English Language Arts
Grades 6-12
Research Writing Initiative

Research Paper & Product
Overview & Requirements

East Orange School District
Division of Curriculum Services
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Dear Teachers, Students and Parents,

Research and media skills are featured prominently in the new Common Core State Standards. These skills are located throughout the strands of Reading, Writing, Language, and Listening & Speaking. The Standards describe two types of research; long-term and short-term. According to the Standards, "Research" both short, focused projects (such as those commonly required in the workplace) and longer term, in depth research of a topic require students to think critically and sift through information to cite and synthesize details to support a thesis or opinion in their reports.

Therefore, during the 3rd & 4th marking periods, all students in grades 6-12 are required to complete one (1) short-term (Inquiry & Research) and one (1) long-term research project in English/Language Arts. This research initiative is designed to be a culmination of academic experiences and a genuine opportunity for students to merge their various interests, passions, and curiosities with their academic lives, while demonstrating autonomy and critical thinking skills.

The one (1) short-term project is directly embedded into the district-approved English/Language Arts curricula. This short, focused inquiry & research project is student-facilitated and can be completed either individually, in partnerships or within groups. Each short-term project is to be scored using the Inquiry & Research Scoring Rubric. Inquiry & Research or the "mini research" mirror real-world experiences similar to the quick investigational research we do everyday as adults in the workplace. Students are able to use a component of their

The one (1) long-term project is a **two-part** production. **The first part involves researching and writing a documented research paper on some aspect of an overall topic.** The foundation of information will be a combination of primary and secondary sources on an approved area of study. Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge they have gained during their research and study. Your English teacher will thoroughly explain the research paper format and requirements.

The second part of the project allows the student to apply the information gained in research to a physical product. This part of the research project may be manifested in a variety of forms. For example:

- *A product for a research paper on Alzheimer's disease may involve volunteering at a retirement home for Alzheimer's patients. In this case, the physical product is service based.*

- *Another possible product is a manufactured product. A student interested in woodworking might write a research paper on Shaker furniture design and then, for the physical project, build a chair in that style.*

- *Other physical projects may include learning a new skill such as playing an instrument.*
- *Products may also include "job shadowing" with an expert in a specific field. A minimum of 3 hours, verified by an adult mentor familiar with the topic, must be completed if you consider to "job shadowing."*

Each component of the long-term project – the research paper and product, will count equally and will be weighted as of the final exam grade for English. Students will receive a calendar, which reminds them of deadlines and important submission dates. In addition to the grades for each part of the project, **students will also receive benchmark grades/points for meeting deadlines** and completing the other various components of the project such as:

- note cards
- outline
- drafts
- MLA guidelines, and
- reflections

Failure to complete one part of the project will hinder a student from continuing on to the next. Please be aware, failure to satisfactorily complete this project will make it virtually impossible to pass English, a promotional requirement. Therefore, students should do their best to complete these projects and meet district guidelines in order to be successful.

Throughout the process, your teacher will provide support and provide next steps to make your research successful. Use both the calendar and checklist to record your research.

Although students may feel overwhelmed by the project requirements, be assured that if they meet all the deadlines, give their best effort, challenge themselves and take a risk, they will feel like they have accomplished something important during the academic year.

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12 Steps to the Research Process

Step 1: Defining the Task
- *Formulating Research Question*

Step 2: Exploratory Research – *Search for Sources*
- *Use of "The Big 6 Strategy (Media Specialist)*

Step 3: Collection, Evaluation & Analysis of Sources
- *Sources Review (authorized, objective, current, accurate)*
- *Identification of theme(s)*

Step 4: Thesis Proposal & Working & Annotated Bibliography

Step 5: Note Taking

Step 6: Original Research & Product Design
- *Use of a Testable Research Questions*
- *Parental Approval of Product*

Step 7: Research & Product Results

Step 8: Final Thesis

Step 9: Outlining

Step 10: Constructing First Draft

Step 11: Student Revision and Submitting the Final Paper & Product

Step 12: Presentation, Reflection and Evaluation

Permission Form-Research Project

Dear Parents,

Our class will be completing a research project due on _____ (date). Your child has chosen the following research problem to explore:
Research Question: _____

By signing below, you are giving permission for your child to complete this project. Doing this project may require work hours beyond the school day. The research paper portion of the project is required coursework for achieving college and career readiness. The teacher will provide instruction on research project development.

Thank you, _____(teacher signature)

Parent's/Guardian's Signature_____

The schedule for completing this project (paper & product) is as follows. Students/Parents may cut off this timeline to keep for their records and return only the top portion to the teacher.

Required Submission Dates:
- February 8-11, 2016 – Research Question
- March 7-11, 2016 – Review of Sources & Analysis
- March 21-24, 2016 – Thesis Proposal & Working/Annotated Bibliography
- April 4-8, 2016 - Original Research Design
- April 18-23, 2016 – Research Product Results & Final Thesis
- May 9-13, 2016 – Outline
- May 16-20, 2016 – Final Draft & Product Presentation
- May 23-June 10, 2016 – Research Paper & Product Presentations

Research Paper Requirements Overview

The research paper is the first step in completing the project. It develops and demonstrates the student's proficiency in identifying, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, validating, and incorporating that information into a documented paper. The paper must have a connection to the final product, which demonstrates a learning stretch.

Requirements
- Maintain fidelity to grade-level overarching topics/themes
- Students maintain Research Journal throughout process
- MLA format
- Typed, black ink
- Doubled spaced
- 1" margins
- 12 point font size; Times New Roman font
- Work-cited page
- Heading/header or cover page (teacher discretion)
- MLA internal parenthetical documentation within the text
- **See table for required number of pages and sources**

Standards
- Students must meet the Common Core Standards in order to successfully complete the paper to include:
  - **Focus:**
    - Insightful and relevant thesis statement
    - Draws strong and clear connections between thesis and significant related ideas.

  - **Organization:**
    - Effectively provides a logical progression of related ideas and supporting information in the body of the paper.
    - Effectively use transitions to connect supporting information.
    - Arrives at a well-documented, logical conclusion, involving critical thinking

  - **Support/Elaboration:**
    - Synthesizes complex ideas from research sources
    - Sufficient selection of supporting information clearly relevant to the thesis.
    - Balances the use of quotations and student paraphrasing or summarizing
    - Integrates student-generated visual aids (diagrams, charts, tables, graphs) to emphasize important content

- o **Style:**
    - Skillful use of language, including effective word choice, clarity, and consistent voice
    - Fluency through varied sentence structure, paragraphing, flow of ideas, and transitions.

- o **Conventions:**
    - Use of prescribed MLA format, including work cited, internal documentation, and pagination
    - Use of standard writing conventions in grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation and usage

- o **Information Literacy:**
    - Demonstrates integrity in citing practices
    - Use of secondary and primary sources to include current information
    - Demonstrates evaluation skills in determining resource credibility

Required Grading Benchmarks
- Topic and product approval
- Typed outline with working thesis statement
- Sources and annotated bibliographies
- See table for note card requirements
- Multiple rough drafts
- Two (2) clean copies of final draft (hard & electronic copies)

Grading Criteria
- **All components of the research project (paper and product) will be entered into the "Writing" category of Focus unless otherwise specified.**
- For schools who grade by points, the project will be worth 100 points per marking period and the Final Project and Presentation will count as the FINAL EXAM.
- Must be completed in order to move on to next part of the project
- Modifications will be made for new students who enroll AFTER April 1, 2016.
- All papers must be free from plagiarism. This includes improper citing. Any paper found to contain plagiarized material will automatically receive a zero (0) and the student may fail the course.
- The final draft will be scored using the district-approved research rubric (See attached)
- IEP accommodations will be observed. Additional assistance and remediation will be provided to students with special needs and to other students who are not demonstrating proficiency while completing the research project through support/intervention.

The Top 10 of Developing a Topic: Where to Begin?

1. **The research topic should be one in which you are highly interested, but not yet an expert.**
   - Think about future career choices that interest you or something you always wanted to do.
   - Learn something new: to play an instrument, sign language, to cook.
   - **It must be a learning stretch**. You cannot simply learn a new song or a new recipe if you already play an instrument or are an accomplished cook.

2. **The research topic should be broad enough to allow access to enough information, but narrow enough to make the research scope reasonable.**
   - A topic such as "guitars" would contain too much information for one paper. Instead, narrow the topic to the influence of the electric guitar on rock and roll.

3. **The research topic should be one that is intellectually and creatively challenging.**
   - Take care not to choose a topic that is limited to relatively simple ideas or one that has little application or extension possibilities.

4. **Be mindful that your topic should lend itself to the creation of a product, learning of a skill, or performance of a service.**
   - Choose your topic with the ultimate product in mind.
   - Begin by determining something you would love to do or make (product) and tailor your research topic around their product.

5. **Avoid choosing topics that might involve expenses that you are not prepared to handle.**
   - There is no required expenditure for the research or the product.
   - If you do not drive, do not plan research that requires you to travel to distant locations.
   - If you do not have much money, do not plan research that will involve purchasing costly materials or committing you to a series of expensive lessons.
   - Keep in mind that your grade on the research/product is not affected by your expenditures. More money does not mean a higher grade.

6. **Topics that are illegal, immoral, dangerous to you or to someone else, or prohibited by East Orange School District will not be approved.**
   - Avoid experiments that are potentially explosive.
   - Avoid investigations of inappropriate website
   - Do not connect your product to any type of illegal weapon or substance.

7. **Primary research shows originality and intellectual maturity.**
   - Choose a topic that will allow you to do a personal interview, survey, and scientific experiment.

8. **Before making your final choice, do some preliminary research.**
   - Investigate your main areas of interest to be sure that you can locate abundant research material to complete your paper. This exploration might open new possibilities for your final topic.

9. **Brainstorm ideas with others**
   - Talk to your family, friends and teachers for possible topics and how to relate it to a product.

10. **Use good judgment when selecting your topic.**
    - Select a topic that is complex enough to warrant you time and one that you will be proud to share with others. Do not waste time investigating topics that will be rejected. A committee will review for final approval any topics/products deemed questionable.

Research Product Requirements Overview

The product is the second component of the research project. In this component, students must use the information gathered during their research to create a product that fulfills a need or desire. The conception, development, and refinement of the product created must respond to the identified need or desire. This part of the research project offer students an opportunity to connect their education aspirations with real-world career or community service opportunities.

Purpose
- To create a tangible product related to the research paper.
- Reflect application of:
  - Learning
  - Critical Thinking
  - Problem-Solving
  - Teamwork
  - Personal employability skills such as
    - Responsibility
    - Persistence
    - Independence

Requirements
- Selected, designed, and developed by the student
- Reflect a minimum of 10 hours of out-of-class work (not to include research)
- Must be completed with collaboration of a teacher/media specialist
- Must be tangible or must be able to be documented if intangible
  - Intangible products must be documented with photographs, videos, logs, letters, receipts, certificates
- Products may be short-term or long-term, personal or public
- Must provide a learning stretch, students may not work on something in which they are already accomplished
- Must be approved by English teacher

Notice
- **Products do not require students to spend any money**. Many projects are service related and serve the community – for free!
- **Any cost incurred by the student is by his or her choice and should be discussed very carefully with parents.**
- Students who require minimal supplies and who encounter financial hardships should discuss avenues for donations with his or her teacher.
- Products that require large amounts of money for supplies or lessons do not necessarily earn a higher grade.
- Be creative with your product ideas and cost solutions!

Grading Criteria
- **All components of the research project (paper and product) will be entered into the "Writing" category of Focus unless otherwise specified.**

- For schools who grade by points, the project (paper & product) will be worth 100 points per marking period and the Final Approved by English Teacher
- Monitored and verified by English Teacher
- Graded by English Teacher

A Word of Warning!
- Students who choose topics in the medical, law, social work, athletic training and coaching field will not be approved unless the student can prove that they already have a mentor in that field secured. These occupations have professionals who are very busy and are often not available after hours for mentoring. Also, due to patient/client confidentiality issues, students have limited availability to business sites and information.

- Students must also choose a topic in which they are legally allowed to complete a project. For example, tattooing requires that all persons be at least 18 years old. If you will not be 18 prior to your project completion, you will not be able allowed to shadow at the establishment. All food-service products also require immunizations and TB testing; you must meet all requirements as any paid employee.

Grades 6-12 Mandatory Research Topics

Grades	Overarching Research Topics	Suggested Research Subcategories	Possible Products
6	**Visual & Performing Arts**	• Music Styles & Genre • Music of Specific Countries & Groups • History of Music	Learn to play a musical instrument
7	**Politics and Government**	• U.S. Constitutional History & Issues • International Relations	Write a speech in support of or to oppose affirmative action in higher education
8	**Heroes**	• Heroes in History • Peace Heroes • Mother Teresa	Create a historical fiction story or play
9	**Culture & Ethnic Groups**	• Ancient Civilization • Interracial Relationships	Create a historical artifact
10	**Harlem Renaissance**	• Art & Culture • Langston Hughes • Music	Write an original poem in the voice of one of the Harlem Renaissance poets.
11	**Careers**	• Medical Profession • Software Engineer • Marketing	Interview or job-shadowing with a journal a "day in the life" of the employee
12	**Social Issues**	• Child Abuse • Same-Sex Marriage • Civil Rights	Public Service Announcement bringing awareness to the social problem.

Grades 6-12 Research Submission Timeline
January 25 – June 10, 2016

Components	Due Dates	Points
Research Question	February 8 – 11, 2016	25
Review of Sources & Analysis	March 7-11, 2016	25
Thesis Proposal & Working/Annotated Bibliography	March 21-24, 2016	25
Original Research Design	March 28-April 1, 2016	25
Total Point-Marking Period 3		**100**
Research Product Results & Final Thesis	*April 4-8, 2016	25
Outline	*April 18-23, 2016	25
1st Draft & MLA Guidelines	*May 9-13, 2016	25
Product Presentation (Draft)	*May 16-20, 2016	25
Total Point-Marking Period 4		**100**
Final Research Paper & Product Presentation count as the FINAL EXAM	May 23-June 10, 2016	100

*If administering PARCC, accept submissions the following week; however all project presentations are due no later than June 10, 2016.

Grades 6-12 Pages, Notecards & Sources Requirements

Grade	# of Pages	Sources	Notecards per Source	Total # of Notecards
6	4	Minimum of 2	4	8
7	5	Minimum of 2	5	10
8	6	Minimum of 3	6	18
9	7	Minimum of 4	6-8	24-32
10	8	Minimum of 4	6-8	24-32
11	9	Minimum of 4	8-10	32-40
12	10	Minimum of 4	8-10	32-40

Sources to include:
- **One (1) print source (book, periodical)**
- **One (1) interview (generally with an individual with expertise or knowledge in your area of research)**
- **Internet sources**
  - **Students are to utilize The Big 6 (six-step process) when conducting research. School Media Specialist will assist with this process.**
  - **Students are not allowed to use any .com sites – especially Wikipedia.com.**
  - **Only .gov, .edu, .org sites only. Some .net sites will be allowed upon both teacher and media specialist approval.**

College & Career Anchor Standards

Reading

Key Ideas and Details
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

3. Write narratives develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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