US History: 1st Research Paper Guidelines and Requirements

RATIONALE: The research paper is an important part of this course’s curriculum. By completing this assignment, you will learn valuable skills that can be applied to other classes, to college, and your career field. Skill areas that this assignment focuses on include: finding and evaluating sources of information, reading for information, note taking, organizing information, outlining, word processing skills, and writing an argument.

Please note the due dates for each part of the research paper. There will be class time to work on each assignment. However, you will find it necessary to work on this project outside of class in order to meet each due date.

ITEMS TO HAND IN:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Brainstorming Topics Graphic Organizer” worksheet</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 notecard</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 additional notecards</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Develop a Research Question” worksheet</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 additional note cards focusing on answering your research question</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Develop a Hypothesis then a Thesis” worksheet</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline (printed from noodletools with the thesis, topic sentences, 3 notecards that will help support the topic sentence and a transition sentence)</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Draft</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>6/10</td>
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REQUIREMENTS FOR FINAL DRAFT:

• You must have 3-5 different scholarly sources for your paper. You may use Internet sources as long as you do not use Wikipedia, Ask.com, eHow, etc. Consider finding informative books, encyclopedias, and/or magazine/newspaper articles in the library.

• Your paper must be 5 paragraphs in MLA format.

• All students will use noodletools to make research notecards, an outline and a bibliography.

• The paper must include a works cited page and the in-text citations.
• In order to avoid plagiarism, you must properly cite your sources both in the essay itself and have a works cited page.

Research Paper Expectations Checklist for Items Due

Throughout the unit, use the following checklist to ensure you have met all of the components of the research essay. If you have questions about any of the assignments, please do not hesitate to ask.

• Topic Sheet
  ✓ What is the topic you selected?
  ✓ Can you develop an additional 5 subtopics on the topic?
  ✓ Is the topic narrow enough to create a clear and concise essay?
  ✓ Is your topic researchable?
  ✓ Can you find scholarly sources on your topic?

• Notecards
  ✓ Is each notecard linked to the source it is from in the section titled “source”?
  ✓ Does each notecard have a specific title for each notecard that is not general or vague in the section titled “title”?
  ✓ Does each notecard have either a direct quote in the “direct quotation” section or information in the “paraphrase or summary” section?
  ✓ Did you write a note to yourself explaining how you might be able to use this notecard in the future?
  ✓ Did you include the page number if using a book in the section titled “page”?

• Research Question
  ✓ Develop a research question to guide your research
  ✓ Looking at the information you gathered, can you use at least 3 sources in your essay?
  ✓ Do you have enough information for each of your subtopics?
  ✓ Do you need to do additional research? If so, for which subtopics?

• Hypothesis
  ✓ Develop a hypothesis
  ✓ Evaluate your evidence to see you can answer your hypothesis

• Outline from Noodletools
  ✓ Did you reference the sample that was given to assure that you understand the requirements below?
  ✓ Is the thesis at the start of the outline?
  ✓ Does each paragraph have a topic sentence that supports the thesis and introduces the paragraph?
  ✓ Does each paragraph have at least three notecards in support of the topic sentence?
  ✓ Does each paragraph end with a transition sentence that informs the reader the current paragraph’s argument is concluded and informs them of the next argument?
Selecting a Topic

When choosing your research topic, you should make sure you select something that is narrow, researchable, manageable and most importantly interest you. The topic must also be within the context of our course of study this year. On the following page, you will begin to map out three potential research topics that meet these expectations. From there, you will select one of the three to focus on.

Narrowing the Topic

Once you’ve selected your topic, you’ll need to determine how the main topic can be broken into a minimum of 5 subcategories. If the subcategories seem too broad, you may consider using a subcategory as your main topic and breaking it down. For example, if the topic I select is “Teddy Roosevelt” to begin with and my subcategories include “anti-trust, imperialism, Big Stick Diplomacy, the Square Deal, and Rough Riders” I would quickly realize that my topic is too broad. I could easily write an entire essay on each of those subcategories. Therefore, I could narrow my topic by selecting just “Rough Riders” and breaking it down into 5 subtopics: popularity in America, popularity in Cuba, success, membership and legacy.”

Ask yourself the following question once you’ve selected a topic: Would I produce a more precise essay if I focused on one of the subcategories as my main topic? If so, how would I break it into sections?
Brainstorming: Topic Selection Graphic Organizer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Topic:</th>
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</table>

Name: __________________________________________

Directions: Use the following organizer to brainstorm potential topics for your essay, then use the back of this sheet to continue developing topics to guide your research.
## Final Topic Sheet

1.) The topic of my research paper is:

2.) I chose this topic because:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Break the topic into 5 subcategories:</th>
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<td>5.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is this topic narrow, researchable, and manageable?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher approval:</td>
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5
3.) Brainstorm five potential subcategories of my main topic could be:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.

4.) Subtopics for each of my subcategories include:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

5.) Additional questions I want answered about my topic are:
   a.
   b.
   c.

**Once your topic is approved, you can begin looking for your sources!

**Develop a Research Question**

Name:__________________________________________
What do you want to find out about your topic?

You must narrow your focus to a particular question that you would like to investigate and answer. Consider what you already know. What would you like to explore further? Consider different aspects of your topic that you have learned about during your reading. This question will likely begin with how or why. It should lead to an answer that is an argument, not just facts.

Examples of research questions:

• What should the legacy of the Rough Riders be?
• How much did the Rough Riders impact the Spanish American War?
• Why were the Rough Riders so popular?

Use the space below to brainstorm some research questions about your topic:

My research question is:

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Develop a Hypothesis and then a Thesis

Name:__________________________________________
1. Now that you have made some progress collecting information/evidence to answer your research question and have 10 notecards. You will now develop a hypothesis. In order to do this ask yourself are there any obvious CATEGORIES or FACTORS that seem important to you that could support your hypothesis? It may help to sort your cards into actual piles (which can be done on noodletools.com) to discover these categories or reasons.

   For example, if you are asking how a resistance movement became successful, can you see several FACTORS or REASONS that influenced the movement's success? Perhaps certain leadership decisions, political trends, economic developments or international events contributed to the movement's effectiveness.

   In the space below, write the factors, categories or reasons that seem important to developing a hypothesis. You may already have extensive information on them or you may realize that you still need to look into them. Three or four is common, but there's no magic number.

1. ______________________________________
2. ______________________________________
3. ______________________________________
4. ______________________________________
5. ______________________________________

2. If you tried to express the RELATIONSHIP between these factors in one sentence, what would it be? For example, "The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was the most successful civil rights organization of the 1940's because A. Phillip Randolph combined concrete economic demands with the threat of civil disobedience during a wartime crisis."
The purpose of a hypothesis is to give **DIRECTION** to narrow in on developing a thesis. Don't just mindlessly collect information. Pursue a plan and **THINK** about what you find. Look for the opinions of authorities as well as facts that support your conclusions.

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The sentence above is your tentative thesis or **HYPOTHESIS**.

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**THESIS**

*After writing your hypothesis create an outline on noodletools.* Once you have created your outline evaluate the outline and the notecards to see if you will be able to prove your hypothesis. If you feel that you will not be able to prove your hypothesis, it is advised that you either try to re-do your hypothesis or you could determine that you need to do some more research on a certain category/factor. If your evidence and your outline can support your hypothesis, then it is your thesis. Write your thesis below.

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