article (MI)
- Concrete details (CD) that could be used in your project
- Commentary (CM). This could be labeled and/or your own ideas in the margin.
- For academic articles, instead of MI, research questions (RQ) and findings (F)
- Ideally, items you mark-up are also labeled according to where you might use them in your paper

Notes (Instead of annotation. Don't do both.)

- Cornell notes
- A different page for each source with the source indicated
- Questions should be your research questions
- Bullet-point answers with page numbers if available
- Paraphrasing/quotations clearly indicated

Due: _____

Preliminary Outline

- Contains a preliminary thesis
- Lists sub-points
- Should correlate to your research questions

Due: _____

Research Question Check

- List of final research questions reflects content of the project
- Sources to answer each question are indicated

Due: _____

Preliminary Annotated Bibliography

Due: _____

Annotated Bibliography

- Properly formatted in MLA style
- Generally, includes only recent sources ("Recent" will vary depending on your topic. No more than 8 years for most topics; science sources should be more recent)
- Includes background on the authors that indicates they are authorities (if available)
- Includes any other information that would indicate authority (sponsoring organization, a bibliography with recent sources, etc.)
- Main idea(s) or findings of each source
- How the sources relates to your topic
- 2 sources that were discarded based on content that turned out not to fit your thesis

Due: _____

Poster

- Contains all the elements: outline, embedded CD's, chart, and illustration
- Thesis takes a specific stand on a specific issue
- Thesis establishes a structure for the ideas presented in the outline
- There are 3 to 4 topic sentences that address all aspects of the thesis
- One of the topic sentences addresses a counter-claim
- Under each topic sentence, 2 to 3 concrete details are listed (these may be phrases)
- All of the embedded concrete details are complete sentences with lead-ins and parenthetical citations with page numbers
- 2 of the embedded concrete details are quotations
- 2 of the embedded concrete details are paraphrases

Due: _____

Evaluation of Process and Product

- Fully answers all the questions on the assignment sheet
- Demonstrates thought

Due: _____