Research Paper Requirements

TOPIC: You may choose to write on any topic that deals with American history. This is an opportunity to study in depth a topic of interest to you. You will have a more enjoyable experience researching and writing your paper if you have enthusiasm for your topic. The topic must be approved by the instructor.

1. The first step is to arrive at three possible topics of interest to you and hand them in.

2. The second step is to narrow your choices to one topic and then attempt to be as specific as possible. The topic must be approved by the instructor.

THESIS: Before you research you must have a main idea or thesis. The thesis is a statement of what you will prove in your paper. The thesis cannot be an accepted or established fact. The thesis must be approved by the instructor.

3. The third step is to write your thesis statement (or question) and have it approved.

SOURCES: You must have a minimum of seven sources. They can include books, magazines, newspapers, journals, diaries, or interviews. You should use only reliable sources. (Be careful – you can find anything on the Internet / Presidential libraries and the Library of Congress are excellent sources. Many of the sources that you will need to use are only going to be found in books.) Encyclopedias are not acceptable sources. (Although they are excellent for discovering what is common knowledge on your topic.) Please take advantage of the excellent libraries located nearby – JCCC, UMKC, Johnson County, and KU. Remember that just about every 11th grade student is going to be writing a research paper this quarter – material will be at a premium.

4. An initial bibliography is required to establish that there are sufficient materials to support your paper.

OUTLINE: A preliminary outline is a guide for organizing your research. The goal is to make sure that you don’t ignore a vital area of research.

5. Write your preliminary outline listing what areas you have researched.

NOTES: Use 3 x 5 note cards to organize your information. A bibliography card should record the book title, author, publisher, copyright date, and where you found the book.

Each note card should have no more than one piece of information on it. (Along with the title, author, and page number. Without the page number your information is worthless.) A color coding system can save you time.

All statistics, quotations, and specific information must be cited. Items that are common knowledge are not cited. (Common knowledge would be information found in an encyclopedia.) Refer to MLA style manual for proper method of citing.

6. Do your research and turn in notecards and bibliography cards for a grade.

Requirement: 100 notecards and 7 sources

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Your sources should be listed on a separate page at the end of your paper. Refer to MLA for proper form.
FINAL OUTLINE: The final outline presents the final shape of your paper. This is to check your Organization, and that you support your thesis statement.

7. Turn in final outline. (Typed)

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH: Because people always put off starting their paper, you will be Asked to turn in your introductory paragraph. Remember your Thesis is the last sentence in the paragraph.

8. Turn in introductory paragraph.

ROUGH DRAFT: The rough draft should be typed and includes-

- Introductory Paragraph – Thesis is the last sentence.
- Body – Supporting material.
- Conclusion

9. Write the rough draft. Turn in for a grade. We will take one day and exchange papers for Peer editing.

FINAL DRAFT: Final draft includes -

- Title Page
- Outline
- Paper – Introduction / thesis
  - Body – citations
  - Conclusion
- Bibliography
- Grade Rubric – Spelling
  - English
  - Sources
  - Citations
  - Paper – Organization
  - Supporting Material
  - Logic of Argument

10. Write final draft. **DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE – COMPUTER PROBLEMS ARE YOURS – NOT MINE!!!!!!**

11. CELEBRATE WILDLY – BUT WITHIN THE LAW!!!

INFORMATION AND ADVICE

1. Put all of your paper on a disk – it makes revising so simple.

2. You will present a 5-8 minute report to the class on your findings.


4. This is to represent your best work. No crossed out words / penciled in words.

5. The more citations you have the stronger your paper will be.

6. Use the last name of an individual over the age of 12. After you have introduced a person you then only use their last names. (Exceptions)

7. Use past tense / no personal pronouns.
8. Use abbreviations only after presenting the full title or name.

9. Do not use a symbol for "and."

10. Do not use cliches.

11. Use formal scholarly language / no slang / no contractions.

12. If you have questions ask them immediately. I can't help you if I don't know about them. Don't wait until the last minute. You will be graded on your ability to follow directions, the content of your paper, the quality of your research, and the mechanic of the paper.

13. **The paper is due on the date assigned – NO LATE WORK ACCEPTED!!!!!**

14. **The research paper is a requirement for passing the class!!!!!**

15. Grades:
   - 3 topics
   - 1 topic
   - Thesis
   - Initial Bibliography
   - Preliminary Outline
   - Notecards
   - Final Outline
   - Introductory Paragraph
   - Rough Draft
   - Final Draft

   Final Draft
   - Cover Sheet
   - Outline
   - Paper
   - Bibliography