**Independent Research Paper: World History, Standard, 9th Grade**

First of all, I insist that your final product will be the best essay you have ever written. I’m serious. I expect that you will work very hard on this essay and create something that you and I will be very proud of. This is an opportunity for you to investigate and develop in-depth understanding of something that interests you—the Buddhist arts, Aztec warfare, Song Dynasty economics, ancient Greek food, etc. You will develop an expertise and own this project.

**Requirements Format and writing Research Documentation: At least**

✓ 3-4 pages + bibliography

✓ 10-12 point font. See rubric for details

✓ 30 note cards (min)

✓ Min. 4 sources; 2+ books

✓ Min. 1 primary source (architecture, painting, doc.).

✓ Max. 1/3 websites

✓ Max 1/3 reference sources.

✓ Read at least 30 pages.

✓ 5 parenthetical references

✓ 1 citation per body paragraph.

✓ 1 direct quotation.

This year we have focused on 5 themes: Belief, Power, Arts, Geography and Exchange. In this assignment, you will choose a topic—person, place, or event—and research it in-depth, focusing on one of these themes. (For example: the importance of exchange during the Song Dynasty). Ultimately you will write a 3-4 page thesis essay that makes an argument in response to a question:

**POWER**

*Why or how did someone (or a group) become or stay powerful? Example: How did Chinghis Khan transform a band of nomads into a powerful empire?*

**BELIEF**

*What impact did a philosophy, belief or religion have? Example: How did Confucianism impact Chinese society?*

How does **EXCHANGE** *—of goods, ideas, germs or people—impact society? Example: how did medieval Italian trade networks lead to the Renaissance?*

**ARTS/SCIENCES**

*What does art or music tell us about a culture or period of time? Example: How did the Byzantine craftsmen impact arts across the Mediterranean?*

**GEOGRAPHY** *How do humans interact with their natural environment and with animals, and how do they mutually transform or adopt to each other? Example: Why did mostly Native Americans and not Europeans die from disease when the two groups encountered each other?*

Your topic may cover nearly anything from the ancient and pre-modern period (see topic ideas on website), but it must be approved by me. I will not allow topics that are too difficult. Your essay must go beyond work we have already done in class—don’t simply repeat readings or discussion we have already covered.

***As you answer your research question, you will say something significant. Remember, this is not a biography or a story—you are making a mature historical argument about why or how something or someone was significant. In other words, the answer to your research question will explain causes, consequences, changes, or why something is important.***

**The research process**

Step 1: Choosing a Topic

As you research, you may have to change, adjust or revise your topic. Brainstorm a list first, then turn it into a research question.

Step 2:

Key word list, research and refine topic

There’s this new way of research—it’s called “going to a library.” You are required to visit the library multiple times and read at least 30 print pages to research your subject. You may begin with general sources—Encyclopedia, textbook, Wikipedia. Once you’ve written your question, say “bye bye Wikipedia.” Write a research question (see form) that you will attempt to answer. Now expect to spend significant time reading about the topic and taking a lot of notes and citing your sources. You may refine your question after you’ve done some research.

Taking notes: Use Noodletools to record your research—you’ll make at least 30 “cards.” Each “card” will cover one topic from one source. As you take notes, record interesting quotations and your ideas that you can use in your essay later. BE SURE TO KEEP TRACK OF PAGE NUMBERS for each note you take and THE SOURCES YOU USE TO RESEARCH. Like totally don’t even think about slacking on notes and bibliography, dude, or you’ll lose madd points, aight?! Information or ideas in your essay that is not documented in your notes is considered plagiarized (translation: Cheating=fail). Your thesis, however, is your voice, your idea.

**The writing process: Theory, Evidence, Analysis (TEA)**

**Step #3: Make an outline**

Thesis: Before developing a thesis, develop a question first: What do you want to know about this topic? A thesis answers the question in the form of an argument, something you need to prove with evidence. Review old essays before turning in your final essay. Expect to do a lot of revising and editing. Set up a thesis meeting with Mr. Grande.

Evidence: Each body paragraph must provide evidence and analysis that supports your thesis. Begin body paragraphs with topic sentences, then include detailed supporting evidence. Don’t make stuff up! Evidence includes primary sources (documents, art, etc.). Analysis is an explanation of how your evidence supports your thesis.

Quotes and Citation: Quotations should not be too lengthy—don’t substitute someone else’s writing for your own. Write a paper that is your own, in your own words—a paper that you can be proud of! Be sure to give credit to writer for their quotes AND their ideas. The bibliography is part of your essay—it should not look like you copied and pasted it. Make it consistent with the font and text size of the rest of your essay.

Conclude essay with a summary of your ideas and an interesting reflection: compare or contrast topic to another person, idea or period; an interesting thought connected to a theme in your essay.

See next page for topic list:

**China:**

• How did a Dynasty come to power? Why did it collapse?

• The Mongols

• The Shogunate in Japan

• Zheng He, Chinese sailor

**India and the East Indies**

• The spread of Hinduism

• The Gupta Dynasty

• The spread of Islam to India, Taj Mahal

• The Spice trade

• The caste system

• Spread of Buddhism

• Buddhist or Hindu Sculpture

**Ancient Greece and Rome**

• Art, including sculpture

• A philosopher

• Democracy or other forms of government

• Ancient Sparta

• Alexander the Great

• The Bible

• Rome stuff!

**Islam and Medieval Africa**

• Muhammad

• Asoka or Mansa Musa

• An Islamic Dynasty: Umayyad, Abbasid, Almohad, Almoravid

• The spread of Islam into Africa

• Medieval Cairo

• Golden Age of Islamic Science

**Medieval and Renaissance Europe**

• People: Oliver Cromwell, Charles Martel, Charlemagne, Pope Urban II (or other Pope), Machiavelli (“The Prince”), The Medici family, Isabelle d’Este, (woman and patron), Christine di Paysan, Lucrezia Borgia (or other Renaissance woman w/political power), Queen Elizabeth I (Renaissance queen)

• Cathedrals

• Gothic Art

• A Renaissance artist (or comparison)

• The Holy Roman Empire

• Medieval economic change

• Gutenberg Press

• Crusades

• Explorers: Columbus, Vasco de Gama, Vespucci, Magellan

• Medieval Fairs

• Protestant Reformation and Martin Luther

**Ancient Americas**

• Maya, Aztec, Inca

• The European conquest

• North American tribes and art work

**Scientific Revolution:**

• Galileo, Mercator, Vessalius or other

• Medicine

**Food:**

• Corn—a history