

PLYMOUTH NORTH HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR PROJECT



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PLYMOUTH NORTH HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the Senior Project is to empower all students to explore an area of great personal interest that extends beyond the classroom setting.

Through this project-based learning, students will apply knowledge and connect research that culminates with a showcase demonstrating their learning stretch. Each student will produce physical written products, an oral presentation and a portfolio.

WHAT IS SENIOR PROJECT?

The Senior Project allows students to engage in a personalized learning experience utilizing interdisciplinary skills and knowledge while investigating an area of personal interest. The Senior Project offers broad opportunities so that **all** students can achieve at high standards and apply their knowledge and skills in real world situations. Senior Project allows students to demonstrate proficiency through a comprehensive exhibition which makes a meaningful connection between the skills they have acquired during their years in Plymouth North High School and the outside world. The Senior Project has five components:

1. **Portfolio** - Students showcase the connection between the research paper and the product, documenting the learning stretch and providing evidence of all required components of the process.
2. **Practicum** - A student must choose a mentor who is an expert in the student's chosen field and who will guide them in their project. Practicum must include a minimum of 15 hours with a mentor outside the building.
3. **Product** - Students use the knowledge acquired during the research phase to create a demonstrable product that is related to or connected to the research paper. A demonstrable product could be a physical product, planning an event, or designing or improving a system.
4. **Paper** - Students write a five to six page thesis driven research paper on a topic related to a chosen field of interest. This interest, chosen by the student, could be a career or special hobby. The topic, however, must be legal, safe and moral, and must include a clear "learning stretch" that emphasizes depth of knowledge, and includes analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Topics must be approved by the Senior Project Advisor and a parent(s) or guardian(s).
5. **Presentation** - Students present a culminating oral presentation (8-10 minutes) about their research paper and product to a panel of judges. Students respond to questions from the panel about their senior project experience.

PRE-APPROVAL FORM

Sample

Name: _____

This form needs to be submitted in typed format with student signature. Any changes must be approved using the Petition to Senior Project Advisory Board Form.

Please explain your proposed topic/idea for senior project in detail. Please be sure to include how this project will demonstrate a learning stretch.

Please identify 3 potential mentors (with contact information) for your practicum requirement. Be sure to include dates of communication.

Please explain your proposed product in detail and how it will demonstrate a learning stretch. Be sure to keep all costs and risks in mind.

Please explain the topic for your research paper. Please be SPECIFIC and explain what you will be researching and how it will be connected to your practicum and product.

Student Signature: _____ Approved by Board Date: _____

ETHICAL COMMITMENT
Sample

As a student at Plymouth North High School completing my Senior Project, I pledge to adhere to the following as a demonstration of my honor and integrity:

1. I understand that I am responsible for meeting all deadlines and completing all requirements as stated in the timeline of this handbook.
2. I alone will complete the research necessary to write the research paper component of my project.
3. I will document my paper according to the MLA (Modern Language Association) format as shown in the MLA stylebook or online guide.
4. I will maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity while writing my research paper.
5. I promise not to plagiarize my paper in whole or in any part, which includes submitting the work of another, either published or unpublished.
6. I will include in my portfolio only work that I have created and completed myself.
7. I will collect accurate verifications of the practicum I do. I will not forge any verification documents.
8. Throughout the work on my Senior Project, I will maintain the highest standards of moral and ethical conduct.

As an honorable student of integrity with full realization of the responsibility and commitment involved, I agree to adhere to the above criteria in completing my Senior Project.

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date: _____

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS/CHECK-LIST
Sample

In order for your portfolio to be evaluated, it must contain the following basic components

	1	2	3	4
Organization				
• 1 inch three ring binder				
• Label on binder spine with topic, name, course, teacher, and title				
• Cover page with name, course, teacher, and title				
• Tables of Contents with required sections in designated order: Introduction, Practicum Documentation, Research Paper, and Assessments				
• Tabs or dividers for each section; plastic sleeves				
Introduction				
• Pre-Approval Form				
• Letter of Intent				
• Declaration Poster				
• Estimated Budget				
• Resume				
Practicum Documentation				
• Letter to Mentor				
• Practicum Time Log				
• Required chronological journal entries				
• Minimum of five documentary photos of product process (captioned & dated)				
• Thank you letter to the mentor				
• Copy of Ethical Commitment				
• Copy of Parental Consent/Form				
• Copy of Mentor Agreement				
Research Paper				
• Clean, ungraded copy of research paper & revisions				
Assessments (Remove before Judging)				
• Senior Project Reflections (3)				
• Graded research paper with rubric				
• Completed product rubric				
• Portfolio Checklist				

SENIOR PROJECT REFLECTIONS

You will be reflecting on the Senior Project process as a whole. During the course of the year you will have three reflections. Please be prepared to share your thoughts with your advisory.

Each reflection should be typed and minimally two pages-double spaced.

Advisory Reflection #1: Reflect on finding a mentor
How did you go about choosing a topic?
What successes have you made thus far?
What concerns do you have on your upcoming project?

Advisory Reflection #2: What sources have you found for your paper?
What sources do you additionally need?
What is your plan in order to complete the paper?
How did you decide on your research topic?
Reflect on your research paper
What did you find difficult?
Strengths?
Weaknesses?
How would you take this paper to the “next step?”

Advisory Reflection #3: What did you gain?
Reflect on Senior Project as a whole.
Process of creating a product.

TOPIC SELECTION

Choosing the topic for the Senior Project is the steppingstone for completing a successful, rewarding, and exciting project. This is an opportunity for students to explore something entirely new or to challenge their skills in an area already familiar to them. One of the most important aspects when choosing a topic for the Senior Project is that it must be a learning stretch of personal choice. A learning stretch is a demonstration of knowledge and research over and beyond previously learned material.

Explanation of Personal Learning Stretch:

Academic Interest: A project may involve pursuing an area of academic interest in more depth than the student has been able to do at school. *Examples:* Volunteer at Woods Hole or the Plimoth Plantation; collect and analyze statistics for the tourism bureau of Plymouth.

Community Service: A project may involve carrying out community service which results in something benefiting the local community. This project should culminate in an end-product which reflects a learning stretch. *Examples:* Fix up a Forges Field; promote recycling awareness; or work with a food pantry.

Personal Challenge: A project may involve taking on a personal challenge, extending your current skills and abilities in a significant way, and meeting it. *Examples:* Create your own chorus or learn to rock climb.

Career Interest: A project may involve pursuing a career of interest, gaining valuable insight into a potential occupation. *Examples:* Shadow a State representative; work on a campaign; help build a house; or observe a surgical procedure.

Learn a New Skill: A project may involve learning a new skill and presenting that skill. *Examples:* How to be a pastry chef; how to train a service dog; or how to sew a quilt.

Other: If your passion lies outside the above areas, present an alternate approach to your Senior Project Advisor.

The Senior Project Advisor will approve no topic unless there is clear evidence of a learning stretch. Students must be actively engaged throughout the entire Senior Project process and therefore choosing a topic carefully and wisely will determine the success of the project. Parents or guardians must also approve the project and sign a waiver/consent form. All projects must be ethical, moral, and safe. Joining a team does not constitute a senior project. Mentors are mandatory and must have expertise in the topic area. Remember the sky is the limit!

TOPIC ANALYSIS

Consider the following questions before choosing a topic:

- **Based on your topic what will your product be?**
- Which classes have you taken that you really enjoyed?
- What would you like to learn more about?
- What would you like to do better?
- What do you wish you had more time to do?
- What is a profession you think about but have not seriously explored?
- What is one handcrafted item that you wish you could make?
- What can you not do but would like to learn?
- What community group do you admire?
- What would you like to encourage others to do?

PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS

A product reflects a learning stretch beyond the knowledge the student already possesses and demonstrates a connection to the research paper. Products must be student driven as evidenced by the portfolio documentation process and must be presented for judging

Requirements:

- Must be selected, designed, and developed by the student.
- Products must be documented with photographs (minimum 5), videos, logs, letters, etc.
- Must be approved by Senior Project Advisors.

Examples of Products:

Physical artifacts: models, computer programs, pottery

Written artifacts: children's book, cookbook, play

Performance-based: choreography, recital, acting, music

Teaching: teach an academic lesson, observe a teacher and develop a unit plan,

Leadership: coach a team, coordinate an event

Career related: develop a program based on a job shadowing experience

Community Service: organize a food bank, coordinate a charity event

Non-Examples of Products:

- Presentation boards describing the research paper
- PowerPoint presentation for the judging panel (PowerPoint can be used to show your product if it cannot physically be brought in)
- Put the student at risk
- Changed without the approval of Senior Project Advisors

SENIOR PROJECT - PRODUCT RUBRIC
Sample

Criteria	N	M	E	Comments
Your product demonstrates a clear focus and purpose. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your product is an authentic outgrowth of your senior project Your message/intentions/goals are clear 				
Your product demonstrates your learning stretch. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You apply new knowledge to complete the product You have demonstrated knowledge and research over and beyond previously learned material. 				
Your product is complex and original. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your product has a real-world connection to you You understand and interpret the meaning(s) of your findings Your product shows an understanding of your findings 				
You made wise, deliberate, informed decisions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your research informs the design/shape of your work You understand the conventions used in your field of study 				
Your final product is coherent and demonstrates quality work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your work is complete Your final product shows good craftsmanship and attention to detail 				

N = Needs Improvement
M = Meets Expectations
E = Exceeds Expectations

TIME/COST ANALYSIS EXAMINATION

Consider the following questions to determine if your Senior Project is realistic in terms of time and money necessary for success:

- How much time do you estimate you need to build or create the product?
- What will the cost of building or creating the product entail?
- What raw materials will you need to build or create the product?
- What research resources will you need to build or create the product?
- How much space will you need to build or create the product?
- What human resources will you need to produce the product?
- Are there any transportation issues to be resolved?
- What, if any, will the instructional costs involve?
- What additional costs will be involved for the completion of the product?

**Estimated Budget
Sample**

Estimated Costs for the Senior Project			
Description of Item	# of Items	Price Per Item	Total Cost
		\$	\$
Estimated Total of All Costs			\$

LETTER OF INTENT

All students must obtain approval of their chosen Senior Project topic before beginning it. In order to obtain approval, students must address Letters of Intent to the Senior Project Advisor. Letters must clearly state the topic for the research paper and the product, experiences and/or interest in the chosen area including a learning stretch, potential costs, and potential time line of completing the project, a potential mentor's name and connection to the project, and an explanation of how the project meets the Plymouth North mission statement. A paragraph clearly indicating the expected ethical behavior with the understanding of the penalty for violation is also required. All letters must be well written, thoughtful and properly formatted. This is the first step in the Senior Project journey.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING LETTER OF INTENT

All students must identify topic ideas by creating a Letter of Intent addressed to their Senior Project Advisor. The Letter of Intent must explain all components of the Senior Project. The Letter of Intent becomes the blueprint of the project. Careful planning is essential to avoid potential roadblocks. Below is a model to follow in writing an insightful, thorough, organized, and engaging Letter of Intent.

FORMAT OF THE LETTER OF INTENT

Your full name

Your street address

Your city, state, zip

Date of submission

< three blank lines; type on the fourth>

Name of Senior Project Advisor

Plymouth North High School

41 Obery Street

Plymouth, Massachusetts 02360

< double space>

Dear Ms. Smith:

< double space>

Paragraph 1: Personal information/Rationale. Begin with an appealing introduction that includes personal information. Describe the Senior Project topic: Why did you choose this topic? What prior knowledge and/or experiences do you have about this topic? How does this project demonstrate a learning stretch?

< double space>

Paragraph 2: State possible topics of your research paper and your research question. Name any available sources that you might have.

< double space>

Paragraph 3: Describe the possible practicum and related product and how it is connected to the research paper. Identify possible mentors you hope to use and their role in assisting you.

< double space>

Paragraph 4: Conclusion: Confirm the expected ethical behavior and penalty for violation if any acts of plagiarism occur. Additionally, include how this Senior Project will benefit your future.

< double space>

Sincerely,

< three blank lines; type on the fourth; sign your name here>

Type your name here

