

## **I-Search: 2020 Packet**

Dear Students:

The following packet contains general instructions for these I-Search assignments:

- **Proposal**
- **Media Search #1**
- **Independent Reading Book**
- **Interview**
- **Site Activity/Observation**
- **Media Search #2**
- **About the Author**
- **Findings Presentation (video taped and archived for community online)**
- **I-Search in the Alcove**

The purpose of the packet is to serve as a guide for students. Please know that each assignment will be discussed in class, and your teacher will give practice activities as well as samples of each assignment. Because we will go over the information in class, we ask that you do not try to work ahead.

Please note that most of the assignments above must be submitted to turnitin.com. Your teacher will give you the guidelines for turning in your notes for the media searches, interview, and site activity/observation. Be sure you know how to submit online and *ask for help right away if you do not*.

Remember, the I-Search is your English focus for third quarter. You will have quite a bit of time in class to work on it, and you will be learning about something you are truly interested in. Your teachers and librarian are here to help you learn and grow as writers and researchers.

**The final hard copy of your I-Search is due on Friday, April 3rd.**



## I-Search: Proposal Assignment

**Learning Target:** In a well-written essay, I can convince my teacher that the I-Search topic I have chosen is something I am truly interested in, and that I have explored a variety of research resources for my topic.



**Task:** Write 2-3 pages (3 maximum), double spaced, examining your interests, motivations, knowledge, and possible resources for your I-Search.

- This is the first step in the I-Search process. Before you begin researching your topic, you must convince your teacher that your topic is meaningful to you and that you have carefully considered the resources available for your search. It's also important for you to establish some clarity about the purpose of your search.
- You may still change your mind about your topic; however, if you do switch, you must write another proposal.

**Submit to Turnitin.com:** Your 3 page (max.) I-Search proposal.

**Due date:** Monday, January 27th at 10pm

### Steps to a Successful Proposal

Start by “answering” the question in italics, and then build from there.

**1. Interest and Motivation:** *Why have you chosen this topic?* Consider this carefully. Explain *why* this topic interests you and *why* you got interested in the first place. Be as thoughtful and self-analytical as you can. Your topic choice is the single most important choice you will make. Convince your reader that this is a topic you truly care about. Try to write this portion using an anecdote.

**2. Knowledge and Preconceptions:** *What do you already know, or think you know about your topic?* What have you learned through personal experience? The media? Through discussions with family or friends? Through school? This should be an exhaustive inventory of what you bring with you to the I-Search process.

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**3. Curiosity:** *What do you still want or need to know about your topic? What do you hope to discover during this process? What is your central guiding question? What are your sub-questions? Can your questions be categorized? Consider the factual information related to the topic you may want to learn, but also consider the questions you want to examine that do not have factual answers at all.*

**4. Resources:** *Where will you find information? What resources are available to you for your research? Who would be the perfect people to interview and where might you be able to find them? What would be valuable to observe? Think big, but also think locally. In most subject areas you *will* be able to interview the *best* source if you can locate him or her. Be ambitious and start thinking of where that person might be. You may need to do some preliminary research to see if any of these resources exist locally. This should include specific information.*

**5. IRB Component:** Your 3rd quarter IRB is connected to the I-Search process. What book have you chosen to read that may meaningfully contribute to your knowledge about your topic? Why have you chosen this book? What are you hoping to learn from reading it? Your IRB can be fiction or nonfiction, but must be thematically related to your topic. You must finish reading this book by March 16.

## I-Search: Media Search #1

**Learning Target:** I can find multiple sources of high quality information on my topic using a variety of media, and I can organize this information into a well written essay.



**Task:** Take notes from 4-6 relevant sources and write 25-35 “notecards” using NoodleTools. You can use information from books, newspaper and/or magazine articles, journal articles, websites, film, and TV shows.

Write a 4-6 page (6 maximum) essay that both presents the information you have gathered and reflects on it. Include information from the books, newspaper and/or magazine articles, journal articles, websites, film and television shows you consulted.

All notes taken from your relevant sources should be in NoodleTools. No notes? No credit. No exception.

**Due date:** Monday, February 24th at 10pm

**Submit to turnitin.com:** Your 4-6 page (6 max.) paper.  
(The works cited is in addition to the page count.)

**Due date:** Friday, February 28th at 10pm

### Steps to a Successful First Media Search

Question-Report-Reflect-Plan

**Question:** Identify the central question that is guiding your search. Identify the *sub-questions* you have or had about your topic that have factual answers. Identify other *sub-questions* that will not have factual answers, but that you want to use this search to explore.

**Report:** What are you learning? Begin with a definition of your topic or an explanation of your topic if it is not a self-explanatory concept. Tell why it is important. Summarize, paraphrase, and quote the information that you have found on your topic. **This is the bulk of your project.** Concentrate on *facts* about your topic. Be sure to quote interesting or important passages. Include in-text citations and a list of Works Cited in correct MLA format.

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**Reflect on your learning:** Look at the specific information you have gathered and consider:

- How does it connect to your central question?
- How might it contradict any assumptions you had about your topic?
- How might the information you have found be limited/biased/problematic data?
- If this continues, what comes next?
- Why is this information important? Why does it matter?

**Plan:** Where are you going? Are any of your questions changing as you continue your search? What new questions do you have? Where do you want or need to look next?

## I-Search: Interview Assignment

**Learning Target:** I can prepare effective interview questions from my research, approach an expert on my topic to request and schedule an interview, conduct a successful interview and write it up in 2-4 well written pages.



**Task:** Interview an expert or knowledgeable source on your topic, asking at least 12 questions and taking detailed notes. Then in 2-4 pages (4 maximum), relay the important information you gathered in the interview, and help the reader make sense of that information.

**Submit to your teacher:** A hard copy of your “Interview Plan/Questions.” This should include the name and credential(s) of your interviewee, the proposed date and location of your interview, and your 12 questions.

**Due date:** Thurs, Feb 13/Fri, Feb 14

All notes taken from your interview should be in NoodleTools.

No notes? No credit. No exception.

**Due date:** Wednesday, March 11th at 10pm

**Submit to turnitin.com:** Your 2-4 page (4 max.) interview write-up.

**Due date:** Friday, March 13th at 10pm

### Steps to a Successful Interview

See the Tip Sheet following for more guidance on each step below

**1. Start by finding your interviewee.** We will work on this in class.

**2. Create a question list, 12 questions minimum. Your source entry in NoodleTools for your interview should have one notecard for each question. You must ask the following questions (included as part of your twelve):**

- How did you first come to know about or get interested in \_\_\_\_\_?
- Have your attitudes toward \_\_\_\_\_ changed over time?
- Is there something about \_\_\_\_\_ that you think no one knows or understands?
- What do you think I should look into next as I continue to research \_\_\_\_\_?

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- 3. Choose an interview location.** You should conduct your interview in person. Pick the quietest, most comfortable place that is convenient for your interviewee.
- 4. Bring these to the interview:** Your question list, pen/pencil and paper/pad, and your recording device if you are planning to record. Be sure to get your interviewee's consent about being recorded.
- 5. Conduct the interview:** Take notes! Even if you are recording, jot down key points, quotes, ideas and questions/responses that are not on your list but that come up during the interview.
- 6. Wrap it up.** Say thank you in person and get a mailing address so that you can mail a formal thank you card later. (We will write the thank-you cards in class.)
- 7. Write it up.** The interview write-up must be in a narrative essay, NOT a Question/Answer format.

### **TIPS for a Successful Interview**

**Finding your interviewee:** Brainstorm a list of people or types of people (i.e. Dr. Damon or "a pediatrician") whom you might interview about your subject. Ask classmates, parents and teachers for ideas. When you find someone you think would be a good interviewee, call, email or approach him or her in person and politely ask for an interview. Have your planner with you so you know when you are free!

**Choosing a Location:** A comfortable setting makes for warm, authentic recordings. Avoid large, empty rooms, and stay away from kitchens, which have a lot of reflective surfaces and appliance noise. Make sure you select a location where you and your interviewee will be able to talk at length free from interruption.

**Creating a question list:** What are the important aspects of your interviewee's experience that relates to your topic? What does he or she know that you want to learn? Write at least ten-twenty focused questions on your topic, including the required questions listed on the assignment sheet. Then choose the best twelve to ask.

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### Conducting the interview:

- Take notes even if you are recording!
- Using your question list, begin the interview. Remember, the questions you generated are just suggestions. Trust your instincts. If something interests you or bears exploring, ask more questions. Show your interest by saying "Tell me more." Feel free to ask questions in whatever order feels right.
- Be sure to note the interviewee's body language and non-verbal responses.
- Stay quiet when your subject is talking. Don't say, "uh huh," or interrupt when something interesting or important is being said. Instead, use visual cues like nodding your head.
- Ask emotional questions like, "How did this make you feel?"
- Listen closely - look your interviewee in the eyes and stay engaged.
- Follow-up questions often yield the best material, so while your interviewee is talking, consider what you could ask to get *deeper*. Help the interviewee be more descriptive. When you need your interviewee to describe something, ask him or her to "paint a picture with words."
- Be curious and keep an open heart. Great things will happen. Be yourself. You can laugh with the person you are interviewing or even cry with them. Real moments are the best moments.

**Wrap it up:** Ask the interviewee if there is anything else that he/she wants to talk about, and thank him/her. Sharing a story can be difficult for some people. It's a privilege to have someone share a personal story with you. Express your gratitude.

### Write it up:

- **Determine the central theme** of the information you got from your interview. This should be the focus of your interview write-up.
- **Write your interview up as a narrative or story.** It could be the story of your interview *or* it could be a story based on the information you learned in your interview.

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For example, if you were interviewing a veteran about his experiences in the Vietnam War, you could tell the story about a time he was in combat that incorporates much of what you learned in your interview.

- **The narrative should be an exposition**; that is, it should creatively *expose* abundant facts that you learned from your interview.
- **Describe the details that are important** for your readers to know about your interviewee and that illustrate your theme. Do not include every detail. Some details you might include are:
  - + The person's character. These can include mannerisms and personal qualities.
  - + What makes this person an expert on your subject?
  - + Where, when, and in what circumstances the interview took place.
- **Use direct quotes** to tell *at least two* things your interviewee said in the words he or she said them.
- **Summarize the answers** from your interviewee but do NOT write out all of the questions.
- **Reflect on some or all of the following questions:**

How does the information you gathered in your interview connect to your central question?

How might it contradict/confirm any assumptions you had about your topic?

How might the information you have found be limited/biased/problematic data?

If this continues, what comes next?

Why is this information important? Why does it matter?

### **Tips for Recording an Interview**

1. **Take notes** even if you are recording.
2. **Practice using the equipment-** Before your interview, get comfortable with your equipment. Record yourself. Find a friend and do a mock interview.
3. **Double check** that the recording device is actually recording and not on pause.

## **I-Search: Site/Activity Observation Assignment\***

**Learning Target:** I can be a careful observer and note-taker and can draw conclusions about my topic from my observation. I can effectively communicate my observations through an engaging essay.



**Task:** Observe a place or activity related to your topic. Gather information and take detailed notes during the experience. Then in a 2-4 page (4 maximum) essay, relay the important information gathered during this observation, and help the reader make sense of that information.

**Submit to your teacher:** Detailed questions and handwritten notes on your site visit/observation. No notes? No credit. No exception.

**Due date:** Monday, March 16th

**Submit to turnitin.com:** A 2-4 page (4 max.) site visit/observation paper.

**Due date:** Friday, March 20th by 10pm

### **5 Steps to a Successful Site Visit/Observation**

**1. Select a location** that relates to your topic that you can visit. Know when the site is open, the visiting hours

and how to get there. Make an appointment if needed.

**2. Observe your site for at least twenty minutes.** Pay attention to what you “observe” with each of your five senses. Take notes as you are observing on such things as:

- How does this setting look? Describe things large and small such as size, colors, neatness, brightness.
- How does this setting smell? Are there several smells mingling together? Describe.
- What can you hear? Who is talking? What are they saying? What background noise is constant?
- How do the things at the site feel? Are you comfortable? What is the temperature?
- What is the mood at the site? What gives you that idea?
- What is going on? Describe the people at the site: their actions, words, mannerisms, etc.
- How are you feeling as you observe? What are you thinking? What is your role?

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### 3. Write your observation report.

- Determine the central **theme**, or the main thing you learned about your topic from your observation. Focus your entire report on this theme. Weave this theme through every paragraph.
- Write your observation up as a story: the story of your experience *or* the story of one of the people you observed *or* a fictional story of what your perceptions about the average day of a worker at the site.
- As you write your story, creatively *expose* facts you learned about your topic.
- Incorporate figurative language (similes, metaphors, imagery, personification, alliteration) in your writing.

### 5. Reflect on your learning: Look at the specific information you have gathered at the site and consider:

- How does it connect to your central question?
- How might it contradict any assumptions you had about your topic?
- How might the information you have found be limited/biased/problematic data?
- If this continues, what comes next?
- Why is this information important? Why does it matter?

\*If an observation is not safe or appropriate for your topic, you will conduct a second interview and follow the Interview Assignment protocol.

## I-Search: Media Search #2

**Learning Target:** I can improve upon Media search #1 using one more source of high quality information on my topic, and I can organize this information into a well written essay.



**Task:** Create 5-8 notecards in NoodleTools from 1 more relevant source. Hopefully, you will have found a new source that you have come across recently or that adds more clarity to your topic. Then, find an organization, community, or group that further supports or informs the public about your topic and create 2-3 notecards in NoodleTools.

Write a 2 page (2 maximum) essay that both presents the information you have gathered and then discusses action that you can take.

**Submit to schoology/turnitin.com:** Your 2 page (2 max.) paper.

**Due date:** Friday, March 27th at 10pm

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### Steps to a Successful Second Media Search

One more thing...take action!

**Introduction:** How has your search led to this last piece of information?

**Report:** Now that you are wrapping up your I-Search with one final source, what more have you learned? This is the final stage of your I-Search research, so what last thoughts or discoveries would you like to share?

**Action step:** Look at the specific information you have gathered about the organization/ community group and do one of the following:

#### Option one-

Write ½ page about the organization (summary style and include proper MLA citation)  
Then, write ½ page in which you discuss- What action could I do related to my topic for this organization?

#### Option two-

Find at least two organizations about your topic.  
Write ½ page about each organization (summary style and include proper MLA citation)



## **I-Search: About the Author**

Learning Target: I can write an engaging, brief autobiography about me, the author.



**Task:** Write a half-page *About the Author*, following the steps below.

**Submit to turnitin.com:** Your ½ page paper, single-spaced.

**Due date:** Monday, March 30th at 10pm

### **Steps to a Successful About the Author**

**Point of View:** Write in 3rd person even though you are writing about yourself. Do not say “I” but, instead, refer to yourself by your name, “Jane has always loved kittens.”

**Biographical Information:** Suggestions:

- Where the author was born
- Family info
- Hobbies
- Goals
- Any descriptions that make connections between the author’s real life and his/her I-Search topic

**Images:** Include a recent picture of yourself.

## **I-Search FINAL DRAFT: Cover, Dedication, Graphics, Works Cited**

### **Cover**

Your cover should be visually appealing. Include color, graphics and whatever else achieves this goal. The cover should also include an appropriate, thoughtful or snappy title. Your teacher will give you further instructions on formatting the I-Search.

### **Dedication**

You may dedicate your paper to whomever has provided you with inspiration for or supported this project. This belongs after the cover page, on its own page.

### **Images (photographs, charts, graphs, drawings)**

You must include a variety of images with proper MLA citations. Your teacher will give you specific requirements and instruction on finding and inserting images into your paper. Images may include:

- Photographs taken during the search (highly recommended)
- Photographs related to your topic
- Charts, graphs (etc...) that relay information you've gathered and discussed
- Drawings related to the subject matter
- Any other type of artwork that relates to your topic

### **Works Cited**

All sources must be properly cited in MLA format throughout the I-Search paper. This includes direct quotes, summaries and paraphrases and all graphics.

### **Images Cited**

All sources must be properly cited in MLA format throughout the I-Search paper. This includes photos, graphics, and charts. All graphics must be recorded in NoodleTools. Since your Images Cited page will be separate from your Works Cited page, we recommend that you create a NEW project in NoodleTools to compile all of your graphics sources.



## I-Search Findings Presentation

Learning Target: I can present a cogent synopsis of what I discovered about my topic during the I-Search process.



**Task:** Perform or record a 2 minute presentation on your findings.

Your presentation should include the following:

1. Your topic.
2. Your guiding question(s).
3. What you expected to learn/discover about your topic
4. What you actually learned/discovered about your topic.
5. What you hope readers of your I-Search will take away, including your “action” step.

You may record the presentation yourself and turn in the video file to your teacher, OR you may present to your class while your teacher records it. These recordings will be compiled on a website that current and future Piedmont community members can view.

A few details:

- If you are recording yourself, you must appear in the video at least once.
- Visual aids are optional.
- Your teacher will give you more details before the assignment is due.

## I-Search in the Alcove Activity

Learning Target: Using all I have learned about focused research and nonfiction writing, I can thoughtfully examine and articulate my sophisticated perspective on what I read.



**Task:** Read and respond to I-Searches written by your peers.

It is time to have an audience for your completed I-Search! The Freshman I-Searches will be temporarily placed on the shelves of the PHS library and available to the public.

You will select two I-Searches (out of about two hundred!) to read. You will then address the following questions:

6. What attracted you to this I-Search?
7. What did you know about the topic before you read the I-Search?
8. What did you learn from this I-Search?
9. In what ways has this I-Search encouraged you to think differently or more carefully about the topic than you had before you read it?

This activity and assignment will be done in the library during a class period following Spring Break.