

APUSH Research Paper Assignment

During the third quarter, you will have the opportunity to write an 8-10 page research paper on a topic of your choice from any period in American history prior to 1999.

Your paper should not be entirely descriptive or biographical. Rather it should be a thesis-driven cause/effect argument backed by research in both primary and secondary documents. A minimum of eight primary and two secondary sources are required. You will turn in copies of all your sources along with the paper itself.

Your paper should be properly documented as to both notes and bibliography, in accordance with the format presented on the Menlo School library website.

Key Dates

Tuesday, January 20th:

Hand in one typed paragraph, double-spaced, on “the story so far.” Summarize what you have learned from your research. The best of these summaries will include evidence supporting more than one point of view on your Research Question. Think of it as a narrative journal entry. You can even use the I-word! “I found such-and-such source that shows that this person thought that...” Be sure to include the current version of your Research Question at the top.

Thursday, February 5th:

Hand in a one-page (maximum) statement of your tentative answer to your Research Question. Just as your research paper will be an expanded version of an essay, think of this assignment as an expanded version of a thesis paragraph, including a counter-argument, thesis, and points of proof. It is not a journal-type entry this time; it is something more formal. Another way to look at it is as a rough draft of the first page of your paper. Again, double-space and include the RQ.

Tuesday, February 10th:

Hand in a two-page (max.) abstract of your paper. This is not a summary of the evidence you have found, but rather a narrative outline of your argument. Using full sentences (not Roman numerals or bullet points), explain the question you are trying to answer, the thesis that will answer it, the sources and evidence you will use, and the cause/effect arguments you will make to prove your thesis. Each paragraph of your abstract should correspond to a section of your paper, i.e., to a sub-section of your overall argument. Double-space and include the RQ.

Friday, February 27th: Optional but highly recommended: Hand in by 3 PM a rough draft of your paper, including bibliography. Benefits are as follows:

- 1) an automatic bump in grade of half a grade (a B grade becomes a B+);
- 2) time to revise your draft before the final is due (clean up the citations, confer with Ms. Sincoff in the Writing Center, etc.).

Friday, March 13th: Submit the final draft of your paper by 3 PM.

Your paper must be accompanied by hard copies of all sources used in creating it. I will keep the sources until I am ready to give them back to you. If you use newspaper articles or on-line sources, they must be photocopied and handed in.

Tuesday, May 19th [evening]: APUSH Lecture Night