American Literature Research Project
Due: May 11, 2015

Your assignment is to write a research paper and give a presentation about an author or literary movement from the Americas. You will have two weeks to complete this project. You will be given at least four class periods in the computer lab/library to research and organize your findings. Any other time that is needed for this project will be done outside of class. I will only allow two students from each class to choose each individual author/movement on a first come first serve basis starting 10 minutes after class on Tuesday, April 28th by way of a sign-up sheet on my dry erase board. This paper will count as 2 major grades, and the presentation will count as 1 major grade.

You are responsible for the following aspects of this project:

- Identifying and Choosing an author or literary movement in American Literature (I have provided a list for reference);
- Researching your chosen author/movement using a variety of appropriate sources by utilizing the classroom, media center, and outside sources (this means you need BOTH print and non-print sources);
- Planning and Drafting a 3-5 page research-based paper outlining the history and significance of your chosen author/movement in the development of American Literature;
- Proofreading, Editing, and Publishing a final draft of your finished paper that meets all formatting guidelines for this assignment;
- Properly citing a minimum of 3 sources within the paper and adding a works cited page in MLA format to the end to avoid plagiarism;
- Developing a 3-5 minute presentation on your topic to present to the class, outlining the history and significance of your chosen author/movement;
- Including a multi-media, graphic, or audio-visual component to your presentation to clarify your understanding of the author/movement and communicate its importance to the audience;
- Attaching the enclosed grading rubrics to the last page of your paper.

**Paper Format**

Be sure that your paper follows the following format in order to receive full credit for your work.

**MLA FORMAT**

**Introduction** – Include:
- Context – appropriate background information on your selected author/movement. (Do not give a complete history of your topic here.)
- Thesis – What makes your author/movement significant to the development of American Literature?

**Body of Paper** – Include:
- Historical context for the author/movement
- Biography/Explanation of author/movement
- Effects the author/movement had on subsequent American Literature
Conclusion – Include:
- Immediate impact of the author/movement
- Long-term impact of the event

MLA Source Formatting
Using MLA format requires that sources be cited both in the text where the information is utilized and at the end of the paper in a separate Works Cited page (The separate Works Cited page does NOT count as one of your 3-5 pages!). If you need assistance on how to format specific citations you may utilize the web resources listed below, the citation poster in the classroom, or other resources available in our Media Center.

MLA Term Paper Formatting
Your American Literature Paper should utilize MLA formatting style throughout. Your paper should be typed, double-spaced, 12pt, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins. You may use the following web resources to determine formatting requirements for title page, text, works cited page, header, page numbering, etc. There are also links to sample papers posted on the class website.

MLA Formatting Web Resources:
- Purdue University Online Writing Lab - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
- Citation Machine - http://citationmachine.net/
- Cornell University Library - http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/mla

A Note on Sources
- Be sure to use reliable sources in your research. Think about who you would trust to tell you information that was important.
- Open sources that can be altered by anyone (such as message boards or Wikipedia) are generally unreliable sources; therefore, you do not need to use these sites.
- Sources that have been checked by some official organization are usually good resources. Think colleges, responsible non-profit organizations, government agencies, etc.
  - Look for web sources ending in .gov, .org, or .edu and print sources published by respectable publishing houses or featured in professional journals.
- Textbooks and Encyclopedias are starting points, not major resources. While they must be cited, they will not be where the majority of your information comes from.

PLAGIARISM: A Warning
Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty that robs the intellectual property of others. Plagiarism is NEVER acceptable. A research paper showing evidence of plagiarism will receive a grade of zero with no chance of raising the score, and a discipline
referral. Remember – if you can find papers or passages to copy on the internet, your teacher can find them, too.

**What is Plagiarism**

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

**According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means**

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own  
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source  
3. to commit literary theft  
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

**But can words and ideas really be stolen?**

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

**All of the following are considered plagiarism:**

- turning in someone else's work as your own  
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit  
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks  
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation  
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit  
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not.

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.

**Source of the above information:** [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org)
MLA Citation Format

BOOKS

Format: Author: Title: Subtitle. Place: Publisher, Date.

Examples:


MAGAZINE & NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Format: Author, “Title of Article.” Title of Periodical Date: First page-last page.

Examples:


ARTICLE FROM A REFERENCE BOOK

Format: Author. “Title of Article.” Book title: Subtitle. Editor. Place: Publisher, Date. First page-last page. [Simply omit any information that isn’t available]

Examples:

WEBSITE OR WEBPAGE

Format: Author. Title. Editor. Date. Institution. Access Date <URL>. [Omit any information that isn’t available]

Examples:

MAGAZINE & NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ACCESSED ONLINE

Format:
Author, “Article Title.” Periodical Date of article. Access Date <URL>.

Examples:
“Customer’s Attempt To Complain To Manager Thwarted By Employee.” The Onion 14 Feb. 2001.

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,98988,00.html>.

MATERIAL FROM A DATABASE SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE
(such as Ebsco or Infotrac)

Format:
Author. “Title of Article.” Title of Periodical Date: First page-last page. Database Name, Subscription Service. Name of Library. Date of Access <URL of subscription service’s home page, if known>.

Examples:

Research Paper Topic List

2. As first American poet, Anne Bradstreet was inspired by English poets: Spencer and Sydney.
3. Anne Bradstreet exhibits the Puritan “plain style” in her poetry
4. In his autobiography and his letters, Benjamin Franklin imparted instructional, practical advice.
5. Thomas Paine made the ideology of the American Revolution accessible to everyone in his pamphlet *Common Sense*.
7. The genius of Thomas Jefferson comes forth in his drafting of the *Constitution*.
8. Although recognized as an author, Washington Irving’s studies and pursuits were not limited to literature
9. Washington Irving used historical events and personalities as background for *Rip Van Winkle*
10. Ralph Waldo Emerson reveals his transcendentalist beliefs in his essay “Self-Reliance”
11. Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “From Nature” reflects the 19th Century romantic thought.
12. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau show changes in the concept of the American self in the early 19th Century.
13. Transcendentalism was a philosophical, literary, social, and theological movement
14. Henry David Thoreau teaches us to open to self-discovery in *Walden*.
15. Nathaniel Hawthorne mastered symbols and symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter*.
19. Individuals’ isolation from community recur in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s stories.
20. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s attitudes toward women are seen in characters Hester Prynne and Beatrice Rappaccini.
21. Edgar Allan Poe masters the use of repetition in many of his poems - explain its effect
22. Edgar Allan Poe invented American detective fiction.
23. Edgar Allan Poe’s short stories reflect characters with disturbed psyches.
24. Edgar Allan Poe’s poetry is both musical and metrical.
25. African American spirituals, sung mainly outside of church, linked their authors (the slaves) to one another by expressing personal feelings of hope and salvation.
26. Commonly sung by runaway slaves in the Underground Railroad, African American spirituals were rich in codes.
27. Walt Whitman portrays African Americans as equal partners with whites in a democratic future in *Leaves of Grass*.
28. In Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself” slaves enable for the narrator his identity.
29. Walt Whitman caroled throughout his poems.
30. Walt Whitman’s greatest legacy is the invention of American free verse.
31. Walt Whitman conveys the nation’s loss of Abraham Lincoln in “O Captain! My Captain” and “When Lilacs in the Dooryard Bloomed”.
32. Ambrose Bierce exhibits Mark Twain’s wit and Edgar Allan Poe’s horror in his short stories.
33. Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is (or is not) a racist novel.
34. In *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain epitomizes American childhood.
35. In his short stories, Mark Twain far exceeds contemporary humorists.
36. In Kate Chopin’s short stories, characters search for female spiritual emancipation.
37. “To Build a Fire” is Jack London’s best loved “man vs. nature short story.
38. Paul Laurence Dunbar was the first African-American poet to express lyrical qualities of the black dialect

**Developing a Thesis Statement**

(Controlling Idea)

The following examples show how to develop a thesis statement from a broad, general idea. Each step shows a further narrowing of the topic in order to arrive at a legitimate thesis statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark Twain</td>
<td>Huckleberry Finn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THESIS:** Huck’s departure at the end of the novel reflects Twain’s own dissatisfaction with civilization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Schools</td>
<td>Length of School Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THESIS:** An extended school year would have a positive effect on learning, student attitudes toward school, and the retention of skills from year to year.

**WHAT A THESIS STATEMENT SHOULD NOT BE:**

1. A topic or subject by itself cannot serve as a thesis statement. That information tells what the paper is about, but not what you and your research have to say about it.

2. A question cannot serve as a thesis statement because it is not a statement. A question merely says that an answer will follow. However, a question-and-answer pair can be a thesis statement.

3. A general statement that lacks a detailed point of view cannot serve as a thesis statement. A general statement may give the reader background information but does not reflect your point of view.

4. A “so what?” statement. This kind of thesis statement is too obvious (common knowledge) and demonstrates no originality of thought.
WHAT A THESIS STATEMENT SHOULD BE:

1. A complete sentence or two summarizing the point of view in your paper.

2. A specific declaration of your main idea.

3. A statement reflecting your position.

EXAMPLES:

THESIS: *The Midwife’s Apprentice* is a realistic interpretation of the Middle Ages, showing what life was really like for the common villager.

THESIS: Throughout *To Kill A Mockingbird* we see Scout Finch mature as she becomes aware of the true nature of the people in her town.

HINT: You write a thesis statement early to focus your attention – not that of your reader. Therefore, as you do your research, you may wish to modify your statement or radically change it (and perhaps you should). That’s okay, but you need to discuss a major change with your teacher.

Your Thesis Statement

First, Jot down your topic: ____________________________

Now, think about what it is about this topic that you want everyone to know, which they may not already know. Present this in the form of a statement that you can prove is true with your research. Remember, a thesis is not a general statement (so it is not common knowledge, i.e. the Earth is round).
1. **Controlling Idea (Thesis Statement)**
   ("Controlling Idea" is just another term for thesis statement or main idea of your research paper. Copy your revised controlling idea in this space).

2. **Introduction**
   (Write down any points you want to include in your introduction in this space. You may write the actual introductory paragraph or simply make bullet-point comments. It is customary for the final sentence of an introduction to be the controlling idea/thesis statement).

3. **Supporting information**
   (Write down any details or facts that support your thesis statement).
4. **Conclusion**  
(Use this space to write down any points you want to include in your conclusion. You may write the actual concluding paragraph or simply make bullet-point comments).

5. **List of sources**  
(List the sources you have consulted so far. You do not have to use MLA style here – just list book titles, websites, etc).
Using Quotes Correctly

In *The Crucible* John Proctor said, “I say – I say – God is dead!” (111).

During the holocaust the Germans “committed unthinkable acts against humanity” (Price 26).

“In search of a better life, Nelson Mandela strived for equal rights,” remarks Professor Jenkins (26).

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SAVE YOURSELF EXTRA WORK by...

…using [www.citationmachine.net](http://www.citationmachine.net) to format your in-text citations and Works Cited page. Click MLA in the upper left corner, select your source type (book, encyclopedia, web page, etc.), enter required information and click *submit*, and then cut and past the formatted information into your research paper.
Research Paper Final Draft Expectations

1. Research Paper is typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, and a normal font type (Times New Roman is the best – this is the default font in Microsoft Word). Margins should be standard 1-inch margins. The Research Paper should look professional – not wrinkled, misprinted, or damaged.

2. You should have a cover page with your NAME, DATE, CLASS PERIOD, and RESEARCH TOPIC. Feel free to add designs or art to the cover.

3. Your research paper must be at least 3 typed pages in total, NOT including the “Works Cited” page and the cover page. It should not exceed 5 typed pages.

4. You must use quotations and proper MLA citation form. You should have at least eight citations total. Ex. According to Smith, the Middle Ages were “a very exciting time” (46). You must use at least one direct quote.

5. You must include a Works Cited page at the end of your paper. This is where you list the sources you have cited in your writing. They are listed alphabetically as in a bibliography page. You must have at least 3 sources listed. At least one source must be a book. Also, one web source must be evaluated in a paragraph below the works cited.

6. You MUST submit your TIMELINE CHECKLIST in order to receive credit on all of the checks. If you do not submit this form, you may only receive partial credit for the final draft.

7. First Drafts – Your first draft will only be looked at if it is turned in on time.

8. Research Papers turned in late will lose 5 points every day.

Check your printer well before it is expected to perform. Printers that are out of ink or don’t work correctly will not constitute a legitimate excuse. Also, computers that fail will not be excused. Save your work often - on both your hard drive and a CD/floppy drive/flash drive.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formatting</strong></td>
<td>Paper has correct formatting, length and was proofread</td>
<td>Paper has correct format, length and some spelling/grammar errors</td>
<td>Paper has some incorrect formatting issues or major spelling/grammar errors</td>
<td>Paper did not utilize formatting guidelines or major obvious errors show no proofreading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarity/Understanding</strong></td>
<td>Paper is on a significant author/movement in American Literature that includes all the information needed to understand the significance. The paper makes a reasoned argument about the significance in a clear and concise way.</td>
<td>Paper is on a significant author/movement in American Literature that includes most of the information needed to understand the significance. The paper makes an argument about the significance in a clear and concise way.</td>
<td>Paper is on a significant author/movement in American Literature that includes some of the information needed to understand the significance. The paper makes a weak argument about the significance in a clear and concise way.</td>
<td>Paper is on a significant author/movement in American Literature that includes little of the information needed to understand the significance. The paper makes no argument about the significance in a clear and concise way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research/Sources</strong></td>
<td>Paper uses at least 3 reliable sources and is properly cited within the paper. The Works Cited page includes and cites all the sources used.</td>
<td>Paper uses at least 2 reliable sources and is cited within the paper. The Works Cited page includes and cites all the sources used.</td>
<td>Paper uses at least 1 reliable source and/or is not properly cited within the paper. The Works Cited page includes and cites some of the sources used.</td>
<td>Either the paper uses at least 1 reliable source and is cited within the paper or the Works Cited page is present. You will receive a 1 if you do not have both the in-text citation and a WCP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neat/Effort</strong></td>
<td>Paper shows thorough research and understanding of the topic. It is neat and easy to read and shows obvious effort in its planning and writing.</td>
<td>Paper shows research and understanding of the topic. It is neat and easy to read and shows effort in its planning and writing.</td>
<td>Paper shows little research and understanding of the topic. It is not neat and easy to read and shows effort in its planning and writing.</td>
<td>Paper shows no research and understanding of the topic. It is not neat and easy to read and shows no effort in its planning and writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Presentation Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Exceptional 4</th>
<th>Very Good 3</th>
<th>Acceptable 2</th>
<th>Unacceptable 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Speaker provides an accurate and complete explanation of the significance of the author/movement. Audience can understand the material.</td>
<td>For the most part, explanations of author/movement are accurate and complete. Audience gains some knowledge of the topic.</td>
<td>Explanations of author/movement are inaccurate or incomplete. Listeners gain little from the presentation</td>
<td>No reference is made to author/movement. Listeners gain no new insights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Speaker presents information in logical, well-ordered, interesting sequence which audience can follow.</td>
<td>Speaker mostly presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.</td>
<td>Audience has difficulty following presentation because it jumps around.</td>
<td>Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no consistent flow of information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual/Media Aids</strong></td>
<td>Graphics are plentiful, explain and reinforce topic, are good quality</td>
<td>Some graphics used, are subject to topic, vary in quality.</td>
<td>Few graphics are used, they don’t relate to the topic, are poor quality.</td>
<td>Speaker uses irrelevant graphics or no graphics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking Skills</strong></td>
<td>Professional; proper volume; steady rate; good posture and eye contact; enthusiasm; confidence.</td>
<td>Lack professionalism Either inconsistent volume or rate.</td>
<td>Some mumbling; little eye contact; uneven rate; little or no expression.</td>
<td>Inaudible or too loud; no eye contact; rate too slow/fast; disinterested/monotone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Presentation</strong></td>
<td>3-5 Minutes with material covered adequately</td>
<td>Less than 3 or more than 5 minutes with material covered adequately</td>
<td>Less than 3 or more than 8 minutes with material covered somewhat</td>
<td>Material not adequately covered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_____ Total Score
Honors Contract

Student

I,______________________________, understand that I have been assigned to complete a research paper on an author or literary movement from the Americas. I have been given a written description of the assignment and have had the chance to ask any questions I may have about the assignment. I understand that 2 class periods will be spent on instruction on format and avoiding plagiarism, and 4 class periods will be spent in the media center for research and organization. The rest of the work will be done outside of the classroom. I am to have the research paper completed by May 11, 2015 and will be ready for my presentation on May 13, 2015. I understand the consequences of plagiarism and will avoid any form of plagiarism.

Signed:____________________________ Date:________________________

Parent

I,____________________________, parent of ________________________, understand that my child has been assigned an research paper and presentation on an American author or literary movement that is due on May 11, 2015. If I have any questions, I know I can call Mrs. Orso at (251) 221-3444 or email her at wors@mcps.com

Signed:____________________________ Date:________________________
This form is the only place where your points will be recorded. You must turn in this form with your final research paper in order to ensure receiving the full credit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Due</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Pts.</th>
<th>Points Credited and Teacher Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 28</td>
<td>Topic Chosen (write it here):</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 30</td>
<td>Note Card Check #1 (at least 10 cards total)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, May 1</td>
<td>Note Card Check #2 (at least 20 cards total)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, May 4</td>
<td>Controlling Idea [thesis statement] due (typed or neatly written in packet)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, May 5</td>
<td>Detailed Outline due (typed)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, May 7</td>
<td>First Draft Due (typed with cover and works cited page – this should resemble a finished product) – First Draft must be resubmitted with Final Draft (MAJOR GRADE)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, May 11</td>
<td>Final Draft Due (typed with cover and works cited page – this sheet must be included as the last page). Hand in your first draft also. (MAJOR GRADE)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, May 13</td>
<td>Research Presentation Due (topic, significance, and visuals are all presented to class) (MAJOR GRADE)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEACHER COMMENTS:                                       FINAL GRADE: