

The Assignment: The Multigenre Research Project

- For this project you are to research a person, event, place, or issue of interest to you.
- You will choose your topic from the Billy Joel song “We Didn’t Start the Fire” and research it just as you would for a traditional research paper: collecting information and recording it, synthesizing the information, then presenting it through writing.
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 - Instead of the single, extended prose piece of a traditional research paper, though, this project will consist of a number of creative pieces in various genres—poetry, advice columns, diary entries, news articles, lists, art or graphics, and alternate styles of writing—imaginative writing based on fact. You’ll organize all that writing and put it in a topic-appropriate package.
- You will have a great deal of freedom in this project. Sometimes you may break the rules of spelling, usage, and punctuation if ignoring them helps you to communicate the message and the mood better. (Of course, if one of your articles is a news article, it should be in Standard English and in the appropriate news style.)
- You will also have flexibility in choosing the point of view you use in each piece of writing. A particular genre, for instance, might portray events through the eyes of the subject, others who were present, or even from the viewpoint of an inanimate object.
- As you research your topic of interest, you should try to discover a theme or a thesis. If you were researching Elvis Presley, for instance, you might discover that many of his actions and problems in his life were related to his need for love and acceptance. This emergent theme might suggest a thread with which you may create cohesion among your separate pieces of writing. We’ll talk about ways to do this later. For now, just realize that in this project, instead of starting with a thesis, you’re going to look for one.
- This project will reflect not only what you have learned about your topic, but also the spirit of it and how you have come to feel about it. Lighthearted? Spirited? Dismal? Violent? Nostalgic? The mood will surely come through. I can always remember which student created which project because his or her voice speaks through the choice of the topics and the words on the page.

Requirements:

1. You may choose any number of genres (*but at least seven - two of them have to be non-fiction; one has to be a type of technical writing*) to tell the story of your subject. Some of these genres you have studied before— this year or in previous years. You have, for instance, learned the proper form for a business letter; many of you have written haiku poems or sonnets; and all of you have seen play scripts. Your entire paper should be at least 1,500 words in length and will either be turned in as a paper or PowerPoint copy.
2. Information about your subject should not be repeated in several pieces. For instance, do not write an encyclopedia-type entry with all the major facts about your subject and then present the same information in various creative pieces. We should learn new things about your topic with each piece of writing.
3. You will need to document your sources, including page numbers for any direct quotations.
4. You should include at least three types of alternate style writing, either as separate pieces or as part of one of the genres.
5. The pieces you create should be arranged in some logical order.
6. You should find some way to create flow/cohesion in your project.
6. You should create a cover sheet for your project that reflects the nature and spirit of your subject.
7. You will turn in your research notes.
8. You must turn in a bibliography page with your project.

You should understand that I don't have a certain preconceived idea of what your project will be. In fact, I don't know what it will look like, how long it will be, or what forms it will take. I expect that your individuality will cause you to choose a new topic, to research it in new ways, and to create a final product that reflects the uniqueness of your personality. I know this much: I want your project to be thorough; I want to *know* your subject when I'm through reading. I want your paper to be creative; I want to see imaginative—maybe even shocking—uses of words, unique types of writing, graphics, or artwork to convey the information, and fascinating arrangement of the pieces of writing both on individual pages and within the project as a whole. I want your project to convey that you were completely involved with your subject, that you were willing to take risks, that because you care, you gave your very best effort. I want to be able to turn to whoever is around when I'm reading your paper and say, "Wow! Listen to this!"

Dear Mom and Dad:

For my multi-genre research project in Language Arts, I would like to have my topic be one of the three listed below. I have listed the topics in order of preference, but I need your signature approving them for me to research. The topics are given out on a first-come, first-serve basis, and no one else in my class can have the same topic. I need you to sign this so I can be the first student to bring my paper back signed. I really want my first choice of topic. A few of the topics are a little controversial. That is why Mrs. Loughrige is asking us to get permission for us to research them. Also note that I will HAVE to use out of class time to work on this project.

Please sign below so that I have a chance to receive my chosen topic and begin my research.

The topic I REALLY want to complete my research project on is:

1.

I will settle for either of these topics if someone beats me to my first choice:

2.

3.

Thanks for your help with this!

Student Signature

I approve the above listed topics. I acknowledge that my child has permission to complete his/her research project on any of the topics listed above.

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

Name of Student (printed) _____