



PLEASANT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL



GRADUATION PROJECT CLASS OF 2011

RESEARCH PROJECT

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GRADUATION PROJECT PLANNER RESEARCH PROJECT

This *Graduation Research Project Booklet* is designed to help you organize your project. You will find information to help you through all phases of the process. We hope that by using this planner you will succeed on your graduation project.

Things to remember:

- Save your information on a disk and/or hard drive, email a copy to yourself as an attachment, keep a copy at an online storage site such as Google Docs, and/or print multiple copies for yourself.
- Consult the PVHS Library Handbook for information on MLA formatting, research strategies, and types of sources (including primary sources).
- Refer to the Graduation Project Pathfinder for step-by-step guidance for all phases of the project at <http://pleasantvalleyhslibrary.wikispaces.com/Community+Service+Pathfinder>.

STUDENT PLANNER

STUDENT NAME: _____

FACULTY ADVISOR: _____

PROJECT TOPIC: _____

Note: You must successfully meet all four (4) deadlines in order to pass the Graduation Project.

COMPONENT	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED
Contract	Friday September 10, 2010	
First Draft with in-text citations and Works Cited	Friday November 5, 2010	
Final Paper and First Draft	Friday December 3, 2010	
Oral Presentation	Beginning February 2011 <i>Specific dates will be announced</i>	

INTRODUCTION

The graduation project illustrates a learning experience that completes one requirement in a student's educational career. The project provides students the opportunity for an in-depth study or a creative endeavor. Students may select a topic involving research and development or students may complete an approved community service project. Each option includes a written component and an oral presentation.

Once a topic or graduation research project is selected and approved by a faculty advisor, the student will need to ask questions, select resources, and conduct research in order to develop a successful written presentation. The culmination of the project, which is conducted under the guidance of a high school faculty members, requires a successful oral presentation.

The project ensures that all students apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information as well as communicate significant knowledge and understanding of a chosen topic. Students will receive .50 credit after successful completion of all components. The project will be graded on a PASS/FAIL basis. **Students must successfully meet all four (4) deadlines respectively in order to pass the Graduation Project. This means that students must pass each level of the project before moving to the next level of the project.** Successful completion of the Graduation Project is a state and local requirement for graduation from high school.

This *Graduation Research Project Booklet* describes the components of the project, the steps necessary to complete the project, and a timeline. It also contains evaluation and remediation procedures. Each student is encouraged to use the *Library Handbook*, library website, and library pathfinder to assist with the written and oral presentations. Both the process and the product become integral parts of the project.

The Pleasant Valley High School Graduation Project provides a positive learning experience that serves all students as they prepare for success in adult life.

RESEARCH PROJECT COMPONENTS

Students must successfully meet all deadlines in order to pass the Graduation Project. **If each step is not successfully completed, the student fails.**

The major components of the Graduation Research Project are as follows:

1. **The Contract – due Friday, September 10, 2010**

The contract is a document that must be signed by the student, the parent(s) or guardian(s), the project advisor, and the mentor (if applicable). This document shall be utilized by the student to choose his/her research topic. **If the contract is not submitted by the due date, the student will fail the graduation project. In order to earn the .5 credit for graduation, the student will need to remediate prior to graduation.** The contract must be submitted and approved by the faculty advisor on or before the above date.

2. **The Written Presentation (First Draft) – due Friday, November 5, 2010**

The first draft of the written component must meet minimum requirements and be submitted to the faculty advisor no later than the above date to be considered successful. These minimum requirements include a written presentation that is typed in MLA format, at least four (4) pages in length, with at least five (5) appropriate sources (one of which must be a primary source), a works-cited page, and be void of spelling/grammatical errors. **Failure to meet ANY of these requirements will result in failure of the graduation project. In order to earn the .5 credit for graduation, the student will need to remediate prior to graduation.**

3. **The Written Presentation (Final Paper) – due Friday, December 3, 2010**

The final paper must meet the requirements in the *Written Presentation Evaluation Form* in this booklet. It must also include advisor corrections as made on the first draft. **Failure to meet any of these criteria will mean failure for the graduation project, and will require remediation to acquire the .5 credit needed for graduation.** The final draft of the written presentation must be submitted to the faculty advisor by the above date in order to be scheduled for the oral presentation component.

4. **The Oral Presentation – beginning February 2011**

The oral presentation is the culminating component of the Graduation Project. Only those students who meet all of the requirements outlined above will be scheduled for an oral presentation. The criteria for the oral presentation can be found in the *Oral Presentation Evaluation Form* in this booklet. In addition, students who do not report to their scheduled presentation dates (without a doctor's note or Administrative approval) will be marked as failing the Graduation Project course.

- **NOTE:** Any student who registers prior to January 1st of his/her senior year must complete the first draft component by the last school day in January. **Community service will not be an option for students transferring their senior year.** An acceptable substitute project, determined by the project committee, will be assigned to transfer seniors who register after January 1st.

RESEARCH PROJECT COMPONENT CHECKLIST

For the PROJECT CONTRACT, the student will:

- select a topic
- describe the research project
- provide a thesis statement
- obtain the signature of a parent/guardian
- sign the contract
- submit the contract to the faculty advisor no later than **Friday, September, 2010**

During INVESTIGATION and RESEARCH, the student will:

- identify appropriate resources
- gather, organize, interpret, and record information or data
- document all sources

In the WRITTEN PRESENTATION, the student will:

- define objectives in thesis statement and maintain focus
- explain the importance, value, and impact the project
- draw conclusions and summarize from the research/interview(s)
- cite references on an MLA works-cited page
- submit typed first draft by **Friday, November 5, 2010**
- submit final paper by **Friday, December 3, 2010**

For the ORAL PRESENTATION, the student will:

- communicate the importance, value, and impact of the project
- deliver an organized presentation
- demonstrate effective speaking skills
- utilize visual material/media to enhance the presentation
- answer questions posed by the audience concerning the project
- inform the Principal in charge of the Graduation Project at least one week in advance of their scheduled presentation if the project:
 - requires a location other than the presentation room to present
 - requires special circumstances/equipment (other than TV, VCR, computer with TV display capabilities, or overhead)
 - cannot be transported on the school bus

PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

Project evaluation consists of two major components: the written paper and the oral presentation.

Students must successfully meet all four (4) deadlines respectively in order to pass the Graduation Research Project. This means that students must pass each level of the project before moving to the next level of the project. It is important to note that the project faculty advisor has the responsibility for reporting the student's final project evaluation to both the student and the assistant principal. The oral presentation will be evaluated by a PVHS staff member. A building administrator will resolve any conflicts regarding the evaluation process. By the conclusion of the senior year, each student will receive a grade of PASS or FAIL. If the student receives a failing grade, remediation is required in order to graduate.

- **NOTE: Students may remediate their projects prior to the conclusion of their senior year.** The names of those students who receive a failing grade for the Graduation Project course will be submitted to the high school guidance department. *Plagiarism will be handled according to school policy as stated in the student handbook. Plagiarism will result in project failure which requires remediation to make up the .5 graduation project credit.*

PROJECT MEMBER DESCRIPTIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES

Project Faculty Advisor

The project faculty advisor is a high school staff member who provides knowledge, information, and guidance to students. The faculty advisor is responsible for submitting completed contracts, interim reports, and final project grade report sheets. The faculty advisors also monitor, supervise, and evaluate the progress of their students regarding successful completion of the project.

Mentor

A student may also contact an individual in the community or a faculty member as an additional resource for obtaining knowledge, information, or guidance. This person will be referred to as a mentor. The mentor may also comment on the student's final written evaluation and be present at the oral presentation. The mentor does not grade the project.

RESEARCH PROJECT COMPONENT DEADLINES

- **Graduation Research Project Contract**

Due on or before **Friday, September 10, 2010** to the faculty advisor

- **The First Draft**

Due **Friday, November 5, 2010** to faculty advisor

First drafts (with required revisions noted) will be returned to students by their faculty advisor.

- **The Final Paper**

Due **Friday, December 3, 2010** to Faculty Advisor

➤ **Note:** The original first draft (with advisor corrections noted) must be re-submitted along with the revised final paper by the above date.

- **The Oral Presentation**

Beginning **February 2011** – as scheduled

NON-COMPLIANCE CONSEQUENCES

Failure to successfully meet any component requirements (outlined within this booklet) or the deadlines listed above will result in the student receiving a failing grade for the Graduation Project course. Failure letters will be sent to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of every student who fails the Graduation Project.

Students who fail any component of the project must complete one of the options listed below in order to receive a passing grade for the Graduation Project course and be eligible to graduate from Pleasant Valley High School:

1. Secure an approved, certified teacher to provide tutoring necessary to meet all requirements of the Graduation Project.
2. Enroll in and successfully complete a Graduation Project Course offered by Pleasant Valley High School (Winter, Spring, or Summer School).

➤ **Note:** Contact the Pleasant Valley High School Guidance Department for additional information regarding the above options.

MLA STYLE CHECKLIST

- _____ 1. 1” margins
- _____ 2. 12-point font throughout (Times New Roman)
- _____ 3. Double-spaced throughout
- _____ 4. ½” running header with student’s last name and page (right justified)
- _____ 5. NO title page
- _____ 6. First page heading with:
 - Student’s Full Name
 - Advisor’s Name
 - Graduation Project
 - Date (Day Month Year)
- _____ 7. Centered Title (with NO underline or boldface)
- _____ 8. No first-person language or personal pronouns (e.g. I, you, me, us, we, etc.)
- _____ 9. All tables, charts, graphs, and pictures are labeled and properly cited.
- _____ 10. Quotations four (4) lines or more are set-off one inch from left margin.
- _____ 11. Works-Cited title is centered 1” from the top of the page with NO underline or boldface.
- _____ 12. The list of works cited is NOT numbered. Each entry ends with a period.
- _____ 13. Works-cited entries are in alphabetical order by the first word in the citation; if no author is listed, the first word of the title is used.
- _____ 14. Each works-cited entry has at least one corresponding parenthetical citation in the text of the paper.
- _____ 15. All web hyperlinks are “turned off” with NO underlining or change in font color.
- _____ 16. All URLs are complete with NO hyphenation and break only after a slash.

➤ **Note: Refer to the Library Handbook or website for more information on MLA formatting.**

RESEARCH PROJECT WRITTEN PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM FIRST DRAFT

Outcome: *The student must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the subject. The project is PASSING only if deadlines are met and all of the items are rated "Successful".*

S = Successful for final paper submission

NYS = Not Yet Successful = Must make corrections before final paper submission

Content	S	NYS
⊗ Defines objectives in thesis statement		
Provides specific, accurate, precise information or data and maintains focus		
Uses appropriate vocabulary		
Reflects insightful consideration of the importance, value or impact of the research		
Draws conclusions supported by the information or data		

Organization	S	NYS
⊗ Minimally 4-10 typed pages of text (double spaced; Times New Roman 12-pt font)		
Arranges information in a logical manner		
Includes strong introduction and strong conclusion		
Uses transitions between paragraphs		

Research	S	NYS
⊗ Adheres precisely to MLA format		
Utilizes credible, timely source(s)		
⊗ Uses at least one (1) MLA parenthetical citation for each source in works cited		
Contains at least one primary source		

Conventions of Language	S	NYS
Uses varied and structurally correct sentences		
Uses correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar		

Sources/Citations	S	NYS
⊗ Includes a works-cited page of at least 5 varied sources (at least one primary source)		
⊗ Includes at least five (5) proper MLA parenthetical citations in paper text (a minimum of one parenthetical citation for each source)		

⊗ = Failure to complete these requirements results in automatic project failure. Students must remediate in order to make up the .5 credit for graduation.

	PASS	FAIL
Grade for First Draft		

Student Name _____ Date _____

Project Title: _____

Advisor Name: _____

RESEARCH PROJECT WRITTEN PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM FINAL PAPER

Outcome: *The student must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the subject. The project is PASSING only if deadlines are met and all of the items are rated "PASS".*

P = Pass = Scheduled for Oral Presentation

F = Fail = Project Failure → Remediation

Content	P	F
Defines objectives in thesis statement		
Provides specific, accurate, precise information or data and maintains focus		
Uses appropriate vocabulary		
Reflects insightful consideration of the importance, value or impact of the research		
Draws conclusions supported by the information or data		

Organization	P	F
Minimally 4-10 typed pages of text (double spaced; Times New Roman 12-pt font)		
Arranges information in a logical manner		
Includes strong introduction and strong conclusion		
Uses transitions between paragraphs		

Research	P	F
Adheres to MLA format		
Utilizes credible, timely source(s)		
Uses at least one (1) MLA parenthetical citation for each source in works cited		
Contains at least one primary source		

Conventions of Language	P	F
Uses varied and structurally correct sentences		
Uses correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar		

Sources/Citations	P	F
Includes a works-cited page of at least 5 varied sources (at least one primary source)		
Includes at least five (5) proper MLA parenthetical citations in paper text (a minimum of one parenthetical citation for each source)		

	PASS	FAIL
Grade for Final Paper		

Student Name _____ Date _____

Project Title: _____

Advisor Name: _____

VISUAL AID CHECKLIST FOR THE ORAL PRESENTATION

Design

_____ Project is balanced, uncluttered, neat and clean

Graphics/Media

_____ All graphics/media are used effectively to enhance message, support thesis, and convey meaning

Text

_____ Text is presented in a legible font utilizing appropriate style, size, and color

Mechanics

_____ Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors

Completion

_____ Project is completely finished and includes an adequate number of slides/graphics/etc

Quality of Information

_____ All information is clear, appropriate, and correct

Organization/Presentation of Content

_____ Visuals are introduced at appropriate times to enhance concepts throughout the presentation

Originality

_____ The product is original, inventive, and does not rehash other people's ideas

Documentation

_____ All text, charts, graphs, and pictures are labeled and properly cited in an MLA list of works cited
(Attached to project or last screen of the *Power Point*)

Equipment Needs

Describe any special equipment (other than TV, VCR, computer with TV display capabilities, or overhead) you will need to present your graduation project.

➤ *Special Note:*

- All presentations **with or without** a demonstration must be accompanied by a visual aid.
- Projects unable to be transported on the bus **must be pre-approved** by the assistant principal at least **one week** in advance of the presentation.

ORAL PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM

Outcome: The student must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic. A presentation is *PASSING* only if all of the categories below are rated "PASS".

P = Pass = Earned .5 Graduation Project Credit
F = Fail = Project Failure → Remediation

Communication	P	F
Clearly defines objectives and thesis		
Supports each major point with information or data		
Summarizes with a concluding statement		
Cites major sources to show how experts and studies support thesis		
Uses appropriate and accurate vocabulary		
Communicates importance, value, and impact of the project		

Effective Speaking	P	F
Uses body language which enhances the presentation		
Maintains consistent eye contact with members of the audience		
Speaks clearly, correctly, and efficiently		
Varies tone, volume, and speed to enhance presentation		
Presents oneself with poise		

Organization	P	F
Arranges information in a logical manner		
Uses an engaging beginning and a thoughtful ending		
Clearly focuses around a controlling idea or thesis		
Flows smoothly from one idea to the next		
Keeps length of presentation between 8-12 minutes		

Visual Aid	P	F
Visual aid is introduced at an appropriate time during the presentation		
Demonstrates effective use of media/graphic design with attention to neatness, color scheme, and appropriate font style and size		
Clearly, accurately, and precisely communicates significant information or data to enhance presentation		
All illustrations, tables, charts, and graphs are labeled with sources		
Visual aid is free of errors with correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar		

Response to Questions	P	F
Effectively responds to all questions from the evaluators		

	PASS	FAIL
Grade for Oral Presentation		

Student Name _____ **Date** _____

Project Title: _____

Evaluators: _____



PLEASANT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL



GRADUATION PROJECT

RESEARCH PROJECT SELF EVALUATION

Name _____ Advisor _____

Research Topic _____ Date _____

Please attach this sheet to your final paper.

1. I have fulfilled all the requirements listed on the "Written Presentation Evaluation Form." Yes No
2. My thesis is adequately answered. Yes No
3. My evidence is logically organized. Yes No
4. I have not used first-person language or personal pronouns (e.g. I, you, me, us, we, etc.) Yes No
5. I have carefully checked spelling, capitalization, grammar, and punctuation. Yes No
6. My verb tense is consistent throughout. Yes No
7. I have varied sentence structure to make the text more readable. Yes No
8. My paragraphs have topic sentences. Yes No
9. Transitional sentences link my paragraphs. Yes No
10. I have responsibly quoted, paraphrased, and summarized with parenthetical citations. Yes No
11. My introduction and conclusion clearly support my thesis. Yes No
12. My documentation is correctly formatted following MLA style. Yes No
13. All facts not commonly known are documented. Yes No
14. I have used a balanced and adequate number of relevant resources. Yes No
15. My own voice, as a writer, is clearly heard. Yes No
16. I have not plagiarized any of the material in this project. Yes No

Signature _____

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PLEASANT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION PROJECT
RESEARCH PROJECT OPTION

Student Name (Print) _____

Grade _____ Homeroom _____ Advisor (Print) _____

Home Address _____

Home Phone # _____ Email _____

Guidance Counselor (Print) _____

Topic for Project:

_____ **Biographies are NOT permitted!** _____

Description of Research Project:

Thesis Statement:

Student Signature & Date _____
 (I have reviewed the *Graduation Project Research Booklet* and understand the information and expectations.)

Parent / Guardian Signature & Date _____
 (I have reviewed the *Graduation Project Research Booklet* and understand the information and expectations.)

Project Advisor Signature & Date _____

Mentor Signature & Date (if applicable) _____

CC: Student
 Project Advisor
 Mentor (if applicable)

Contract due date: Friday, September 10, 2010