

WHAT IS THE SENIOR PROJECT?

The Senior Project at Clark Magnet High School is a key component of the vision for the educational experience of the Clark student. It is a culminating exit program that demonstrates a senior's ability to apply knowledge and skills, speak, write, problem-solve and practice the life skills of time management, organization and risk-taking. This long-term project is housed in the English curriculum although the core skills are taught and reinforced in all disciplines. Clark teaching staff, community members and school district personnel act as mentors, evaluators, and advisors during the research, project, and presentation phases.

The key components of the Senior Project are:

1) 6-8 Page Research Paper

The research paper reinforces effective writing skills learned in English class and requires students to delve extensively into a topic by completing research. Because the paper is persuasive, students should choose a topic about which they have a strong opinion. This persuasive paper should have a clear opinionated, argumentative thesis. Students should use elements learned when debating to convince the reader of the strong opinion stated in the thesis, and prove the thesis through research. The research paper follows MLA (Modern Language Association) guidelines for format and documenting sources.

2) Fieldwork

Students are required to do a minimum of 25-hours for their fieldwork. In most cases, students go beyond 40-50 hours due to the fact that they are really trying to spend time to gain experience in a specific field or industry. Their fieldwork should be related to some aspect of the paper. The hours spent for fieldwork should amount to something, not be wasted. If a student claims they have worked on their senior project for 50 hours, they should be able to thoroughly explain what those hours were spent on. Students explore topics that are academic in nature, a hobby, a passion, or a possible future career. Good projects often have a community service component, and therefore benefit the community in some way.

3) A FINAL Product

The final product should demonstrate the conclusion of the students experience throughout the year. Examples of final products include sculptures, models, booklets or websites. In some cases students cannot literally bring their item to the classroom so they use photographic or video evidence to show the result. Examples of those types of projects are dance concerts, musical performances or a videos showing the event that the student coordinated. The final product should demonstrate work that took place over several months, not days. In order for it to qualify as an acceptable project, it must demonstrate a learning stretch for a 12th grade student.

4) A Portfolio

The portfolio contains evidence of the fieldwork illustrated through letters from the students' mentors, pictures, showing the process of the project as seen in illustrations or photos, receipts, certificates, or anything else that would show proof of the work completed. Additionally, the portfolio includes: a letter to the judges, resume, the research paper, and student log. Senior teachers may have *slightly* different requirements for their classes. The portfolio is reviewed during the senior project presentation.

5) Final Speech (10-15 minutes presented before a review board)

The speech is a chance to showcase the students' senior project. Students are to dress professionally and summarize their senior project journey. Students will talk briefly about their research paper, their project, and what they learned. The speech should include visual aids and adhere to effective speech guidelines. If the presentation includes performing, the students must speak for at least five minute of the time.

The Senior Project is a vehicle that allows students to use the knowledge and skills they have acquired in a "real-world" application. It has the potential to motivate the student, connect the school with the community, and create pathways from school to career.