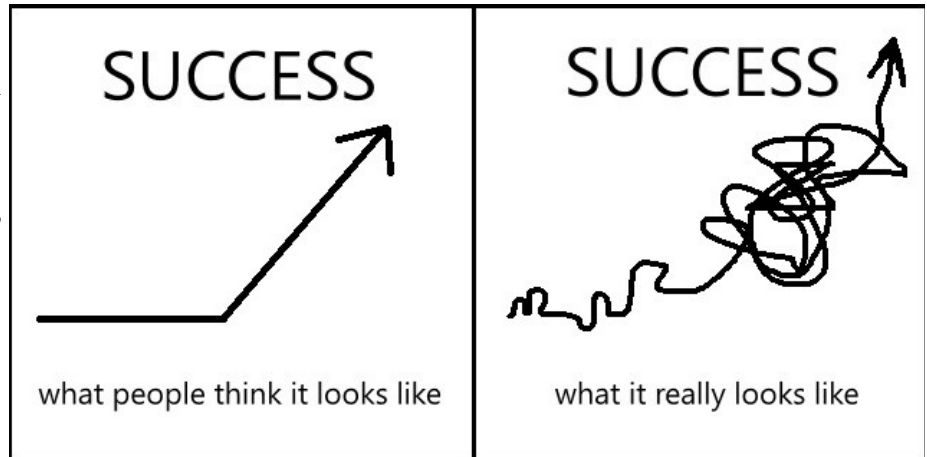


A Student Guide to Senior Project

The Nature of Senior Project

Your Senior Project is an in-depth study of a focused research topic chosen from among the academic disciplines you have studied throughout your career as a student at Animas High School. Senior Project will consist of the following 3 inter-related parts:

Part I: The Paper



The research paper is intended to promote high-level research and writing skills, intellectual discovery, and creativity. It provides students with an opportunity to engage in personal research within a topic of their own choice, under the guidance of a Senior Project Advisor (for most, this will be a teacher at the school). This leads to a major piece of formally presented, structured writing, in which ideas and findings are communicated in a reasoned and coherent manner, well referenced, and appropriate to the subject chosen.

Part II: The Presentation

You will also give a dynamic, engaging, and informative 15-18 minute presentation of your research findings to an audience. This presentation must outline your research and clearly state your findings. It must be thought-provoking, and reflect a mastery of presentation skills in the POL/TED style. It must also be accompanied by a visual aid of some kind, which will include both your research question and thesis statement, and should be thoughtfully and expertly prepared.

** At least one parent is required to attend your presentation.*

Part III: The Thesis Defense

Directly following your presentation, you will be required to defend your thesis to an audience panel. This panel will include your senior teachers, senior project advisor, a group of your peers, your family members, and the audience. You will be asked questions relating to your methodology and the value of your conclusions. You may also be asked more reflective, introspective TPOL-style questions about your role and impact here as an Animas High School student and representative.

The Aims of Senior Project

The aim of Senior Project is to provide students with the opportunity to:

1. Create a meaningful and engaging research question
2. Pursue independent research on a focused topic of interest
3. Develop research and communication skills
4. Develop the skills of creative and critical thinking within a specific discipline
5. Engage in a systematic process of research appropriate to the subject
6. Deliver findings in a professional and engaging manner
7. Defend research methodology and findings to a critical audience

Student Responsibilities

It is required that students:

1. Choose a topic that fits into one of the subjects on the approved list of subjects (see form on subjects and advisors)
2. Pick an appropriate Senior Project Advisor
3. Formulate a research question
4. Meet all deadlines in the Senior Project Schedule and Advising Schedule
5. Plan how, when, and where they will find material for their essay
6. Fill out a schedule for both researching and writing the essay, including extra time for delays and unforeseen problems
7. Record sources as their research progresses (rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end)
8. Have a clear structure for the essay itself before beginning to write
9. Check and proofread all versions carefully
10. Act as peer editors for other student projects
11. Meet all basic requirements

Role of the Senior Project Advisor

Senior Project Advisors are content specialists, present to guide students toward a professional research paper in their chosen discipline. Advisors will assist and support students during several key phases in the development of the project. Students will choose a Senior Project Advisor from our pool of faculty at Animas that is familiar with the chosen topic or discipline. Students will be expected to check in at least 3 times with your Senior Project Advisor with specific deadlines and objectives. Advisors will assist with the following:

1. Providing the student with advice and guidance in their discipline
2. Ensuring that the chosen research question is appropriate for the subject
3. Reading and providing feedback on the project outline

4. Encouraging and supporting students throughout the research and writing process, and potentially guiding students toward useful sources or other appropriate resources.
5. Reading and commenting on the first draft (*Advisors will not* edit the draft)
6. Monitoring student progress using the Senior Project Advising Schedule
7. Ensuring that the essay is the student's own work.
8. Assisting with the thesis defense process

Advisors *are not* required to:

1. Spend more than 2-3 total hours with each student and/or student work over the course of the semester
2. Meet students outside of their office hours
3. Advise more than 3 students total

Research and Writing the Senior Project

When researching the Senior Project essay, students should do the following:

1. Choose an approved subject for the essay (see the list of subject and advisor roles for a list of approved subjects)
2. Choose a topic
3. Choose a Senior Project Advisor in your discipline
4. Formulate a well-focused research question
5. Plan the investigation and writing process
6. Undertake some preparatory reading
 - If students discover that it will not be possible to obtain the evidence needed in the time available, the research question should be changed. This should be done sooner rather than later, as students should not lose time waiting and hoping that something will turn up. Students should go back to stage 3, 2, or 1, and choose a new research question that can be answered.
7. Carry out the investigation and research process
 - The material gathered should be assembled in a logical order, linked to the structure of the essay. Only then will students know whether they have enough evidence for each stage of the argument so that they can proceed to the next stage.
 - Students should be prepared for things to go wrong – do not wait until the last minute on your research deadlines!

When writing the Senior Project essay, you will need to include the following required elements.

1. Title Page

- The title should provide a clear indication of the focus of the essay. It does not necessarily have to be phrased as a question, though this is a recommended starting point for student essays.

2. Abstract

- An abstract not exceeding 250 words must be included with the essay. It does not serve as an introduction, but presents a brief overview of the project and will be on a separate page.

3. Contents Page

- A contents page must be provided at the beginning of the essay and all pages should be numbered.

4. Introduction, body, and conclusion. This must follow the strict guidelines presented in the “Elements” handout. Your essay will consist of 5 basic elements: Introduction, Historical Context, Summary of Past Research, Findings + Analysis, and Conclusion.

5. Bibliography

- Bibliography must comply with MLA guidelines for citing sources outlined in Purdue's Online Writing Lab (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>) Other discipline-specific formats will be approved per conversation with me.
- Bibliography must include not only sources cited, but all sources used in the formulation of the argument, such as personal interviews, et. al.

6. Page numbers

Assessment Criteria:

Benchmarks during research and writing process will be assessed through a pass/fail system. The bulk of your grade will come from the final draft, exhibition, and thesis defense. In total, Senior Project will be worth half your grade for this semester (the other half will be Economics). The Senior Project half of your semester grade will be broken down the following way:

50%: Your Senior Project Paper Final Draft

30%: Your Senior Project Presentation and Defense

20%: Pass/Fail: All of the work you will put into both of the above will be measured and assessed regularly, but on a pass/fail basis. This means that most (80%) of your final grade will be measured on the quality of work that you produce at the end.

Submission Criteria: Your final paper grade will be worth 50% of your Senior Project grade. The paper will be reduced by 10% for each of the following criteria not met.

- Due date to be announced
- Double sided
- Double spaced
- Title page
- Bibliography
- Page numbers
- Page count, text only. Non-Honors is 10-12 pages, Honors is 12-20

Rubric: Senior Project Final Draft	10 Advanced	9-8 Proficient	7-6 Basic	5-0 Emerging
<p><i>Thesis Statement and Research Question. Do they...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contain 1 main idea? • Take a stand? (Thesis only) • Justify discussion? • Be specific? • Set up contrast? (Thesis only) • Show clearly in your introduction and title page? 				
<p><i>Evidence + Analysis, assessed on the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenty of relevant, accurate information directly supports the claim • In-text citations are used EVERY time a detail/number/claim is put forward • Background information provides context for evidence • Quotes/sources set up effectively • Commentary and evaluation show deep insight • Focus remains on the claim • Opposing arguments stated and refuted effectively 				
<p><i>Organization (Topic sentences, paragraph sequencing)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic sentences support argument in thesis • Topic sentences are clear, succinct, and direct • Topic sentences guide paragraph content • Paragraphs are organized in a clear, effective manner (such as T, E, A, E, A, etc). • Essay organized by logical paragraph sequencing • Effective transitions tie ideas together 				
<p><i>Style, conventions, punctuation, and sentence focus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tone and voice are appropriate for your audience • Precise nouns, careful verb choice, and active subjects provide sentence focus • Sentence length and structure adds variety with no awkward constructions. • Appropriate comma usage and punctuation • No errors, typos, contractions, etc. 				
<p><i>Works Cited and Title Page</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-text citations are appropriately used and formatted correctly (Hughes, 78) • Bibliography at end of paper, on separate page • Sources cited appropriately (MLA), alphabetized • Title Page formatted correctly, w/ all required info • Length requirements are met (Title page, bibliography, and abstract page not included) 				

Senior Project Rollout Survey Form

Starter: Read over the Student Guide to Senior Project. As you read, annotate sections that you find important, and write down any questions or clarifications you have. We'll discuss this together when we are done.

When you're done, fill out the following info sheet. This will help me group you together in the future so that your group members will be facing common problems.

Respond to the following statements as honestly as you can by circling the number that best fits you.

How sure are you about the content area (Biology, English, History) you would like to research?

I have no idea 1 2 3 4 5 Very sure

Write some thoughts here:

Within that subject, and know what I would like to focus on.

I don't know 1 2 3 4 5 I do know

Write some thoughts here:

I know an Advisor that will be able to help me with the specific content on which I would like to focus.

I have no idea 1 2 3 4 5 Very sure

Total up the numbers from the above exercise and write that total here: _____

Greatest Fear: