World History Research Paper

Introduction:

The World History Research Paper is designed to give you an opportunity to explore an area of interest in World History. The history of the world is extensive and fascinating and unfortunately, we are unable to cover everything we would like in one school year. Therefore, this assignment allows you to engage more deeply in an area of World History that has sparked some interest. You may select a topic from any time during or prior to the 20th century. Topics may focus on an important individual, an influential event, major themes or systems of government. Please refrain from using topics based in United States History as you will focus on this during your junior year.

The research process and paper is designed to be followed in a step by step manner so you can receive support from Mrs. Bernards and from your peers as we discover new material and work to build our skills in research and writing together. This year the paper will also include an emphasis on finding and including primary source material as supporting evidence. Below you will find a quick synopsis of the major requirements of the research paper.

Requirements explained:

1. Research proposal paragraph (10 points)
   Write a paragraph about the general subject that you will research and why you are interested in it. Based on your first day of research, explain how you will narrow your subject down into a specific topic. Include the main research question that you will use to drive your research moving forward. Finally, discuss where you think you will be able to find the information that will help you answer your question.

2. Research notecards and working thesis (10 points)
   Keep a record of the sources that you consult during your research. Take notes on the evidence that each source provides. Create a preliminary working thesis which answers your research question. You will revise this thesis as you continue to research and craft your argument.

   Next, using the evidence that you have found to help answer your research question, organize your evidence into three to five arguments. Your arguments should be in the form of topic sentences. Include a list of evidence for each argument. Revise your thesis based on your arguments.

3. Preliminary works cited page (10 points)
   Make a list of your sources using MLA format. You must have a minimum of six sources. You must use at least one primary source. Attempt to include at least one print source (book). The others must come from the JHS library e-resources or a resource approved by Mrs. Bernards. Do not use random websites that you find on the internet!
4. Research paper outline (10 points)
Your outline must include a revised thesis statement, followed by the topic sentence of each of your paragraphs. Under each topic sentence, list the evidence that you plan to use to support your opinions, with MLA parenthetical citations.

5. Research paper rough draft (10 points)
Papers should be 3-5 pages in length.
Papers should have a title and at least four to five paragraphs organized as follows:
- Introduction (one paragraph with thesis statement)
- Body (at least two/three paragraphs that contain your arguments)
- Conclusion (one paragraph)
- “Works Cited/Consulted” list

6. Research paper final draft (50 points)
After peer editing & revising you will want to clean up your paper prior to submitting the final draft.

Total - 100 points
You must earn a passing grade on this research paper in order to receive a passing grade for the semester.

Keys to Success

1. Choose a subject that interests you and narrow it down to a topic about which you can make a concise, intelligent claim in 3-5 pages.

2. Ask yourself questions about your topic and then develop possible answers through your research. The evidence you gather can lead you to deeper, more specific questions. Your analysis of these questions and possible answers will eventually allow you to make an informed claim.

3. Do the research. It will take time. This project will require you to read as much about your topic as possible.

4. Be diligent about logging your research. Keep a record of your sources and the evidence that you find in them. Keeping accurate notes about your research will make writing the final draft and the works cited page much easier.

4. Document your sources and don’t plagiarize. You must show the sources of your evidence so that you give credit to other people’s ideas and statements. Documentation is a crucial duty for a historian; it allows your audience to find and evaluate the sources of your evidence.

5. Structure is key. You are not writing a mystery. Write in a clear, straightforward style. State your thesis in the introduction paragraph. Your topic sentences should build on each other and work together to directly support the claim in your thesis statement. Each paragraph should
provide evidence to support the topic sentence. You must explain your evidence with commentary.

6. Proofreading is essential. Get a good proofreader and give them the time to help you. Spell check is a handy tool, but it is a poor proofreader.

**Tips:**

- This is a formal paper that requires a professional, scholarly tone. Do not be pedantic, but do not be conversational either. Avoid contractions and never use slang. Use only the third person and the past tenses. Avoid the passive voice. Be specific.

- Never use “a lot of…” or “lots of…” Be more specific. (Dozens? Hundreds? Thousands?)

- Avoid using parentheses ( ), brackets [ ], and dashes --.

- When using a person’s name always write their full name the first time you introduce them. After that, just use their last name.

- Be careful of diction errors: “there” instead of “their,” “capitol” instead of “capital,” “duel” instead of “dual,” “aloud” instead of “allowed,” etc.