

# GRADUATION PROJECT



**2014-2015**  
**Student Manual**

[www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/ci/grad-project](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/ci/grad-project)

*Every Child. Every Day. For a Better Tomorrow.*

# THE GRADUATION PROJECT HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

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## **Graduation Project: Service Learning Experience**

This culminating project for CMS students is meant to provide all students a venue to showcase the accumulated learning and skills they have acquired over the course of their academic career. Each project is individualized by the student's choices and expression of learning. It is fully aligned to the Strategic Plan 2018.

The Graduation Project demands:

- Creativity
- Research
- Agile problem-solving
- Global Awareness
- Citizenship
- Responsibility
- Leadership
- Innovation
- Entrepreneurship
- Collaboration

The Graduation Project has been revised to allow each student to broaden their knowledge about a particular, self-selected global or community issue and apply their knowledge and skills in the completion of a service learning experience directly related to their chosen issue in our own community.

The information included in the Graduation Project manual will help students frame their work, and can answer many questions about the project itself. For more information about service learning, please access CMS Serves at <http://serves.cmslearns.org>.

# THE GRADUATION PROJECT: Service Learning Experience HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

## CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

The goal of the Graduation Project is to assure/ascertain that CMS students have acquired the skills, knowledge and concepts necessary to perform well when they leave high school. Each student will use educational tools to broaden his/her knowledge about a particular, self-selected topic related to a community or global issue. The topic should be complex and comprehensive enough to challenge the student intellectually and creatively. The topic should be viewed as one that requires cumulative knowledge. Each student will demonstrate mastery of his/her topic through the four components of the Graduation Project:

### 1. RESEARCH-BASED PAPER

- The content shows that knowledge has been gained and that the student is able to analyze, apply, and synthesize that knowledge.
- The paper incorporates a minimum of five sources, including at least one primary source. Students should avoid encyclopedias and other general-information references (including current technological reference bundles).
- For purposes of documentation, students should use the most current *MLA Handbook*, *APA Handbook* or an equivalent with in-text citations and technological (the Internet, for example) referencing.
- The final draft of the paper includes a works cited page.
- The paper is 6-8 pages of text.
- *Each student must complete a research paper before continuing to the product, presentation and portfolio phase of the Graduation Project.*

### 2. APPLICATION (PRODUCT)

- The product is an appropriate outgrowth/extension of the research and documents the service the student performs to address his/her chosen community issue.
- The amount of money spent on the product will not impact the overall evaluation score.
- Students must also complete a minimum of 15 focused/direct contact hours towards making a positive impact on the researched issue.

### 3. ORAL PRESENTATION BEFORE A REVIEW BOARD

- The student will make an oral presentation of the research findings on the chosen community issue and the service learning experience artifacts..

### 4. PORTFOLIO

- As students progress through the project, they will compile a portfolio, which should contain required documents and artifacts of the Graduation Project components. For specific contents, refer to the "Guidelines for the Portfolio."

A Review Board will complete evaluation of the oral presentation and product.

## ROLE OF THE STUDENT

Through the completion of the Graduation Project, students have an opportunity to showcase an issue of interest through the four components that serve as a culminating project of the high school experience. The graduation project provides a process where students can select an area of interest and focus on a specific community or global issue and work toward solving that problem.

Most of the project is completed without the daily supervision of classroom teachers. Therefore, each student must take full ownership of the step-by-step process involved in the project. Only when a student has worked independently on the project will he/she benefit from completing the Graduation Project. All work completed for the project must be the student's own work.

Student responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Selecting a viable and compelling issue to research
- Successfully completing all components of the Graduation Project: research paper, portfolio, product, and oral presentation
- Working on the culminating project independently, unless otherwise approved
- Submitting all paperwork and documentation by designated deadlines
- Seeking advice and assistance when needed
- Maintaining timelines and documentation of completed tasks
- Identifying and maintaining regular contact with the English teacher or Academic Advisor (as designated by your school) and a mentor (optional), as the Graduation Project is created and developed
- Using a variety of communication techniques (electronic, written, verbal), such as the letter of intent, interviews, phone calls, and electronic communication, as project work progresses
- Researching and writing a paper on a focused issue that addresses the specified guidelines
- Completing and documenting verifiable work (outside the regular school day) on the product component
- Preparing a portfolio documenting work completed and making the portfolio available for the Review Board in advance of the oral presentation.
- Presenting to the Review Board

## ROLE OF THE FACULTY AND STAFF

**Every** member of the faculty and administrative staff, when appropriate, should be actively involved in the implementation of the Graduation Project.

**Faculty and staff** are integral to the successful implementation of the Graduation Project. Members of the faculty and staff should be involved at all levels of planning and implementation. Because the Graduation Project is a culmination of all the experiences during students' secondary education, all faculty and staff members are key to students' success at any stage of the process. Some of the areas where faculty and staff may serve during the process include:

- Academic advisor
- Mentor
- Resource person
- School-based committee member
- Review Board member
- Graduation project coordinator
- Evaluator
- Graduation Project advisory council

## ROLE OF THE ENGLISH TEACHER OR ACADEMIC ADVISOR

The **English teacher or academic advisor**, who may be any teacher from any content area, serves as the main contact at the school to help a student develop and complete his/her Graduation Project. The English teacher/academic advisor can help the student refine the project idea and approve various aspects of the project. The English teacher/academic adviser serves as the "go to" person and inspiration for the student throughout the completion of the project over the course of the student's high school experience. The role of the English teacher/academic advisor may include but is not limited to assisting students with the following:

- Selection and narrowing of a topic for research
- Approval of the research issue
- Research process
- Documentation of research
- Revision and editing of the paper
- Approval of the service learning experience product
- Completion of all applicable progress checks, documentation logs of service hours, notification of parents, and selection of mentor
- Completion of the student log of activities

# ROLE OF THE MENTOR

**The mentor component is optional, but highly recommended.**

A mentor is strongly recommended for the Graduation Project, but is not required. Students who utilize a mentor, document contact, and provide a reflection will receive incentive points toward their Graduation Project grade.

**A Graduation Project mentor** is a community or faculty member who has expertise, experience or background with the project topic and accepts the following responsibilities:

- Allocates time and makes arrangements to work with the student on the project
- Provides suggestions and advice to the student on applicable aspects of the research paper, product, portfolio and oral presentation
- Provides accurate and honest verification of the student's work.
- Serves as a support and resource to the student in all stages of the Graduation Project process
- Signs and returns all required forms

Anyone from the community who is 21 years of age or older that has a background on the student's chosen topic or is considered to be an expert in the field the student is researching for the project may serve as a graduation project mentor. All community-based mentors must be screened through the CMS Volunteer process and approved prior to serving as a mentor.

Mentors who are not CMS employees must submit an application and be approved to volunteer by the Office of Strategic Partnerships. Mentors must also consent to a background check. Ideally, students should select their own mentors. Mentors should have an expertise or background in the student's topic that will assist the student in the successful completion of the Graduation Project.

Additional information about the role of mentor can be accessed on the district website.

## MENTOR DOCUMENTATION

### **Mentor Confirmation**

Mentor agrees to assume responsibility for mentoring.

### **Mentor Log**

Mentor records assistance to students.

### **Project Proposal**

Mentor (along with parent and English teacher/academic advisor) approves/disapproves student topic.

### **Student Project Log**

Mentor initials contacts with students.

### **Progress Checks**

Mentor (along with English teacher/academic advisor) evaluates progress of students at prescribed intervals.

### **Description of Product**

Mentor (along with parent and English teacher/academic advisor) approves/disapproves student choice of product.



# GRADUATION PROJECT TOPIC SELECTION

## OVERALL GUIDELINES

Each student will choose a research topic related to a community or global issue. Such issues impact the society in which we live, are complex, and worthy of exploration. They also lend themselves to a service learning experience. The following guidelines will assist the student in choosing the subject to be explored.

**The research topic should be one that requires knowledge across multiple subjects.** It should be a natural outgrowth of interest and combine skills of all, or most, content areas. For example, a student who researches the changes in the ozone layer is using cumulative knowledge from English, Math, Science, and History.

**The research topic should be one that is broad enough to allow the student access to enough information, yet narrow enough to make the research scope reasonable.** For example, a student choosing the topic *Access to First Aid* would find it impossible to include EVERYTHING about first aid (home remedies, history of emergency services, the treatment of burns, how to stop bleeding, evolution of first aid courses, etc.) On the other hand, a student choosing the research topic *The Application of Band-Aids to Skin Abrasions* probably would not find enough information.

**The research topic should be one in which the student is interested, but not one about which the student is already an expert.** If a student has been a diabetic for ten years, worked closely with the Juvenile Diabetes Association, and has been a volunteer in the children's diabetic ward in a local hospital, he or she probably already knows a great deal about the subject of juvenile diabetes. Unless that student pursues a new aspect of diabetes, that topic might not yield much new learning.

**The research topic should be one that is academically and creatively challenging to the student.** The student should take care not to choose a topic that is limited to relatively simple ideas or one that has little application or service learning possibilities. Making such a choice would relegate the paper, the product, and the presentation to the mundane and uninteresting. The topic should require an academic and creative s-t-r-e-t-c-h for the student. Service Learning experiences should demonstrate some leadership and growth for the student.

**Expenditures will not enhance the evaluation of the project.** Students should avoid choosing topics that might involve expenses they are not prepared to handle. If the research will involve travel or long distance calls, the student may want to make another choice. If the product that grows out of the research and service learning experience will require expensive materials, the student may want to consider another choice. Remember, the student is NOT EXPECTED to spend money in order to complete the project.

**Students should avoid choosing topics that might endanger themselves or others.** For example, experiments that are potentially dangerous are not appropriate. Students MUST obtain permissions BEFORE THE START of any service learning experience.

**Primary research is a valuable component of any inquiry.** It may be wise for students to explore the possibilities for personal interviews, informal surveys, empirical observation, etc., before making a final selection of topic.

**Some preliminary research may be helpful to the student.** By reading about a certain topic, the student may expand his/her areas of interest. Additionally, possibilities for new areas of exploration may surface. For example, if a student is not able to find precisely what he or she needs but does find usable information, it is possible for him/her to change focus while keeping the same main topic. Students may find helpful information at <http://serves.cmslearns.org>.

**Students should use good judgment to be certain that the issues they choose are appropriate for presentation to a Review Board and the general public.** Remember that the senior English teacher/academic advisor, the mentor, and the parent(s) of the student must approve the selection of the issue.

### **Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

All work completed for the Graduation Project must be a student's own work and must represent his/her best effort. Students who purchased and/or copied any portion of their research paper will receive a zero (0) on the paper and will be required to complete a paper on a new topic in order to be allowed to complete the three Graduation Project components in their senior year.

Research papers, products, and visuals completed for the Graduation Project must be correctly and accurately documented. Any information that is not the student's own knowledge must be correctly cited. Direct quotations must be in quotation marks and their source must be placed in internal citations. Paraphrasing must be completely in the student's own style of writing and must also have its source placed in internal citations.

Any flagrant evidence of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0).

# Important Guidelines

## Reflections:

Students should complete a written reflection for the following components of the Graduation Project: Research Paper, Service Learning Experience/ Product, Presentation. If a student has a mentor, they must also submit a reflection for their experience in order to gain extra points. Each reflection should be a minimum of two pages hand-written (1 page typed) and should address the challenges, solutions, and growth they experienced. The reflection should focus on what the student has learned and his/her impact on the community issue they chose.

## Late Submissions:

Students who turn in components of the project past the **school's published deadlines** are subject to the consequences set by the school.

## Artifacts:

Student-generated artifacts that enhance the understanding of **and** demonstrate impact on the chosen issue for the service learning experience should be included in your portfolio. Only artifacts that have been created by or highlight the student are acceptable. Testimonials must directly state the student's impact.

## Permissions:

Students should obtain all proper and necessary permissions before they begin any work on the Graduation Project. Parent and Advisor signatures are **REQUIRED**. Check the manual to obtain forms and include them in the portfolio. Other permissions may be required by the organization for which the student is performing the service learning experience.

## Scores:

Learning from challenges, perseverance and creativity are the hallmarks of professionalism. Students will score highest for work that demonstrates mastery of skills, effective problem-solving, leadership, and honest reflection.

## Evaluations:

Students should complete all three self-evaluations and obtain necessary signatures. Students also **MUST** acquire at least one evaluation of their service learning experience from someone who is directly involved. Students may include more than one evaluation if doing so enhances the judges understanding of the quality of the student's work. All evaluations should be included in the portfolio.

## Special Accommodations/Modifications for Graduation Project

**Accommodations:** *Accommodations are adjustments to assignments that are required by law for students who have documented needs, have been assessed, and have the appropriate paperwork filed in the school system. Schools should follow federal and state guidelines for giving accommodations.*

- **IEP/ 504:** Any accommodations the student receives on an individualized education plan are expected to be given for Graduation Project. This means that if the student receives extra time or shortened assignments, those same accommodations are applied to Graduation Project. The school staff will make adjustments to the Graduation Project requirements accordingly.
- **ELL:** Similar accommodations are given to documented ELL students. The most common are bilingual dictionaries, extra time on assignments and shortened assignments.

**Modifications:** *Special circumstances may necessitate modifications to the Graduation Project. There is greater flexibility when modifying an assignment based on student need. **Schools have the option and authority** to modify the assignments based on the needs of the student. Modifications should be documented and decided on by the Graduation Project Coordinator or committee. Some common examples follow.*

- **Late Enrollment:** Students who enroll late in the Graduation Project process may need shortened assignments or other modifications. Students who enter CMS as a Senior must do research, but **do not** need to write a paper to proceed with the product, portfolio and presentation.
- **ELL:** Students who have not mastered English may be given extra time, shortened assignments, shortened presentations, reduced requirements for resources, or other modifications based on need. Scores should not penalize students for lack of mastery with language.
- **Illness:** Students who miss presentations due to documented illness may be rescheduled. Students who are home-bound may present to one qualified and trained judge, usually a home-bound teacher.
- **Exchange Students:** Students who are visiting our district to study for a limited amount of time are still required to complete the Graduation Project components that are assigned while they are here, but their assignments can be modified based on time frame and need. Students who are from CMS and are studying abroad may be given the same modifications.



# Research Paper





# GUIDELINES FOR THE GRADUATION PROJECT PAPER

1. The basic purpose of the research paper is to support a focused thesis statement with strong research.
2. The paper can be written in any mode, including but not limited to:
  - Expository
  - Compare and Contrast
  - Cause and Effect
  - Argumentative
  - Critical Review
  - Analytical
  - Literary Analysis of Chosen Issue; for example, a student's chosen issue is Cultural Identity/ Assimilation. After reading, the student would critique *the treatment of the issue* in one or more texts (*Things Fall Apart, Joy Luck Club, Great Gatsby*, or others). The service learning experience could include volunteering at the International Fair, providing tutoring to newcomers, or documenting stories of cultural identity.
3. Each paper must cite a minimum of five different sources that are authoritative and current. Encyclopedias and other general resources are not acceptable, including technological reference bundles. Students should strive for variety and balance by using print, online, interviews, digital media, and other reliable sources for information.
3. Papers should be approximately six (6) to eight (8) pages of text.
5. **The thesis statement should be in bold-faced type.** A thesis statement is a short statement that summarizes the main point or CLAIM of the research paper, and is developed, supported, and explained in the text by means of examples and evidence.
6. Sources should include at least one primary source. Students whose primary sources are individuals should explain in the text the person's expertise. **NOTE: Students should identify primary sources with bold-faced type in the list of works cited.** Primary sources are original materials. They are from the time period involved and have not been filtered through interpretation or evaluation. Primary sources are original materials on which other research is based. They are usually the first formal appearance of results in physical, print or electronic format. They present original thinking, report a discovery, or share new information. (The definition of a primary source may vary depending upon the discipline or context.) Examples include: Audio recordings (e.g. radio programs); diaries; interviews (e.g., oral histories, telephone, e-mail); letters; newspaper articles written at the time; records of organizations, government agencies (e.g. annual report, treaty, constitution, government document); speeches; survey research (e.g., market surveys, public opinion polls); video recordings (e.g. television programs)
7. Students should learn to evaluate research in terms of validity and possible bias. This examination is especially important when students are using on-line sources.
8. Research should take a variety of forms, primary and secondary, traditional and non-traditional. Students may design, administer, and analyze surveys, conduct interviews of experts, access on-line databases, or consult portable database products. Students should tailor their research to their topic to ensure a reasonable balance of sources.



9. Students should not rely solely on on-line sources.
10. Students must carefully document all research information that they cite in their papers. This should include parenthetical documentation within the paper and a list of works cited at the end of the paper.
11. Students should access the most recent edition of the *APA* or *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (or an equivalent) guidelines for appropriate documentation.
12. Students should understand research ethics and the serious consequences of plagiarism.
13. Students should create and integrate a student-generated graphic in their paper, if applicable.
14. Students should acknowledge counterpoints in their presentation of the research. The treatment of the counterpoint should serve to broaden the knowledge base and strengthen their claim.

## Graduation Project Activity

### Topic Feasibility Filter

In order to determine if your chosen topic will result in engaging research and discovery or end up in dead-ends and roadblocks, filter your topic through the following questions and place a check in the column which best matches your answer.

Mostly High Ratings = **Green Light!**

Mostly Low Ratings = **Red Flag!**

TOPIC:		
Feasibility Question	High	Low
1. What is the likelihood that this issue can be seen from multiple perspectives? (Ethics, Budget, Feasibility, Management, etc.)		
2. What is the likelihood that there is something about this issue that is controversial – a point on which experts disagree or which they interpret differently?		
3. What is the likelihood that a body of information about this issue exists?		
4. What is the likelihood that there have been recent new developments in this field?		
5. What is the likelihood that you will be able to identify 5 W's and an H for this topic? (Who, what, when, where, why, and how)		
6. What is the likelihood that you can identify 2-3 primary sources in this field (names, job titles, situations, legal documents, original texts, etc...)		
7. To what degree are your opinions informed or uncertain regarding this issue? (Is there room for you to become an "expert" yourself?)		
8. To what degree are you able to view this issue objectively?		
9. What is the likelihood that this issue is focused enough to be thoroughly addressed in 6-8 pages?		
10. What is the likelihood that you will be able to develop a position or thesis statement regarding this issue (something that you can PROVE and not just EXPLAIN)?		
11. What is the likelihood that you will be able to clearly link your learning from the research to your service learning experience?		
12. How comfortable would you feel presenting this issue to a panel of adults?		

Adapted from: Dianne Niemann, Partnership for Dynamic Learning

## Graduation Project Activity

### Narrowing a Topic

The research topic choice is very important. Your topic should be narrow enough that you can find targeted research on the topic, but broad enough to cover a 6-8-page research paper. Consider the following questions when deciding how to narrow a research topic:

- What do you already know about the issue?
- Is there a specific **time period** you want to cover on your topic?
- Is there a **geographic region or country** on which you would like to focus?
- Is there a **particular aspect** of this issue that interests you? For example, historical influence, sociological aspects, specific groups or individuals involved in the issue, etc. (Adapted from [www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/refining.htm](http://www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/refining.htm))

Here are some ways to ensure a narrowed focus for your research project:

Narrow Topic By:	General	Specific	More Specific	Very Specific
▪ Time	Sports	Basketball	NBA Regulations	Changes in doping regulations since 2000
▪ Location	Conservation	Biodiversity	Urbanization and Biodiversity	The Use of Greenspace in Charlotte
▪ Genre	Economics	Business Loans	Minority Business Loans	Micro-loans for Women in Poverty
▪ Area of Study	Medicine	The Development of Immunizations	Use of Immunizations in Preventing Disease	Eradicating Polio with Immunizations

(Chart adapted from <http://mccoy.lib.siu.edu/explorer>)

Use the blank chart to practice narrowing your topic:

Narrow Topic By:	General	Specific	More Specific	Very Specific
▪ Time				
▪ Location				
▪ Genre				
▪ Area of Study				

Reviewed by Academic Advisor/English Teacher

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Academic Advisor OR English Teacher's Signature

Date

## Graduation Project Activity

# Narrow Your Research Topic & Identify Your Essential Question

Once you have identified a **general issue(s)** that you are interested in, the next step is to narrow the subject and identify the **essential** or **research question**.

My general issue(s) of interest are:

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In order to narrow your subject, you must conduct some **preliminary research**. Find **several books or articles (avoid .com information) on your topic** and browse them to get an overview. Look at the table of contents and scan the text. After doing this preliminary research:

List three facts that you **already know** about your issue:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

List three questions that you **would like to know** about your issue:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Then, structure several what, which, how, or why questions about your issue:

**WHAT** What effect? What difference...? What if...? What is the best choice for...?

**WHY?** Why does it matter that...? Why do... Why...?

**WHICH?** Which is most important...? Which path is best to...? Which is the best design...?

**HOW?** How could things be better? How does this effect...?

Adapted from <http://www.mchs.mariposa.k12.ca.us>



Graduation  
Project  
PROJECT PERMISSION FORM

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Community Issue to be researched: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Learning Experience/ Product (What, Where, and How?): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Parent/ Guardian:

\_\_\_\_\_ I have discussed this project with the student and find it is **ACCEPTABLE**.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have discussed this project with the student and find it is **UNACCEPTABLE** for the reasons stated below.

Comments, suggestions, or concerns:

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Site Administrator: (Where service is to be performed)

\_\_\_\_\_ I have discussed this project with the student and find it is **ACCEPTABLE**.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have discussed this project with the student and find it is **UNACCEPTABLE** for the reasons stated below.

Comments, suggestions, or concerns:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor:

\_\_\_\_\_ I have discussed this project with the student and find it is **ACCEPTABLE**.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have discussed this project with the student and find it is **UNACCEPTABLE** for the reasons stated below.

Comments, suggestions, or concerns:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Using Graphs, Charts, Tables or Other Visual Aids In a Research Paper

## Guidelines:

1. Tables, graphs, and charts **MUST BE STUDENT-GENERATED**. This means that students may NOT simply copy and paste. The graphic/visual aid must be produced by the student and based on information gathered by the student or researched by the student.
2. Tables, graphs, and charts must be accompanied by an explanation in the paper. References should precede (come before) the visual aid/graphic and explain or analyze the information contained in the graphic/visual aid.
3. All resources used in creating the student-generated visual must be properly annotated beneath the graphic.

## Consider the following:

- Every student is **REQUIRED** to include a visual component in his/her research paper.
- Visual components may be one of the following: diagrams, charts, graphs, maps, or artistic renderings (such as a drawing, sketch, floor plan).
- Visual components **MUST** be original (i.e. student created). The visual component may not be a photocopy of a visual element taken from another source.
- The visual component must be used by the student to compile information researched from various sources and then placed into a student-generated/created visual (chart, graph, table, diagram, map, sketch, etc).
- The visual component must be incorporated into the paper close to the text that clarifies and analyzes it. In other words, it cannot be attached at the end of the paper.
- The visual component must reference material introduced and explained within the text of the paper.
- The visual component should be no larger than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the page size and no smaller than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the page size.
- Most word processing programs contain tools to assist in preparing and placing a visual component directly within the text of the paper.

## Basic Rules:

Graphics, often called figures, make technical information clearer by presenting it in a visual way. There are simple guidelines to use to generate and present graphics in formal papers and essays. Some tips are:

- Make sure that the graphic or figure corresponds to the topic and overall thesis or purpose of your essay/paper.
- Keep your graphic simple. It should illustrate one idea – and the reader/audience should be able to understand the idea immediately.
- Use as few words as necessary in graphics. A title, labels, scales, numbers, statistics, and essential information are all that should be included in addition to the statistics.
- The graphic should add to the purpose of the paper and should be discussed within the text.



The most common graphics found in papers/essays are:

- Tables
- Graphs
- Pie charts
- Bar chart

**BULLET POINTS DO NOT COUNT AS THE “VISUAL” ELEMENT REQUIRED FOR THE GRADUATION PROJECT.**



*NOTE: The following samples of graphics are professional examples, not examples of student-generated models.*

## Tables

Tables are used to categorize and compare large amounts of information. A table should not be constructed unless repetitive data must be presented. If only a few items of data are presented, explain them in text rather than in a table. Guidelines for using tables are:

- Tables have both left and right (horizontal) dimensions and up-and-down (vertical) dimensions. Ideally, tables must read down a column, not across rows. However, much will depend on the purpose of the table.
- Words in a column must be lined up to the left (left justified).
- Numbers in a column must be right justified, or lined up along the decimal point.
- Limit the range values shown in the table. If the values of variables do not change much, group the data into ranges.
- Give each column a clear heading, which must be understandable without reference to the text or any footnotes to the table.
- Separate column headings or totals from the rest of the table using a thin horizontal line.
- Break vertical lists by a line space every few lines.
- Use vertical space, rather than solid lines, to divide columns.
- If you have placed a table in your paper, make sure that you have referred to it in the text of your paper.

**Table 5a: Demographic indicators**

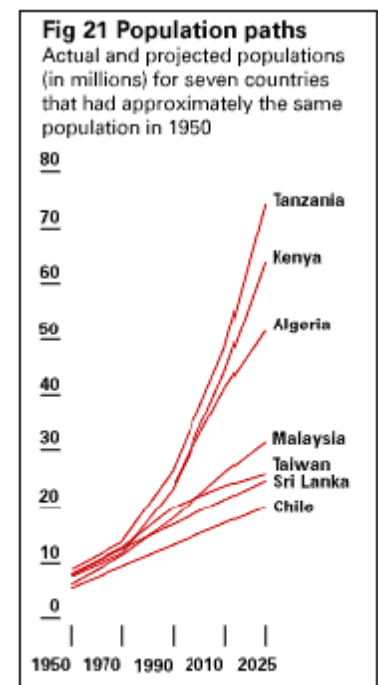
	Sub-Saharan Africa	Middle East and North Africa	South Asia	East Asia and Pacific	Latin America and Caribbean
Population under 16 (millions)	258	149	464	542	167
Population under 5 (millions)	100	54	161	185	55
Population annual growth rate (1965-80) %	2.8	2.8	2.3	2.2	2.5
Population annual growth rate (1980-92) %	3	3	2.2	1.7	2.1
Crude death rate 1960	24	21	21	19	13
Crude death rate 1992	15	8	11	7	7
Crude birth rate 1960	49	47	44	39	42
Crude birth rate 1992	45	35	32	23	26
Life expectancy 1960 (years)	40	47	43	47	56
Life expectancy 1992 (years)	51	64	58	68	68
Total fertility rate	6.4	5	4.3	2.5	3.1

Source: UNICEF (1994)

## Graphs

Graphs can be used to show how variables relate to each other. Guidelines for preparing and using graphs in research papers are:

- Make connecting lines clear and easy to distinguish from other lines on the graph.
- Use a legend to explain what each of the lines represents and set the legend away from the data lines for ease of reading.
- Do not extend the horizontal (x) or vertical (y) axes beyond what is necessary to include your data. If your data ranges in value from 0 to 46, consider having the axis between 0 and 50, but not more than that.
- If there is more than one line in a graph, choose colors or marks that make the lines easy to distinguish from each other.
- Avoid using graphs that only show one curve or line. If it does, it might be better to describe in words, rather than in a graph.
- Use graphs that illustrate your message in an interesting way. If it does not look interesting, do not use a graph.
- If the precise values are important, use a table instead of a graph.
- Avoid using graphs if the data you are presenting is sparse or repetitive.

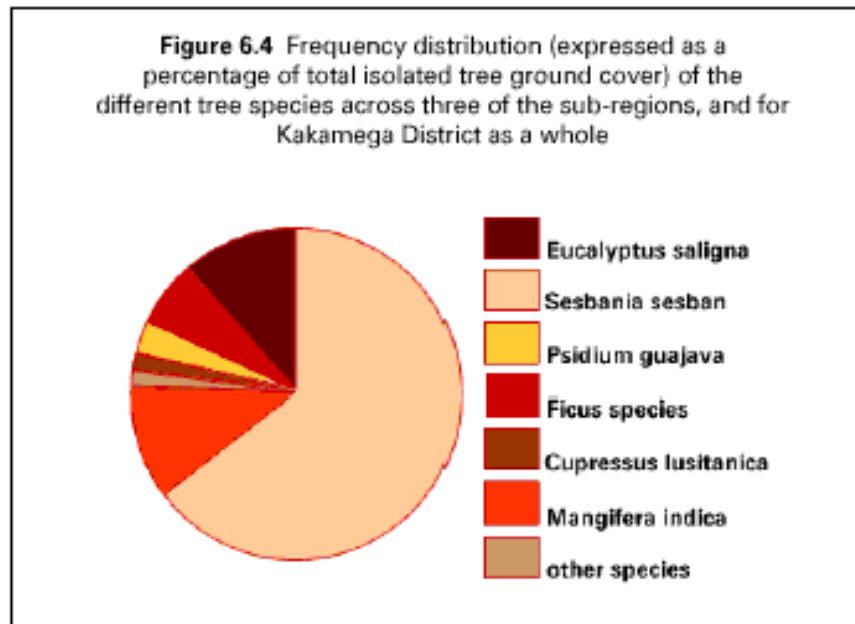


Sources: United Nations World population prospects: the 1992 revision  
1993 Data for Taiwan from World Bank, 1993

## Pie Charts

Pie charts are used to show proportions and the relationship of proportions. Guidelines for using a pie chart in research papers are:

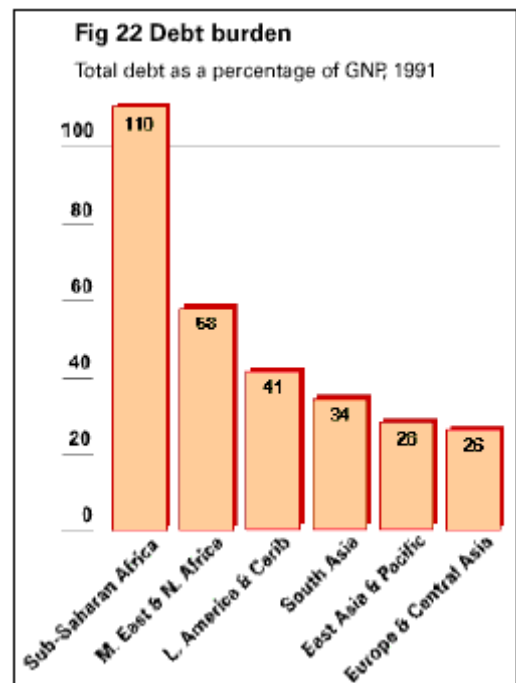
- Limit the number of slices shown in the pie chart to no more than five.
- Ensure that the color/pattern for each slice is distinct from all other slices. Each slice must be clearly labeled.
- The difference in slice sizes must be obvious.
- Start the arrangement of slices at 12:00 on the chart and arrange slices clockwise in decreasing order of size.
- Provide a legend so the reader can easily grasp what each slice represents.
- Set legends away from the chart.
- Provide a title for the chart and any explanatory notes – but keep to a minimum.
- If the precise values are important, consider using a table to show the data instead.



## Bar Charts

Bar charts are used to show trends and variations. A histogram is a specialized form of a bar chart used to show frequency distributions of data. Guidelines for using bar charts in research papers are:

- Limit the number of items you are comparing.
- Label both the x and y axes clearly and indicate the units of measure.
- Keep the scales consistent (draw as accurately to scale as possible).
- Place the bars next to one another for continuous trends and farther apart for discontinuous ones.
- Legends should be set away from the data.
- Label the chart and provide a title.
- Consider whether the bars look better vertically or horizontally. A chart that is wider than is tall probably gives the best overall effect.
- Avoid using bar charts if the data you are presenting is sparse or repetitive.



Graduation Project  
Research Paper Rough Draft Checklist

Student's name \_\_\_\_\_ English teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Paper title \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: (Circle One)

Notes:

- |     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | Introduces topic with a concise thesis statement   |
| Yes | No | Builds a clear, logical development which supports the thesis statement  |
| Yes | No | Includes a strong, insightful conclusion   |
| Yes | No | Includes parenthetical documentation (in-text citations) correctly/accurately  |
| Yes | No | Demonstrates an appropriate balance of research and student's synthesis of information                               |
| Yes | No | Consistently uses appropriate Standard American English  |
| Yes | No | Incorporates at least five sources (with no general encyclopedias)   |
| Yes | No | Integrates at least one primary source (bold citation on works cited page)   |
| Yes | No | All sources cited in parenthetical documentation listed on the works cited page                                      |
| Yes | No | All sources on the works cited page mentioned in the text of the paper (through parenthetical documentation or text) |
| Yes | No | Uses MLA or APA documentation correctly in text and on the works cited page  |

*Student's Signature* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date Completed* \_\_\_\_\_

# Graduation Project

## Research Paper Requirements Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Paper submitted in correct format
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Title
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Thesis clearly evident in boldface type
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Paper typed
  - \_\_\_\_\_ One-inch margins
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 12 pt Times New Roman normal font
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Paper contains student-generated visual
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Paper contains correct internal documentation and Works Cited pages.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Meets or exceeds number of required (5) sources on the Works Cited page
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Meets or exceeds types of sources required in the Works Cited page
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Primary
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Journal
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Book sources
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Non-print sources (film, photographs, video, graphics, tables, charts, interviews)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Works Cited page follows correct format
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Paper meets minimum length (6 pages)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Evidence of student voice (Point of view, analysis, word choice, syntax, etc)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Overall content and format acceptable

Parent's Signature

Date

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Mentor's Signature

Date

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## GRADUATION PROJECT PROGRESS CHECK: After Paper Completion

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Service Learning Experience \_\_\_\_\_

What tasks have you completed?

What problems have you have encountered?

What success have you experienced?

What assistance have you sought/received?

What further steps have you planned?

English Teacher/academic adviser's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

English Teacher/academic adviser's Comments:

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Comments:

Mentor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Comments:



Self-Evaluation

Research

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*This self-evaluation is intended to help you be aware of your development as you worked through the research process. Your answers should reflect your skill development. A summary of your research would not be an appropriate response!*

What I learned from my expected outcomes (successes):

What I learned from my unexpected outcomes (obstacles):

**Advisor/ Mentor:** Please answer the following questions, if possible.

How has this student demonstrated growth in the area of conducting research?

Research Strengths:

Research Future Recommendations:

Advisor/Mentor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_





# Research Paper Rubric

Total Points	Evaluation Criteria	Distinguished 4	Effective 3	Insufficient 2	Unsatisfactory 1	No Submission 0
	Content	Presents skillful, insightful, focused thesis statement	Presents thesis Statement with effective insight and focus	Presents thesis statement with minimal insight and focus	Presents no thesis statement or one with no insight and focus	No Paper Submitted
		Exemplary synthesis of ideas, providing multiple perspectives that draw strong and clear connections between thesis and related ideas	Effective synthesis of ideas, providing multiple perspectives that draw connections between thesis and related ideas	Effective synthesis of ideas, providing limited perspectives that draw insufficient connections between thesis and related ideas	Does not synthesize ideas, or provide multiple perspectives, shows limited understanding of connections between thesis and related ideas	
		Demonstrates exceptional selection of supporting information, <i>including a primary source</i> , clearly relevant to thesis and related ideas	Demonstrates effective selection of supporting information, <i>including a primary source</i> , clearly relevant to thesis and related ideas	Demonstrates selection of supporting information, <i>including a primary source</i> , relevant to thesis and related ideas	Minimal use of supporting information relevant to thesis and related ideas <i>May not include primary source</i>	
		Masterfully balances use of quotations and student paraphrasing	Effectively balances use of quotations and student paraphrasing	Insufficiently balances use of quotations and student paraphrasing	Does not incorporate use of quotations and student paraphrasing	
		Demonstrates flawless use of prescribed format (MLA, APA) including pagination, citations, primary and secondary sources	Demonstrates effective use of prescribed format (MLA, APA) including pagination, citations, primary and secondary sources	Demonstrates flawed use of prescribed format (MLA, APA) including pagination, citations, primary and secondary sources	Does not use prescribed format (MLA, APA) Does not include Works Cited page or cite resources within text	
		Seamlessly integrates student-generated visuals (charts, diagrams, pictures, etc.) to enhance and emphasize important content	Effectively integrates student-generated visuals (charts, diagrams, pictures, etc.) to emphasize important content	Integrates student-generated visuals (charts, diagrams, pictures, etc.) to emphasize content	Does not include student-generated visuals (charts, diagrams, pictures, etc.) to clarify content	
	Conventions	Exhibits masterful use of language, including skillful word choice, clarity, consistent voice, and effective compositional choices that convey specific meaning	Exhibits good use of language, including intentional word choice, clarity, consistent voice, and effective compositional choices that convey specific meaning	Exhibits ineffective use of language, including weak word choice, limited clarity, inconsistent voice, and ineffective compositional choices	Exhibits flawed use of language, including poor word choice, confusing ideas, no voice, and lack of compositional choices	
		Masterfully uses standard writing conventions in grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage to enhance meaning	Effectively uses standard writing conventions in grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage to enhance meaning	Minimally uses standard writing conventions in grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage to enhance meaning	Does not use standard writing conventions effectively in grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage	
<b>Total Points</b>	<p><i>Each dimension can receive between 1-4 points. The maximum score for a Distinguished level paper is 32. The minimum score for a submitted paper is 8. Papers can receive a combination of points from all categories. If students do not submit a paper, they may receive a score of 0.</i></p>					



## Graduation Project – Paper Calculation of the Overall Grade

To determine credit for the Graduation Project as part of the English III grade, the following conversion chart must be used to calculate the numeric grades after the paper has been scored with the rubric.

Each dimension of the rubric can receive between zero and four points. The maximum score for a “Distinguished” level paper is 32. Papers can receive a combination of points from all categories.

<b>Point Total</b>	<b>Numerical Conversion</b>
32	100
31	98
30	96
29	94
28	93
27	91
26	89
25	87
24	85
23	84
22	83
21	82
20	81
19	80
18	79
17	78
16	77
15	75
14	74
13	72
12	70
11	66
10	63
8	60
0	0



# Service Learning Experience





## GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE LEARNING/PRODUCT

1. The service learning experience and product must be student-generated. Students must identify/ design and participate in a suitable, related service learning experience that connects to their community issue. For example, students may conduct a food drive for a local food bank. The service learning experience should reflect SIGNIFICANT EFFORT by the student to make a positive impact on the chosen community issue.
2. The product is tangible evidence of the effort and time invested in the endeavor to meet the criteria established for the service learning experience. The student should be able to show that the service learning experience is an application, extension, and synthesis of the research and has practical applications in the real world.
3. The product should be tangible evidence that reflects applications of learning, critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and personal employability skills, such as responsibility, determination, and independence.
4. This phase of the graduation project offers students an opportunity to connect their educational aspirations with real world career or community service opportunities.
5. The product artifacts should reflect a MINIMUM of fifteen (15) hours of work on the student's identified community issue.
6. The process of working on the service learning experience must be adequately documented with photographs, logs, letters, reflective journal entries, and other forms of documentation.
7. A parent and the senior English teacher must approve the Service Learning Experience Description and Approval Form.
8. Students should avoid selecting/completing service learning experience/ products that might require excessive expenses, as the school/district does not provide funding for student graduation projects. Successful completion of a graduation project is not dependent upon the amount of money invested in the graduation project.



# Choosing a Service Learning Experience

The service learning experience should be something from which you can grow and benefit. You can choose from many different types of experiences that will reflect an appropriate application of the information you acquired from your research. Use the following information to guide you as you choose your service learning experience (SLE).

The SLE should fulfill a need or desire by either the student and/or community.

- **Physical experiences** – build or make something; such as a computer program, a special engine or prototype for temporary housing.
- **Written product** – write advertisements for volunteer opportunities, write a proposal to limit waste production for a specific company, write a petition to solicit public response and send it to the government.
- **Performance** – Mentor a performance with disabled actors, create a show that incorporates the community issue and perform to build public awareness.
- **Conduct a teaching or leadership experience** – teach a middle school or elementary class a series of lessons or a skill; for example, tutor a math skill, read for a class or coach a little league team. Teach elders how to use the internet, Skype, etc. Establish a community garden, and teach people how to tend it.
- **Physical experience** – Teach someone how to exercise, work with a buddy to prepare for Special Olympics, or lead a group on a ecological tour of the community and map resources.
- **Career-related project** – complete a service learning experience in a professional area that you wish to pursue; for example, volunteer your time at a local office or hospital, shelter, park, historic site, or science center. Note: Job-shadowing without any application beyond the shadowing experience is not challenging enough to meet the requirements of the Graduation Project and is unacceptable unless some measure of service is involved.

This page adapted from the Senior Project Center from Dynamic Learning and the White Oak High School Senior Project Manual.

# Service Learning Experience (SLE) Description/ Approval Form

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Topic of Service Learning Experience \_\_\_\_\_

1. What type of SLE will you complete?
2. What materials will you need?
3. What expenses do you anticipate?
4. What timeline will you follow to complete this project?
5. How does the SLE demonstrate application of research and synthesis of new knowledge?
6. What artifacts do you plan to use in your portfolio and present to judges?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Not Approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Not Approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Not Approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor Date



## Graduation Project

# Service Learning Experience Requirements Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Related to the thesis of the research-based paper
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Is an academic stretch or challenge
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Connected to chosen global or community issue
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Demonstrates creative problem-solving
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Implements a variety of sources
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Shows evidence of technical skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Aesthetically pleasing/ creative
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Shows thoughtful use of detail
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Represents a minimum of 15 hours of work
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Artifacts include evidence of work (journal, time log)

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Student's Signature

Date



# THE GRADUATION PROJECT SERVICE LEARNING EXPERIENCE LOG

Student \_\_\_\_\_  
 Topic \_\_\_\_\_

English Teacher \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mentor \_\_\_\_\_

You will keep a record of your work on your Graduation Project SLE on this form. It will help you pace yourself. This is your documentation of the time that you spend working on your project. This log should be included in your portfolio. If you meet with a mentor, ask your mentor to initial in the Date/Time Spent column.

NOTE: You may choose to maintain a product journal in addition to or in place of the product log.

Date/Time Spent	Description of What You Did	Resources Used	Next Step in Plan

Date/Time Spent	Description of What You Did	Resources Used	Next Step in Plan

## GRADUATION PROJECT PROGRESS CHECK: After Service Learning Experience Completion

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Topic of Project \_\_\_\_\_

What problems did you encounter? How did you resolve them?

What success have you experienced?

What assistance have you sought/received?

What are your next steps to prepare for the presentation?

English Teacher/academic advisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

English Teacher/academic adviser's comments:

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's comments:

Mentor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's comments:





Self-Evaluation

Service Learning Product

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*This self-evaluation is intended to help you be aware of your development as you worked through the service learning process. Your answers should reflect your skill development and your impact on the community. A summary of your experiences would not be an appropriate response!*

What impact did this experience make on your life?

How did you solve problems that came up?

What will you take away from this experience that will help you in the future?

**Advisor/ Mentor:** Please answer the following questions, if possible.

How has this student demonstrated growth?

Strengths:

Future Recommendations:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Service Learning Experience Evaluation Form

Graduation Project

After you complete your service learning experience, you must obtain at least one evaluation from someone with whom you worked or a site administrator. This evaluation **MUST** be included in the portfolio.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Service Learning Experience \_\_\_\_\_

**To the Evaluator:** By completing this evaluation, you attest to having first-hand knowledge of the work and leadership skills of the student during their chosen service learning experience.

This student demonstrated the following skills related to the completion of the service learning experience. (Please add specific details. Use N/A for skills not demonstrated.)

Organization:

Problem-solving:

Critical Thinking:

Creativity:

Enthusiasm:

Leadership:

Thoroughness:

Engagement:



# Service Learning Experience/ Product Rubric

Total Points	Evaluation Criteria	Distinguished 4	Effective 3	Insufficient 2	Unsatisfactory 1	No Submission 0
	Learning Over Time/ Depth of Knowledge	Chooses a significant community/ global issue and demonstrates creative and effective problem-solving skills	Chooses a community/global issue and demonstrates sufficient problem-solving skills	Chooses a community/ global issue but demonstrates limited problem-solving skills	Does not focus on a community/ global issue Does not demonstrate problem-solving skills	No Submission
		Artifacts demonstrate a significant, logical, and relevant link to the service learning experience and add to the presentation	Artifacts demonstrate an adequate and relevant link to the service learning experience	Artifacts demonstrate a minimal link to the service learning experience	Artifacts show little link to the service learning experience	
		Demonstrates comprehensive, critical analysis of researched issue in developing the service learning experience	Demonstrates analysis of researched issue in developing the service learning experience	Demonstrates limited understanding of researched issue in developing the service learning experience	Demonstrates unacceptable understanding of researched issue in developing the service learning experience	
		Demonstrates exemplary creative thinking, decision-making, reasoning, and/or problem-solving	Demonstrates creative thinking, decision-making, reasoning, and/or problem-solving	Demonstrates insufficient creative thinking, decision-making, reasoning, and/or problem-solving	Demonstrates unacceptable creative thinking, decision-making, reasoning, and/or problem-solving	
		Demonstrates extensive connection to real world situations	Demonstrates effective connection to real world situations	Demonstrates limited connection to real world situations	Demonstrates unacceptable connection to real world situations	
	Quality of Work Effort	Exhibits creative and exceptional results using talents, abilities, and varied resources Displays extensive use of leadership skills	Exhibits effective results using talents, abilities, and varied resources Displays effective use of leadership skills	Exhibits insufficient results using talents, abilities, and varied resources Displays minimum use of leadership skills	Exhibits unacceptable or no results using talents, abilities, and varied resources Lacks use of leadership skills	
		Displays evidence of exceptional technical, creative, and/or organizational skills	Displays evidence of effective technical, creative, and/or organizational skills	Displays evidence of minimal technical, creative, and/or organizational skills	Displays no evidence of technical, creative, and/or organizational skills	
		Service Learning Experience demonstrates exceptional quality that exceeds 15 hours of time and effort	Service Learning Experience demonstrates quality that reflects 15 hours of time and effort	Service Learning Experience demonstrates insufficient quality resulting from minimal time and effort (less than 15 hours)	Service Learning Experience demonstrates unacceptable evidence of time and effort	
<b>Total Points</b>	<i>Each dimension can receive between 1-4 points. The maximum score for a Distinguished level product is 32. The minimum score for a submitted product is 8. Products can receive a combination of points from all categories. If students do not submit a product, they may receive a score of 0.</i>				<b>Scale:</b> 32-28 =4 27-20 =3 19-12 =2 11-8 =1 0 =0	<b>Overall SLE/Product Score</b> <b>4, 3, 2, 1, 0</b>



# Presentation







## Making Your Presentation Extraordinary

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If you want your audience to remember your presentation, if you want to convince them of your knowledge and expertise, if you want them to pay attention to you, here are some tips you can incorporate into your talk.

TEDtalks are brief speeches given by experts in many fields. TEDtalks are considered to be a prestigious platform for promoting information, ideas, and innovation. Steve Farnsworth, an advisor to the TEDxSanJoseCA events, shares these tips with people who are developing, practicing, and delivering TEDtalks.

1. “Tell a story. A story takes people on a journey of challenge, discovery, and emotion with salient sights, sounds, tastes, textures, and even smells. Think of the opening as a mini story. It gives the listener a place to start.”
2. “You need a middle and an end.” The opening story propels your listener into the topic. “The middle is where we learn the challenges and how they were overcome.” Then share the resolution, flourishing with rich detail so that your audience is carried on your words to the conclusion.
3. Your audience cares more about what you are saying than reading slides. The technology is there to support your talk, not be the focus for the audience. Use your technology wisely, as a help to visualize the story. Just a clean representation or picture is best, using very few words per slide. It is easy to distract the audience from what you are saying by making them read too much for themselves, or by noises that do not add to the story you are telling.
4. “Be Passionate. Passion is conveyed by going on an emotional journey. The speaker needs to share how key events touched and changed them. When obstacles seem insurmountable, passion drives the hero forward. Many speakers just share the facts believing the audience will just ‘get it’. That never works”.
5. “Edit Mercilessly. Have nine key points? Cross out three. Usually people try to talk faster and touch on too many ideas or points for the audience to consider. Keep your story simple, truthful, and create a clear vision of how good it can be and you just might inspire others to help change the world, too.”

### **Tips for the Graduation Project presentation:**

1. Reference your research. What about your research influenced your choices for the presentation? Why are you choosing to focus attention on the things you are?

## Making Your Presentation Extraordinary

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2. Dress for the task. Treat this opportunity as a potential job interview. Wear clothes that reflect your professionalism. Your outfit should not compete for attention with your talk. Look with a critical eye at what others will see when they look at you. Don't allow anything to distract your listeners. What is the message you are sending?
3. Step into a persona that speaks with confidence and knowledge about your topic. The best way to fend off nervousness is knowledge of your message.
4. Use technology as a visual tool. Don't rely on it to fill time or add too many details. Make sure you edit for spelling errors. Check that you can clearly read the text and that it contrasts to the background. Look at your presentation with a critical eye to see it as your audience will, not just from a monitor. You will be scored on how well the technology was integrated into your talk as a part of your overall score.
5. State your argument or information clearly. Don't leave the audience wondering what your point was.
6. Be honest. If you don't know the answer to a question, say politely "I don't know that particular data", or "That was not the focus of my research".
7. Take your time to answer questions thoughtfully and with as much information as you can. This can make a huge difference in your score.
8. Be prepared as well as you can, which means push yourself a bit beyond when you think you are ready. Once you are confident in your material, relax.
9. Attitude counts. Be interested, responsible, and knowledgeable, and you will succeed.

# STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS

1. Write a letter of introduction for the Review Board members (one copy of this letter must be included in the portfolio). Review Board members will read this letter before listening to your presentation.
2. Practice your presentation several times until you feel comfortable with its format and content. Also, time your presentation to be sure that you do not exceed the school time limit.
3. Anticipate questions that your Review Board might ask you (or ask a parent or a friend to compose questions for you) and plan the answers you would give. Your board may not ask these exact questions, but this will give you an opportunity to practice answering questions. Remember that questions should address an aspect or an extension of your chosen issue. Review Boards will be trained regarding the nature of appropriate questions. However, if you are asked a question that you feel is not appropriate, you have the right to reply politely that the question does not relate to your research.
4. Wait for a signal from the Review Board before you begin your presentation.
5. Introduce yourself to the Review Board.
6. Remember that you will be making a formal presentation. Dress appropriately. If you are not sure what constitutes appropriate dress, consult your English teacher.
7. Exhibit a professional and mature demeanor throughout your presentation..
8. Be aware of your body language. Avoid nervous gestures that may negatively affect your presentation.
9. Maintain eye contact with the Review Board members.
10. Do not read your presentation. You may refer to notes occasionally.

## Sample Questions for Review Board Preparation

- Why did you choose this research topic?
- What interested you in this issue?
- What was the most interesting aspect of your research?
- What insight/experience did you gain from working with your mentor?
- How does your chosen issue relate to your future goals?
- What did you learn about yourself through completing this project?
- How has what you learned in school prepared you for completing this project?
- How have you grown through completing the Graduation Project?
- If you could change something about your service learning experience, what would it be?

# GUIDELINES FOR THE LETTER TO THE REVIEW BOARD

1. The letter to the Review Board is an informative summary of the Graduation Project. It should include a personal introduction, background information, and a discussion of the research and service learning. The student should state the thesis, provide an overview of the research, explain additional knowledge gained through research, and provide a clear explanation of how the service learning experience is an extension of the research-based paper.
2. Remember your audience is the Review Board.
3. Copies of the letter must be provided for each review board member at the time of oral presentations.
4. The letter to the Review Board should follow standard business letter format.
5. A copy of the letter should be placed in the student portfolio.

## Suggested Outline of Letter to the Review Board

1231 Main Street  
Charlotte, NC 28211  
October 5, 2006

Graduation Project Review Board Members  
Graduation Project High School (Your High School)  
5555 Any Boulevard (High School Address)  
Charlotte, NC 28200

Dear Review Board Members:

- Paragraph I: Introduce yourself and explain your issue choice for the Graduation Project.
- Paragraph II: Provide the thesis and an overview of the research. Discuss additional knowledge that you have gained through research.
- Paragraph III: Explain how you identified your service learning experience, and how it is an extension of research.
- Paragraph IV: Share what you have learned from the Graduation Project experiences and your impact on the issue
- Paragraph V: Write a statement of personal growth.

Sincerely,

Signature (handwritten)

Your Name (typed)

# Graduation Project Presentation Practice Checklist

Student \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Presentation meets school guidelines for length.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Presentation includes the use of at least one visual aid and your portfolio.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Speaker maintains eye contact, uses appropriate language and speaks clearly with good volume.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. Speaker responds accurately and effectively to questions.

(Circle one) Student has rehearsed presentation, and I find it is **ACCEPTABLE/ UNACCEPTABLE**.

Comments, suggestions, or concerns:

Teacher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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(Circle one) Student has rehearsed presentation, and I find it is **ACCEPTABLE/ UNACCEPTABLE**.

Comments, suggestions, or concerns:

Mentor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature required if using a mentor.)



Self-Evaluation

Presentation

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*This self-evaluation is intended to help you be aware of your development as you worked through the presentation process. Your answers should reflect your skill development. A summary of your presentation would not be an appropriate response!*

What impact did this experience make on your life?

How did you solve problems that came up?

What will you take away from this experience that will help you in the future?

**Advisor/ Mentor:** Please answer the following questions, if possible.

How has this student demonstrated growth?

Strengths:

Future Recommendations:

Signature\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_





# Presentation Rubric

Total Points	Evaluation Criteria	Distinguished 4	Effective 3	Insufficient 2	Unsatisfactory 1	No Submission 0
	Communication/ Speaking Skills	Consistently speaks with engaging volume, tone, and articulation Consistently makes appropriate eye contact	Speaks with effective volume, tone, and articulation Appropriate level of nervousness Frequently makes appropriate eye contact	Has difficulty speaking with appropriate volume, tone, and articulation Makes infrequent eye contact	Does not speak with appropriate volume, tone, and articulation Makes no eye contact	<b>No Presentation</b>
		Consistently maintains appropriate posture, non-verbal communication techniques Consistently exhibits poise, enthusiasm, confidence Engages audience	Maintains appropriate posture, non-verbal communication techniques Generally exhibits poise, enthusiasm, confidence Engages audience	Exhibits weak posture, non-verbal communication techniques Exhibits limited poise, enthusiasm, confidence	Poor posture, non-verbal communication techniques Lacks poise, enthusiasm, confidence	
		Effective use of grammar, diction, and style	Appropriate use of grammar, diction, and style	Occasional inappropriate use of grammar, diction, and style	Consistently uses inappropriate grammar, diction, and style	
		Artifacts creatively enrich or reinforce presentation	Artifacts effectively reinforce presentation	Artifacts detract from presentation	Provides no artifacts	
	Content / Coherence	Effectively defines purpose of presentation, maintaining focus throughout	Defines purpose of presentation, generally maintaining focus throughout	Insufficiently defines purpose of presentation, may lose focus	Does not adequately define purpose of presentation or adhere to its purpose	
		Presents a logical and engaging sequence which the audience can follow	Presents a logical and engaging sequence which the audience can follow	Presents a logical and engaging sequence which the audience can follow	Presents a logical and engaging sequence which the audience can follow	
	Extemporaneous Responses	Effectively, confidently, politely, and accurately responds to judges' questions	Politely and accurately responds to judges' questions	Insufficiently responds to judges' questions	Unable to respond to judges' questions	
	Time	Consistently manages time effectively	Generally manages time effectively	Insufficient time management (over or under significantly)	Mismanages allotted time (1-2 minutes)	
<b>Total Points</b>	<p><i>Each dimension can receive between 1-4 points. The maximum score for a Distinguished level presentation is 32. The minimum score for a presentation is 8. Presentations can receive a combination of points from all categories. If students do not present to judges, they may receive a score of 0.</i></p>				<p><b>Scale:</b></p> <p><b>32-28 =4</b>  <b>27-20 =3</b>  <b>19-12 =2</b>  <b>11-8 =1</b>  <b>0 =0</b></p>	<p><b>Overall Presentation Score</b></p> <p><b>4, 3, 2, 1, 0</b></p>



# Portfolio





# STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR PORTFOLIO

The portfolio serves as a record of the process and progress of the graduation project and includes periodic reflections. This physical record will help you keep track of your work. Additionally, this record will help your teacher, academic advisor, and mentor (optional) monitor your progress.

## Portfolio Requirements

**The Graduation Project Portfolio must meet the following guidelines:**

1. The appearance and format should be neat and orderly.
2. The portfolio **must** be organized and contain a table of contents.
3. All forms and content **must** meet the requirements of the portfolio.
4. The portfolio should demonstrate depth in academic and personal growth.
5. The portfolio **must** contain reflections that provide insight into how the student has anticipated and dealt with challenges and changes through the project.
6. The portfolio **must** include three self-evaluations from the student, and at least one evaluation from someone directly involved with the service learning experience.
6. Technology should be used to construct the portfolio.

**The following are REQUIRED documents:**

Title page (including the Graduation Project topic, school and student's name)  
Graduation Project proposal and approval form  
Research paper (Final Draft)  
Progress checklists for paper, SLE/ product, presentation and portfolio  
SLE approval form  
Letter to the review board  
SLE/ Product log and artifacts (may include photos, samples, testimonials, etc.)  
Self-evaluations (three: paper, SLE, and presentation)  
Evaluation from someone directly involved with the service learning experience  
Reflection on the overall graduation project (minimum of three: paper, SLE, and overall process)

**The following are OPTIONAL documents (\*required to receive mentor credit):**

- Mentor confirmation form\*
- Mentor log\*
- Mentor reflection\*
- Communications (letters, emails, thank-you notes)
- Additional time logs/journals



# Portfolio Checklist

Student \_\_\_\_\_

English Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

## Items to Be Placed in Portfolio

- Graduation Project proposal and approval form
- Research paper
- Progress checklists for paper, SLE/ product, presentation
- Product/SLE approval form
- Signed permissions
- Letter to the review board
- Product/SLE time log and artifacts
- Evidence of planning for presentation (may include outline, note cards, and copy of PowerPoint, if used)
- Reflections on the graduation project (minimum of three: paper, product, and overall process)
- SLE Evaluation

## Optional Documents:

- Mentor log\*
- Mentor confirmation form\*
- Mentor reflection\*
- Communications (letters, emails, thank-you notes)
- Work samples, pictures, sketches during product completion
- Additional time logs/journals

\* Mentor forms are required for students who want to earn mentor credit points.

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_





# Portfolio Rubric

Total Points	Evaluation Criteria	Distinguished 4	Effective 3	Insufficient 2	Unsatisfactory 1	No Submission 0
<b>X2</b>	Student Reflections	Reveals mature and critical insight into how student anticipated changes and dealt with contingencies	Reveals sufficient insight into how student anticipated changes and dealt with contingencies	Reveals insufficient insight into how student anticipated changes and dealt with contingencies	Reveals no insight into how student anticipated changes and dealt with contingencies	<b>No Portfolio</b>
	Student Growth	Demonstrates significant ongoing academic and/or personal growth	Demonstrates adequate academic and/or personal growth	Demonstrates insufficient academic and/or personal growth	Does not demonstrate academic and/or personal growth	
	Technology	Technology used skillfully to enhance construction of portfolio	Technology used adequately to construct portfolio	Technology used minimally in construction of portfolio	Uses no technology in construction of portfolio	
	Format and Appearance	Portfolio appearance is professional	Portfolio appearance is adequate	Portfolio appearance is inappropriate or insufficient	Does not adhere to guidelines for portfolio appearance	
	Organization	Exhibits effective organizational skills in compilation of portfolio	Exhibits adequate organizational skills in compilation of portfolio	Exhibits insufficient organizational skills in compilation of portfolio	Exhibits no clear organizational skills in compilation of portfolio	
	Completeness	Exceeds requirements for portfolio contents in thoughtful ways to enhance meaning	Meets requirements for portfolio contents	Meets some requirements for portfolio contents	Does not meet requirements for portfolio contents	
<b>Total Points</b>	<p><i>Each dimension can receive between 1-4 points. The maximum score for a Distinguished level portfolio is 32. The minimum score for a portfolio is 7. Portfolios can receive a combination of points from all categories. If students do not submit a portfolio, they may receive a score of 0.</i></p>				<p><b>Scale:</b></p> <p>28-25 =4                  24-18 =3                  17-11 =2                  10-7 =1                  0 =0</p>	<p><b>Overall Presentation Score</b></p> <p><b>4, 3, 2, 1, 0</b></p>







# FINAL Graduation Project Grade Calculation

**CMS School Board policy states:** In order to receive credit for the Graduation Project as part of the English IV grade, students must complete all three required components (product, presentation, and portfolio) and have demonstrated that they completed the required research paper. The product, presentation, and portfolio will count as 20% of the second quarter grade in 18 week English IV courses and 40% of the fourth quarter grade in 36 week English IV courses.

The student's overall project score will be calculated by adding the scores for the service learning experience/product, presentation, and portfolio. For example, if a student earns a score of "2" on the presentation, a score of "3" on the SLE/product, and a score of "3" on the portfolio, then the final composite score would be calculated as follows:

$$2 + 3 + 3 = 8$$

The following conversion table will be used to convert the student's overall score to a numerical equivalent that can be averaged into the student's grade (see above) on a 100 point scale.

Overall <b>Service Learning/ Product</b> Score (4, 3, 2, 1, 0)		
Overall <b>Presentation</b> Score (4, 3, 2, 1, 0)		
Overall <b>Portfolio</b> Score (4, 3, 2, 1, 0)		
Optional Bonus <b>Mentor Points</b> Score (2, 1, 0)		
<b>Total Composite Score</b> (Total Product, Presentation, Portfolio, Mentor Scores)		
<b>FINAL Graduation Project Score</b> (Numerical Conversion of Composite Score – See Conversion Table to right)		

Composite Score	Numerical Conversion
1	NS – Student must resubmit
2	NS – Student must resubmit
3	65
4	69
5	73
6	77
7	81
8	85
9	88
10	92
11	96
12	100
13* (mentor bonus point)	101
14* (mentor bonus point(s))	102

**\* Students can receive an extra 2 points for obtaining a mentor, if the following guidelines are met:**

- The student must have a completed mentor confirmation form contained in the portfolio.
- The student must have a completed mentor contact log contained in the portfolio, documenting on-going contact with the mentor. The contact can be face-to-face, via email, or phone.
- The student must have a written reflection (suggested length 1½ pages) discussing how the mentor has enhanced his or her overall project, contained in the portfolio.