

# *I-Search Project*

The major project for senior year is writing the *I-Search Paper*. Examining carefully the unusual title *I-Search* will tell you a lot about the paper. The typical re-search (literally “to search again”) paper asks you to investigate what other people have learned about a subject and then report on their conclusions. Writing this kind of paper doesn’t demand that you do your own original search for information. The *I-Search Paper* requires you to investigate a topic that you have an interest in, to interview people who can aid you in this investigation, thereby conducting original research.

You may think that interviewing people will make the project much more frustrating. You’ll find, however, that talking with people who are excited about your topic will make the research process much more interesting for you.



## I. Finding a Topic

The first step in the *I-Search Project* is finding a topic that you want to investigate.

- A. Think of a variety of possible topics. Complete brainstorming sheet.
- B. Avoid committing yourself to the first one that comes to mind.
- C. Remember that you will gather information not only through typical research sources, but also through interviews. You need to make sure that the topic you select lends itself to actual face-to-face interviews.
- D. **This topic should be meaningful, important, and not frivolous.** Also, select a topic that requires you to learn new information, not a topic that you already know extensively. The project is meant to be a learning experience, not a waste of time.

## II. Proposal

This is a one to two page typed paper in which you name your topic, explain what you already know about it, how you got interested in it, and indicate how you plan to research it. At the very end of this paper indicate this topic’s value to you and what you might gain by researching this topic area.





### III. Requirements of the Paper

Below are the requirements for the project. Following these will enable you to do well on the paper, which is the culmination of your search.

- A. **Read about your topic.** Every topic requires some background research, even if you are well versed on the subject. You will need to do some background research before you interview people. The amount of reading research you do depends on how much background you need to fill in. Make copies of articles you discover, or take good notes on your readings. Make sure to include the full bibliographic citation for each source. Begin a “working” works cited page as soon as you have your first reference. Use proper MLA style on the works cited page.
- B. After you have done some background research, you will conduct **at least 3 interviews**. You should prepare a list of questions prior to each interview. Notes should be taken during and after each interview. These should include a commentary on the interview, key quotations, and a summary of what you have learned. **You need to note the person’s name, his/her title, and the date and time of the interview.** At least one interview must be a face-to-face interview. The other two interviews can be done by email, over the phone, or in person.
- C. You will need **at least 10 sources** for this paper (including your interviews). Again, you will need to keep an ongoing works cited page as you will turn it in with every update. The better prepared you are in the beginning stages, the better your outcome will be in the latter stages of production.
- D. **Keep a three ring binder** that contains all of your activities while you are engaged in I-Searching.
1. Keep all of your research in a **3 ring binder**
  2. Keep a notebook in your binder in which you
    - ✓ keep your reading notes (summarize articles, question content, make connections to your world)
    - ✓ keep your interview notes (how easy were they to talk to, did you get a lot out of the interview, how easy or hard was making arrangements for the interview, etc.)
    - ✓ keep other materials related to your topic (handouts, pictures, outline, draft, etc.).
  3. **If you keep detailed notes, your paper will practically write itself.**
- E. Meet the deadlines for the different parts of your paper.

F. **Avoid plagiarism.** Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the paper, perhaps a failing grade for the semester, and a referral to the deans.

## IV. Paper Length and Style

Your paper will be a minimum of **15 pages typed**. It will be the story of what you did in your search, whom you interviewed, what they had to say, what you read, the successes and failures you had along the way—in other words everything that occurred in the order in which it happened. This is why your notes and progress reports are so important. **Your journal and progress reports will turn into your paper.**

The paper should have several chapters or divisions. A typical division would be as follows:

**Introduction:** overview of your project/search. Tells what you decided to research and why. This part of your essay should include any changes from your original proposal. It also tells what you specifically were looking for and tells how you found your information.

**Body:** details of your information. Tells what you found out about your topic, including what you found from each of your sources, properly cited, of course. This part should include quotes from your interviews and research material.

**Conclusion:** explains what you have learned. Tells whether or not you met the objective you set up, how difficult or easy this project was, how you liked or disliked the results of your search, and most importantly, what you learned from this project (both from the content and the process)

The language and style of your paper should belong to you. This is a personal paper. You should use “I” in narrating your search. Your writing should be clear, expressive, and interesting. You might even write parts of your paper in a creative format, a poem or story for example. In addition, be creative with the formatting of your paper. Include clip art, pictures, borders, shading, watermarks, color graphics where appropriate. Make use of pre-printed computer paper, for instance, on which to print your paper. Include cover sheets for each section and for the title page of your paper.

## V. Oral Presentation

As a culminating activity for this project, you will be presenting your search to the rest of the class in a formal speech. As with any speech you will be graded on your speaking presence, the content and organization of your speech, and the appropriateness of your visual aid, activity, and /or power point. Focus on one interesting aspect of your search and share it with the class.

*Project Due Dates*

Project due dates to be determined by teacher and course. See individual instructor for these requirements.



## **VI. Turning in the Project**

When you turn in your project on April 7 (whether you are present in school or not), you will be turning in a binder with the following sections:

- Part I Binder Creative Cover Page**
- Part II Formal Cover Page for the project**
- Part III Original Project Proposal**
- Part IV I Search Paper and Works Cited Page**
- Part V I Search Notes and Progress Reports, including interview notes, reading notes, and research articles**
- Part VI Appendix (rough draft(s), etc.)**

**Each section should be separated by a tabbed page.**

**Reminder: Completion of an acceptable Senior Project is a course requirement for second semester. You cannot pass the semester unless you complete an acceptable project.**