

West Henderson High School - Henderson County Graduation Project Handbook



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Henderson County/West Henderson High School Graduation Project: Overview

At West Henderson High School, the Henderson County Graduation Project is a course requirement in English IV. The purpose of the project is to provide students with the opportunity to pursue interesting and meaningful work using the skills and maturity gained through the high school experience. The North Carolina Graduation Project has four components.

- 1) Each student will select a topic of personal or professional interest that will be the basis for a **documented research paper**. The research should include a variety of primary sources (personal interviews with experts) and secondary sources (articles/books/Internet).
- 2) Each student will complete a **practical experience with a mentor** that relates to the topic. The practical experience may take many forms such as:
 - Preparation for and performance of a skill (example: learn and play a musical instrument).
 - Production of an item (example: design and build a piece of furniture).
 - Participation in an activity that reflects a future professional interest (example: attend CPR classes and receive certification for future as an EMT).

Whatever the practical experience, the student will be required to document his or her activities in some way. Students should plan a **minimum of 15 hours** to complete the practical experience. Many students spend significantly more time.

- 3) Seniors will compile a **portfolio** that will contain documentation of work on the North Carolina Graduation Project throughout the semester.
- 4) Seniors will present an eight to 12 minute speech to a panel of three to four faculty and community volunteers on Graduation Project Jury Night.

The final grade on the North Carolina Graduation Project will count as one third of the student's grade in English IV. The project grade will be the average of the research paper grade, the portfolio grade, and the presentation grade.

Roles and Responsibilities

The North Carolina Graduation Project is intended to be a challenge and requires each student's very best effort. Fortunately, students have the support of several key people: an **English IV teacher** who will meet with the student frequently to track progress on the North Carolina Graduation Project and provide instruction, support and feedback throughout the process; a **mentor or expert in the field** who will observe and verify all steps of the practical experience as well as provide instruction and support; the **Library Media Coordinators** who will assist students in gathering the necessary sources for the research paper and help guide the student through the process; a **faculty sponsor** who will help make contact with the mentor and help with presentation practice; and finally, the **panel of judges** who will provide a receptive audience for the project and give an evaluation that will count toward the student's final grade.

Henderson County Graduation Project Policies

1. Grading/Averages

There are four components of the Graduation Project — the research paper, the portfolio, project, and presentation. The paper will count one third of the grade, the portfolio and project one third, and the presentation one third. The Graduation Project grade will count 20 percent of the student's final grade for English IV. Completing a graduation project is a graduation requirement for the Henderson County Public Schools.

2. Retaking English after Failure

In the event a student has to retake English, the Graduation Project produced in the second class may not be the same as that produced in the first class.

3. Special Needs

All students in English IV will be required to produce a Graduation Project. The senior English teacher will provide appropriate levels of instruction and challenge to meet the needs of the individual student. Concerns about fulfilling requirements may be addressed to the Graduation Project Committee.

4. Forgery/Plagiarism

Students are reminded that forging signatures on documents related to the Graduation Project will result in immediate failure of the project. If you have a problem obtaining a signature, see the senior English teacher for help. Students are also reminded that plagiarism will not be tolerated. Projects that contain blatant acts of plagiarism, which includes submitting the work of another, either published or unpublished, will receive a zero. If the final copy of the research paper contains a strong pattern of plagiarism, it will be subject to a zero.

5. Research Paper

Students will be required to submit their research paper component to *turnitin.com*. Completion of a documented research paper is required to make a presentation before a Graduation Project Jury.

6. Double-Dipping

NO Graduation Project (including research paper, portfolio, or product) may be used to satisfy the requirements for another course. A project for a vocational class or an internship may NOT be used to satisfy the requirements of the West Henderson Graduation Project.

7. Project Approval

All Senior Projects must be pre-approved by the Senior Project Committee. The Committee must approve any change in a project and the Letter of Intent must be updated to match the new project. Neglecting to do an approved project will result in failure of English IV.

Henderson County Graduation Project Requirements

The following are required components of the Graduation Project:

I. Research Component:

- Must satisfactorily complete a documented research paper in order to make a presentation
- 6-8 page research paper (word-processed, double spaced, 12 point font, one (1) inch margins)
- Minimum of seven (7) sources (no Wikipedia or general encyclopedias)
- Outline page with thesis, Works Cited
- Notes/note cards
- Rough drafts and a final copy
- Submitted to *turnitin.com*
- All research materials submitted following the teacher's instructions

II. Portfolio Component:

- Parent permission form
- Approval of Graduation Project Committee
- Letter of Intent/Topic Approval Sheet that matches project
- Mentor Consent Form
- 15 hours of documented time with mentor (outside of class)
- Mentor Time log that documents time and cost of project
- Graduation Project Journal that records descriptions of project activities
- Photographic record of the project, including pictures with you and your mentor
- Mentor evaluation
- Self-evaluation
- Thank you notes to all involved

III. Project/Performance Component:

- Project/Performance

IV. Presentation Component:

- Must satisfactorily complete a project in order to make a presentation
- Required rehearsals
- Presentation of project (8-12 minutes for presentation, and 3 additional minutes for questions and answers totalling 15 minutes)
- Project Portfolio (with all required entries)
- The project itself and/or props that illustrate your work
- Appropriate attire

NOTE: A progressive penalty will be applied to late work.

West Henderson Graduation Project Letter of Intent Guidelines

Street/PO Box
City, State ZIP
Date

Graduation Project Committee
West Henderson High School
3600 Haywood Road
Hendersonville, North Carolina 28791

Dear Senior Project Committee:

Paragraph 1: Describe the general area of interest, i.e. history, art, music, etc., and tell why you chose this area. Also explain what you already know or have accomplished in this area.

Paragraph 2: Include the specific research that will be the focus of your paper, some of the ideas you hope to include, and some possible resources.

Paragraph 3: Begin with a transitional sentence showing the relationship between your paper and your project. Then describe your project by telling what it will be and who will be involved, estimate the potential cost and potential time to be spent, and mention some possible resources.

Paragraph 4: Explain your understanding of plagiarism and the repercussions of such an act by copying the following paragraph (this paragraph does not need to be in italics):

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another's words or ideas as one's own, whether found in printed material or in electronic media. Academic honesty is my responsibility. I understand that if I plagiarize, I will be penalized according to the plagiarism policy of West Henderson High School.

Sincerely,

(type your name here)

West Henderson Graduation Project Topic Approval Sheet

Student's Name _____ Date _____

Proposed Topic _____

Checklist for Paper

I can find and use at least seven separate sources. _____

I can write at least four to eight pages on this topic. _____

I can incorporate at least one citation from each source. _____

I will turn in my paper on _____.

Checklist for Project/Presentation

I can find a mentor to help with this topic. _____

I will be able to afford this financially. _____

I will have time to complete this project by _____.

I will be prepared and present for my presentation at 6 p.m. on _____, _____.

Student's signature _____

Parent/Guardian's signature _____

Mentor's signature _____

Faculty Sponsor's signature _____

This topic is

Approved _____ Not Approved _____

Teacher's signature _____

Comments

Graduation Project Parental Awareness Form

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you know, your child has begun work on a Henderson County Graduation Project. Your active participation in the process will enhance its meaning. Please complete the following letter, acknowledging your understanding of your child's chosen topic.

Thank you,
Senior English Teacher

As a parent/guardian of _____, a senior at West Henderson High School, I am aware that my son/daughter must complete a Henderson County Graduation Project as a part of the Henderson County Public Schools' graduation requirements and that this project will count 20 percent of my child's final grade in English IV. I understand that there are four parts to the project: a research paper, a physical product that is connected to the research paper in some way, a portfolio, and an 8- to 12-minute oral presentation before a panel of adults from the school and the community.

For the Graduation Project, my child has chosen the topic of.....I realize that a minimum of fifteen (15) hours must be spent under the supervision of a mentor. These hours can be completed after school and on weekends. **I also acknowledge that blatant plagiarism and the falsifying of signatures will result in the failure of English IV.**

I release and hold harmless Henderson County Schools, its employees, any organization, or mentor from any injury that may result from participation in the Henderson County Graduation Project.

Parent/Guardian's signature

Date

Home phone number

Cell phone number

Work phone number

Email address

<<Date>

Dear Graduation Project Mentor,

The faculty at West Henderson High School would like to thank you for agreeing to serve as a Henderson County Graduation Project mentor. In the past, the significance of the Graduation Project program to the overall learning experience of our seniors has amazed both our students and the mentors who have worked with them. We are grateful that you have agreed to carry on this tradition of volunteering as a caring community member making a difference in the life of a high school student.

Before the mentoring process begins, you will be asked to review the student's letter of intent. This letter is designed for the student to express in writing his or her intentions for both the research paper and project. You will be asked to approve the project by signing the Topic Approval Form. This ensures that the project is manageable, and it also gives you guidelines on what must be accomplished in your time together.

As you begin the mentoring process, I would like to remind you that the student must complete a total of fifteen (15) hours with you. During the fifteen (15) hours, the student may spend time discussing issues related to his/her research paper, observing you in your work setting, and/or working under your supervision. They should also work with you, directly or indirectly, on a product of some type. If you ever have a concern about your student or your role as mentor, please feel free to contact me at 828-891-6571 or _____@hcpsnc.org. Someone will contact you during the semester to check on the progress of your student.

In May, your student will ask you to review his/her portfolio and project and to complete an evaluation sheet. The grade you assign to your student will count as one third of his/her final grade for the Graduation Project. You will be asked to grade the student not only on the overall experience and finished product, you will also grade the student on professional courtesies such as regular phone calls and setting up appointments. I will average the grade you assign with the student's research paper and project presentation grades. Please assign a grade that most accurately reflects your evaluation of the student's performance.

Again, thank you for your willingness to serve as a mentor. Do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Senior English Teacher

Henderson County Graduation Project Mentor Contract

Responsibilities of Mentor

1. Meet with the student for at least 15 hours to assist and to assess progress and participate in photos for photographic evidence. (It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact.)
2. Provide information and guidance specific to the student's chosen topic.
3. Advise the student in developing the project.
4. Evaluate the project and student's interaction with mentor.
5. Complete mentor evaluation forms and return them to the student's English teacher.
6. Notify the student of any change in your status or availability.
7. Notify the student's English teacher, _____, at _____@hcpsnc.org or 828-891-6571 of any concerns.

Contract

I agree to serve as a mentor for _____ during the complete process of the Graduation Project.

Name	Date	Signature
Mailing Address		
Day Phone Number	Evening Phone Number	Cell Phone Number
Email Address		

Your signature above indicates that you are at least 25 years of age and of no close familial relationship to the student.

Statement of Ethics for Mentor

Participation as a mentor requires fairness in grading the student's workmanship as well as professionalism on the final product. The mentor agrees to score work on all evaluative statements honestly, disregarding personal opinions about the student or the Senior Project process. The Senior English teacher relies upon the mentor's thoughtful assessment of quality—not simply completion—of the project.

I have read and understand my responsibilities as an evaluator.

Signature

Ethical Commitment to the Henderson County Graduation Project

I, _____, acknowledge the following:

____ I must complete the North Carolina Graduation Project and all of its components in order to pass English IV, a requirement for graduation.

____ I may not change the project topic from the one approved by the NCGP committee.

____ I am responsible for keeping an accurate journal of my activities related to the NCGP.

____ I am responsible for keeping photographic evidence of the completion of my NCGP project (photos **must** include ones of me with my mentor).

____ I must invest a **MINIMUM** of fifteen hours of supervised work with my mentor.

____ I must turn in a waiver if my project is expensive (more than \$75.00) or dangerous.

____ I must participate in a dress rehearsal in front of my class in order to have the opportunity to present on Jury Night.

____ I, and I alone, will complete the research necessary to write the research paper.

____ I will document my research, do my best to avoid plagiarism, and submit my paper to *turnitin.com* for plagiarism detection. Submitting the work of another student is a form of plagiarism and cheating and will result in a zero for the assignment.

____ I will collect authentic signatures on all NCGP documents. I will not submit forged signatures on any documents.

____ I will not submit for my NCGP (including research paper, portfolio, or product) any work used to satisfy the requirements for another course. I understand that a project for a CTE class or an internship may not be used to satisfy the requirements of the NCGP.

____ I understand that any ethical violation will result in a zero on the graded element and an appearance before the North Carolina Graduation Project Committee.

I commit to the following:

Research Paper Topic: _____

Product/Project: _____

Signed,

Student signature: _____ (date) _____

Parent signature: _____ (date) _____

Henderson County Graduation Project Parent Permission for Costly Project

My son/daughter has discussed with me his/her choice to participate in the following activity to complete the Practical Experience requirement of the North Carolina Graduation Project:

I understand that this project exceeds the cost expectations set by the Henderson County Graduation Project committee, and we have arranged for these costs to be met.

Student Name (Print)

Student Name (Signature) _____

Date: _____

Parent or Legal Guardian (Print)

Parent Name (Signature) _____

Date: _____

Henderson County Graduation Project Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Student/Parent Waiver

I have discussed my wish to participate in _____ with my parents/guardians. This project is considered a dangerous activity by the Henderson County Graduation Project Committee. The possibility of personal injury has been discussed, and my parents/guardians have agreed not to hold West Henderson High School or Henderson County Schools (hereafter referred to as "Releasees") liable for such injury.

The undersigned expressly acknowledge and agree that the activities of the event are dangerous and involve the risk of serious injury and/or death and/or property damage.

Each of the undersigned parents or legal guardians for the minor participant agrees to indemnify and save and hold harmless the Releasees, and each of them from any loss, liability, damage or cost they may incur due to the participation of said minor in the project deemed "dangerous" by the Releasee.

I have read this release of liability and assumption of risk agreement, fully understand its terms, and understand that I have given up substantial rights by signing it.

Student Name (Print)

Minor Name (Signature) Date:

Parent or Legal Guardian (Print)

Parent or Legal Guardian (Signature) Date :

Parent or Legal Guardian (Print)

(Sign) _____

Henderson County Graduation Project Presentation Evaluation

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____ Topic: _____

Evaluation Components	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unacceptable
Contents Total Points - 20	19-20	16-18	14-15	0-13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a relationship between research and the project • Demonstrates expertise on the topic • Shows strong understanding and insight of his/her project by confidently and accurately responding to panel comments 				
Organization of Presentation Total Points - 20	19-20	16-18	14-15	0-13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces and concludes the talk in an appropriate manner • Has prepared the presentation carefully • Shows originality and creativity • Uses appropriate audiovisual equipment, etc. 				
Communication Skills Total Points - 25	23-25	20-22	17-19	0-16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks clearly (pitch, rate, volume, enunciation, pronunciation) • Uses correct grammar • Uses appropriate diction • Uses proper body language (posture, eye contact, gestures) 				
Project Description/Explanation Total Points - 20	19-20	16-18	14-15	0-13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a knowledge mastery from the research-based paper • Includes a clear statement of the project purpose and provides specific supporting details and evidence of preparation • Includes evidence that the student has evaluated his/her own skills and work on the project 				
Time Management Total Points - 10	10	9	8	0-7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stays within the 8-12 minute time limit for presentation and 15 minute time limit including questions 				
Personal Appearance Total Points - 5	5	4	3	0-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dresses appropriately for the presentation 				
Total Points				

Henderson County Graduation Project Portfolio Contents

Place the following in a three ring binder notebook. Use page protectors for EACH sheet.

1. Notebook Cover
2. Title Page (include your name, topic, mentor's name, and teacher's name)
3. Table of Contents
4. Letter of Intent
5. Topic Approval Sheet
6. Parental Awareness Form
7. Mentor Contract
8. Ethical Commitment Form
9. Research Paper Title Sheet
10. Clean Copy of Research Paper
11. Works Cited Page
12. Research Paper Evaluation (opt.)
13. Planning Calendar (work on own, pictures developed, supplies purchased, etc...)
14. Time Log
15. Journal Entries (meetings with mentor, work in progress, accomplishments, etc...)
16. Photos with Captions (photos must include student and mentor together)
17. Mentor's Graduation Project/Portfolio Evaluation
18. Self-Evaluation

Henderson County Graduation Project/Portfolio Mentor Evaluation

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Mentor: _____ Topic: _____

Mentor: Thank you for the time and effort that you will put into completing this form. We realize you may have worked closely with this student, but we would like you to be as impartial as possible in evaluating his/her work. Your total score on this form will count as one-third of the student's final senior project grade.

Evaluation Components	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unacceptable
Documentation/Portfolio Total Points - 30	28-30	24-27	19-23	0-18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time log documents the minimum required hours for the project • Journal of project experience included • Photographic record of project progress included • Letters and papers to initiate project included • Portfolio is neat and attractive 				
Creativity Total Points - 30	28-30	24-27	19-23	0-18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project shows originality of thinking • Project shows an adequate level of preparation and development • Project demonstrates growth in the knowledge/ability level of the student 				
Organization Total Points - 40	37-40	33-36	28-32	0-27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project is presented in a manner that is easily understood • Project shows evidence of careful workmanship in presenting a finished project • Project is obviously complete • Project is neat and attractive • Final project matches your expectations for the student 				
Total Points				

Comments:

Signature: _____