7th & 8th Grade Research Projects
St. Bernard School Library Media Center 2017

As younger students, we learned "The Big Six" – the six steps for research success, as presented in **Our Librarian Won't Tell Us ANYTHING! By Toni Buzzeo**. No matter how old we are, those same steps can be used to guide us through a research project. One page or ten, multimedia or paper, the process is the same.

The first step in any project is **Task Definition**. In order to begin, we need to know what we will be researching. For this project, our topics have been assigned. Each topic coincides with the time period that our class is studying this year in American History.

      My topic is: _____

Information-seeking Strategies come next. Decide where are you going to get your research, then evaluate those resources using the **handouts** you were given, along with our class discussion. Pick the 8 best resources – 5 must be print (books, textbooks, encyclopedias, magazine articles, newspaper articles, etc.) and 3 can be other sources (websites, documentaries, video clips, etc.) Begin by assembling a list of possible resources, then evaluate whether they are right for your project. Continue until you have 8 GOOD sources and continue with the next step.

Determine the **Location and Access** of your sources. Physically locate each source and bring it to class with your list. Web sources can be printed for future notetaking. Documentaries and video clips cannot; those do not need to come into class but you need to have a written record of the item (title, author, location, etc.)

      I need to turn in my list of resources on: _____
      <small>(I will also bring this list and any sources needed for future classes as directed by my teachers.)</small>

A formal list of resources, a **bibliography**, is needed to prove where you got your research. It's easiest to create it at the beginning of a research project and then update it as needed while you work. It will then take very little time to produce your final bibliography page for your project. Use the **handouts and sample** given in class to create your bibliography. Use technology to create your bibliography in typed, MLA format. This will be demonstrated in class.

      I need to turn in a first draft of my bibliography on: _____
      <small>(A final, updated draft of the bibliography will be included with my completed paper.)</small>

Use of Information – As you begin to use your sources, double-check that each source will be useful to your project. Get rid of any that are not useful and replace those with better sources. Skim through your sources to get a general idea of the information you have, and decide what you want to focus on. All research papers begin with a thesis statement. **Think … what will the point of your paper be?** What do you want to focus on or prove? This will be your thesis statement. Using the **handouts and suggestions** from class, determine your thesis statement and write it here:

_____

_____

_____

       I need to share my thesis statement on: **_____**

It is now time to **begin taking notes**! Use the **handouts** provided and take notes onto notecards, as directed in our class discussion. Be sure to:
- Write just **one** note on each card
- Indicate **which source** the note came from
- Also include **what page** the information was found on (if it's from a print source; webpages and other resources may not have page numbers)

See the attached **samples** of notecards to be sure you are setting up your notecards correctly. Be sure to **paraphrase**; put the information into your own words! This is the best way to be sure that you understand your research and to avoid plagiarism. If you are taking a direct quote, use quotation marks and indicate who said it.

Notecard due dates:

       Notecards from my first 2 sources are due on: **_____**

       Notecards from my next 2 sources are due on: **_____**

       Notecards from my next 2 sources are due on: **_____**

       Notecards from the rest of my sources are due on: **_____**

Each week the teachers will quickly review each student's notecards, check their progress, and give each student ideas that will help them focus their research. **Suggestion:** for each due date, choose one larger source (book) and one quick

source (webpage, magazine article, etc.) Start with the sources you think will be the most helpful.

In the **<u>Synthesis</u>** step, you need to decide how you will use your research. How you use your research will often be determined by the research itself, so the first step in this process will be organizing what you've learned.

In order to make sense of your research, you will need to **organize your notecards**. This is easy to do since you put only one thought or idea on each card. Sort your notecards into piles, keeping like ideas together. Then, go through each pile and put the cards into the order that you think makes the most sense.

I need to bring my organized notecards into class on: _____

As we'll discuss in class, our organized notecards will create an **outline** of our research. Using the organized notecards, write out the topics of your research in outline form. See the **handouts** and refer to your teacher's input for this.

I need to turn in my written outline on: _____

You are now ready to turn your research into a **final project**. In many cases, the format you will use to present your research (written paper, poster, interactive display, multimedia presentation, etc.) will be decided upon by your teacher. **For example, for this project our 7th graders will use their research to write a 5-page research paper, while our 8th graders will turn their research into a 10-page paper.** Refer to the specific guidelines for your final project, along with **handouts** given by your teacher, in order to create your final project.

I need to turn in the rough draft of my project on: _____

My final project will be due on: _____

The final step of any research project is **<u>Evaluation.</u>** After you have completed your project, evaluate how successful it was. Did it turn out the way you had envisioned? Why or why not? Do you feel that your grade reflected the effort you put into the project? What could you have done better? Are there changes you would make next time? This important step will help you be even more successful the next time you set out to complete a research project. As Mrs. Scorupski would say … **"YOU are a Library Success Story!!!"**