

Social Justice Project - 2007-2008

Research Component: Social Issues in a Developing Third World Country

The project:

The eighth grade research project is designed to culminate the student's academic pursuits throughout elementary and middle school in a single, extensive intellectual inquiry. This project, monitored by teachers but largely independent, will foster the student's individual ability to organize and direct a thorough study of a social justice issue and its impact on the citizens of a third world country. Each student will acquire the skills needed to formulate an argumentative thesis, conduct competent, professional research, and present a final product that adequately expands the argument.

The topic:

Choose a developing third world country which faces the social issue that your group is investigating.

Investigate:

- The specific occurrence of this social issue within the country.
- Has the cultural or historical background of the country caused or influenced the current situation?
- What is currently being done within this country to impact the situation?
- Who, which elements of the population, are primarily impacted by the issue?
- What outside aid - aid from industrial countries, from G-8, from the United Nations, from the World Bank, etc. - has been / is being given?
- What is the United States - either the government or an agency within the U.S. - doing to help?
- What legislation on the part of the country itself, the United States, other industrialized nations, or the United Nations, has had an impact, either positive or negative, on the situation?
- What literature has been / is being written to bring attention to the issue? Music? News coverage? Other?
- What "high-profile" people does the country have on its side?
- What progress, if any, has the country made toward overall improvement in the last 5 to 10 years?
- What else could be done to help?

Important:

The goal will be to consider a specific social issue from a world-wide perspective. Your research should not be presented as a country report, but rather as a profile of the social issue and the affected people living in a third world environment.

Appendix 4.5

Purpose

- Develop research skills, involving the stages of investigation, selection, discernment, support, and documentation.
- Synthesize information while distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant material.
- Exercise analytical and logical reasoning skills in constructing an argument that adequately supports a specific thesis.
- Become more familiar with the various resources found at both the school and off-campus libraries.
- Locate, select, and organize information from various reference materials, including dictionaries, encyclopedias, periodicals, and computer resources.

Method

The individual components of this research project will influence grades in both English and in Literature. We will study and discuss the research process in class. As a portion of the required work, including typing and revising, needs to be accomplished at home, each student must have access to a computer and printer. If this presents a problem, the student must independently arrange for computer time in the school's computer lab or elsewhere. No work is to be presented on disk (CD or Removable Drive). Work is due on the date listed in the appropriate format. Any work not submitted by the due date will be evaluated as a late grade beginning at 70% credit.

Students will select and narrow a topic, create an outline appropriate to the project option chosen, prepare various kinds of note cards, and submit annotated bibliographic entries. All work is to be submitted according to MLA style guidelines.

Materials

- *The Research Paper: A Contemporary Approach* by Sharon Sorenson.
 - This resource is available in class.
- *A Quick Reference to the Research Paper* by Sharon Sorenson
 - These may be checked out overnight as needed.
 - These must be returned each morning by 8:00 A.M.
- 100 3X5 note cards (with a file box)
- Post-it notes or stick-it tabs
- MLA Handbook (available in any library or online)
- Loose-leaf and computer paper
- Pens, pencils, highlighters, markers, etc.

Many of these materials were on the original supply list; however, please check student supplies and replenish as needed. Success on a project of this magnitude depends in large part on the availability of required supplies.

Requirements

The research project requires:

- The incorporation of eight (8) citations (**within the actual text of the project**) taken from a variety of published sources all listed in your annotated bibliography.
- Minimum of eight (8) outside sources / references: (1) or (2) of these resources may cover the individual biography you are reading; at least (6) should pertain to the 3rd world nation you are investigating.
 - One reference book (encyclopedia, atlas, etc.)
 - Two internet sources
 - Your other five sources should be a combination of the following:
 - Novel(s)
 - newspaper, periodical, magazine
 - an interview
 - a literary critique or character analysis
 - a poem
 - a drama, play, or theater production
 - non-fiction published work about the country or one of the social issues
 - a biographical or autobiographical work about a person of prominence either from the country or who has worked to effect change within the country
 - Bible
- The properly formatted MLA bibliography includes **8 sources all annotated** in at least **2 paragraphs** documenting the value of the source and summarizing the information contained. The annotated bibliography should be typed, 12pt. Times New Roman Font, 1" Margins on all sides, submitted with a properly formatted title page including an original and creative title.
- **All** printed pages except the title page should have a left aligned **header** consisting of the student's last name and page number. i.e. "Smith 2")
- Written work must be appropriately formatted. Consideration should be given to spacing, font size, and margins as appropriate to the project chosen.
- All written work should maintain the use of Active Voice.
- All written work should utilize a variety of sentence types, kinds, and structures. Students are encouraged to incorporate different tropes and / or schemes into their writing.
- Remember that this is your culmination project. The research project should demonstrate your overall understanding of the art of writing.
- **Final Project Options:** (see specific guidelines for each project option)
 - Power Point w/ **Presentation Notes (print a copy with notes to submit)**
 - Brochure designed to encourage non-profit foundation and/or corporate involvement to address the specific social issue within the country.
 - Scrapbook of a social justice journey
 - Storybook or Journal
 - Other project choice proposed to and approved by Mrs. Safford prior to beginning the project.