

## Research Assignment (worth 20% of course grade)

**Objective:** The object of this assignment is to introduce students to historical research methods, build skills in information literacy and technology, promote critical reading and thinking skills, and to engage students in the writing process.

### **Assignment:**

Write a 3-5 page research paper. The paper must be typed, double-spaced, with standard margins and a 12 font. While I will not require footnotes, students will be expected to attach a bibliography.

Choose a person of historical significance before 1600 CE and write a paper about some aspect of that person's life and contributions. For example, if one were to choose the Han Emperor Wu Ti, either his economic reforms or military expansion might be good topics to examine. *I do not want a biography; you are writing a research paper.* Choose an aspect of a person's life, explore it through multiple sources -- books, scholarly articles, memoirs, reliable databases and websites -- and then explain it and discuss the significance of that aspect.

For the research and citations, students will work with Carl Antonucci, Director of the Library, or Karen DeLoatch, Head of Library Instruction. Library instruction sections will be scheduled. Thirty percent (30%) of the paper grade will be assigned by the library for quality of research and citation work. Students will be provided a research checklist for this purpose. This will need to be completed and signed by either Antonucci or DeLoatch, and attached to the final paper.

You must be careful in the use of the internet. There are many, many unreliable sources on the web that, if used, would do significant damage to your paper grade by introducing factual errors. To that end, you may use only ONE website as a source. And while you may use encyclopedias to help you get started, they will not count as sources. Use library databases to help you find reliable sources for your paper. But don't procrastinate. You may discover that you need to interlibrary loan books -- and that will take some time. I expect that students will consult, utilize, and document no less than six sources for this paper.

All papers must follow standard rules and format for historical research papers, and are expected to have a clear thesis. See handout.

**DO NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, PLAGIARIZE! STUDENTS WHO PLAGIARIZE WILL RECEIVE A ZERO FOR THE ASSIGNMENT, AND MAY BE REFERRED TO THE DEAN FOR FURTHER ACTION. See handout for definition of plagiarism.**

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**Assignment:**

Choose a year between 1607-1865 (for U.S. History I) or 1865-1945 (for U.S. History II). Begin researching that year to learn of the events and phenomenon of that particular year. From that research, choose a topic for your research paper.

For example, in 1968:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated.
- Sen. Robert Kennedy was shot and died.
- Richard Nixon was elected President.
- Tet Offensive in Vietnam began.

From those events, one might choose the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. as a topic.

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The paper must make use of mostly primary sources. Primary sources are documents from the time being studied. Books, newspaper articles, letters, diaries, memoirs, speeches or even photographs can all be primary sources. They are written or recorded during the period researched.

Students may use no more than two secondary sources. Secondary sources are materials produced by people in a later period, recording events after the fact. A biography, for example, written in 1950 about Theodore Roosevelt, is a secondary source. Whereas an autobiography, written by Roosevelt himself, is a primary source. A book about slavery in the United States, written in 1990, is definitely a secondary source.

No more than one website may be used as a source. Also, encyclopedias will not count as sources. You may consult websites or encyclopedias to help you get a start, but you may not rely upon them as sources except as noted above. I expect that students will consult, utilize, and document no less than six sources for this paper.

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