

12th Grade Research Project

Name: _____

Due Date: _____

Teacher: _____

What is a research project?

Research is the collecting of information about a specific subject. When you research, you are trying to find the answer (or answers) to a question on a topic of interest to you. Your project will use the information you have discovered to develop or suggest a viewpoint and support it with evidence.

The research project for 12th grade English will be a persuasive paper in which you use research as part of your supporting evidence. This mode of research and writing are of great importance for every student, because writing persuasive research papers teaches you to stand upon your opinion.

The most important thing in writing any research paper is to choose a proper topic. The topic should be of a controversial nature, which means that it should have, at least, two different points of view.

The topic of a persuasive research paper should be new and unusual, maybe a little bit shocking. Of course, it should not be something like George Bush is a nephew of Saddam Hussein, because you will never be able to convince somebody that it is true. Also, you have to make sure that the topic of your persuasive research paper is not offensive for any reader. Do not try to prove that fat people are the threat to the society. That is why you should choose the topic for your persuasive research paper very carefully.

Another important aspect of your persuasive research paper is an informational base. You will have to use all means to prove that your opinion is the right one. But you will not be able to do this if you do not study a great number of materials.

Besides, you should be aware of other viewpoints concerning your topic. This is one more significant part of writing your persuasive research paper. You should study not only the opinions of other authors, but also the evidences that are used for proving them. If you have no idea about that, you will not be able to beat your opponents, because you do not have any counter-evidence.

Your persuasive research paper will have at least six sections: introduction, first argument, second argument, third argument, counterargument(s), and conclusion. Six sections do not necessarily correspond to six paragraphs, however. You may need more than one paragraph to address each argument being made. Each section should be developed so that the reader fully understands the argument being made and is left with no questions.

The Research Process

For students who would like to follow an online guide through the research process, there is a wonderful resource at:

<http://www.crlsresearchguide.org>

WEEKS 1-2

Choose and Narrow a Persuasive Topic

You should begin by choosing a debatable topic and formulating a working thesis statement. Remember: your paper must include at least three arguments to support your opinion, and you must also address the opposition's strongest argument.

See the list of "Possible Topics" for ideas.

Topics that interest me (teacher will help student narrow the topic if necessary and approve the topic selected for research with his/her initials):

Discover What Is Known and What Needs to Be Learned

Get to know your topic. Find a variety of information sources on all sides of the subject (monographs, reference books, magazines, videos, library databases, websites, etc.) and make a preliminary reference list.

Formulate Research Questions

What do you know about your topic? What do you need to learn? Write down some controversial questions about your topic that you want to find the answers to. A research question allows you to look at a topic from a certain perspective and draw a conclusion from your research.

When you are developing research questions be sure to choose a topic that actually can be researched: not “Is George Bush an idiot?” but “Did George Bush disregard the law during his presidency?” List all the questions you would like answered. Do a preliminary search to see what kind of sources are available for research. The perspective from which you choose to explore your research question will develop into your thesis statement.

Choose Appropriate Resources to Support Your Topic

Resources can be people you interview, such as experts or teachers. Textbooks, magazines, newspapers, videos, photographs, encyclopedias, single subject books and the internet are all resources as well. See the specific resource requirements for 12th grade on your “Information Sheet.”

Gather Information

You may need to survey, skim or scan a variety of sources in order to pick the best ones. There is no sense reading an entire book or article if they do not address your research questions.

Take Notes

As you read your research materials, take notes on notecards or notebook paper (these will be handed in).

For each source:

1. Include the key words or important phrases about your topic.
2. Use the “Sources Consulted Chart” to record each source you consult. Do not forget to do this!
3. Write down information that is important to your topic. Write down the information in your own words, or, if you copy the exact words from a source, be sure to put the words in quotation marks and note the page number(s). If you copy someone else’s words without giving credit to the source, you are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism is illegal. It will result in failing the research project and will be reported to the director.

WEEKS 2-3

Analyze and Evaluate Information from Multiple Sources

After you have taken notes from all the sources you plan to use, you will need to analyze that information. You will be looking to see if there is some repeated information and how the information from different sources relates to each other. Evaluate the information to see if it is relevant and useful before deciding to include it in your paper.

Make an Outline

An outline will help you synthesize and organize information from multiple sources, as well as summarize your research findings and draw conclusions. To make an outline:

1. Put all your notes that have the same keywords or phrases together.
2. Make the first research question from your notes into a main idea statement. This will be Roman numeral I. Each of your key research questions which yielded useful and relevant information will be a Roman numeral heading.
3. Find the details that explain each main idea and list them below the main idea statement with capital letters (A, B, C, etc.)
4. More specific details (such as quotations) can be listed with numbers and lower case letters under each capital letter detail.
5. Give your outline a title.

Also, visit this web address for an amazing online [outline maker](http://www.crlsresearchguide.org/NewOutlineMaker/NewOutlineMakerInput.aspx)!

<http://www.crlsresearchguide.org/NewOutlineMaker/NewOutlineMakerInput.aspx>

Write a Thesis Statement

There should be one complete sentence that expresses your opinion on the main idea of your research paper. That sentence is often called the thesis, or thesis statement. (Some other names it goes by are "the main idea" and "the controlling idea.") Based on everything you've read, and thought, and brainstormed, the thesis is not just your topic, but ***what you're saying about your topic***. Another way to look at it is, once you've come up with the central question, or organizing question, of your essay, ***the thesis is an answer to that question***. Remember, though, while you are still writing your paper, consider what you have to be a "working thesis," or one that may still be adjusted to fit with your findings.

Write your thesis here: _____

_____.

Write Title and Introduction

Copy the title of your outline. You can always change it if you come up with something more interesting later. Just make sure it gives the main idea of your topic. Now write an interesting introduction that will grab your reader's

attention and explain what the report will be about. You may wish to start with a startling fact or statistic you have learned through your research or with a perplexing question or scenario. Include your thesis in your introduction, often as the final sentence.

Write the Body

The body is the main portion of your report. Use your main ideas to write topic sentences for each paragraph. Then use your research details to explain and support each topic. It is important to add **quotations** and **citations** from your research to lend your voice authority. You will try to integrate these smoothly into your writing. Any words that are not your own must be in quotation marks. If you paraphrase an idea or information that is not your own (put it in your own words), you still must cite its source. To cite a source means to list the information of your source. For this research project, you will use the citation style developed by the Modern Language Association (MLA). The MLA style way to cite is to list the author and page number of your source in parentheses right after you use the words or ideas of that author. At the end of your report, you will create a separate “Works Cited” page.

Write the Conclusion

Write about the main ideas of your report in your conclusion. Also, restate your thesis. This will summarize your report. You can also include an interesting fact or opinion to end your report that will keep your audience thinking after they have finished reading.

WEEK 3

Revise Your Research Paper

The word revise means “to see again.” After a day or two, pick up your draft of your research paper and read it with fresh eyes. Look for both strengths and weaknesses. Mark your paper where you can improve the content, clarity and style of your paper. Then pass your paper on to another reader and ask him/her to do the same. Use the check list that follows.

Focus and Unity

- The thesis (main idea statement) is clearly stated and fits the paper.
- The thesis is supported by relevant details.
- Ideas and details flow together logically and smoothly.

Organization

- The title tells what the report is about.
- The introductory paragraph is interesting and gets the attention of the reader.
- The body of the paper presents relevant facts/ideas discovered through research.
- Each body paragraph covers one topic (from the outline).

- There are effective transitions between ideas.
- The argument is presented in the best order.
- The conclusion, or ending, is insightful and fitting.

Development of Ideas

- The ideas are persuasive.
- There are three arguments and three counter arguments.
- The supporting details are clearly and accurately explained.
- The details address your original research questions.
- There are many facts and ideas from other sources and those sources are indicated in parentheses.
- The conclusion arrives at an answer on the topic.

Voice and Style

- The writing is unique and engaging.
- Most of the sentences are in the active rather than passive voice. (i.e., *Luis solved the problem* rather than *The problem was solved by Luis*.)
- The writer sounds convincing on the topic.

Revise your paper accordingly. Try to take your writing from good to great.

Edit Your Research Paper

Edit your writing for mistakes in grammar, usage, mechanics and spelling. Consult the grammar handbook at the back of your English textbook if you need to revisit rules for grammar, punctuation, commonly confused words, etc. Errors in written conventions will detract from your overall project, so edit carefully and/or get a trusted friend or family member to help you. Use the “Typing Tips and Requirements” handout at this point.

Create the Works Cited Page (or Bibliography)

Your list of works cited must contain every print and internet source that you reference, either directly or in your own words. You should follow the MLA citation format precisely. Your teacher has a 7-page resource which you can use. The resource is also available online at: <http://www.cpsd.us/crls/library/PDFs/WorksCitedHowTo.pdf> You should also consult the “Typing Tips and Requirements” handout again.

Congratulations!

Before handing in your research project, go through each item in the “Final Check List” and REALLY check to see that you have required information, writing and format. Then, hand it in a smile with relief. You don’t have to do a research project again...until next year!

