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Senior Project Basics

Senior project is a graduation requirement at Casa Roble High School; this means that to graduate you must complete this project. To walk at graduation, the project must be completed on time.

1. There are essentially four parts to your senior project.
   A. You must complete twenty hours working towards a goal.
   B. You must compile a portfolio as evidence of your hours.
   C. You must complete a five-seven page paper that relates to your hours and goal.
   D. You must share your findings/experience with a senior project board in a ten to fifteen minute speech. If you complete a senior project that is performance based, you will need to complete a 10-15 minute speech and a three minute live performance/demonstration.

2. Your senior project topic must fit into one of five categories.
   A. Product
   B. Performance
   C. Volunteer
   D. Job Shadow
   E. Physical Skill
   (See product categories for more information)

3. You must have a product, as evidence of your hours, to present at the board.
   A. If your product is your performance, no video taped performances are allowed. All performances are to be live and three minutes long. If you believe it is impossible to have a live performance, see Ms. Cameron for a waiver.
   B. If you job shadow or volunteer, you must interview the person you job shadowed or a person at the organization where you volunteered and produce a typed transcript of that interview.
   C. If you make a physical product, plan to bring it to your board. Again, if you believe you cannot bring your product, see Ms. Cameron for a waiver.
   D. If you learned a new physical skill, be prepared to demonstrate elements of that new skill using a 3 minute video.

4. Your blue portfolio must be completed and handed in on time and should be neat and free of errors. Be aware that the entire senior project board panel will be reviewing this portfolio. This is your first chance to make a good impression. Your blue portfolio contains 11 or 12 items including the title graphic, inventory sheet, proposal letter, mentor signature sheet, parent consent form, research paper, research rubric,
working log, reflective log with photos, mentor verification, and self evaluation. You may also have a job shadow or volunteer interview.

5. You will have a lot of guidance while completing your senior project. Your English teacher is very knowledgeable in all parts of senior project and will assist you. You will also work with a supervising teacher and you can get help from Ms. Cameron, the coordinator. She is available in room D-8 or at mcameron@sanjuan.edu.

6. You must work with a mentor. You are responsible for finding and staying in contact with this person. Your mentor must be knowledgeable, preferably professionally employed, in your field of study and must be 23 years old or older. Your mentor may not be your parent or sibling. Plan to spend 20 hours with your mentor. Hours may not be completed during your school day.

7. It is best to begin your project when you begin English Four (or the equivalent of English Four). You may not begin before July 1, 2015.
**Product Categories**

Basic categories of study and requirements for each

For senior project, each senior should demonstrate an interest in a specific, academically challenging goal and show a clear path of progress toward that goal. The product should demonstrate NEW LEARNING and may not be part of a class, academy or organized athletic activity at Casa Roble High School; this includes ROP classes. The product must fit into one of the following categories.

1. Physical Product: A physical product is a tangible item that one makes. Items such as woodworking, sewing, writing, and working on cars are all considered physical products.
   a. The item should be made entirely by the senior. Kits, especially craft kits, are not acceptable. (If it comes in a box at Michael's, it is probably not a senior project.)
   b. The actual item must be brought to the board
   c. The student must be prepared to explain the item to the board, demonstrating new learning.
   d. The research/argument paper should relate to the product in some way, but may not be a “how to” or “history of” paper.

Examples:
   a. Creating a portfolio of black and white photos emulating Ansel Adams. The paper might look at how Ansel Adams influenced the photography world.
   b. Creating a king sized quilt. The paper might focus on the purpose of quilting during the Underground Railroad.

2. Performance: A performance is a skill you learn, usually through classes taught outside of Casa, which can be demonstrated through a live performance. Drama, dance and music presentations are all considered part of the performance category. Scuba diving and martial arts are also considered performances.
   a. The product is a live, three-minute performance. This performance will occur after the ten-minute speech.
   b. The senior should discuss the process of learning this skill to demonstrate new learning.
   c. The research/argument paper should relate to the product in some way, but may not be a “how to” or “history of” paper.
Examples:

a. Learning how to Salsa Dance. The paper might be a comparison of Latin Dance styles.
b. Learning the basics of yoga. The paper might focus on the health benefits of yoga.

2. Job Shadow: A job shadow project is one where the senior follows/helps a professional. Working with a nurse, working in a school, and coaching are all considered Job Shadows.

The product is an interview transcript. Please see the appendix for specific questions. The senior will explain common protocols involved in the profession. While videos are acceptable visual aids, a job shadow project must include an interview transcript.

The Interview transcript is due with the senior’s blue portfolio.

The senior should explain one’s job shadow experiences, outlining new learning. He/she should also discuss the interview transcript.

The research/argument paper should relate to the product in some way, but may not be a “how to” or “history of” paper. The paper should not be a description of the senior’s experience.

Examples:

a. Coaching a peewee basketball team. The paper might focus on the learning styles of children.
b. Teaching American Sign Language to a third grade class. The paper might focus on the effects of the Cochlear Implant on the deaf community.

3. Volunteer Experience: A volunteer experience is when a senior dedicates twenty hours of time to a not-for-profit organization. This organization should not be part of a church or youth group. Volunteering for a political campaign, volunteering at a hospital and volunteering to build homes for the less fortunate are all volunteer experiences. A volunteer experience must contain new learning.

a. The product is an interview transcript. Please see the appendix for specific questions. The senior will explain common protocols involved in the profession. While videos are acceptable visual aids, a volunteer project must include an interview transcript.

b. The interview transcript will be due with the blue portfolio.

c. The research/argument paper should relate to the product in some way, but may not be a “how to” or “history of” paper. The paper should not be a description of the senior’s experience.
Example:

a. Building houses for the poor. The paper might focus on economic hardships in less developed countries.

4. Physical Skill: A physical skill is when a senior learns a new skill that is physically demanding. Learning to cycle, training to run a marathon, and learning the skills necessary to run a triathlon are examples of physical skills. Losing weight and simply working out do not qualify for this category. The senior’s body may not be the product. The product should be the skill the student learned.

a. The product will be a video of the student performing the skill. Students must explain the skill, in detail, during the presentation. This can be done by muting the volume of the video and talking about the skills demonstrated during the presentation. A student may also decide to include information about the work needed to master the new skill in his/her presentation.

b. The research/argument paper should relate to the product in some way, but may not be a “how to” or “history of” paper. The paper should not be a description of the senior’s experience.

Example:

a. Learning to participate in a triathlon. The product would be a video of the student during the transitions. The student would explain to the board the skill needed to properly transition. The paper might focus on the health benefits of regular exercise.
The Blue Portfolio

The blue portfolio is the first thing the community judges see. It is the senior’s opportunity to make a good first impression. This portfolio should be neat and free of errors. Items in this portfolio should not be wrinkled, glued together, or dirty. All items should be typed. All signatures should be original, no photocopied signatures allowed. All items should be contained in the folder and placed in the order listed on the inventory sheet.

Please use only the blue folder provided by your English teacher. Label the folder with a white label sticker containing the following information:
   b. Student’s name (center, proper name)
   c. English teacher’s name (bottom right corner)
   d. Supervising teacher’s name (upper left corner)
   e. Type of product (upper right corner)

Example:

Mr. Alves          Product
Joe Smith          Ms. Cameron

• If student has second term English, omit supervising teacher’s name.

The Blue Portfolio contains 11 or 12 items. Directions for each item are listed below.

TITLE GRAPHIC

The title graphic is the title page of your entire project. It should be printed on sturdy paper, in color, and must be typed. No stapled or glued elements are allowed. The title graphic contains the title of the research paper, the title of the project, the student’s name and a graphic that represents the project. The graphic should be clear and the fonts should be easy to read.

Format:

    Title of Project
    Graphic
    Title of Paper
    Your Name

INVENTORY SHEET
This sheet is a list of each of the elements of senior project and is available in room D-8 or a senior English teacher’s room. Fill out the top portion in blue or black ink, be neat and be sure to fill out each item. The verification signature column is for the English and/or Supervising Teacher. The senior should not sign these spaces.

PROPOSAL LETTER
The purpose of this letter is to verify the senior’s plans for his/her project. It needs to contain all the information necessary for contacting the mentor, as well as a clear plan for the project. This must be single spaced and typed in 12-point academic font (Times New Roman). The letter must be signed by the student, the mentor and the Parent(s). Specific items are listed on appendix A. The proposal is read in a committee format and the senior is expected to attend the proposal reading to answer any questions regarding his/her plan. Indicating that the idea is relevant and the plan is appropriate, a committee member will sign the proposal letter. The senior English teacher should not sign the proposal. (CCSS Standards: Writing 2, speaking and listening 4 and college/career readiness).

MENTOR SIGNATURE SHEET
The purpose of this item is to keep an accurate record of all necessary contact information of the mentor.

PARENT CONSENT FORM
The purpose of this letter is to inform parent(s) of the due dates and requirements of senior project.
Senior English teachers or the senior project coordinator have copies of the parent consent form.

RESEARCH/ARGUMENT PAPER
The purpose of the paper is to familiarize the student with the process of completing a formal research paper while further familiarizing the student with his/her chosen topic. The paper is to follow MLA format (the rules of this format should be discussed in the student’s English class). It is to be typed in 12 point, Times New Roman font and double-spaced. The title of the paper is not to be in a different font or different font size. The margins are to be one inch. The paper must contain a Works Cited page and must utilize at least four sources. The website citationmachine.net is very helpful while compiling the works cited page.
This is a formal paper, not a report of information. Therefore, “no how-to” or “history of” papers are permitted. The student’s paper should prove a point.
(CCSS: Writing 1 a-f and college/career readiness)
EXAMPLES:
Report: The history and evolution of basketball.
Research/Argument: How learning theories can assist a basketball coach.
Report: How to build a dresser.
Research/Argument: How current technology has significantly changed the methods utilized in woodworking.


Remember, this is a research/argument paper. Research papers do not have cover sheets. The first page of the paper should contain the following information in the upper corner.

Student’s Name

Senior Project Paper

Name of English Teacher

Name of English Class

Date

A team of English teachers grades the research/argument paper and the grade is based on a six-point scale. Each paper is read twice to ensure maximum fairness. If a student fails, he/she is given two weeks to correct mistakes and re-submit the paper.

RESEARCH RUBRIC
The research rubric is the grading scale for the senior project paper. The rubric is available in the senior project coordinator’s office or from any senior English teacher.

WORKING LOG
The working log is a daily account of the hours spent on the senior project. It is a basic excel spreadsheet. The student’s mentor must sign after each entry and must sign the bottom of the completed log. This item does NOT have to be typed. Forms are available from English teacher as well as in the coordinator’s office.

REFLECTIVE LOG WITH PHOTOS
This item is an extension of the working log; the purpose is to have the student reflect on his/her experience(s). This item must be typed, 12-point font and double-spaced. It must contain at least ten photos (3 must be with the mentor) and the document must be no less than three pages. A reflective log that is less than three pages is generally not enough information and can be sent back to the student for expansion. The final reflective log is similar to a set of diary entries
which mention the photos to help communicate the events discussed. The photos must be in color, easy to see, and relevant to the progress of the student’s goal. **No crumpled, dirty, or sloppy work will be accepted—the student’s portfolio will be returned if it is sloppy.** The format for this item is online; all students must use a format similar to the one that is online.

**SELF-EVALUATION**

The purpose of the self-evaluation is to give the student an opportunity to reflect on his/her progress and how that progress relates to the school-wide learning goals (ESLRS). The self-evaluation must be typed, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font. It should be approximately two pages in length. This is not an essay; it is more like a list of questions with corresponding answers. (See appendix B).

**MENTOR VERIFICATION**

The purpose of this item is to verify the mentor’s knowledge of the student’s progress toward his/her goal. This item does NOT have to be typed and is to be filled out by the mentor. The mentor verification is available in the senior project coordinator’s office or from any senior English teacher.

**JOB SHADOW/VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

All products that fall under the job shadow/volunteer category require the student to interview his or her mentor and provide a written transcript of the interview. The transcript must be typed, double spaced, and the font is to be 12-point Times New Roman. The transcript must be at least 750 words in length. Students must follow the specific guidelines for the interview (see appendix C).
The Presentation

The senior project culminates in a ten to fifteen minute presentation (The minimum time does not include the required three minute performance for those using a performance rubric). This presentation is part of the project and must be taken seriously. Work, medical appointments, and other activities are not valid excuses for missing the presentation. Plan accordingly.

A "senior project board" will hear each presentation and assign a grade based on a four-point scale (see appendix). Each board contains four-six members. These members are teachers, parent volunteers and community members.

Each presentation needs at least two visual aids. These visual aids should be objects that aid in the understanding of the student's learning/project. Posters with additional photos on them do not qualify as visual aids; there are already photos in the blue portfolio. Charts, designs, and tools make good visual aids. If a video is used as a visual aid, it should be no more than one and one half minutes long.

Seniors MUST dress appropriately for this presentation. Attire should be close to what one would wear to a job interview. No flip-flops and no jeans! Boys should wear slacks, a nice shirt, and dress shoes. Girls should wear a skirt or dress of appropriate length, or slacks, a blouse, and dress shoes. The only exception is if the senior is dressing in a manner that reflects his/her senior project. For example, a student who is going to discuss his/her time job shadowing a nurse would be permitted to wear scrubs. (CCSS Listening and Speaking 4,5,6).
Senior Project Presentation Outline

1. **INTRODUCTION**  
   a. **Hook**  
      A hook grabs the attention of the audience. Statistics, stories, and quotes make excellent hooks.
   b. **Introduce yourself and your product**
   c. **Your interest in this area**  
      Why did you pick this as your senior project? What is your prior experience in this field of study?
   d. **Who is your mentor and how did you find him/her?**  
      (About two minutes)

2. **RESEARCH PAPER**  
   a. **State the topic of your paper and outline the main points (at least two).**
   b. **Discuss the process of writing the paper**
   c. **Discuss the relationship between your hours and your research**  
      (About two minutes).

3. **THE PRODUCT**  
   f. **Discuss how you spent your hours. What did you do? Include information from the beginning, middle, and end of your project. Reference your photos and blue portfolio here.**
   g. **Share your product. Go through the steps needed to create your product. (explain job shadow or volunteer protocols).**
   h. **Make sure you explain your visual aids here. Visual aids help to explain or demonstrate the middle steps of your project/hours. These should prove ownership of your project.**  
      (six minutes).

4. **WRAP-UP**  
   a. **Reflect on your experience. Is this something you will continue to do? Did you enjoy it?**  
      (two minutes)

________________________

Twelve minutes—easy!

Helpful hint: Have a story handy in case you find yourself needing to make-up time. You could discuss a problem you had or a success story you experienced.

Appendix A  

Proposal Letter
Directions: Write a business letter outlining your plans for senior project. Make sure you use complete sentences, type it, and make sure you have included all required signatures on the same page as the letter.

**Paragraph One:** What is the goal of your senior project? What would you like to learn and accomplish? What is your experience in this field of study? How is this an academic and/or challenging goal? What are your learning targets (please list 2 or 3).

**Paragraph Two:** Who is your mentor? What is his or her address and phone number? What professional experience does this person have in this field? What makes this person qualified to be your mentor? What do you expect your mentor to teach you?

**Paragraph Three:** What will your product be? Describe this in as much detail as possible.

**Paragraph Four:** What research might you complete to assist you in completing your goal? These will turn into possible paper ideas when you begin working with your English Teacher.

**Paragraphs Five and Six:** Please copy the following paragraphs exactly as they appear (do not italicize these paragraphs). These paragraphs indicate your knowledge of the due dates for senior project as well as your knowledge of the seriousness of plagiarism and forgery.

*Should my mentor or my product change, I will have the changes approved by my supervising teacher or English four teacher by (insert date). If my product changes and I do not submit the proper paperwork, I understand that I will not pass senior project. I understand that my completed portfolio is due on (insert date) and should include the job shadow/volunteer report if applicable. This final portfolio must be delivered to the senior project coordinator no later*
than 3:00 P.M. I understand that my blue portfolio must contain all necessary signatures on the inventory sheet or my blue portfolio will be considered late. I further understand that the entire project, including all products, must be completed by (insert date) or I will be denied the privilege of walking at graduation.

I completely understand the seriousness of plagiarism and forgery and agree that either of these offenses will negate the contents of this entire project. I also understand that my project cannot be a copy of any past Senior Project and any props or extras that I might use must be of my own creation.

Signatures: Close your letter by including your signature, your parents’ signature(s), and your mentor’s signature.

Approval Section: Please include a footer with the following lines (exactly as they appear below):

Approved/Approved with modifications/Not Approved
Committee Signature___________________________
Room Number ________________________________
Committee Signature___________________________
Room Number ________________________________
Appendix B

Senior Project
Self-Evaluation

Please answer the following questions thoroughly. Type out each question and then answer it using complete sentences. Type your work.

1. Estimate the total number of hours you spent toward completing your project.

2. Describe the types of problems you encountered while working on each part of this project: the paper, the hours, and the product.

3. Now that you have completed your entire project including the paper, hours, and product, summarize how the three parts link to each other. How does the topic of your research paper relate to the 20 (or more) hours needed to finish your product?

4. Looking back, how would you change your senior project? Would you choose an entirely different project or modify some aspect of the one you pursued? Would you change your choice of mentor, product or amount of time you put into the project as a whole? If you were completely satisfied with all of your choices, describe why.

5. Reflect on your experience, make sure you discuss the different stages of progress you experienced. How does your final product meet, exceed or fall short of personal expectations?

6. Will having completed this project affect your future in any way? Will you continue to pursue or avoid this area of work altogether now that you have completed this project? Fully explain your responses.

7. The expected school wide learning results reflect Casa’s mission as a school. Please pick 3 of the following learning results and explain how your senior project addressed each.
   - Display Initiative, Curiosity, and Creativity
   - Think Critically and Problem Solve
   - Communicate Skillfully
   - Collaborate Effectively
   - Produce Quality Work
   - Demonstrate Social Responsibility
Appendix C

Senior Project Volunteer/Job Shadow Interview

Outline

750 Word Minimum

Interview Transcript with an introduction

The purpose of the volunteer/job shadow interview is to closely examine several aspects of the volunteer/job shadow experience. This is your opportunity to clarify any questions you had during your job shadow/volunteer experience and to further explore aspects of the job or nonprofit organization.

Introductory Paragraph: Explain, briefly, what your goals were for senior project. Introduce your mentor including how long he/she has done this job and what degrees, certificates, or training your mentor may hold. Introduce the organization or company where you did your hours.

The middle portion of this product should be formatted like a transcript. Type out the question you asked and the answer your mentor provided. You may include questions of your own, but you MUST include the following questions:

**Job Shadow**
1. What kind of training or education would I need to continue in this field? Can you describe the classes/training that I might expect? Where did you receive training or where did you go to school?
2. What are two protocols involved with this job that are essential for me to know? Why are these aspects of the job important?
3. What does a typical day at work look like for you?
4. What are the best and worst parts of your job?
5. What advice would you give to a new (insert job title here)?
6. How competitive is your job? How can I set myself apart from the competition?

**Volunteer**
1. Describe the purpose of this organization. Who, in the community, do you serve?
2. How is this organization funded?
3. What are two protocols involved with this volunteer experience that are essential for me to know? Why are these aspects of a volunteer’s job important?
4. Are there other opportunities for me to get involved in this organization? Are there paid opportunities?
Appendix D
Presentation Rubrics
Appendix E
Paper Rubric

2015-2016 Senior Project Research Paper

6: Exceptional Achievement
• Introduction engages the reader: effective lead; authoritative context; concludes with a clear, insightful thesis.
• Thorough development; content is relevant, specific, extended, and insightful.
• Citations demonstrate depth and breadth of research; source information eloquently woven into writer's own voice and style. Effective use of direct quotations.
• Well organized and coherent; essay progresses in a logical, effective manner that supports thesis; transitions are clear and graceful.
• Voice is authoritative; style is clear and engaging; marked by an elevated vocabulary and sophisticated, varied sentence structures.
• Few, if any, errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, and MLA conventions.

5: Commendable Achievement
• Introduction is clear and authoritative; subject is defined and focused; thesis may lack the engaging quality of the 6.
• Thorough development; content is purposeful, relevant, and extended.
• Citations reflect depth of research; source information effectively integrated into writer's own voice; clear signal phrases for direct quotations.
• Essay is well organized, controlled; clear transitions.
• Voice is clear and authoritative; varied sentence structures; apt word choice.
• Few errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, and/or MLA conventions.

4: Adequate Achievement
• Introduction make effort to engage reader, provides adequate context, and presents a thesis with a POV.
• Adequate depth, but lacks the development and/or insight of the 5/6; may read like a report of information—i.e. information may be related to thesis, but may not always advance an argument or position; may rely on general information rather than specific support; may include one or more digressions.
• Citations reflect adequate depth of research; some source information may not advance/support thesis; quotes not as smoothly integrated as the 5/6.
• Clear beginning, middle, end; generally well-controlled; utilizes transitions.
• Reports information earnestly but predictably; conventional sentence structures and language; occasional awkwardness and/or lack of clarity, but does not hinder overall meaning.
• Occasional errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling and MLA conventions.

3: Minimum Competency Achievement
• Introduction may be brief, lack clarity or coherence, or ramble; subject matter may simply lack richness; thesis present, but may be simplistic or awkwardly stated.
• Development may be thin, general, superficial or simply lack clarity; may rely heavily on historical or biographical information, and fail to use this info to support thesis. Some body paragraphs may lack controlling ideas, may fail to support generalizations, may provide quotes w/o context or elaboration, and/or may digress.
• Citations reflect some research, but may simply report information rather than advance an argument or support assertions; may rely heavily on one source; citations may become "listy" or possibly even dominate; quotes often "dropped in" (lack signal phrases).
• Intro, body, and conclusion present, but may include digressions and/or lack transitions.
• Style hindered by simplicity, lack of precision, and/or clarity; may be marked by simple sentence structures, awkward sentence constructions, use of personal pronouns, and/or flat or imprecise word choice. Minimal awareness of audience.
• Several errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, and/or MLA conventions.

2/1: Insufficient Achievement
• Introduction offers limited context or includes info not appropriate to an intro; thesis may be simple statement of fact, lack clarity, fail to reflect the content of paper, or missing altogether.
• Development is over-generalized, superficial, or excessively dependent on irrelevant historical/biographical information; body paragraphs often fail to support assertions; body paragraphs may be opinion-based and/or include inaccuracies. Paper may be a “how to” essay—i.e. it “instructs” rather than “describes.”
• Source information reflects limited depth and breadth; some obvious research may go uncited; quotations, if present, may lack integration, may be integrated awkwardly, may lack relevance.
• Shaky organization; digressions and logic gaps both within paragraphs and/or from paragraph to paragraph break forward movement and hinder clarity.
• Style marred by lack of clarity and coherence, awkward sentences, and/or imprecise word choice. No awareness of audience.
• Frequent and distracting errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, and/or MLA conventions overshadow content.

**NOT SCORED**—**PAPERS THAT DO NOT MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS FAIL AUTOMATICALLY:**

- Five-page minimum (must be onto the fifth page, not including the Works Cited)
- At least FOUR (4) valid and reliable sources on Works Cited page (all sources on Works Cited must be referenced in paper)
- At least ONE (1) citation IN EACH BODY PARAGRAPH (possible exception may be 1st body paragraph that provides background information)

**ASTERISK**—A paper may receive a passing score (3-6) with an asterisk. An asterisk indicates that one or more technical errors—usually with MLA conventions—must be corrected before credit will be issued. See your English teacher.

08/14 jga
12/09 jga