

Senior Project Description

English IV

Senior Project, in compliance with Board of Education policy, is a requirement for all D. H. Conley High School English IV students and underclassmen are quickly lining up for the state requirement for Senior Project. The Senior Project grade will constitute the final exam grade. The four components [research paper, project/product, portfolio, and oral boards], which are due one after another beginning with the research, must be completed in order and on time. Should a student fail to complete one component, that stops the process for him and his final exam grade will be a zero [0]. Many grades for assignments related to the project/research also count on the marking period grades for English IV. The project must be new learning for the student rather than continuing an area of study previously enjoyed. Students may not begin [or get credit for any hours] until their project and research topic are approved by their senior English teacher. Since block scheduling began, we allow students to get approval from the Senior Project coordinator and begin their project hours in the summer. E-mail Mrs. Foster at cvfoster2000@yahoo.com or call the school secretary for dates Mrs. Foster will be at school for summer approval.

This project combines student interests with academics by incorporating real-life goal setting, problem solving, and critical thinking skills in primarily an out-of-class assignment. The project fosters self-directed and life-long learning and time management skills needed in the real world. In addition, Senior Project helps integrate subject areas within the school and involves school and community resources. It supports elements of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Communication Skills and makes a wonderful culmination of the student's educational experience. *If the student chooses a project/product in which he/she is truly interested*, the experience will be extremely enjoyable. It is not often that one gets to do exactly what he has always wanted to do. Students should take advantage of this opportunity. In qualifying the "what he has always wanted to do" statement, I should add that clearly there will be safety, monetary, and moral restrictions.

Components of Senior Project

Research paper	A set length on a teacher approved topic [4-6 pages for all students] All rough materials, note cards, bibliography cards, outlines, source copies, etc. are required with the final paper. Student must follow the English teacher's instructions carefully. This instruction will build on junior research instruction.
Project/product	Relates to the research in some way [Most students choose this first and then relate their research to this component.] Student must verify a minimum of 15 contact hours with his mentor. Students will get a list of possible topics, may talk with former seniors from Conley and other schools for ideas, and may discuss with interested adults.
Portfolio	A record of the steps, etc., of the Senior Project—basically everything done all year relating to Senior Project. The portfolio should be bound according to teacher directions [professionally bound]. Virtually all materials are word-processed. Student must include pictures and follow teacher directions for organization and inclusion.
Oral boards	A panel of faculty and community members before whom the student presents an 8-10 minute speech about his project, demonstrates any learning such as a performance, answers questions about his personal process. Student must have visual documentation of the process of his learning.

What should I do in the summer before my senior year relating to Senior Project?

If you have not already gotten your project approved, begin thinking about what project you would *like* to do. What have you wanted to do that you have not been able to do? You may take lessons [guitar, self-defense, scuba diving, yoga, piano, shooting, sky-diving, etc.], you may work one-on-one with an expert [build a robot, build a computer, rebuild your car engine, tune up your car, do body work on an old car, make a web page, make sculpture of any medium, paint in any medium, decorate cakes, learn to sew, etc.], you may do volunteer work [work with a mentor at the Real Crisis Center, Picasso, Habitat for Humanity, the Boys and Girls Club, your church, etc.]. As you think, consider what you anticipate the rest of your life being like; try to choose something that will add to your life in some way. **You absolutely MUST know what you will do for your project and for your research when you return to school. Senior English classes will go into the library to begin research at the end of the first week of school. If you have not already begun on or finished the "project" portion, which you are allowed to do in the summer, you will soon be working on the project, your research paper, and your regular English work all at the same time.**

Consider costs: you are responsible for your own costs and a good grade is not in any way dependent on how much money you spend. You could have a perfect grade with no expenditure of money at all for your project. A few students have actually chosen topics they later earn money for doing. Many have used their materials and speeches in college.

Consider who might serve as your mentor. You must have an adult mentor [someone who can help you learn] for your project. The mentor cannot be a parent, close relative, or anyone living with the student. Avoid any relatives when possible. Talk to anyone you think might be able to help you. Find out if what you want to do is feasible. Find out if that person's idea of what you are thinking of is the same as yours. [Example: a student wants to learn video editing. Some video editor mentors ask only that the student bring the already shot video and begin work. Others insist on a script before the video is shot. Make sure you are both talking about the same project.] Find out if it is affordable. Find out if it can be done in the amount of time you have to give to it. Make sure the mentor can meet at the same times you can meet. Consider your other obligations [school, work, church, clubs, etc.].