

Name:

Independent Research Project

Step 1: Deciding on a topic.

Due: Friday, February 15

You will need to decide on a workable topic for your independent research project. The final project will consist of a **3 to 5 page typed paper**, an outline of the paper, a title page, and a bibliography. It will be necessary for you to consult a minimum of 5 sources during the course of your research. You will present the final project to your parents and peers along with a **5-10 minute speech using PowerPoint** on May 11th. During the week before your presentation, you will polish your presentation and work on your speech.

A workable topic meets the following criteria:

1. You can find enough material on the topic.
2. The topic interests you, and you think you can make it interest your audience.
3. The topic is objective, not subjective. An objective subject is based on factual information. A subjective topic is based on opinion. In a research paper, you want to present facts and informed opinion.

Your goal at this stage is to brainstorm ideas and come up with 3 possible topics that can be used as the subject of your independent research project.

List below three workable topics that you would be interested in investigating for your independent research topic. Check each one against the criteria for a workable topic listed at the top of the first page.

1.

2.

3.

Discuss the topics listed above with your parents and your teacher and Circle your final topic.

Approved by: _____ **Date:** _____

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Step 2: Generating questions.

Due: Wednesday, February 22nd

After you decide on a workable topic and have it approved by your teacher, you need to generate questions that you anticipate answering in your research and writing. These questions will help guide your research and narrow down your general topic into subtopics for your writing. Think of three questions that you would like to answer about your topic and don't forget to anticipate your audience's curiosity.

If you are having trouble generating a question think about these:

What are the most important ideas that I want to have covered in my paper?

What background information will readers need to have?

What are the main parts, or sections of my paper?

What conclusions do I expect to make?

List below three self-generated questions below.

1.

2.

3.

Teacher feedback:

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Step 3: Brainstorm. Make a mind map.

Due: Wednesday, February 22nd

Make a mind map using Inspiration software or by freehand. Think about all the graphic organizers that we have filled out in writing. Include the information that you already know about your topic and your questions. Start thinking of keywords that could fuel your research.

You may use the space below to create your own mind map.

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Step 2: Finding Resources.

Due: Wednesday, March 1st

One of the criteria for a workable topic is that there needs to be enough material about the topic available to you. The objective of this step is to locate resources in your home, at school, and at the library that you can use to research your topic.

You will be required to have a minimum of 5 sources. In addition, you must use at least 3 different types of sources.

Types of sources:

1. encyclopedias (books, CD-ROM, internet)
2. text books
3. special topic books
4. internet (other than encyclopedias)
5. interviews
6. newspaper or magazine articles
7. videos or television shows
8. letters from experts

A. On a separate sheet of paper:

1. List all resources that you have in your home for the topic that you are most interested in.

For books of any kind, include the title, author, and date of publication. If it is an internet site, describe the amount of information available. For an interview or letter, list the credentials of the person that you will be contacting and a time frame that the person will be available to answer your questions. If it is a video, be sure to include the producers, year of production, and length of video.

2. List resources available in the classroom for your topic.

3. List resources available from the library for your topic.

When exploring the library, use the online catalog to locate resources. Investigate first those available at your branch and list those. Also check possible resources that are found at other branches. Remember that these resources can be ordered, but it must be done a few days before you need the book.

Note: If there are not enough resources available for your first topic at the three locations listed above, you should make a list of resources for your second choice.

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Step 4 1/2: Taking notes. Using at least 5 different resources, make at least 60 note cards using the index cards provided.

Due: Friday, March 31st

Now that you have a topic, a list of resources, and a graphic organizer, it is time to begin collecting information for your research project.

For each resource that you use, you need to make a bibliography card. Make one card for each resource. Please include the following information:

books: author, title, publisher, year of publication, place of publication, pages of section

internet source: name of Web site, full address, author (if given), sponsor (if given), date last updated, online service (if appropriate)

interviews: full name and title of person interviewed, date of interview, location of interview

encyclopedias: title of article, author (if given), name of encyclopedia, publisher, year of publication, place of publication, page numbers

videos: name of video, director, producer, writer, series name (if appropriate), year produced

At the top of each bibliography card, place an icon that is easily recognizable and easy to reproduce.

Each card should include the following:

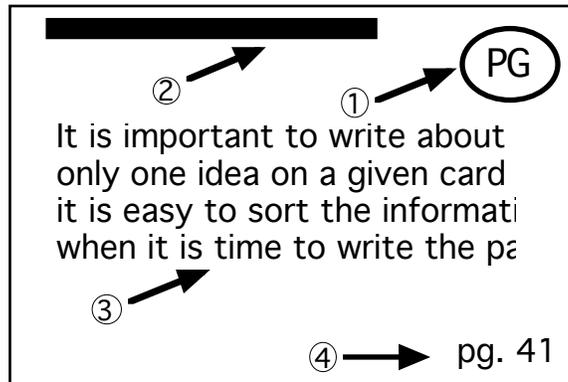
1. A bibliography icon in the top, right-hand corner of the card.
2. A line of color that matches the appropriate subtopic across the top of the card.
3. One idea from one source.
NOTE: Most cards should contain an idea in your own words (paraphrase). If you record a direct quote, then the words should be surrounded by quotation marks.
4. The page number from which you got the idea or the quote on the bottom, right-hand corner of the card.

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For example:



Discuss your color-coded graphic organizer, your bibliography cards, and your 60 note cards with your parents and your teacher.

In the space below, make a list of items that you may want to find/download from the Internet to put into your Power Point presentation. This may include pictures, maps, diagrams, or quotes.

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Step 5: Writing a thesis statement and making an outline.

Due: Wednesday, April 5th

In this step of the project, you will begin to organize your material and make a structure upon which you will build your paper. You will do this by writing a thesis statement and making a detailed outline.

On a separate sheet of paper, write a thesis statement. A thesis statement can be either the first or last sentence in the introductory paragraph and should conform to the following guidelines:

1. A thesis statement is a single declarative sentence. It should not be stated as a question.
2. A thesis statement is a preview of what the paper is about, stating the topic and the writer's specific focus. NOTE: Avoid starting with "In this paper, I will write about ..." or "The purpose of my paper is"
3. A thesis statement controls the paper's content. Everything else provides support for that statement.
4. A thesis statement can suggest, but should not state, your conclusions.
5. A thesis statement should have a confident tone. Avoid tentative words such as *probably, might, I think, seems, apparently, it seems to me, etc.*

After writing and revising your thesis statement on a separate sheet of paper, write your latest version (it might evolve further as you begin the writing process) in the space below. Email a typed version to Ms. Walker cc Ms. Ward & Mrs. Haynes.

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The outline can be either a topic outline or a sentence outline.

A **topic outline** has headings and subheadings that are a series of words or phrases, but not complete sentences. This type is quicker and easier to write.

In a **sentence outline**, every heading and subheading is a full sentence. The advantage of this one is that when you start writing, you have ready-made topic sentences for each paragraph. In addition, because you are required to summarize what you are going to say about each topic, problems with your logic can be revealed before you start writing.

Put the title of your paper at the top of the page. Use the following guidelines to write your outline:

1. Your outline should either contain phrases or sentences, but the two styles should not be mixed.
 2. A number or letter precedes each heading. Each number or letter is followed by a period or is enclosed in parentheses.
 3. Every heading begins with a capital letter. Sentence outlines have a period at the end whereas topic outline do not.
 4. Indentations show a level of important. Make sure that your indentations are noticeable.
 5. If any heading calls for subheadings, there must be two or more.
- I. The main heading is preceded by a Roman numeral.
- A. First-level subheading is preceded by a capital letter.
1. Second-level subheading is preceded by an Arabic number.
- a. Third-level subheading is preceded by lower case letter.
- (1) Fourth-level subheading is preceded by number in ().

Discuss your thesis statement and your detailed outline with your parents and your teacher. You will need a typed copy of your outline that is to be emailed to Ms.Walker cced to Ms. Ward and Mrs. Haynes.

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Step 6 & 7: Writing a rough draft and peer edit with parents.

Due: Thursday, April 13th

It is time to begin writing. At this time you are asked to write the first draft of your research paper and begin assembling supporting material, including your typed outline and bibliography.

The first step is to evaluate your outline. Make any revisions necessary based on feedback from parents or teacher or any revisions that you may feel will improve the flow of the paper.

Using this outline, write the first draft of your research paper. It is to be typed with 1 in. margins, double-spaced, size 12 font, in Times New Roman font. Your paper should be 3-5 pages long.

Some things to remember while writing the first draft:

1. This is a big step, but it is also the beginning. Nothing is permanent and you will make many changes before you are finished.
2. Try to write the draft in one sitting, without interruption. Find a quiet space and stay focused until it is complete. If you cannot do this, then try to do it in only 2 or three sittings.
3. Follow your outline, but adjust it as needed. If something does not work, eliminate it. If something needs to be added, do so.
4. Write in the third-person point of view, avoiding words such as *I*, *we*, and *me*.
5. Express your ideas as clearly and directly as you can. Do not use fancy-sounding words of which you do not know the meaning.
6. Be sure to document quotes. After the quote, provide the following information in (): (author(s) name, year of publication, pg. quote found on). For example: (Adams and Franklin, 1776, p. 224).

NOTE: Beware of plagiarism, which is passing off the words of another as one's own words.

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Type your bibliography.

Read your paper out loud to a parent. Ask them to focus on the flow of the paper including whether the parts supported your thesis sentence, are the ideas clear, and is the writing meaningful.

Ask your parent to comment in the space provided below:

The strong points of this paper are:

This paper would be improved by:

Step 8: Finalize! Final Copy due April 21st

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Step 8 1/3 & 2/3: Power Point or Prezi

Due: Wednesday, April 26th

It is time to create a presentation to inform the audience about your research. You may choose to compile a Power Point or Prezi (email- bhaynes@lamplighterschool.org; password- lamplighter), which can be accessed from any computer.

Please remember the presentation is your talking points. Use the rubric as you prepare this so you can insure your work has all the required elements.

Note cards: Prepare what you are going to say to the audience on note cards. You will present at school to various faculty and staff for constructive criticism several times between May 1 and May 5. You need to get to the point where you are not reading from the cards but rather telling the audience about your research.

Step 8 3/3: Presentation.

Thursday, May 11th

You will present your project to your parents on the night of May 11th at 6:00 p.m. You need to dress in business casual attire and arrive no later than 5:45 p.m.

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