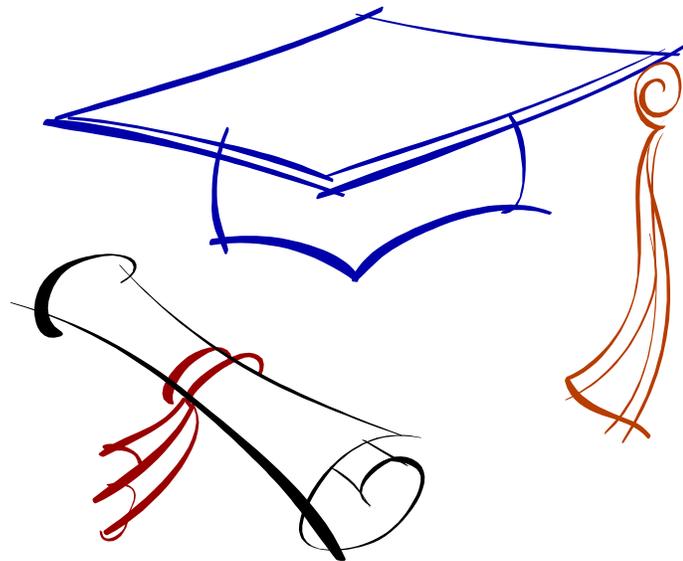


# **COLUMBIA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT GRADUATION PROJECT: The Research Project**



**Columbia Borough School District  
200 North Fifth Street  
Columbia, PA 17512  
Revised February, 2017**

# THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The analytical research project will provide students with the opportunity for investigation and analysis of a problem or topic outside the high school curriculum.

## **Requirements:**

- Your paper should be 15-18 pages in length.
  - There is no Narrative/Reflection Paper due with this project.
  - Your title page and works cited pages will be counted towards your total number of pages.
- 12-point size, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, 8.5” x 11” with 1” margins according to MLA/APA guidelines
- Must include a Works Cited page (A use of a variety of resources is required.)
- Component 1: Your research paper should include an introduction that contains a clear thesis statement that identifies the project.
- Component 2: Your research paper should include a body. The body will make up the bulk of your paper and should be organized into subtopics.
- Component 3: Your research paper should include a conclusion.
- You should ensure all grammar and spelling is accurate.
- Your writing should conform to the PSSA Writing Rubric (which is listed in this packet).
- You will also need to be prepared to present your paper to a panel as part of your oral presentation. The rubric for the oral presentation can be found after the PSSA Writing Rubric.
- As part of your project requirements you will be asked to submit a proposed time log to your mentor and a finalized time log as part of your evaluation. Both time logs can be found on the last two pages of this packet.

## The Thesis Statement

A thesis statement is an assertion, not a statement of fact or an observation.

- Fact or observation: People use many lawn chemicals.
- Thesis: People are poisoning the environment with chemicals merely to keep their lawn clean.

A thesis statement takes a stand rather than announcing a subject.

- Announcement: The thesis of this paper is the difficulty of solving our environmental problems.
- Thesis: Solving our environmental problems is more difficult than many environmentalists believe.

A thesis statement is the main idea, not the title. It must be a complete sentence that explains in some detail what you expect to write about.

- Title: Social Security and Old Age.
- Thesis: Continuing changes in the Social Security System make it almost impossible to plan intelligently for one's retirement.

A thesis statement is narrow, rather than broad. If the thesis statement is sufficiently narrow, it can be fully supported.

- Broad: The American steel industry has many problems.
- Narrow: The primary problem in the American steel industry is the lack of funds to renovate outdated plants and equipment.

A thesis statement is specific rather than vague or general.

- Vague: Hemingway's war stories are very good.
- Specific: Hemingway's stories helped create a new prose style by employing extensive dialogue, shorter sentences, and strong Anglo-Saxon words.

A thesis statement has one main point rather than several main points. More than one point may be too difficult for the reader to understand and the writer to support.

- More than one main point: Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world-renowned physicist, and his book is the subject of a movie.
- One main point: Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world renowned physicist.

A thesis statement may be revised while you are writing your essay.

- Writers often discover what their real purpose and point is in the process of putting their thoughts into words and then reading what they've written.
- Revision is an ongoing process.

# Structure of the Research Paper

## **Title Page**

The paper contains a title page which includes: title of the paper, the student's name, Columbia High School, and the date. The information is spaced appropriately and is free from spelling and convention errors.

## **Table of Contents**

The paper contains a table of contents. The table of contents is titled and lists major sections of the paper with corresponding page numbers. The table of contents page is double-spaced and is free from spelling and convention errors.

## **Introduction**

The paper contains an introduction to the project that includes a well-written thesis statement that is stated in the opening paragraph or paragraphs. The introduction is free from spelling and convention errors.

## **Body**

The body of the paper contains relevant details that support the thesis statement and the information is presented in a logical manner so that it is easily understandable. The paper is written in the writer's own words. All thoughts or ideas that are borrowed from another are quoted and cited appropriately. Failure to do so is considered plagiarism. Arguments are supported with documented proof and examples. Creative and appropriate transitions between sentences and thoughts show how each relates to and builds upon the one before it. Sequencing is logical and effective. Vocabulary is used that is appropriate to the content, but not confusing to the reader. Sentences are well-constructed, vary in length, and have varied sentence beginnings. There are no sentence fragments or run-on sentences. The voice or tone of the writing adds interest and is appropriate to the content. The body is free from spelling and convention errors.

Your research, thoughts, and observations on a specific topic should be grouped together by subject or subtopic. This is important for the completion of your **Table of Contents**.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion should restate your thesis and state the conclusion you've drawn from the material you presented in the body of the paper. Although no actual new information is usually introduced in the concluding paragraphs, the conclusion is the only "original" contribution you offer in your paper. It manifests the value of your research as well as your understanding of the material that you have presented. It should be a strong recapitulation of your major idea

## **Works Cited Page**

The paper contains a minimum of ten sources (must include both print and non-print) that are listed alphabetically on the Works Cited Page and any entry on the Works Cited Page has at least five parenthetical citations within the paper. All sources are listed in MLA/APA format. The double-spaced Works Cited page contains a title (centered) and appropriate one-inch margins. The Works Cited page is free from spelling and convention errors.

**PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT DOMAIN SCORING GUIDE**

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Conventions</b>
The single controlling point made with an awareness of task (mode) about a specific topic	The presence of ideas developed through facts, examples, anecdotes, details, opinions, statistics, reasons, and/or explanations	The order developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using transitional devices and including introduction and conclusion	The choice, use, and arrangement of words and sentence structures that create tone and voice	Grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation

	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Conventions</b>
<b>4</b>	Sharp, distinct controlling point made about a single topic with evident awareness of task (mode)	Substantial, specific, and/or illustrative content demonstrating strong development and sophisticated ideas	Sophisticated arrangement of content with evident and/or subtle transitions	Precise, illustrative use of a variety of words and sentence structures to create consistent writer’s voice and tone appropriate to audience	Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
<b>3</b>	Apparent point made about a single topic with sufficient awareness of task (mode)	Sufficiently developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation	Functional arrangement of content that sustains a logical order with some evidence of transitions	Generic use of a variety of words and sentence structures that may or may not create writer’s voice and tone appropriate to audience	Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
<b>2</b>	No apparent point but evidence of a specific topic	Limited content with inadequate elaboration or explanation	Confused or inconsistent arrangement of content with or without attempts at transition	Limited word choice and control of sentence structures that inhibit voice and tone	Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
<b>1</b>	Minimal evidence of a topic	Superficial and/or minimal content	Minimal control of content arrangement	Minimal variety in word choice and minimal control of sentence structures	Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation

## ORAL PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL PROJECTS

### Requirements:

- Students will complete a 15-minute oral presentation to a panel of teachers and administrators.
- Students should be prepared to address any questions the panel may ask about the project.
- *The presentation of the completed project must take place before a Project Review Panel prior to the end of the first semester of the student's senior year.*
- **The presentation should cover three distinct areas: the process for developing/creating your project, explaining your project to the panel, and what you have learned from the experience.**

### The presentation should:

- Begin with an introduction of yourself and your topic; why you chose the topic; and a preview of your presentation.
- Share your results.
- Explain what you learned about your topic.
- Explain whether your project was successful and how you determined it was a success.
- Explain the challenges you faced.
- Identify who helped you along the way and what role they played.
- Explain what you would do differently.
- Share what you learned about yourself.
- Share your conclusions and a statement that reminds the audience/panel of your work and your learning.
- Invite questions from the audience.

## RUBRIC FOR ORAL PRESENTATION

**STUDENT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Does not speak with appropriate volume, tone, and articulation.	Rarely speaks with appropriate volume, tone, and articulation.	Speaks with appropriate volume, tone, and articulation some of the time.	Speaks with appropriate volume, tone, and articulation most of the time.	Consistently speaks with appropriate volume, tone, and articulation
Does not maintain appropriate eye contact and posture.	Rarely maintains appropriate eye contact and posture.	Employs appropriate eye contact and posture some of the time.	Employs appropriate eye contact and posture most of the time.	Consistently employs appropriate eye contact and posture.
Does not employ appropriate nonverbal techniques.	Rarely employs appropriate nonverbal techniques some of the time.	Employs appropriate nonverbal techniques some of the time.	Employs appropriate nonverbal techniques most of the time.	Consistently employs appropriate nonverbal techniques
Does not exhibit poise, enthusiasm, and confidence.	Rarely exhibits poise, enthusiasm, and confidence.	Exhibits poise, enthusiasm, and confidence some of the time.	Exhibits poise, enthusiasm, and confidence most of the time.	Consistently exhibits poise, enthusiasm, and confidence.
Does not employ standard grammar.	Rarely employs standard grammar.	Employs standard grammar some of the time.	Employs standard grammar most of the time.	Consistently employs standard grammar.
Student's presentation is over in less than 5 minutes.	Student's presentation is over in 5-9:59 minutes.	Student's presentation is over in 10-14:59 minutes.	Student's presentation is over in 15-19:59 minutes.	Adheres to prescribed time guidelines of 20 minutes.
Wears inappropriate attire for a presentation.	Dress, grooming and demeanor is minimally appropriate.	Dress, grooming and demeanor is barely acceptable for the presentation.	Dress, grooming and demeanor is appropriate, but not professional.	Dress, grooming and demeanor promotes an air of professionalism.
No visual aids were used.	Uses visual aids that are sloppily made and are ineffective.	Uses visual aids but they do not enhance the presentation.	Uses effective visual aids.	Uses creative visual aids that enrich or reinforce presentation.

### SELF-REFLECTION PORTION OF PRESENTATION

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Fails to offer an evaluation of the project process or provides a minimal evaluation.	Offers minimal detail about the project process.	Offers little detail about the project process.	Offers some detail about the project process.	Offers an insightful evaluation of the project process.
Does not reflect on successes and challenges or provides a reflection that is limited in depth and insight.	Reflects on successes and challenges with minimal detail.	Reflects on successes and challenges with little detail.	Reflects on successes and challenges with some detail.	Reflects on successes and challenges with depth and insight.
Does not provide an insight into learning that occurred as a result of this project.	Provides minimal information on personal learning and growth.	Provides little information on personal learning and growth.	Provides some information on personal learning and growth.	Provides detailed information on personal learning and growth.

**CONTENT AND COHERENCE OF PRESENTATION**

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Lacks an introduction and/or conclusion.	A beginning and ending are minimally evident.	A beginning and ending are somewhat evident.	A beginning and ending are clearly evident.	Uses an engaging beginning and a thoughtful ending.
Does not define, or insufficiently defines a main idea and does not adhere to its purpose.	States a main idea and minimally adheres to its purpose throughout the presentation.	States a main idea and somewhat adheres to its purpose throughout the presentation.	States a main idea and adheres to its purpose throughout the presentation.	Effectively defines a main idea and clearly adheres to its purpose throughout the presentation.
Lacks an organizational sequence or sequence is confusing to audience. No transitions are used.	Employs a sequence which the audience can barely follow. Transitions are minimally used.	Somewhat employs a sequence which the audience can follow. Transitions are somewhat used.	Employs a sequence which the audience can follow. Transitions are used.	Employs a logical and engaging sequence which the audience can follow. Transitions are effectively used.
Provides insufficient supporting details/evidence.	Barely demonstrates supporting details/evidence.	Demonstrates few supporting details/evidence.	Demonstrates supporting details/evidence.	Demonstrates exceptional use of supporting details/evidence.

**EXTEMPORANEOUS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOLLOWING PRESENTATION**

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Is unable to answer questions or provides inadequate answers to questions from the panelists.	Student responds to questions and/or comments from the panelists with minimal detail.	Student responds to questions and/or comments from the panelists with little detail.	Student responds to questions and/or comments from the panelists with some detail.	Confidently, politely, and knowledgeably responds to questions and/or comments from the panelists.

**\*\*Students must score at least a 52/64 which is over 80% in order to Pass their Senior Project.**

\_\_\_\_\_/64

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Score**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Evaluator Name)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Date)**

