Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ English 9

***Research Paper***

***Directions:*** During the next few weeks you will be researching an approved topic that meets the requirements below. We will be working at times in the classroom, library and the computer lab. You can expect to spend some time researching, writing and typing at home. You will be graded on many aspects of this project at different times, so it is important to stay on task and keep up with due dates. Please keep all of you work and do not throw anything away. You will need all pre-writing and source/note cards to help write your final paper.

***Topic:*** This research paper will allow you to incorporate a variety of resources to reveal how something or someone has influenced, changed, or contributed to society in some major way. This paper will not be a biography or a flat narrative of events, but rather a focused essay on how or why this moment, person or event was or is so significant.

***You must choose a well-known topic and describe one contribution it/they have made to society and explain the positive difference that contribution has made in today’s world.***

***Paper: 7 paragraphs, minimum of three pages***

***What you will be graded on: Approved Thesis, 10 Source Cards, 20 Note Cards, Outline, Paper***

**Steps:** We will be splitting this project up into four steps. Some of you may get ahead of others and that is okay. You may work ahead -**but you do not want to get behind.**

**Step 1: Thesis/Sources**

* You will complete a brainstorm sheet and a practice thesis worksheet and you will come up with three possible topics.
* You will search in the library for sources. You need to find at least 10 sources.
* After you find 10 sources, you will create your final thesis and have it approved.
* You will complete 10 Source Cards/Works Cited cards on Noodle Tools.

**Step 2: Narrowing Research/Notecards**

* You will read through your sources and choose at least 5 that you will incorporate into your paper. You must read through the sources and highlight the information that you will use in your paper.
* You will create a minimum of 20 notecards (averaging around 5 cards per source)

**Step 3: Outline**

* You will receive a sample template and must create an outline which organizes all of the information you will use in your paper.

**Step 4: Paper**

* Using your outline, you will write your final paper. **You will cite ALL borrowed materials and MUST cite all five sources.**

**Step 1: Possible Topics**

1. List 5 well-known inspirational topics and a reason why they inspire others.

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1. Which 2 topics from the list interest you the most? Why?
2. Do you think you would be able to find ten articles/book/reports written about these people?

**Step 2: Writing the Thesis Statement**

* A thesis is a statement that declares what you believe and what you intend to prove. A good thesis statement makes the difference between a thoughtful research project and a simple retelling of facts.
* A good thesis gives ONE major idea that the research paper will discuss.
* A thesis contains a fact/subject and an opinion.
* Your position/opinion must be able to be supported by research- If you cannot find enough appropriate research than you must re-write your thesis.

**A thesis CANNOT be:**

* A well-known fact that is generally accepted to be trues

“Shakespeare was an Elizabethan playwright”

* A biographical statement

“William Shakespeare spent his youth in Stratford”

* A biased opinion that can have no proof

“There will never be a more popular poet than Shakespeare”

* A personal statement that cannot be supported by research

“To me, Shakespeare’s plays are boring”

Thesis Practice: For each of the following thesis statements, underline the subject/fact once and the opinion/commentary twice

1. Students who graduate from college in four years have many advantages over students who take longer than 4 years to earn a degree.
2. Playing on a soccer team challenges not only the body, but builds sportsmanship and integrity.
3. Freedom, choices, and a more demanding class load are the reasons why going to high school is different than middle school.
4. On the lunch menu, the cafeteria salad bar is the best value for the money.

**Examples of Thesis Statements: From Weak to Strong**

1. Mark Twain’s Huckleberry Finn is a great American novel.
2. In Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain develops a contrast between life on the river and life on the shore.
3. Through its contrasting river and shore scenes, Twain’s Huckleberry Finn suggests that to find the true expression of American democratic ideals, one must leave “civilized” society and go back to nature.
4. The New Deal was a conservative defense of American capitalism.
5. The New Deal both defended capitalist economic principles and offered government assistance to needy Americans, making it conservative and liberal at the same time.
6. Despite its work relief elements, the New Deal is best understood as a defense of the American capitalism because its main programs attempted to create a stable environment for private enterprise.
7. Oprah Winfrey is one of the most well-respected Americans because of her many achievements.
8. Overcoming poverty and abuse, Oprah Winfrey worked her way to the top to become one of the most successful African American women in the United States.
9. Oprah Winfrey who is recognized nation-wide for overcoming poverty and abuse to host her own talk show, has now made an impact word-wide as she has started an African school for girls.

Sample Thesis Statements: Looking at your list of inspirational people, pick three individuals and create a thesis that argues what their one greatest contribution to society has been.

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Look at those possible thesis statements and ask yourself the following:

* Does the thesis inspire a reasonable reader to ask, “How?” or “Why?”
* Would a reasonable reader NOT respond with “Duh!” or “So What?” or “No Kidding?”
* Does the thesis avoided general phrasing and /or sweeping words such as “all”, “none” or “every”?
* Can the thesis be adequately developed in the required length of the paper?

If you cannot answer YES to these questions, what changes must you make in order for your thesis to pass these tests?