



SENIOR PROJECT PACKET

Class of 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Timeline.....	1
Introductory Letter to Students.....	2
Letter to Parents.....	3
Letter of Intent Format	4
Time Log / Journal / Project Update Information.....	5
Mentor Responsibilities, Contract and Letter	6
PHASE I Research Paper Checklist.....	7
PHASE II Project with a Product & a Mentor	8
PHASE III Portfolio Checklist.....	8
PHASE IV Presentation & Demonstration.....	9
Time Log Template.....	10
Journal Template.....	11
Research Paper Controversial Topics	12
Portfolio Rubric	13

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The El Molino Senior Project will provide every student with the opportunity to pursue an issue or topic that is of personal interest to him or her. Every senior will demonstrate the acquisition of new knowledge, experience and skill by writing a research paper, compiling a professional-level portfolio, and delivering a presentation before a community panel. Students are expected to take appropriate risks and stretch their learning so as to grow both intellectually and emotionally. Also, students are expected to produce something which does not already exist, and which displays their new skills and their learning. Students are encouraged to take on a project which will be of benefit to the community they are about to enter.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All projects must be “approved” by the Senior English teachers. Projects may be denied approval if that do not fulfill the service or career requirement or if they could be deemed dangerous to the students or others.

A quality project will:

- have a career or service goal (or academic goal if in AP English)
- have a researchable “issue”
- be a learning stretch
- have a product that will be presented to community panelists
- include an interview with an expert in the field
- be supported by a mentor
- take at least 30 hours to complete the hands-on or fieldwork component

Timeline

While all senior English classes will address important due dates and provide some in-class time for research and development of the Senior Project, it is the student's individual responsibility to complete specific sections of the project and research according to the timeline.

<u>Due Date:</u>	<u>Item Due:</u>	<u>Required Signature(s):</u>
TUESDAY 9/8	Distribute and Discuss Senior Project Packet	
THURSDAY 9/10	BACK TO SCHOOL - 7:00 pm - Letter to Parents Family Member Panelist Information (See page 3)	*Parent
MONDAY 10/5	Letter of Intent <i>1st journal/time-log check</i>	* Student, Parent, Eng. Teacher <i>*Parent, Eng. Teacher</i>
MONDAY 10/12	Revised Letter of Intent (<u>only if required by Eng. Teacher</u>)	* Student, Parent, Eng. Teacher
MONDAY 11/2	<i>2nd journal/time-log check</i>	<i>*Parent / Mentor</i>
FRIDAY 11/13	Mentor Contract & Signature on Letter of Intent	* Mentor/Parent
MONDAY 11/30	<i>3rd journal/time-log check</i>	<i>* Mentor/Parent</i>
FINALS DAY 12/14-18	Project Update #1	
MONDAY 1/11	<i>4th journal/time-log check</i>	<i>* Mentor/Parent</i>
MONDAY 3/8	Research Paper Final Draft	
MONDAY 3/22	<i>5th journal/time-log check</i>	<i>* Mentor/Parent</i>
MONDAY 4/19	Project Update #2 and Mentor Letter (signed)	<i>* Mentor</i>
MONDAY 4/26	Professional Portfolio - ALL REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING: Preface, Table of Contents, Completed Time Log (30+ hours), Signed Mentor Letter, Self-Evaluation Form	
THURSDAY 4/29	OPEN HOUSE - 7:00 - Portfolio Exhibition – El Molino Library	
TUESDAY 5/18	Panel Presentations (from 5:00 to 8:30) - MAKE-UPS: TBA	

TO: The Senior Class of 2010

FROM: Laura Malcolm, Ginger Riley, George Castagnola, Shelli Saenz, and Carin Johnson, English Teachers
Doria Trombetta, Principal; Barry Sovel, Vice-Principal; Matt Transue, Dean of Students

RE: The Senior Project and The Letter of Intent Criteria

Dear Students:

This year will mark some of the most meaningful work you will produce in all your high school years: the Senior Project. The project is a requirement for Senior English at El Molino High School, but it is much more than just another hoop to jump through. Done well, the Senior Project is an opportunity for you to learn more about yourself and your community, to master a skill, to create a unique product - to do something you will learn from and remember for years to come. The project will culminate in an oral presentation before a community panel on TUESDAY, MAY 18th, 2010. **As a first step, you will submit a letter of intent to your English teacher. The letter of intent format template is provided on page 4. The letter of intent content should include the following:**

Paragraph 1:

Identify your project topic and give a general overview of what you expect to accomplish.

- Categorize project as career or service oriented.
- Describe your product. What will you *show* panelists at the presentation?
- Explain why you chose this topic.

Paragraph 2:

Identify the *issue* you will explore in your research paper (must be related to your project topic)

- Why does it matter? (So what?)
- Why do you care?
- Why would others care?

Paragraph 3:

Copy the following anti-plagiarism commitment:

Plagiarism is a serious offense. If I take information that other people have written or expressed without giving them credit, I am stealing their work. Plagiarism as well as academic dishonesty or cheating will jeopardize my grade and my graduation. I will not place my graduation or my personal honor in jeopardy.

Arrange for a personal meeting with your English teacher, who will provide general assistance and supervision during the research process. The **Letter of Intent needs to be signed by you, your parent or guardian, the advisory board (3 English teachers), and eventually, your mentor.** Letters must conform to the highest standards of excellence in form, mechanics and clarity of content before they will be considered for acceptance by the advisory board.

If you have any questions during this process, speak to your English teacher first. As much as anyone, he/she is the expert on the requirements of the project.

Sincerely,

George Castagnola

Laura Malcolm

Ginger Riley

Shelli Saenz

Doria Trombetta

Matt Transue

Barry Sovel

TO: Parents of Seniors

FROM: Laura Malcolm, Ginger Riley, George Castagnola, Shelli Saenz, and Carin Johnson, English Teachers
Doria Trombetta, Principal; Barry Sovel, Vice-Principal; Matt Transue, Dean of Students

RE: The Senior Project

Dear Parents/Guardians of Seniors:

Senior year is underway and it is time for students to begin work on their Senior Project. In the coming weeks, seniors will embark upon a four-phase program, facilitated by their English teachers. In it they will: write a research paper, create a product with the aid of a mentor, compile a professional portfolio documenting the process, and deliver a presentation to a panel of community members.

The project is a requirement for all seniors. Seniors who fail to meet deadlines, who produce sub-standard work, or who skip any of the four phases, may not pass English, and therefore, may not graduate.

Your role in Senior Project is two-fold. First, we ask that you look over the packet and talk with your senior about possible project ideas. As part of this conversation, think about your network of friends and business associates – oftentimes a good mentor can be found here. Immediate family members are not allowed to serve as mentors. If you do know someone who has some expertise in your student’s area of interest, we ask that you refrain from contacting him or her. Instead, have your student take that step.

Secondly, we ask that one or more family members volunteer to serve on a community panel on **TUESDAY, MAY 18th, 2010**. It involves one evening of evaluating presentations as part of a community panel. If you are not available, perhaps a grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, or sibling (they must be two years out of high school) can serve on a panel. We encourage you to check in often during the year with your student to see that he or she is staying on task. The project is your student’s responsibility, but a little parental support always helps.

We will be going over all of this at back to school night and would very much like to see you there and answer any questions you may have. Please sign and return this letter to school with your son or daughter. We would also appreciate it if you could provide a name and contact information of a family member who may be available to sit on a panel on **TUESDAY, MAY 18th, 2010**.

Sincerely,

George Castagnola

Laura Malcolm

Ginger Riley

Shelli Saenz

Diane Martin

Doria Trombetta

Matt Transue

Barry Sovel

Students’ Name: _____

Parent’s Name: _____ Signature: _____

Panelist (Family Member): _____

Panelist’s Phone: _____ Email: _____

The Time Log

About once a month, **you are required to complete a Time Log about your work and experiences.** It must be signed by a parent, mentor or teacher who can verify your efforts. Time spent with mentor must be signed by the mentor only.

To successfully complete the Senior Project time commitment, your time log must document a total of at least 30 hours.

Sample Typed Time Log Summary in 12 pt. Times New Roman font (incomplete)

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Time:</u>	<u>What/Where:</u>	<u>Who / Signatures:</u>
11/03/08	1.5 hours	Drew first sketches for storyboard	Self
11/07/08	1 hour	First meeting– planned schedule; shared ideas	Mentor
11/15/08	1 hour	Worked on storyboard	Self
11/16/08	1 hour	Continued work on storyboard	Self
11/23/08	2 hours	Mentor helped refine plot; suggested better pens	Mentor
Total Time	6.5 hours		

• NOTE: SEE the Time Log template on page 10. You may use the template or you may create one of your own (as long as it has all of the same information included in it).

The 5 Journal Entries

In your Journal Entries, you will be expected to describe the steps that you've taken in order to complete your project; you should also include your thoughts and reflections on how your project is progressing.

All 5 journal entries should be neatly hand-written in blue or black ink, though you *may choose to type* them. **All entries must reflect quality in content and mechanics. Entries must be thorough, thoughtful, and detailed. All entries must be legible and submitted on time.** A minimum of six (5) pages of entries must be completed by the time you complete your Senior Project in April, 2010.

JOURNAL ENTRY Guiding questions:

- What have you done?
- What have you and your mentor talked about?
- Is there anything you are concerned about?
- What are your next steps?
- Do you have any new ideas about your project?
- In what ways has your mentor contributed?
- What skills have you employed?
- What have you learned about yourself?
- Is there anything your teacher can do to help?
- What have you learned (knowledge)? from books? from expert interviewee? from hands-on work?

Students should note the intellectual *and* emotional challenges and successes they encounter during the course of their efforts. The portfolio will include at least 5 pages of “original” journals.

IMPORTANT! Don't lose any of your work. You need it to earn full credit in the portfolio.

• NOTE: SEE the Journal Entry template on page 11. You may use the template or you may create one of your own (as long as it has all of the same information included in it).

The 2 Project Updates

The two project updates are intended to brief each student's English teacher on the student's **progress** toward completion of the project. As well, they serve as another opportunity for students to **reflect on their achievements, challenges, and learning while completing the project.**

Twice during the year you will be required to submit project updates to your English teacher. You will turn in your portfolio-in-progress (journal entries, time sheet, project documents) with any work completed and a **one page minimum, typewritten paper containing the following information:**

- work completed so far
- contacts made with mentor/community members
- reflection on how you feel the project is progressing
- work yet to be completed
- interview(s) conducted with an expert in the field
- identification of future steps

The two project updates will be included in the written portfolio; be sure that they are turned into your English teacher on time and that you get them back in your portfolio after they are graded.

Mentor Responsibilities And Contract

Each Senior Project student should choose a mentor who has some level of expertise with the student's project topic. Mentors will primarily be responsible for guiding the physical product/fieldwork phase of this Senior Project requirement. This portion requires students to complete at least thirty (30) hours working on a hands-on activity /fieldwork directly related to their chosen topics

While mentors are not required to be present for all thirty (30) hours, they should be readily available to advise the student, answer questions, offer guidance, and check on the progress of the project. Upon completion of the project, mentors will be asked to write a letter verifying the student's work.

Mentors should also be willing to share their knowledge, ideas, and opinions for the student's research paper. Students may, at the discretion of their English teachers, be required to interview their mentors. Mentors may also, with their consent and at the request of the student, help by reading preliminary drafts of the paper and offering suggestions and feedback.

The role of the mentor in the Senior Project process is invaluable. While it is neither overly time-consuming nor arduous, the mentor's involvement does help each student push their education well beyond the walls of El Molino. Each mentor contributes to helping our graduates become more thoughtful and involved members of the El Molino community. We appreciate your essential involvement in our program.

Student's Name _____

English Teacher's Name _____

Senior Project Topic: _____

• I am willing to serve as a mentor for this student, visiting with him/her a minimum of 5 times. I have experience with his/her chosen topic, and I understand the definition of the role of mentor as it is outlined above.

Please print:

Mentor's Name _____ Phone # _____

Address _____ Email _____

Mentor Signature _____

To Parents: Please read and sign below.

I have spoken with _____ (mentor's name) and I approve of him/her as a mentor for my son/daughter. I realize that the mentor will be working closely with my son/daughter to provide support and encouragement on the senior project. I also know that the mentor can not be a family member.

PARENT'S SIGNATURE _____

Mentor Letter - to be written UPON COMPLETION of the student's project

The mentor letter must be written by your mentor and should clearly explain that you have completed your project. In the letter, the mentor should:

- briefly describe her/his area of expertise
- explain what your project was
- explain how he or she assisted you
- comment on your effort, interest, and enthusiasm for the project.
- verify the amount of time you spent on it

The letter does not need to be long; one page should be sufficient. You may copy this form to give to your mentor to assist her/him in writing this part of the project. *Note: YOU are responsible for seeing that the Mentor Letter gets to your English teacher by the portfolio deadline – not your mentor. If there are any problems in this area – please see your English teacher before the deadline, Monday, 4/19/2010.*

Phase I: RESEARCH PAPER that focuses on controversial or debatable issue related to project topic.

• NOTE: SEE the CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS list on page 12.

The purpose of the paper is for students to show that you can engage in focused research and can produce a sophisticated, persuasive paper which meets the California State Standards. Through completing the paper, students will learn the various rules of written etiquette, including proper formatting, citing of sources, organization, etc.

No papers will be accepted without having satisfied *every* item on the Checklist for the research paper. Again, final drafts will not be accepted until **all items** on the checklist have been adequately addressed.

RESEARCH PAPER CHECKLIST

• CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

- LENGTH OF PAPER MUST BE: 10 - 12 (PREP) or 5-7 (NON-PREP) PAGES
- Introduction “hooks” readers; includes a clear definition of topic and debatable issue (5 sent. min.)
- Clear, issue-based thesis idea or focus of the investigation and research
- Well-developed body paragraphs with topic sentences (min. 5 sentences each)
- Written in the third person and does not use personal pronouns to address the reader
- Incorporates and cites evidence from various sources: texts, interview, observations, field work
- Provides ample commentary that explains, analyzes and evaluates the evidence
- Transitions smoothly; Includes appropriate diction and varied syntax
- Conclusion reflects on and synthesizes all evidence and ideas; asserts emphatic closing tone
- List of Works Cited attached
- Typed Outline attached
- Supporting documentation attached including:
 - notes, note cards, all draft (s) with revisions
 - printouts/copies from source material

• MLA FORMAT, DOCUMENTATION and MECHANICS REQUIREMENTS:

- 12 pt. font; Times New Roman (or similar type); one (1) inch margins
- ALL lines double-spaced (no single or double-double spaced lines)
- HEADING with student’s name, teacher’s name, course title & period, date submitted
- HEADER 1/2 inch from top right corner with student’s last name and page number
- TITLE centered with important words capitalized (Do not underline or change font size)
- Parenthetical citations of texts, paraphrases, interviews and other people’s ideas
- List of Works Cited: MINIMUM OF 8 (PREP) or 5 (NON-PREP) SOURCES
- INTERVIEW with at least one expert or authority
- 3 internet sources max. (**elibrary** provides non-internet sources) .gov, .net, edu, or .org?
NOTE: “Wikipedia” is an unacceptable source; check with teacher about other problematic sources (esp. .com)
- Spell-checked; Proofread; Evidence of the editorial help
- OUTLINE, PRE-WRITE, ROUGH, REVISION X2 for Peer Responses, REVISION AGAIN for Final Peer Response, and FINAL DRAFT w/grade sheet and teacher’s comments (for Portfolio)

Phase II: PROJECT with a PRODUCT and a MENTOR

El Molino High School expects its students to **connect their research** and personal interests with either service to the community or a potential career goal. As students are preparing their Senior Projects, they are required to go beyond the classroom in order to learn a new skill with job-market usefulness, or to apply their efforts to the immediate concerns and issues facing the community. Later, these efforts will be the subject of journal writing, project updates and presentations. Ultimately, the Senior Project reflects how the student's education stretches far beyond the usual subjects and skills taught in school.

The PRODUCT:

- should be *a challenge to complete*
- should *produce something which does not already exist*
- should *benefit others* as well as the student doing the work
- requires *an interview with at least one expert or authority*
- requires a *30 hour commitment beyond the research paper*

In addition to the English teacher, students are expected to work with a mentor.

The MENTOR:

- should be a person who has some expertise in the field of the project focus
- should meet with the student at least five (5) times
- should be able to verify the student's 30 hours of work on the project
- should not be a family member

Phase III: PORTFOLIO

The student must compile and organize the following items in a portfolio. The Portfolio must be arranged in the following order and should be neatly organized and displayed:

PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

- Cover Page** (on front of binder - with your original "title" and MLA Heading)
- Title Page** (inside binder - 1st page - with your original "title" and MLA Heading)
- Preface** introducing readers to process and the finished "product"
 - Your English teacher will explain what is required depending on your class
- Table of Contents** with page numbers
- Letter of Intent** (Original letter, signed by all)
- Mentor Contract** signed / **Mentor Letter** (signed original)
- 5 Journal Entries** (5 original drafts)
- Time Sheets** typed and signed documenting at least 30 hours and 5 mentor meetings
- 2 Project Updates** - originals graded (and revised, if necessary)
- The Research Paper** including **graded** original final draft with list of works cited
- Additional Documentation** which includes **ABUNDANT EVIDENCE** such as:
 - photos • drafts work samples • correspondence (emails) with mentors
 - receipts for materials • notes, phone numbers, sketches, other project information, etc.
- The use of photographs of the student completing her/his project is strongly encouraged in the portfolio.** For that matter, students should collect any relevant physical evidence (videos, letters, artwork, etc.) which help document their progress. Some additional documentary evidence must be included in the portfolio beyond the written elements. Also, the **evidence must span the entire project** (beginning, middle and end).
- SAVE EVERYTHING!**
- Self-Evaluation** (completed final form)

Phase IV: Project Presentation and Demonstration

In May of 2010, you will present all of what you have done and learned during the Senior Project Presentations. Each student will have a maximum of 10 minutes to present to a 5-person panel composed of community members.

The following applies to the Senior Project presentation:

- **Students must arrive on time.** Students who are late will miss their assigned presentation slot; no make-ups will be given without prior arrangement with the English Teacher or an El Molino High School Co-Principal.
- **Students should be dressed professionally and appropriately.** “Interview formal” is the standard.
- **Oral presentations must be 5-7 minutes,** with additional time allotted for questions from the panel. No student will be allowed to exceed 10 minutes, as at least 2 minutes must be set aside for questions.
- **A graded portfolio and research paper must be available for the panel to review.** No portfolio? No presentation.
- **Every student must first deliver the presentation to her/his English class.** This is so that each student has the opportunity to receive coaching/feedback from peers and teachers.

Guiding Questions for the Presentation Only those questions with a star are required:

- * What was your project? Why did you choose it? Explain any personal interest or background which might give a sense of you as a person.
- * Upon what issue did your research paper focus? What conclusions did you arrive at in the paper?
- * What steps were involved in completing your project? Describe and analyze the practical skills and useful knowledge you acquired through your project. What problems did you encounter? How did you overcome them?
- * Who was your mentor, and what did you learn from him/her?
- * Were you changed by this project in any way, big or small? What was the most challenging part of the Senior Project and why? What was the most rewarding, exciting, and/or interesting part of the Senior Project and why?
- * If you could have done one thing differently with respect to your Senior Project, what would it have been and why?

While the presentations can be a nervous time, they are also a time for you to show people from outside of EMHS just what you have done. Last year the panelists were very impressed with our students' dedication and quality of work. As seniors, you are the experts on your projects. Show your enthusiasm for what you have created and learned and you can't miss.

SOME TIPS IN PREPARING FOR YOUR PRESENTATION (5 STEPS to SUCCESS!):

STEP 1: Using the guiding questions, write out everything you want to say.

STEP 2: **Organization** --jot your ideas on separate 3x5 cards and arrange them into a logical order .

• **Plan your introduction:**

- a) Creatively grab the panel's attention.
- b) Make the subject clear (be sure to mention both the project and the paper).
- c) Take no more than 60 seconds.
- d) Consider using quotations, readings, dramatics, jokes, surveys or other audience participation sets, games, etc.
- e) DO NOT say “I did my senior project on” (automatic “F” for introduction on the rubric)

• **Plan your conclusion. A good conclusion should:**

- a) Restate topic and thesis idea. Reflect on the “deepest” part of your learning.
- b) Leave the audience with a strong parting thought or universal application
- c) Take no more than 30 seconds.

STEP 3: **Plan the display of your project.** Will it be an ongoing, integral part of your speech, such as a slide show or Power Point presentation? Part of your intro? Will you wear it? Serve up samples? Avoid passing too many items around *during* your speech--this causes too much distraction and eats up valuable time.

a) Plan any other visual aids.

b) Make sure you have equipment you will need. Tech. presentations must approved by English teacher TWO WEEKS prior

STEP 4: **Speech techniques to remember:**

• **Eye contact**--this is *extremely* important. Practice often enough that you rarely need to look at your cards. Remember, this is a friendly audience. Remember, as the saying goes, “A talk without eye contact is just talk.”

• **Posture**--stand straight and proud. You have a right to be. You have accomplished a great deal.

***Avoid the following:**

- Gripping the podium tightly--you'll look nervous and panicked.
- Locking your knees--your legs might give out.
- Twitching, wiggling, shaking.
- You want the audience to pay attention to what you are saying more than how you look.

• **Voice**--speak loud enough to be heard; vary your pitch and tone to be interesting.

• **Gesture**--use your hands to help make your point. Gestures should be natural & spontaneous, not choreographed & mechanical.

• **Props**--plan and practice using any props you'll need.

PART 5: REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE! *Nothing* will boost your confidence more than rehearsal. You know you are ready when you can do the presentation without note cards AND the length of consistently falls within 30 seconds of the same time.