

# Vermilion Parish School Board

## *Senior Project Guide*

Initial Implementation

August 2009

# Why Do Senior Projects?

## Because senior projects can help students .....

- model independent, lifelong, learning skills.
- apply competent basic skills.
- use effective self-evaluation skills.
- work successfully, independently, and interdependently.
- practice decision-making strategies.
- have a sense of self-confidence.
- understand the importance of a sense of humor.
- recognize and understand systems.
- demonstrate responsibility, reliability, and accountability.
- meet challenges without undue stress.
- have a sense of personal skills and abilities.
- be able to create a plan and follow through.
- understand the complexities, connections, and relationships within ideas and disciplines.
- celebrate personal success and that of others.
- feel empowered, valued, and capable.
- learn to problem-solve.
- communicate effectively.
- be prepared to embrace life.
- be courteous and polite.
- use critical and creative thinking skills.
- demonstrate ethical behavior.
- maintain a balanced perspective.
- understand and demonstrate a quest for quality.
- value tolerance, patience, and diversity.
- set and reach goals.
- enjoy learning.
- be able to network within and contribute to your community.
- apply time management skills.
- recognize and value the success of others.

# What are some important ideas embedded in the VPSB Senior Project?

The VPSB Senior Project's success hinges on several beliefs.

- 1. Seniors deserve the best efforts and highest expectations. All graduating students should be actively engaged and rigorously involved in learning and applying sophisticated skills.**

The senior year should be challenging and, to some degree, student-driven. Remember, 75% of students in traditional high schools want to be seniors. They watch seniors, model what seniors do, and can't wait to become seniors themselves.

If others see seniors as challenged, excited, and meeting a requirement framed by high standards, learning tension, interest, and skill, then the senior year is seen as challenging and critical to their future. After all, shouldn't seniors represent the most skilled and educated students in the high school?

- 2. The VPSB Senior Project will help prepare seniors for success in life, school, employment, relationships, and finances. Sophisticated skill application and student initiative should be a standard expectation for graduating seniors.**

Planning and preparing college or workforce applications, though important, should not be the only rigorous, defining force of the senior year. It is a mistake to ask too little of seniors. Irresponsibility and disengagement should not be expected as normal, nor should substandard work be allowed. To find success, the senior must exhibit hard work, goal setting, commitment, and problem-solving abilities.

In other words, seniors should be required to work hard, problem solve, and practice self-directed learning. Excitement and interest in reaching a personal educational goal would follow. Seniors are the end result of a huge effort involving a large number of people. Every educator is a teacher of seniors. In fact, the child in kindergarten is simply a "senior in progress." Being aware of seniors' skill levels and quality of work produced can result in developing viable curricula which will help graduates make better use of skills.

Community members' involvement in the educational process will have direct bearing on the productivity of graduating seniors.

The VPSB Senior Project represents a long-term educational legacy that requires a vision and continued commitment. Stellar programs take time to develop and need annual evaluation, upgrades, monitoring, and adjustments. Staff should be willing to take risks, make mistakes, and think outside the box. No amount of information, planning, or prior experience will make the path perfectly clear. Sophisticated programs represent hard work and constant vigilance, just as all good teaching does. "If you are not making mistakes, you are probably not making anything" certainly applies to the VPSB Senior Project.

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# Section I - Introduction

1.) Overview

2.) Louisiana State Law HB 1990:R.S. 17:235.2

3.) Letters to Students and Parents

4.) Project Outline

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# Vermilion Parish School Board Senior Project Overview

During their senior year, students in Vermilion Parish public high schools will be required to complete a multifaceted project which will give them the opportunity to exhibit, in summary fashion, the skills, knowledge, creativity, and talents which they have been developing throughout their education. This Senior Project will be introduced as part of the English IV and Business English curriculum and will comprise a part of the grade for this course. The Senior Project will not only require the student to read and write; each student must employ self-discipline, organizational skills, initiative, and imagination in a dynamic and exciting project. It will allow students the freedom to explore a career area or field of their own choosing, and an opportunity to relate what they have learned to the “real world.”

**The Senior Project will consist of four basic components:**

- **1.) a research paper (8 - 10 pgs.)**
- **2.) a physical product based on research and inquiry**
- **3.) an oral presentation reflecting on the paper, the product, and the student’s own experiences during the completion of the project**
- **4.) a portfolio containing all rubrics, checklists, and research materials employed in producing the product.**

**The first component of the Senior Project will consist of a research paper.** This should be 8 to 10 (body) pages in length. **The students will be required to employ five or more citations from five or more sources using the format designated by the teacher.** These sources should consist of primary (interviews, surveys, etc.) and/or secondary sources (books, magazine articles, scholarly journals, etc.).

**The second component of the Senior Project will consist of a concrete or abstract example of their work experiences, investigations, and research (product).** An example of the product might be a work of art, photographs, a student film, a performance, or a musical composition. It could be a scale model or perhaps an example of a type of cooking or even a machine. There will be a wide range of choices for this component, but this phase will have some basic requirements. **Students will be required to spend at least twenty hours (outside of class)** on this phase of the project, and a mentor must verify this time using the appropriate form.

**The third component of the Senior Project will be an 8-10 minute Power Point presentation to be delivered before a panel of judges comprised of retired teachers, community members, school staff, school board employees, and school board members.** The student will explain and reflect on their research, present their visual example (product), and describe their personal experiences with the entire Senior Project. Students should also anticipate a short question and answer period following the oral presentation.

**The final component of the Senior Project will consist of a portfolio, which will document the student’s entire Senior Project.** This portfolio will include all of the rubrics, checklists, timelines, prewriting, drafts, plans, graphic organizers, and evaluations the student has received and employed to complete the project. A copy of the final research paper is to be included in this portfolio. The student will retain the portfolio after graduation as a record of their experiences. The school will keep copies of the rubrics on file for a period of three years after graduation.

## Senior Project Requirements/ Timeline

**1<sup>st</sup> six weeks-** \*Brainstorming and research of career topics (3 interests), mentor agreement, parent acknowledgement form, interview mentor, one day of leave time to acquire mentor hours and \*various forms.

\*Brainstorming-Career interest inventory, possible choices, research topics of interest, job possibilities (possible websites for discovery= [www.laeportal.com](http://www.laeportal.com), [www.laworks.com](http://www.laworks.com), [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)).

\*Forms and information reviewing interview format, professional attire and behavior, protocol for beginning a communication between the student and mentor.

**2<sup>nd</sup> six weeks-** One release day will be included during the six weeks. Teachers will monitor mentoring logs and journals. By the end of the second six weeks, the letter of intent is due. Continue discovery through classroom activities to keep students focused.

**3<sup>rd</sup> six weeks-** One release day will be included during the six weeks. Teachers will continue to monitor mentoring. The students will complete mentoring by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> six weeks and will complete mentoring journals. Continue discovery through classroom activities to keep students focused. \*By the end of the third six weeks, students must have completed a plan (at teacher's discretion) for their physical product that ties into their research.

\*What will the student create? I.e. The student will write an essay by the end of the third six weeks outlining the plans they foresee for their research paper, portfolio, product, and presentation.

**4<sup>th</sup> six weeks-** \*Research paper components covered in class. The completed research paper (8-10 body pages) is due at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> six weeks. The completed paper will be graded for content and form according to a state-developed rubric.

\*Criteria and components will be determined by the individual teachers. Due to pupil progression, papers will be turned in within the first week of the 5<sup>th</sup> six weeks.

**5<sup>th</sup> six weeks-** Research paper will be turned in at the beginning of the six weeks. Teachers will use the state-developed rubric to assess. Students will work on presentations and portfolios. (Other-Learning logs, product description, mentor verification.)

**Beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> six weeks-** Presentations will be done in front of the class and a panel which may consist of retired teachers, community members, school staff, school board employees, and school board members. The presentations/ products will be judged according the state-developed rubric. The school will keep rubrics and return portfolios to students.

\*\*All presentations must be completed by the middle of May.

**Students and parents, please read and sign this page. (REQUIRED FORM # 1)**

In accordance with Louisiana State Law HB 1990:R.S. 17: 235.2 which states that students must “demonstrate significant effort toward completing all required class work and homework assignments,” and in an effort to enhance student success, the Senior Project Committee will implement the following pyramid of intervention for identifying and assisting “at risk” students:

**1.) Upon missing the first deadline, the Senior Project Committee will:**

- A. identify the student as being “at risk.”**
- B. phone parents or guardians at home**

In order for a senior to receive credit for his or her Senior Project, all components must be completed. If a student fails to complete the Portfolio, Research Paper, Product, or Presentation, no credit will be given for any of these components and affected grades will be changed.

It is the intent and purpose of the Senior Project to allow seniors to assume more responsibility in their own learning processes while also encouraging them to use and apply what they have learned in a “real world” environment. The ultimate direction and expression of the Senior Project will be the student’s responsibility, although students will need to communicate carefully and often with faculty members and mentors. Creativity is encouraged and many Senior Projects will be unique and perhaps unusual.

It is hoped that the Senior Project will be both challenging and exciting and will allow students to realize and achieve their full potential. Signing this means that the student understands and will abide by the above rules and regulations. Also, I, the student, have been cautioned to make a hard copy of my term paper and all supporting documents.

**STUDENT SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dear Senior,**

The purpose of the Senior Project is to allow **you** to **choose the content** of your learning, to **shape the process** of your learning, and to **produce high quality work** that is the result of your learning.

• **You can learn about anything you want!!!**

• The learning process will probably involve hands-on experiences, research using primary sources, especially interviews, and research using secondary sources, most likely text. The specific nature of this learning process will be determined by the content you choose to research.

• One product of your work will be a **paper** of eight to ten body pages in length. The paper should be a traditional research essay following a format that will be determined by your teacher.

• Another product of your work will be either a tangible **product**, some "thing" that you created, or it will be an experience or set of experiences. If your project is "experience" oriented, you should plan on somehow documenting that experience, either in words, pictures, sounds or video.

• A **portfolio** will document your progress and keep you organized. It will contain various elements and forms as outlined in the booklet, and the final corrected copy of your research paper will be included.

• Finally, you will have the opportunity to present your project to a panel. Your presentation will allow you to explain your project and exhibit all that you have learned through your research. Your **presentation** will include an eight to ten minute PowerPoint presentation including your product and your portfolio and will be the culminating activity of your Senior Project.

Ideally, the work on the paper, the research you are doing, and the work on the project, are very much in accord, and, in some cases, are reflections of each other.

In May you will give an eight to ten-minute oral presentation followed by a question and answer period on the Senior Project before a panel of five or six judges in which you will discuss what you got out of the work you did.

**Find something you really want to do.** You should look forward to doing this work. Make sure your research and project work are sufficiently focused and possible, so you can complete a satisfying experience.

Believe us when we say: **You can learn about anything you want!**

The whole point of this project is that you do something you want to do that leads to a new challenge and **high quality** work worthy of a high school senior. The central purpose of the project should have meaning to you. The goal is for you to find satisfaction when you have completed an excellent project. With hopes of your continued success, I remain,

Yours in education,

---

(Teacher Signature)

**Dear Parents/Guardians of Vermilion Parish Seniors,**

As your son/daughter may have indicated to you, seniors are required to complete a Senior Project. This Project has four components: **a research paper**; **a product**, which is related to the paper; **an oral presentation** of the paper and project to a panel of judges; and **a portfolio** which reflects the creation of the project from beginning to end. This Project will call upon your son/daughter to use the skills he/she has acquired and practiced throughout their twelve years of formal education. Separate components of the Senior Project will be assigned each six weeks and will make up part of the student's six weeks grade.

The first component of this Project, the research paper, will require the student to use specific skills such as research, organization, and time management to produce a fairly lengthy document following a specified format. Senior classes will complete this during their fourth six weeks, and will turn them in at the beginning of the fifth six weeks.

The second component is the actual physical product (visual), a "hands-on" experience or product related to some aspect of the research topic. To attain the necessary experience, the student will need a mentor who will provide some expertise and verify that the student has spent at least the required **20** hours of observation. The product will be worked on and completed outside of the regular classroom.

Third, the student will be responsible for delivering an eight to ten-minute PowerPoint presentation to a panel of adults. During this presentation, the student will explain the learning which occurred in completing the research, product, and portfolio. These presentations will take place at the beginning of the sixth six weeks as a culmination of the work completed.

Finally, the last component of the overall Project is a portfolio, which will contain all of the instructions, rubrics, guidelines, learning logs, a copy of the research paper, a printed copy of the PowerPoint presentation, and any other materials pertaining to the Senior Project.

One of the objectives of the Senior Project is to teach students to prioritize their time in order to meet deadlines. Due dates for the components are given in advance and students are expected to meet them.

A successful Senior Project involves parent, teacher, and mentor support as well as student initiative and self-discipline. To graduate, the student must complete and pass each of the above components. We hope you will become involved with your son/daughter in this endeavor. If we all work together, this will be one of the most rewarding experiences the students will have in high school! More detailed information is available in the Senior Project Manual, which your son/daughter has received and has been posted on the Vermilion Parish homepage at [www.vrml.k12.la.us](http://www.vrml.k12.la.us).

Sincerely,

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(Teacher Signature)

**VERMILION PARISH HIGH SCHOOLS  
SENIOR PROJECT PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM**

**(Required Form #2)**

As a parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, a senior at  
(Student's Name)

\_\_\_\_\_, I am aware that my son/daughter must complete  
(Name of High School)

a Senior Project based upon the career of their choosing. The project includes a research paper, PowerPoint presentation including a physical/visual product, portfolio, and oral presentation to a panel of judges. For their senior project, my son/daughter has chosen to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(continue on back if necessary)

I am aware that my child has chosen to research this career as their senior project. He/she will complete this project, and I agree to release the school district and its employees from all claims arriving from financial obligation incurred, or damage, injury, or accident suffered while my son/daughter participates in the project that he/she has chosen.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: (Home)(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work)(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

VERMILION PARISH SCHOOL BOARD URGES SENIORS TO CONSIDER THE SAFETY FACTOR WHEN SELECTING THEIR PROJECT AND TO CONSIDER ANOTHER CHOICE IF THEY WISH TO CHOOSE A PROJECT INVOLVING DANGER TO THEMSELVES OR OTHERS.

## **Section II - Brainstorming/Topic Selection & Required Forms**

### **1.) Brainstorming Section**

### **2.) Required Forms Including:**

**A.) Proposal**

**B.) Letter of Intent Form**

**C.) Parent Consent Form**

**D.) Student/Mentor Agreement**

**E.) Publication releases (if needed)**

**F.) Mentor Verification Sheet**

### **3.) Learning Process Portfolio**

# BRAINSTORMING

(REQUIRED FORM #3)

Because you will be spending many weeks working on your project, you will need to consider your topic choices carefully. Think about your world and what you would like to fix, do, learn, understand, see, improve, create, experience, or own. Go through the following checklist and circle the subjects which hold your interest: (You may add your own.)

literature	music	communications	woodworking	travel	careers
mechanics	dance	literature	religion	electricity	history
art	biology	computer graphics	education	carpentry	government
math	medicine	taxidermy	social studies	cooking	film making
science	languages	social problems	photography	local industry	anthropology
manufacturing	business	game conservation	robotics	astronomy	psychology
computers	sewing	politics/government	space	special hobbies	engineering
cultures	economics	writing	books	health	marketing
philosophy	sports	ecology	movies	comics	military

genealogy	theatre	endangered species	collecting		
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\*Look over your ideas and consider the ones that are the most feasible then go to the next page.

**(REQUIRED FORM #4)**

Ask yourself these questions for each idea:

- Can I make a research paper out of this?
- Is there adequate information out there to gather?
- Can I make an object to relate to my research paper?
- Can I afford the materials needed to make the “thing”?
- Will I be learning anything new from this research?
- Will this keep my interest over the next 18 weeks?
- Could this lead to a possible career opportunity?

Go back and circle the ones that are potential senior projects. You may want to set this rubric aside and revisit it in one week to give your mind a chance to process these ideas. If you get new ideas in the meantime, write them down and attach them to the rubric.

The next step is to narrow your ideas again to make a final decision. Using the three boxes below, select Transfer the circled items into the boxes below and think about your ideas and possibilities for a product.

Idea #1:  Product:	Idea #2:  Product:	Idea #3:  Product:
Idea: Research Focus:  Product:	Idea: Research Focus:  Product:	Idea: Research Focus:  Product:
Idea:  Product: Product:	Idea:  Product: Product:	Idea:  Product: Product:

your top three choices and complete the box for each

**(REQUIRED FORM #5)**

It is now time to make your final selection. Looking at the three boxes on the previous page then answer these questions:

- Which idea is the most unique and will differ from other Senior Projects?
- Which idea best demonstrates my talents?
- Which idea will have the most resources available?
- Which idea do I have a secret desire to pursue?
- Which idea would my parents most like to see me accomplish?
- In spite of what others think, what do I want to do?

Now count up how many times you marked each idea. The idea with the most marks is the Senior Project you should pursue! If you ended up with a tie, answer the questions again - this time, honestly.

Once you have your area of focus, take some time to analyze your decision. If you suspect that your project isn't all you thought it would be, you will need to perform the topic selection process again. It is much easier to change topics at this point, rather than once you've begun your research.

Take a few days off and relax. Try to visualize the final product as you would like to present it to the public. The next phase of preparation is the research paper. Your teacher will provide class time to work on the components of the research paper.

Remember, students will often select a topic that is too broad for their project such as "space" or "medicine." In order not to be overwhelmed, it is important that a student focus on a manageable topic in their chosen field. Focusing on a specific topic is part of the research and will make the entire process much easier.

Field (such as Space or Computer Science or Environmental Studies, etc.)

Area (such as Space Exploration or Robotics or Conservation, etc.)

Specific Topic (such as Mars exploration or Computer Robotics in Medicine, Louisiana Wetlands Management, etc.)

Focus on a manageable topic!

## CREATING THE PRODUCT

The next step to completing your Senior Project is creating a visual depiction (product) to go along with your research paper. This product represents a hands-on experience. It allows the student to apply the information gained in research to create a product demonstrating learning and mastery of the topic. The product can take on a variety of forms (construct, make, perform, volunteer, etc.) You will have four weeks to complete this facet of the project. Return to your brainstorming rubric to refresh yourself on your visual idea.

There are a variety of ways to demonstrate your information. Below is a list of possibilities: (You can add your own.)

make a book	research a trade	write a story
make a video	build a machine	hold a mock trial
compose a song	write a comic strip	teach a class
create an event	design a web site	sew a garment
make a model	write a play	cook a special dish
create artwork	make a commercial	create a robot
perform an experiment	create/write a game	start a business
choreograph a dance	design a model	design a marketing campaign
perform an investigation	re-enact an event	write a program
shadow a job	explore a historical site	customize an object

Decide which avenue will best meet your goals for your presentation.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do I have access to supplies and equipment?
- How long will it take to make?
- Will I get bored with it?
- Will everybody else do the same thing?
- Am I really interested in making the product I am thinking of?
- Will my product reflect the best efforts I can offer?
- Are my talents being used to their fullest?



## Planning for the product

(Use at teacher's discretion)

Once you have realistically decided on a product, create a plan of action to get it into existence:  
(Who do I need to contact? What materials do I need to secure? How will I physically make it?  
How long should each step take? Etc.)

Step 1:	Step 2:	Step 3:	Step 4:
Step 5:	Step 6:	Step 7:	Step 8:

Now that your plan of action is complete, schedule days to accomplish steps of the process. Use a calendar. Fill in the appropriate dates for the month first; then write in your deadlines and activities.

Record everything on your calendar. The calendar will be checked by your teacher during scheduled conference days.

## Vermilion Parish Senior Project Letter of Intent

Your Mailing Address  
City, State, Zip  
Today's Date

Your English Teacher's Name  
Vermilion High School (School name and address)  
#1 School Board Drive  
Abbeville, LA 70510

Dear (English Teacher's Name):

Paragraph 1: Describe your general area of interest (history, art, science, technology, recreation, etc.) and tell why you chose this area. Explain what you already know or have accomplished in this area.

Paragraph 2: Describe your product. Tell what it will be, who will be involved, how it will be accomplished, and what benefits will come from your completion of this project.

Paragraph 3: Begin with a transitional sentence that shows the relationship between your project and your research paper. Then state your specific research topic. Include some of the ideas you hope to cover, and some of your possible resources.

Paragraph 4 Tell who your mentor will be or how you plan to obtain a mentor (an adult qualified to help you in your field). Explain whom you plan to interview for information and identify their expertise or background.

Paragraph 5: Explain your understanding of plagiarism and the repercussions of such an act, including the fact that this would result in a failing English grade for the component of the Senior Project on which you are working. Conclude with a statement affirming that you will not plagiarize or falsify any of the information in your research or your project.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

(Your typed name)

## SAMPLE LETTER OF INTENT # 1

123 Main Street  
Anywhere, LA 70084  
September 1, 2009

Mrs. Jane Smith  
Vermilion Parish High School  
#1 High School Drive  
Anywhere, LA 70000

Dear Mrs. Smith:

For as long as I can remember, I have been interested in woodworking, specifically the design and manufacture of home furnishings like chairs and tables. I have virtually no experience in this area, aside from making a cutting board and a mailbox for my grandmother 3 years ago in junior high school wood shop class, so I would be learning almost from scratch.

I plan to build two Adirondack chairs with footstools and a matching small table. I recently purchased a table saw for my shop, so I will be able to work at home during the winter after school and on weekends. I haven't priced wood recently, and I'm not sure yet what wood I will use, but I expect this project to cost about \$100 for the wood, sandpaper, screws, and paint. I'm not sure how long the entire project will take, but I expect to spend three-four weeks on it, working several hours at a time two-three days a week. Given my lack of previous woodworking experience, completing two chairs with footstools and a table will be quite a challenge and certainly a stretch of my current abilities.

To help me settle on the exact design of the chairs and table, I will research the history and evolution of Adirondack furniture. Using both woodworking and historical sources, I hope to find the origin of this distinctly American design and some of the reasons Adirondack furnishings have remained so popular through the years.

I have already asked Ron Sterni, a former shop teacher and cabinetmaker living in Sonora, to be my mentor. He is used to working with both beginning and advanced students, and he has been building beautiful cabinets and furniture for over 35 years. I would also like to contact John Hongola, a local artist who makes very unique and beautiful furniture.

I know that plagiarism is stealing another author's words or ideas without giving him or her credit. I understand that if any part of my research paper is plagiarized, I will receive an F on the paper and in my English class.

Sincerely,

*Steve Student*

Steve Student

## Section III - The Learning Portfolio

During your Senior Project you will be creating a portfolio. In addition to the required components, the following is a list of suggested items you should place in your portfolio:

- 1.) Any memories from your mentor
- 2.) Pictures of your project
- 3.) Letters, printed e-mails/on-line conversations
- 4.) Faxes
- 5.) Written/tape-recorded messages
- 6.) Written descriptions of meetings with your mentor
- 7.) Shopping lists and receipts for items purchased
- 8.) Calendars and check lists
- 9.) Flyers and/or business cards
- 10.) Diagrams, sketches, and drawings
- 11.) Any notes you have taken
- 12.) TV listings for programs relating to your topic
- 13.) Phone number logs
- 14.) Any pamphlets, newspaper, magazine, or Internet articles
- 15.) Critiques and editorials
- 16.) PowerPoint presentation (required)
- 17.) Timelines
- 18.) Any leftover materials from your product
- 19.) Any other materials you feel are pertinent to your project
- 20.) The completed research paper

Remember, your portfolio is your evidence that you have been continually working on your project throughout the school year. It will be reviewed periodically and date stamped as monitoring of ongoing work.

Do not assemble this at the last minute as it is very obvious to the panel and to your teacher when this is done and your portfolio grade will suffer!

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## PORTFOLIO COVER SHEET

- DID THIS STUDENT ASSEMBLE AND COMPLETE THE PORTFOLIO IN A TIMELY MANNER?

YES      NO

- DID THIS STUDENT PRESENT A RESEARCH PAPER WITH A SUPPORTABLE THESIS ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED?

YES      NO

- DID THIS STUDENT PROVIDE A SIGNIFICANT, “FUNCTIONAL” FINAL PRODUCT?

YES      NO

- DID THIS STUDENT SHOW IN-CLASS EVIDENCE OF PRESENTATION READINESS?

YES      NO

TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Vermilion Parish Senior Project Portfolio Components**

**Your portfolio will be housed in a two-inch binder. The portfolio must be decorated, presentable, and professional. Your work must be a clear reflection of your senior project, and it must include all of the required components.**

## **Required Pieces:**

- 1. Introduction to you and your project**
- 2. Brainstorming**
- 3. Parental Acknowledgement Forms**
- 4. Proposal and Letter of Intent**
- 5. Mentor Agreement**
- 6. Record of Twenty Project Hours with Mentor Verification**
- 7. Learning Log (with pictures if applicable) and Interview Record**
- 8. Research Components**
- 9. Final Research Paper and Rubric**
- 10. Printed copy of PowerPoint presentation**
- 11. Senior Project Self Reflection**

# Portfolio Evaluation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title of Project \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Section I - Required Content</b>				
	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Table of Contents				
Letter of Intent/Project Proposal				
Stretch commitment				
Documentation of hours				
Research paper				
Mentor Verification Contact Record				
Parent consent				
Reflection of learning				
<b>Section II—Creativity/Appearance</b>				
	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Cover design (Electronic or bound--contains graphic/visual related to project, title of project, student name, instructor name, pleasing composition, and appropriate use of space)				
Neatness and professional appearance (visually appealing and organized, clean, purposeful, and functional)				
<b>Section III--Supplemental 1</b>				
	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Teachers should check which of the following items should be included in the portfolio:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Letter of recommendation				
<input type="checkbox"/> Résumé				
<input type="checkbox"/> Graphics (sketches, designs, photographs, paintings, pictures, etc.)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Videos				
<input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint™				
<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates				
<input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorming				
<input type="checkbox"/> Interview documentation				
<input type="checkbox"/> Research bibliography/note cards				
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing assignments				
<input type="checkbox"/> Letter to the panel members				
<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation plan				
<input type="checkbox"/> Scrapbook				
<input type="checkbox"/> Assignments				
<input type="checkbox"/> Thank you notes				
Scoring: 4 = Excellent - (complete, clearly stated, error free, meets all the requirements provided in writing by teacher) 3= Good (complete, a few minor errors, meets most of the requirements provided in writing by teacher) 2= Average (meets most of the requirements provided in writing by teacher.) 1 = Unacceptable or Poor (incomplete or contains major errors, some requirements not met)				

# THE PERSONAL LEARNING JOURNAL

(Use at teacher's discretion)

Students are required to maintain a journal as they continue their work on all facets of the Senior Project. As the student begins the project, he or she will begin keeping a log of all activities performed and all experiences pertaining to the Senior Project. The learning log should be an actual retelling of what the student experienced each day (including what the student did, when it was done, and what was learned as it was done.) It will be checked regularly for compliance. This journal will comprise one of the components of the Senior Project portfolio.

During the product facet of the project, students will need to log in at least 20 work hours on a mentor log that is included in this handbook. **All mentor contact work hours should be verified by your mentor who will initial the form and make any applicable comments.**

**You will be completing journals during the course of your project. Your teacher will check learning journals for a grade. Make sure you stay current with yours.**

Get into the habit of making entries every day or so to document your progress.

You can make copies of the forms in this booklet or go to the Vermilion Parish website to obtain a copy of the journal form (as well as any other form you might need).

**Note – When printing forms make sure to indicate CURRENT PAGE in the copies box so that the entire manual does not print!**

(Sample)

(Use at teacher's discretion)

(Sample)

Personal Learning Journal

Name Ima Student

Date 8/28/08

Teacher Mrs. Newsome

Topic Salt Water Intrusion in Vermilion Parish

Period 2

Mentor (if applicable) Name Mr. Smith

Initial CJS

(Must be an adult.)

Position Supervisor - Bonne Carre Spillway

Telephone 985-555-1255

**Actual Log: What have you done? When did you do it? Where do you stand at this point? Describe the status of your project and what progress you have made this week. Include any feelings, reactions, successes/failures, frustrations, and victories/defeats.**

*I have obtained maps of the waterways in St. John Parish and am in the process of gathering information about how far salt water has intruded into the areas around St. John Parish. I have contacted the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to get information about how this has affected wild life in the area and will contact some seafood vendors to find out how salt water affects their livelihood. I am having trouble contacting someone in the Seafood industry on Monday.*

**What needs to be done next?**

*I will ask Mr. Smith when I see him on Tuesday to help me locate a contact in the seafood industry. I went to the Bonnie Carrie Commission and found several people who would be willing to help me. I will begin constructing my display next week. I have gotten some really neat maps and charts to use for my product, but I can't seem to find a lot about salt water intrusion in the school library so I am going to have to ask Mr. Smith if he knows where I can find some sources for my research paper.*

**Mentor Comments (if applicable):**

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**Remember that the log is very important when the teacher evaluates your portfolio.**

# Personal Learning Journal

(Use at teacher's discretion)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor: (if applicable) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Initial \_\_\_\_\_  
(Must be an adult.)

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Actual Log:** What have you done? When did you do it? Where do you stand at this point?  
*Describe the status of your project and what progress you have made this week. Include any feelings, reactions, successes/failures, frustrations, and victories/defeats.*

**What needs to be done next?**

**Mentor Comments (if applicable):**

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*Remember that the log is very important when the teacher evaluates your portfolio.*

# Finding a Mentor

**Finding a mentor is a requirement of the Senior Project.** Your mentor agreement is an important document and must be completed in a timely fashion. Seek out an individual who has experience in the field you plan to research for your project. There are many people in your community who have the type of knowledge you seek. He or she can be any adult who is established in your field of study. Your personal mentor will need to verify your logged hours, and your teacher will monitor your progress during research and construction of your product.

- \* In some cases an immediate relative may be allowed at the teacher's discretion depending on the candidate's qualifications.

## Mentor Requirements

1. The mentor must be knowledgeable about the field. This means that the mentor has significant experience in the subject that you wish to explore.
2. Mentors must be adults and not your peers. This will be approved by your English teacher.
3. The mentor must be available for consultation. Your mentor must be able to meet you on a regular basis, which is a minimum of four meetings, and be able to verify that you actually completed your required hours.

## How to Find a Mentor

Decide on your field first, and then try some of the following methods to find a mentor:

1. Select a person at your fieldwork site.
2. Consult the yellow pages.
3. Ask relatives or friends who are working in the related fields (they must meet the above requirements).
4. Ask current or former employers.
5. Consult your own physician/dentist/if your fieldwork is medically related.
6. Consult zoos, aquariums, and/or parks/recreation departments.
7. Consult city and county agencies in related fields.
8. Consult teachers of the classes that you are attending for fieldwork. (Most teachers cannot take on more than one student, however.)
9. Consult senior teachers and counselors to see if they know someone.
10. Contact local universities and trade schools.



# Mentor Job Description

(This form is to be given to your mentor.)

Thank you for taking on the task of mentoring one of Vermilion Parish's seniors during his or her work on a Senior Project. It is because of the efforts of community volunteers like yourself that we are successful. In order to make the experiences between you and your senior a worthwhile and rewarding one, allow us to briefly outline some of the things that you can do to assist the student in successfully completing the Senior Project. You may:

1. Offer advice and direction with regard to the topic/thesis choice of the research paper and project.
2. Suggest some sources that the student can seek out for research.
3. Read the preliminary draft of the research paper and offer constructive criticism with regards to content.
4. Loan the student any materials to which you have access that will help the student complete his/her paper or project.
5. Listen to the student's presentation and offer suggestions for improvement.
6. Meet with the student on a regular basis to check his/her progress.
7. Encourage the student to perform at his/her maximum.
8. Reassure the student that there is a light and success at the end of the tunnel.

Finally, allow us to once again thank you for your time and generosity.

## The Senior English Teachers of Vermilion Parish

Mentor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # and/or E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



# Student/Mentor Agreement

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation/Expertise: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Work (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Home/Cell (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Brief Project Description: (Share this information with your mentor at the conference.)**

**I need help from my mentor in the following areas:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Mentor Comments: (Please directly address what you can provide to meet each of the student's needs.)**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Mentor Agreement:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to help my mentee with each of the above items. I understand that it is my responsibility to verify that the student has worked for at least twenty hours on the completion of this project. My mentee and his/her teacher may contact me about this project at the phone number indicated above. I have been given a timeline by my mentee, and I will help him/her meet all required deadlines and components.

## **Section IV- Research Paper Instructions**

### Research Paper Instructions

1. Research Paper Agenda
2. Developing a Thesis Statement
3. Citing Sources Guidelines
4. Senior Project Writing Style Sheet
5. Rough Copy Editing Sheet
6. Plagiarism Document
7. Research Paper Rubric

\*Teachers can use discretion in the requirements they set for their students.

# Research Paper Agenda

## Phase I: Research Paper Explanation and Thesis Topic

You will write a one-paragraph general explanation of your term paper topic including any details you already know about your topic and questions you are forming about your topic. Remember that you will be **exploring, investigating, discovering, and deciding something about the topic you have chosen**. In this explanation, you will begin to narrow your research idea into one thesis statement.

**The thesis statement** is the sentence that tells the whole focus of the paper or what you are proving by investigating the topic. **A thesis statement should state the position which you will be supporting throughout your paper**. Be sure you have a clear thesis statement and be sure to include it in your introductory paragraph.

## Phase II: Library Research

The class will spend time in the library or computer lab, affording you class time to get some research done. You must also spend time out of school doing research. You will need the following materials:

- **Index cards (according to teacher's directions)**
- **10" x 13" brown envelope with clasp**
- **Paper, pens, rubber bands, paper clips**
- **Change for copies**
- **Disk or jump drive**

\*Library time will allow you to complete these three research components: bibliography cards, index cards, and outlines.

**Bibliography cards** – a list of resources you are using in your term paper.

Bibliographical information must be correctly written on index cards. Your ten bibliography cards should contain a variety of reliable sources: books, CD-ROMS, articles, and digital sources. You must cite at least five sources in your paper. Refer to the written format expected by your teacher.

\*It is important that each student keep a copy of rough drafts, notes, and final draft of his/her term paper as a hard copy and saved on a disk in Microsoft Word.

*The following three pages are to be used at the teacher's discretion.*

## Preliminary Outline

This is a written or working outline to guide your note taking. This outline will probably change as you research your topic. Below is what a topic outline might resemble:

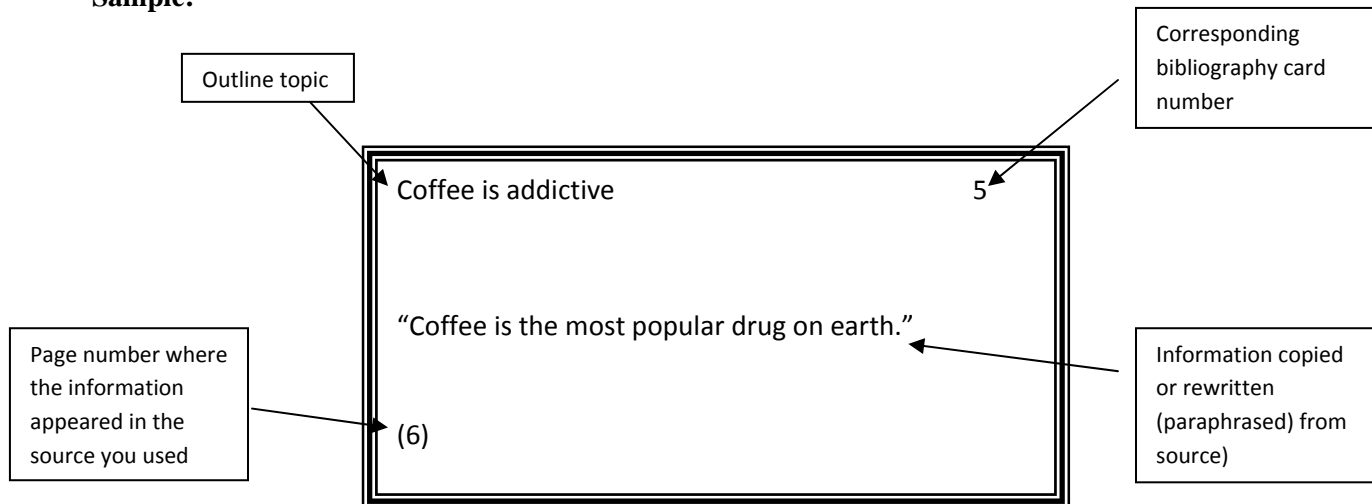
### Writing the Note Cards

Note cards are index cards that contain specific notes or information you gather for your research paper. The purpose of the note card step is to have you read, select, and evaluate specific information that matches your preliminary outline and information that supports the thesis statement of your research. The focus must be on reading and evaluating. *HINT*: Remember, when you switch topics or sources, you must move to another card. Fill a note card only with information you know you can use.

When writing note cards, you can use either of two methods. You may use the *direct quote* method where you copy information as it appears in a source, or you may use the *paraphrase* method where you put the author's thoughts into your own words. When using the direct quote method, remember to place quotation marks around the sentence you copy. When paraphrasing, be careful not to distort the original idea presented by the author and simply write your opinion. It is not your original idea, so you must give the author credit.

It is also essential that you carefully label and document each card you write. Each note card must contain the following: the outline topic, the corresponding bibliographic card number or author's name, the copied or restated information, and the page number where the information was found in the source.

### Sample:



**Note Cards** – cards containing information you gather for your term paper. Take your notes on index cards. You must use both direct and indirect quotes. Remember to use quotation marks for all direct quotes. You may summarize in your own words as you go.

**Format for note cards:**

Author's last name/book & page  
Topic from outline

_____
_____
_____ (note and quotes here)
_____
_____

When should you start a new card?

- When you go to a new page in the book you are using.
- When you go to a new book to take notes.
- When you go to a new topic in your outline.
- When you have completely filled the card and wish to continue taking notes from the same book, same page, and same outline topic. Put the same heading on the index card, and add “continued” next to the outline topic.

Remember that your research paper must be written in your own words with only a few quotes.

**Final Outline** – revised preliminary outline. Use the same format.

**Phase III: Writing the paper**

**Rough Draft** – Place them in order according to your final outline. Begin the rough draft by writing the introduction with the thesis statement as the last sentence of that paragraph. Write the body of each supporting note incorporating your point into it. Use transitions to connect ideas and to lead in to different supporting points. Information that you paraphrased and quoted directly must be cited in your paper. This means that you must state in parentheses the source of your information. Use the author's last name and the page number. If there is no author, or one author wrote more than one of the books you are using, write the title of the book and the page number.

**Works Cited** – Following the text of the paper, you will include a page called “Works Cited.” You must cite at least five different sources. Just list them in alphabetical order in the same format as the bibliography cards.

**Final Format** – Place the paper in this order:

- Title Page
- Final Outline
- Body
- Works Cited

\*\*These portions of the paper will be dependent upon the format your teacher wishes for you to use. Refer to the guidelines you are to use.

# SENIOR PROJECT WRITING STYLE SHEET

- Body of 8 – 10 pages typed
- No use of boldface print
- Use black ink only
- Outline of the paper using correct format as shown on previous pages
- Standard white computer paper
- Standard first-page heading
- Courier New, Arial or Times New Roman font size 12 point (as specified by your teacher)
- Double-spaced (like this list)
- One-inch margins
- No decorative graphics (except supportive graphs, tables, or illustrations)
- Use a paper clip on final draft (some teachers may prefer staple; if stapled, staple vertically in upper left corner)
- One-sided only
- Unbound and un packaged (no plastic sheet protectors please)
- Pages numbered in upper right-hand corner
- **No unexplained gaps or spaces**
- 5 - 10 in-text source documentations using direct quotes – (example)  
“ . . . is seldom true” ( Brown 126). and paraphrase (author’s last name only page number) end mark.
- Appropriate “Works Cited” page.

**SENIOR PROJECT RESEARCH PAPER ROUGH COPY – EDITING SHEET**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Content and Organization:**

1. How long is your paper (approximate words and pages)? \_\_\_\_\_

2. State your thesis: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the major sections of your paper?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do all the sections of your paper support and develop the thesis? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is the paper well written with well-phrased sentences and needed transitions? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. Does your conclusion restate your thesis? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you have an added thought for the reader to consider later? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Use of Sources:**

1. Does your works cited page have at least five or more sources? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. What types of sources are they?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How many times did you document sources within the context of your paper? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you feel you have enough sources cited in your paper to make it a research paper instead of a personal essay? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

5. Was all paraphrased information honestly documented? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**C. Mechanics:**

1. Did you underline all book, magazine, and play titles? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

2. Did you put quotation marks around magazine articles? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

3. Did you use parentheses around documentation within the text? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

4. Did you put the periods following the parentheses, not before them? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

5. When using a direct quote, did you put the end punctuation before the last quotation mark? (i.e., John said, "I love to write papers.") Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

6. Please circle all possible spelling errors on your rough draft. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

7. Check commas. Did you use a comma between two sentences joined and, or, nor, for, or but? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

8. Did you put a comma after a long, introductory clause? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

9. Are you going to make another draft of this paper before typing? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

10. Have you re-read your final draft for clarity and to correct any additional errors? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Items to address:**

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## **Plagiarism vs. Paraphrasing**

**Plagiarism is a form of theft. It is the stealing of intellectual property and the consequences are often severe. Colleges expel students who plagiarize and in many cases further legal action is taken. This can ruin a career and like any crime, appears on one's permanent record. As you know, plagiarism is a crime. Not only is it a crime, but if you plagiarize any portion of your senior project, you will fail senior English and your project, both of which are required for graduation. Therefore, it is important that you understand the difference between plagiarism and proper means of utilizing resources.**

**A paraphrase is...**

- your own rendition of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else, presented in a new form.
- one legitimate way (when accompanied by accurate documentation) to borrow from a source.
- a more detailed restatement than a summary, which focuses concisely on a single main idea.

**Paraphrasing is a valuable skill because...**

- it is better than quoting information from an undistinguished passage.
- it helps you control the temptation to quote too much.
- the mental process required for successful paraphrasing helps you to grasp the full meaning of the original.

**6 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing:**

1. Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.
2. Set the original aside; write your paraphrase on a note card.
3. Jot down a few words below your paraphrase to remind you later how you envision using this material. At the top of the note card write a key word or phrase to indicate the subject of your paraphrase.
4. Check your rendition with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information in a new form.
5. Use quotation marks to identify any unique term or phraseology you have borrowed exactly from the source.
6. Record the source (including the page) on your note card so that you can credit it easily if you decide to incorporate the material into your paper.

## Some Examples to Compare

### **The original passage:**

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes. Lester, James D. *Writing Research Papers*. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47.

### **A legitimate paraphrase:**

In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester 46-47).

### **An acceptable summary:**

Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester 46-47).

### **A plagiarized version:**

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

*Be forewarned that teachers are becoming increasingly aware of Internet sources and it is now fairly easy for a passage to be identified as original or as plagiarism. Many of the term papers and research materials available on the internet are of questionable value and it is not uncommon for the providers of such material to turn right around and provide institutions with the names of those who have purchased these materials.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title of Paper: \_\_\_\_\_

## Senior Project Research Paper Rubric

To be accepted for scoring, the research paper must have the following: documentation

(Bibliography/Works Cited and internal citation) and length of 5 to 8 pages

<b>Section I—Form (MLA)</b>				
	4	3	2	1
Manuscript Form—Typing/Spacing, Page Numbers/Order, Heading/Title				
Documentation—Correct form for parenthetical documentation				
Bibliography—At least 4 correctly typed entries on a Works Cited page				
<b>Section I—Mechanics, Usage, Grammar</b>				
Sentence Construction Errors—Fused Sentence/Run-on Error, Comma Splice/Comma Fault Error, Mixed Construction, Garbled Sentence, Stringy Sentences, Parallelism				
Major Grammar Errors—Subject-Verb agreement, Verb Forms (principal parts and tense), Pronoun Case/Usage/Antecedent Agreement, Adjective-Adverb Usage (such as double negatives), Misplaced/Dangling Modifiers				
Informal language—Incorrect word usage, contractions, slang, abbreviations, 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, shift in tense				
Minor Punctuation/Grammar/Spelling Errors—End Marks, Comma Errors, Underlining, Quotation Marks, Spelling, Capitalization				
<p>Scoring:</p> <p>4 = Excellent (no errors)</p> <p>3 = Good (two or fewer errors)</p> <p>2 = Average (four or fewer errors)</p> <p>1 = Unacceptable or Poor (five or more errors)</p>				
<b>Section III--Content</b>				
Introduction				
Thesis Statement—clearly stated, introduces the topic of the paper and the main points to be discussed				
Thesis/concepts Development				
Organization				
Accuracy				
Citations				
<p>Scoring:</p> <p>4 = Excellent (demonstrates complete understanding of concept; shows thought, responds well to topic, and covers the appropriate scope of the assignment; is well developed with specific, detailed, relevant, and accurate support; is organized in a unified and coherent manner)</p> <p>3 = Good (demonstrates understanding of concept with minimal misconception/confusion, responds with adequate analysis/response, elaborates with enough examples and acceptable reasoning but needs more specific details to fully develop thesis, needs more transitions to maintain unity and coherence)</p> <p>2 = Average (demonstrates limited understanding, may demonstrate an acceptable thesis but lacks sufficient details to support both major and minor points, may digress, frequently lacks unity and coherence)</p> <p>1 = Unacceptable or Poor (demonstrates little or no understanding, lacks a thesis or fails to maintain an acceptable one, frequently digresses, fails to provide supporting details or does not clarify relevance of details that are provided, lacks unity and coherence throughout)</p>				

## **Section V – The Interview**

### **Interview Guidelines**

- 1. Before the Interview**
- 2. During the Interview**
- 3. After the Interview**
- 4. Vermilion Parish Interview Form**
- 5. Interview Evaluation Form**

# **Interview Guidelines**

Interviews can provide a valuable source of information and may be used as a primary source in your term paper (citation). Interviews can be very helpful, or they may be a very disappointing experience for everyone involved. To take full advantage of the time with an expert, students need to prepare ahead of time, use proper interviewing skills, and follow up the interviews with immediate review. The following guidelines have been found to be very helpful:

## **Before the Interview**

The position of the person to be interviewed should be thoroughly researched in terms of the individual's position, background and education, as well as any special skills and experiences he/she might have.

- Learn for whom the interviewee works.
- Clearly define the purpose of the interview, i.e., what's to be accomplished. If there isn't a clear purpose of knowledge of what's to be accomplished, the interview will be disjointed.
- Write clearly phrased questions that reflect the purpose, research, and knowledge.
- Organize questions in a logical fashion: for example, from simple to complex or from objective and factual to personal.
- Gather necessary materials, i.e., pen/pencil, ample paper, and tape recorder, if desired. The functioning of the recorder should be checked before the interview.

## **The Interview**

- Dress appropriately – be well groomed.
- Be punctual – 10 minutes early is desirable.
- Make introductions in a professional manner with a firm handshake, smile and eye contact. State the purpose of the interview and thank the interviewee for his/her time.
- If using a tape recorder, ask permission of the interviewee.
- Don't digress during the interview; stay on task.
- Listen for possible leads and formulate new questions.
- Ask for clarification if needed and don't be embarrassed to ask for an answer to be repeated. Take time to be correct in note taking.

- Ask permission if you plan to quote your interviewee in your paper or presentation.
- Honor “off the record” remarks.

### **After the Interview**

- Thank the person. Follow up with a letter.
- Review the notes as soon after the interview as possible.
- Consolidate information; discard information that can't be used.
- Be especially careful that direct quotes are accurately recorded.
- If in doubt about a specific comment, contact the person again.
- Make a list of any additional resources that have been uncovered.
- Record interview highlights and quotes/facts on note cards to be used in your research paper.

Prior to each interview, an on/off campus interview form is required. This will help you prepare for the interview so that all the information needed will be collected and the time will not be wasted. When completed, the Senior Project interview evaluation form is to be sent to the interviewee. It is important that you keep a record of all interviews and surveys you conduct during the course of your research. Remember that it is important to give proper credit where credit is due and if you plan on using quotes, facts, or any information you have gained during an interview, these must be treated as a resource and proper credit and documentation must be provided.

Remember that the interview can be a valuable source of information and as a primary source can be cited in your paper and entered on your works cited page as one of your sources.

# VERMILION PARISH HIGH SCHOOL ON/OFF CAMPUS INTERVIEW

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Important. This form must be completed prior to conducting an interview with someone for your paper or project.**

Person to be interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of interview (specific address): \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated length of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Briefly state nature and purpose of interview.
2. List objectives you hope to accomplish during interview.
3. List what you have accomplished In preparation for the interview.
4. List all the questions you intend to ask during the interview. Be thorough. Write at least ten questions.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

(8)

(9)

(10)

## VERMILION PARISH SENIOR PROJECT INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

(To be given to the person being interviewed)

To Our Resource Volunteer:

Thank you so much for volunteering your time to talk to a student concerning his/her Senior Project. The Senior Project program affords students the opportunity to gain specific information regarding an occupation, body of knowledge, or skill from an adult expert in that field.

The time, place, and approximate length of the interview should have been arranged with you prior to the interview. We would like you to help us determine how effectively the student utilized this opportunity by filling out the following information concerning the interview. You may either give this completed evaluation to the student after the interview or send it to his/her teacher at school. Your evaluation is an important part of his/her grade.

Thank you, again, for taking time to share your expertise with our students. Schools and communities working together benefit everyone.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Area of Study \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did the student arrive on time for the interview? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. Was the student prepared with questions? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

3. What was the total interview time? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Did the student take notes? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you feel the interview was valuable? Please explain.

Comments:

## **Section VI - Product and Presentation**

- 1) Product Rubric & Expectations**
- 2) Speech Preparation Guidelines (Some do's and don'ts)**
- 3) Presentation Rubric**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

## Senior Project Product Evaluation Rubric

To be accepted, a product must have the following components: 20 hours of documented work and connection to the research paper.

Section I—Quality of Product/Service					
		4	3	2	1
Utilization of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of material gained from work with mentor and from independent research</li> </ul>				
Planning, management, and follow-through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realistic, thoughtful and clearly stated plan</li> <li>• Organization skills indicated</li> <li>• Deadlines met</li> </ul>				
Aesthetics and value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to excellence</li> <li>• Visually pleasing</li> </ul>				
Creativity and uniqueness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempt to make the product stand out from others of a similar nature</li> </ul>				
Section II—Mentor					
		4	3	2	1
Interaction/communication with mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates in an effective and courteous manner</li> <li>• Contact was consistent throughout project</li> </ul>				
Section III—Stretch					
		4	3	2	1
Goal setting/problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals stated clearly</li> <li>• Resourcefulness and creativity demonstrated when facing obstacles</li> </ul>				
Challenge component	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of stretch and high level of challenge</li> <li>• Significant endeavor</li> <li>• New learning</li> <li>• Evidence of personal growth</li> </ul>				

Scoring:

4 = Excellent (demonstrates superior effort and results)

3 = Good (quality and effort meet expectations)

2 = Average (meets requirements)

1 = Unacceptable or Poor (some requirements not met, quality unacceptable)

# SPEECH PREPARATION

**Your speech and presentation is an extremely important part of the Senior Project. It is imperative that you make every effort to exhibit mastery of your chosen subject to a panel made up of community leaders and educators. Your personal appearance and demeanor are extremely important and you should be familiar with all aspects of your presentation including PowerPoints and other technological aspects of your presentation.**

**STEP 1: What are you going to talk about?** Answer the following questions. Referring to the Project Self-Analysis form and Task Analysis form might help.

1. How do your paper and project connect?
2. What emotions did you experience as you worked through the paper and project? (anger? excitement? pride? frustration?)
3. What problems did you encounter (money? time management? skill deficiencies?)  
Explain.
4. What personal growth did you gain from the paper and project? What self-knowledge did you gain? What knowledge of your topic did you gain?
5. How did the project affect your plans for your future? Explain.

**STEP 2: How am I going to say this?** Use the answers to the questions above as reference.

1. Organization--jot your ideas on separate 3x5 cards and arrange them into an order that is logical and pleasing.
2. Slip blank cards into spaces where visual aid is needed or would be appropriate.
3. Add blank cards for introduction and conclusion.
4. If you have a project that can be displayed, jot your ideas for that display on one card, i.e., photographs.
5. Plan your introduction. The introduction should:
  - a) Grab attention
  - b) Make topic thesis clear. (Be sure to mention both paper and project.)
  - c) Take no more than 60 seconds.  
Consider using quotations, readings, dramatics, jokes, surveys, or other audience participation sets, games, audio-visual devices, demonstrations, or questions.
6. Plan your conclusion. A good conclusion should:
  - a) Restate topic/thesis.
  - b) Leave the audience thinking.
  - c) Take no more than 30 seconds.
7. Plan the display of your project. Will it be an on-going, integral part of your speech, such as a slide show? Part of your introduction? Happen after your conclusion? Will you wear it? Sit on it? Serve up samples? Avoid passing items around during your speech-this causes too much distraction.
8. Plan your visual aids.
9. Make sure your teacher knows what AV equipment you will need and you can use it!
10. Look at each idea card and fill in details, colorful anecdotes, and factual information.
11. Place all cards back in order and begin practicing your speech.

### **STEP 3: Speech techniques to remember:**

1. Eye contact--This is extremely important. Practice often enough that you rarely need to look at your cards. Remember this is a friendly audience. Your peers and your judges are pulling for you. You need the reinforcement that their encouraging expressions will give you. Look at them. True communication happens with the eyes. A speech without eye contact is only half a speech.
2. Posture--Stand proud. You have a right to be. You have accomplished a great deal.

Avoid:

- a) gripping the podium--white knuckles are so unattractive.
- b) locking your knees--you've come too far to faint now.
- c) twitching, wiggling, shaking.

You want your audience to pay attention to what you are saying.

3. Voice--Your voice needs to:
  - a) be loud enough to be heard.
  - b) vary appropriately in pitch and tone.
4. Gesture--Use your hands to help make your point. Gestures should be natural and spontaneous, not choreographed and mechanical.
5. Props--Plan and practice using any props you will need.

### **STEP 4: Prepare for questions.**

Of course, there is no way to know for sure what the panel members will ask you, but you can make some educated guesses, and that process will provide you with the confidence and clear-headedness to take on any queries. Answer the following brainstorm questions:

- 1. Why did you choose your topic?**
- 2. What was the most difficult part of doing your project?**
- 3. What help did you get from your mentor?**
- 4. Why do you consider your project a learning stretch?**
- 5. What did you learn about yourself by doing the project?**
- 6. What was the most valuable asset in accomplishing your project?**
- 7. What advice would you give to juniors about to undertake this project?**
- 8. What skills did you develop in doing this project?**
- 9. How did you finance it?**
- 10. How much time did you spend?**
- 11. Did the project involve knowledge learned in another class?**
- 12. How did you feel about completing your Senior Project?**

## **Finally, some do's and don'ts to help you put your best foot forward.**

(These suggestions were taken from previous seniors who have presented their projects in previous years!)

### **DO's**

1. **Rehearse** your speech in front of your peers/ family/ sponsors and ask for critical feedback to make your presentation the best it can be. **Be sure you can use all technology (Power Points, Smart boards, VCRs, CD players, etc.) before you give your presentation. You must perform a full practice run in your panel room in the days prior to your presentation.**
2. **Take some time to consider your personal appearance.** A shirt and tie certainly would be more impressive than jeans and a T-shirt. A nice dress or ensemble will lend an air of confidence while making your presentation. Appearance is very important and you should approach your presentation with the same regard that you would give to a job or college interview.
3. **Do go over your portfolio and eliminate any unsightly corrections or errors** that might detract from your overall project. Your portfolio is the first thing the panel will be viewing and it is important that this first impression be a good one.

### **DON'TS**

1. **Do not go into your presentation unprepared thinking that you can “wing it”.** Lack of preparation will cost you valuable points and there very well may be some experts on your topic in your panel and you will be considered an expert on your topic.
2. **Do not read your PowerPoint presentations and posters to your audience.** The information should be self evident and should support your presentation, not take the place of it.
3. **Do not try muddling your way through a question if you do not know the answer.** Simply state that a good answer will require more research on your part. You are not expected to be an expert on all facets of your project although you should have a good command of the areas you have studied.

**Your Senior Project Presentation should be the peak of your high school career (unless you caught the pass and made the winning touchdown for the state championship). Your audience will be small and supportive. You will be well prepared. This is your chance to show off and shine! Enjoy!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title of Project \_\_\_\_\_

**Senior Project  
Presentation Evaluation Rubric**

Comments

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		<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Content &amp; Challenge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates mastery of topic</li> <li>• Gives clear explanations</li> <li>• Shows evidence of time and effort</li> <li>• Displays clear evidence of a learning stretch and self discovery (new information)</li> </ul>				
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employs a dynamic attention-getter</li> <li>• Presents in an organized, logical and sequential order</li> <li>• Connects all project components</li> <li>• Presents conclusions and a closing statement</li> <li>• Stays within the allowed time limit</li> </ul>				
<b>Presentation Aids</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are relevant</li> <li>• Are error free (spelling and usage)</li> <li>• Are artistic and pleasing in design</li> <li>• Guide the audience through the presentation effectively and creatively</li> </ul>				
<b>Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is articulate</li> <li>• Speaks in standard English</li> <li>• Maintains correct posture and poise</li> <li>• Sustains eye contact with audience</li> <li>• Is dressed professionally or clothing enhances presentation</li> </ul>				
<b>Question &amp; Answer Period</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to panel questions directly and accurately</li> <li>• Answers panel questions fluently and confidently</li> <li>• Demonstrates exceptional knowledge of research topic</li> <li>• Shows enthusiasm for topic</li> </ul>				

**Scoring:**

**4** = Excellent (clear, logical, error free or almost so)

**3** = Good (clear/logical—can be improved; few errors—none interfere with understanding)

**2** = Average (orderly; some things unclear, errors random)

**1** = Unacceptable or Poor (random order; errors interfere with understanding; many points unclear)