**Semester 2 Research Paper**

**AP Language and Composition**

**Description of Paper:**

1. 10-15 pages following MLA format
2. Language and Style: your style should be formal, avoiding the use of slang, jargon, clichés, fragments, run-ons, and the use of 1st or 2nd person (unless necessary).
3. Sources: you must use a minimum of 10 sources that are thoroughly annotated. You must have a variety of sources (internet, print, database, interview, etc.).

**Requirements**:

1. A folder specifically for only this project in which to keep all your information.
2. Research Updates (tentatively there will be 3)
3. Works Cited page in MLA format
4. In-text citations in MLA format
5. Typed drafts (with evidence of revising and editing)
6. 15-20 page final draft (including images, graphs, tables, etc.)
7. Submit to turnitin.com

**Getting Started**

To begin, review the research you’ve already done, and find a general topic/issue that can be pulled from one of the events/articles. This topic will be the basis of your paper, so make sure you pick something you find interesting and want to learn more about, not something that you are already well-versed in, that will result in a boring or mediocre final product.

**Doing the Research**

Below are some questions, which you should use to guide your research:

* What is your potential thesis?
* What are the consequences, concerns, and scope of your thesis?
* What are the various opinions about your thesis?
* Is it argumentative?
* Who is your audience (beside your teacher)? When determining this, consider to whom your topic will matter.

While doing your research, **you must consult a variety of sources**: written material, such as books and magazines; personal contacts, such as interviews and surveys that you conduct; and electronic data, such as computer data banks, the Internet, and electronic mail. You need at least **ten** sources for your paper.

**Writing the Paper**

After completing the research, you will write an extended paper revealing what you have learned. In your paper you will describe the situation and state your opinion. You will also make your paper interesting to others by **using a lively style, including pictures, and designing an attractive layout**. When you cite your research, you will follow the MLA standards (visit owl.english.purdue.edu)*.*

Ideas for how to approach this paper:

* The Beginning: 1-2 pages
  + Summary of issue
  + Background information necessary for your reader to understand the issue
* The Middle: 4-6 pages
  + Stance and support, including counterarguments and rebuttals for them
  + Organization
* The End: 1-2 pages
  + Final thoughts that matter
  + Closing your argument effectively

**Oral Presentation**

After you complete the paper, you will share your research with the rest of the class. This speech is an important part of the project and should engage the interest of the class. The specifics about this portion of the assignment will be discussed in March/April.

**Part 1: Research and “Introduction”**

**(DUE Mon., 1/5/15)**

You should have completed much of your research and be ready to put key pieces of research in your own words. Don’t forget, you should consult a variety of sources. Start with the electronic databases at the library (JSTOR username: sd117, password: librarybook). Print out additional articles that pertain well to your topic. Be selective. Don’t print out all the articles. Once you investigate these databases, search the Web for information (begin with the sites already mentioned in class). Finally, check the catalogue of books in the library to see if the library has any books that you can use or search for documentaries or news programs that will be of use (and watch them).

By the due date, you should have found at least **five** usable sources (feel free to use articles you have already found).

**Research**:

* For many of you, the first step of this project will be to do some preliminary research that will give you a deeper understanding of the issue. Therefore, find and read **FIVE** sources/articles that focus on your chosen problem/controversy (remember that you need a variety of sources; make sure *at least* one of these sources is from a print source, a database source, or an interview). Print out/photocopy a version of each article (when using internet sources, choose the “printer friendly” option or copy and paste the article into a word document), and annotate each for the following:
* A definition of the issue
* Potential problems with issue
* Potential solutions to those problems
* People/groups of people impacted by the issue
* Various perspectives within the issue

**Notes (10 points)**

You need to find and take notes from at least **5** sources. You may primarily have information from what you have read. In your folder, save the copies of information that you have found. Actively read the articles, highlighting main ideas and writing notes and reactions in the margins. I will be reading your notes, so simple highlights or underlines won’t “cut” it. Make sure you also look for information that supports and/or contradicts your claims/thesis.

\*\* You will receive NO POINTS for articles that lack margin notes\*\*

**Update (20 points)**

Your update should be about three to four typed pages long in MLA format. Basically, you are describing the background you and your reader need to understand your topic fully.

Begin by describing the problem or controversy related to your topic. If you are describing a problem, be sure to explain the cause and effects of the problems. If you are describing a controversy, discuss opposing ways of seeing the situation (If these ways of presenting information don’t fit your topic, please speak to me.) Refer to and cite specific pieces of research in your update. Next, describe ways you have found for solving or alleviating the problem or differing opinions on the controversy. Use quotes in your writing.

**Developing your thesis:** The thesisis generally a sentence or two**,** which comes after the introductory material and states the main point/s in your paper.  It is **NOT** a question.

Overall, this update will allow you to reveal the following elements:

* **Knowledge**: Facts, statistics, quotes—this is the research in your paper. Your paper must go beyond this point. If it doesn’t, it is merely a report.
* **Understanding**: Most of this will be revealed in the same way as the knowledge level, but it will reveal your overall understanding of the issue. (For example, if you are writing about a current problem in society, you will identify the causes of that problem in a manner that indicates your *understanding* of the research).
* **Application**: Here you make connections from what you learned in research. You transfer the learning for the reader by:
  + Identifying the central issues of a controversy.
  + Comparing the logic and argumentation of the proponents/opponents.
  + Explaining how the history of the issue has led to the current status.

**Citations (20 points)**

List your sources in the proper MLA format. Make sure to alphabetize sources, use hanging indentation, and punctuate sources properly. In addition to a works cited, make sure you have the correct in-text parenthetical citations for each source.

\*\*\*Rubric is attached.

Name:

**First Research Update Check**

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions in complete detailed sentences. However, under no circumstance should you give yourself any grades. That is my job.

**\_\_\_\_\_** **Sources and Notes (10):** How many sources do you have notes and references to? If not 5, explain why. Are your notes/annotations quality/effective? Explain.

**\_\_\_\_\_ Update (20):** Do you cover the key questions clearly, thoughtfully, and thoroughly? Do you use specific information in the Update: examples, facts, quotes, etc.? (You should have a blend of quotes and paraphrases throughout your essay!) Do you neatly prepare, clearly organize, and carefully edit the update? Explain.

**\_\_\_\_\_ In-text Citations (10):** Are the citations done correctly? What are you confused about?

**\_\_\_\_\_ Works Cited (10):**  Are the citations done correctly? What are you still confused about?

Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/50

**Your Final comments:** What are you struggling with on this assignment? How can I help you?