

To my new AP Research Students (and their parents):

I think it is necessary to address some of the expectations for AP Research before you access the actual summer assignment. I realize that these uncertain times often lead to uncertain circumstances that are out of your control; consequently, some flexibility is necessary—on my part and your part. Yet, I also know the standards and deadlines established by the College Board are not flexible.

What I say in this letter is designed to help set the tone for our class for the upcoming year. Speak to former students to get an idea about the class and how I operate as a teacher; they will tell you that building a collaborative community of scholars is essential to our success. Your willingness and ability to understand and embrace the ideas in this letter will help ensure your individual success.

So before you actually read the summer assignment, please take the time to process the ideas in this letter. It includes the different aspects to consider as you prepare for the beginning of school next year as an AP Research student. I have chunked it into sections and used bullets to make it easier to access the information.

Reflect on Your Goals as an AP Research Student:

- Why did you sign up to take this class?
- What do you want to get out of this class?
- How **intrinsically motivated** are you to be successful in a largely **self-directed** course?
- If you are going to be successful, you need to do a little soul searching. This includes your ability to answer these questions as honestly and specifically as possible.

Class Expectations:

We will cover each of these in greater depth once school starts; however, you may notice that they overlap and are interconnected.

- Academic Integrity* [do your own work & practice ethical research practices]
- Kindness* [to yourself (includes your mental & physical health), to your peers, to me, to all others]
- Respect* [for yourself (includes your mental & physical health), for your peers, for me, for academic standards and integrity]
- Responsibility* [for your own actions, learning, success, growth]
- Reflection* [assessing your strengths & weaknesses, setting goals, making a plan for improvement]
- Growth mindset* [not a fixed mindset]
- The Seven P's* [Preparedness, Promptness, Positive Mental Attitude, Participation, Politeness, Perseverance, Production]

This Assignment, actually this whole course, is not about the Grade:

- This is about learning.
- This is about diagnosing the skills and project ideas you bring to the table; think of this like a diagnostic test.
- This is about preparation and gathering resources.
- This is about highlighting and practicing your skills.
- This is about keeping your brain sharp, especially your problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

- This is about beginning to understand the requirements & expectations of the College Board.
- This is about meeting long-term goals—a marathon not a sprint—to help you earn a passing AP score for your 5,000-word paper and 20-minute presentation that are due in April.

Communication is Key:

- I cannot help you unless you ask for help.
- I need to know before a deadline that you are struggling, how you are struggling, and why you are struggling.
- We will then need to work together to devise a plan to help you be successful.
- Email me as soon as any problems, issues, or questions arise.
- Make your email messages concise and specific.
- Do not send messages through Google Classroom; always email me.
- If you think it will be too hard to express your problems, issues, or questions in writing, send me an email to request a face-to-face Google Meet.
- Check your school email regularly. You have to get in the habit of using a professional email address; currently, that is your JCPS email.
- Go to the AP Research Google Classroom (I have already enrolled you) because this simplifies things when I share resources. Set it up to receive notifications when I make a post.
- I will share a couple of model summer assignments written by former students in Google Classroom over the summer to help you.
- Because it is summer, realize it may take me more than 24 hours to get back to you.

Letters of recommendation for college applications:

- You are building a relationship with me because you may need me to write you a letter of recommendation at the beginning of your senior year.
- You are showing me your character: your work ethic, your grit, your intrinsic motivation, your intellectual curiosity, your motivation, your focus. . .
- You are illustrating to me that you are more interested in learning and growth than merely a grade.
- You are proving to me that you would be a desirable student for your dream college or any other school you may want to attend after high school.

The Reasons You Really Need to Complete this Assignment before School Starts & Do Your Best Work:

- You need to complete this with your best effort in order to get ahead and to be prepared for the challenges of meeting standards, expectations, requirements, & deadlines, especially the final College Board deadline.
- You will be required to do this work anyway. More specifically, you have to get approval from me for

your project and you will have a 25-source annotated bibliography due in the middle of October.

- You need to complete this with your best effort in order to receive feedback from me in a timely fashion on whether you are meeting my standards & expectations, whether your project is feasible and meets the requirements & expectations of the College Board, or whether you will need to completely change your topic.
- You need to complete this with your best effort in order to prevent increased stress levels when school starts.
- If you do not complete it over the summer before school starts, you will be required to complete it when you also have other assignments for this class and all of your other classes.
- You need to complete this with your best effort to help ensure that you will ultimately be successful with your AP Research project (i.e. earn the AP score you desire).

Whew! That was a lot, wasn't it?

Take a deep breath. Exhale. Reflect on what you just read, how it makes you feel, and what questions it generated. Then reread the letter to answer some of those questions. Share this letter with your parents to gain their support.

I bet you could make a list of things you learned about me as a teacher and a person from reading this letter, perhaps both good and bad. Know that I am here to support you and my main goal is to help you be successful and grow. This class is going to be a challenge; yet, if you are willing to put in the hard work, then I am willing to put in the hard work. Also, you will most likely be rewarded for your—perhaps Herculean—efforts. The best evidence to support this claim is the most recent scores for my AP Research students:

My Students' Scores vs. Kentucky Students' Scores vs. Global Students' Scores for 2023

	My Students	KY	Global
Mean	4.11	3.36	3.34
Pass Rate	100%	88.3%	84.4%
5	38.9%	13.3%	13.3%
4	33.3%	25%	26.4%
3	27.8%	50%	44.7%
2	0%	8.1%	12.5%
1	0%	3.6%	3.1%

You are now ready to look at the actual assignment and do quality work. Check your JCPS student email for a message from me with the assignment attached and locate more resources on the AP Research Google Classroom.

I would appreciate an email to let me know you have received the summer assignment.

Good Luck,

Alesia Williams

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Dear Researcher,

We must first and foremost congratulate you on your interest in challenging yourself with the AP Capstone program. The skills that you have and will continue to acquire due to the Capstone program are paramount in your post-high school success. So, to your dedication, we salute you!

Now, down to business. The following summer work has been created after much consideration and discussion with other AP Research colleagues as well as input from this year's AP Research students who all wished they had started the year with this work already completed. I realize this looks like a lot for the summer, but we know that if you frontload before the year starts you will alleviate some stress later when you also have other classes to contend with. I am NOT about busy work, but there are some concepts and items that you need to establish for yourself prior to starting AP Research. One such concept is that this course is more **self-directed** than your other high school classes; this should make you realize then that this course is not about your grade but about learning. Consequently, when we recommend you complete work—instead of requiring it for a grade—you need to be motivated enough to actually do it because it will help you be successful.

These concepts, and others, should be considered while taking long walks on the beach, while sitting in the back of the car on a road trip, while trying to fall asleep at camp, while playing video games, or whatever summer activity enhances your life. First, know that you will be asked to dig deep, so please start now. You are NOT required to have written responses to the following questions; however, we recommend you to spend some time thinking about them before you start the actual assignment: What is “research”? Who is the audience for published research articles? Who is the audience for my research project? Why did I choose to take AP Research? How do I think AP Research will be different from AP Seminar? How **intrinsically motivated** am I to be successful in a **self-directed** course?

Our second recommendation for the summer is that you read Part I and II of [The Craft of Research](#) by Booth, Colomb, and Williams. If you prefer reading a hard copy book, see if you can check it out of the library. Reading these 100 pages will give you a considerable advantage when you go to complete the required written assignment. It would be even better to read the whole book. There is also a [resource packet](#) posted on our website with additional resources; please be sure to seek it out.

Required Summer Research Question Work PART I:

Similar to AP Seminar, the College Board wants you to start your AP Research project with a leading question. The following concepts are things to consider when attempting to build an AP Research leading question. As resources you have been given a separate handout about **research questions** and the list of research questions from this year's research projects. However, it is essential that you realize not all **research questions** are created equal (hint: some of the ones from this year are better than others).

Remember, the **discipline**, specific **topic**, and **research question** you decide to work with must hold your interest for the entire year. Sit and reflect about your true interests for this course prior to settling on a **discipline**, specific **topic**, and **research question**; you must be passionate about your choice. Also, please realize that this is just an initial **research question**; by the time you actually start the **methods-driven** study portion of your project, you may have revised your question numerous times, and no one will be able to proceed past this basic assignment without teacher approval for your **research question**.

The following elements are critical when attempting to build your **research question**. As you proceed it is essential that you consider these four major concepts in connection to your research project: **focus**, **scope**, **value**, and **feasibility**. Use the table below as a guide to help you develop a solid initial **research question**. You are not required to have written answers for the reflection questions, but it is highly recommended that you be able to articulate an answer for each one. If you cannot, perhaps there is a problem with your chosen **topic** and **research question**. Additionally, your research must fill a **GAP** in the body of knowledge in your chosen field.

By the end of the process for PART I you should be ready to start putting your ideas down in black and white. Create a document that includes the following information:

Your name
Date
AP Research Summer Assignment

PART I

Your Discipline
Your Specific Topic
Your Research Question

Example

Jane Doe
14 August 2022
AP Research Summer Assignment

PART I

Discipline: Psychology
Specific Topic: Social Stigma for Mental Disabilities
[Type in the research question you developed]

Issues to Consider when Designing a Research Question

Concept	Description	Reflection Questions
<p style="text-align: center;">Focus</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Research Discipline & Topic</p>	<p><i>Discipline:</i> Lens or section of focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • History • Humanities • Hard Sciences • Social Sciences • Mathematics <p><i>Topic:</i> Specific interest within a discipline that creates the basics of your research question</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What discipline would you enjoy working in during your research? 2. What specific topic are you interested in examining? 3. Why are you interested in this particular topic? 4. What can you add to the body of knowledge that already exist on the topic?
<p style="text-align: center;">Scope:</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Depth & Size of Your Research Project</p>	<p><i>Depth:</i> The level of detail</p> <p><i>Breadth:</i> The number of topics discussed (i.e., all people, teenagers, infants, etc.)</p> <p><i>Context:</i> The specific setting of your research (i.e., a lab, a classroom, a sound booth, etc.)</p> <p><i>Variables:</i> The items/people/situations/issues/concepts being studied and/or manipulated (i.e., blood pressure & music selection; IQ, personality type, & instructional method)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What specific things will you study? People? Animals? Concepts? Theories? 2. How can you limit the scope of your research question to make your project more feasible? 3. How and/or where will you work with these variables?
<p style="text-align: center;">Value:</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Contribution to the Body of Knowledge</p>	<p>The value or significance of your research is determined by how your contribution enhances what is already known about the topic. You are required to fill a gap in the body of knowledge (BoK) by either adding to the current conversation of the discipline or using multiple discipline conversations to create a new understanding. You are not merely compiling or rehashing information; you are bringing something new to the table.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will your research change the way we currently see the topic? How will it fill a gap? 2. What can you add to the body of knowledge that already exists on the topic? 3. How will your research benefit society or your discipline? 4. Will you create a new piece of art, music, dance, or theatre as part of your project? 5. Will you design and create a new device or product as part of your project?
<p style="text-align: center;">Feasibility:</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Possibility of Research</p>	<p><i>Time, money, and resources</i> will play a major role in determining your ability to complete your research project. This may include a research lab, special software, access to secondary data, art supplies, special equipment, etc.</p> <p>You will be required to design a research method to answer your question. Once you have developed a research methods, you will actually only have about 2 to 3 months to complete the methods-driven research study portion of your research project.</p> <p>The time leading up to it will be filled with learning the basics of scholarly research, conducting a review of the literature to become an expert on your topic, and designing your research methods (i.e., quantitative vs. qualitative, mixed methods, correlational, action research, phenomenological, experimental, etc.).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What method will you need to use to answer your research question? How will you generate new data with your method? How will you analyze that data? 2. What will you need, physically and/or monetarily, to complete your research project? 3. How long will the methods-driven research study portion of your research project take? 4. Do you have access to the things you need for your research? (Refer back to scope as you address this.) 5. Who can help you with your research? Who might be potential expert advisers?

Required Summer Research Question Work PART II:

After you have completed the initial reflection and thinking required in PART I and created the brief written portion for PART I, you are ready to complete the written work for PART II on the same document.

Explain the **focus, scope, value, and feasibility** of your **research question**. Write a detailed paragraph for each (for a total of 4 paragraphs) and include a subheading above each paragraph that identifies which element you are addressing (i.e., **focus, scope, value, feasibility**). The reflection questions included in the above table should help you with each explanation. In a 5th detailed paragraph under the subheading “Potential Challenges & Problems,” address this question: What challenges or problems do you anticipate as you proceed with this project?

Required Summer Research Question Work PART III:

Now it is time to start gathering sources and building an understanding of the **body of knowledge** and how scholarly research works. Use the research skills you gained in AP Seminar to gather 10 sources that will help support you in this process. Use the table below to help you understand the 2 types of sources you will be using this year: **Anchor Sources** and **Mentor Sources**. You are required to find 7 to 8 **Anchor Sources** and 2 to 3 **Mentor Sources** for a total of 10 sources.

Type Of Source	Explanation	# Required
Anchor Sources	These are sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● in your discipline ● about your specific topic ● that are most often scholarly, peer-reviewed articles ● that address differing perspectives on your topic ● that include contrasting views about your topic ● that include information you may include in your literature review ● that teach you about your specific topic ● that help you become an expert on your specific topic ● that help you improve your <i>ethos</i> ● that help you identify the gap in the research ● that help you understand the significance of your research question ● that ANCHOR your understanding of the body of knowledge in your discipline 	6 to 7
Mentor Sources	These sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● may or may not be in your discipline ● may or may not be about your specific topic ● are most often scholarly, peer-reviewed articles ● may include similar variables as your research project ● include a research design or method similar to what you might use to answer your question ● include similar data analysis methods ● teach you how to conduct a research study ● teach you about a particular element of the research process ● help you improve your <i>ethos</i> ● do NOT necessarily help you identify the gap in the research ● do NOT necessarily help you learn about your specific topic ● act as a MENTOR to you as a researcher 	2 to 3

Required for each of the 10 sources:

- Bibliographic information in either MLA or APA documentation style (use the one most common in your discipline)
- A detailed paragraph that summarizes the sources in your own words
- Identify what type of source it is (i.e. **Anchor** or **Mentor**) and address why the source is valuable to your success; this should be completed in one or three sentences at the end of the paragraph that complete the appropriate statement for the source:
 - “This **ANCHOR SOURCE** is valuable to my research project because . . .”
 - “This **MENTOR SOURCE** is valuable to my research project because . . .”

NOTE FOR STUDENTS COMPLETING SCIENCE FAIR PROJECTS:

If you are continuing a project from a previous year, the College Board requires that your project—and ultimately, your paper and presentation—for AP Research be new; in other words, there must be a new research question and research method/design to generate new data. You are NOT allowed to merely rehash what you have already done or use the same data you have already generated or use the same paper you have already written. Additionally, any project that complies by ISEF rules is allowed as long as it can get IRB/IACUC approval. The College Board is not going to restrict your research as long as you follow the rules established by the university & ISEF; this includes projects involving working in a lab at UL, cell cultures, recombinant DNA, or any sort of chemical. Additionally, collaborative projects are NOT allowed.

NOTE ABOUT EXPERT ADVISERS AND MENTORS:

We highly recommend that every student in AP Research locate an expert adviser or mentor, even if you are not working in a lab at U of L. This can be a difficult process, so we have included some resource materials about the do's and don'ts of contacting professors and other potential mentors. We will eventually address this in class, but some of you may want to get a head start. We do NOT recommend that you actually contact them over the summer before school starts unless you have a contact that will make the introduction for you. However, compiling a list of potential mentors and drafting email communications over the summer would help you feel more confident about asking professors for assistance. If you have the messages written when we start school, you can set up a conference with your AP Research teacher to read over your messages and give you some feedback before you actually send them.

If anyone wants to work in a lab at U of L, the optimal time to search for one is August; this is when the graduate student rotation opens up lab spots. Sometimes professors are willing to take on students in their labs only if the student has some pre-existing connection to the university; therefore, you may want to contact your MST teachers or senior MST students to ask for advice or connections.

You may email me during the summer if you have questions, but I do not check my school email regularly.

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Other resources you may find helpful:

1. The resources already included in the Google Classroom for AP Research 2022-2023.
2. *Practical Research: Planning and Design* by P.D. Leedy and J.E. Ormrod
3. *Students and Research: Practical Strategies for Science Classrooms and Competitions*, Second Edition, by Julia H. Cothron, Ronald N. Giese, and Richard J Rezba
4. *The Bedford Researcher* by Mike Palmquist
5. USC's Library Guides at <http://libguides.usc.edu/>
6. AP Research Course and Exam Description Book at <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-research-course-and-exam-description.pdf>

DUE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

I will use the Plagiarism Check feature on Google Classroom all year.

Remember:

Research is a recursive process. This is only one small step in that quest.

Adapted from an assignment originally created by Emily Lott, master AP Research teacher.