Haywood County Schools
Graduation Project Handbook

Pisgah High School

Haywood County Graduation Project Handbook

I. The Graduation Project Components Overview

    A. A research paper of no less than four pages in length written according to MLA style guidelines that takes a position on any arguable topic related to the student's choice of product.

    B. A physical or non-physical research-based product that requires a minimum of ten hours to complete.

    C. A portfolio containing sufficient logs, photographs, or other appropriate evidence that documents the process of creating the product.

    D. A presentation of the product before a panel of judges.

II. The Timetable & Component Grade Weighting

    A. The research paper will be completed in the student's English III class. The research paper and any supporting components should collectively make up no less than one-third and no more than one-half of a single grading period's grade.

    B. The product and portfolio will be completed outside of a regular class, preferably during the summer between the student's junior and senior year.

    C. The presentation will take place in the student's English IV class (or in the case of Haywood Early College, during senior seminar). This class will include grades for the product, portfolio, and presentation that should make up no less than one-third and no more than one-half of a single grading period's grade.

    D. The Graduation Project is not itself a requirement for graduation, though it does weigh significantly toward grades in classes required for graduation.

III. The Topic

The topic for the Graduation Project shall emanate from a student's interest and demonstrate global readiness including 21st Century Skills. Such topics may include self-enrichment, entrepreneurship, job shadowing or career exploration, or volunteerism. The product created may be physical or non-physical.

In Haywood County we interpret the above to mean that our students have great latitude in choosing their own topics, provided that it provides a positive outlet for their own growth.

IV. Graduation Project Roles

Every effort shall be made to streamline the graduation process for staff. The English III and English IV faculty shall, by default, act as academic advisors for the student completing the paper and presentation components, respectively.

Each school shall select one staff member from either the English III or English IV faculty to act as a school coordinator, whose task will be to manage any necessary resources (e.g., reserving

classrooms for presentations and ensuring presentation materials (LCD projectors, etc.) are available).

Each student is responsible for recruiting a mentor. Mentors should be adults who have knowledge regarding the topic chosen by the student. Contacts between the student and the mentor shall be kept in a log that must be included in the portfolio component.

If possible, mentors should be included as part of the panel for their student's presentation.

V. The Paper Component

    A. The paper shall be no less than four pages with no fewer than five sources and written according to MLA-style guidelines.
    B. The paper's thesis should take a position on an arguable issue related to the student's topic. It should not simply be a report.
    C. A specific rubric for the paper is located at the end in the rubrics section. That form, or a teacher created version that evaluates the same criteria with similar weighting, should be used to evaluate the research paper component.

VI. The Product Component

    A. The product may be physical or non-physical and should involve a minimum of ten hours in its creation.
    B. A specific rubric for the product is located at the end in the rubrics section. That form, or a teacher created version that evaluates the same criteria with similar weighting, should be used to evaluate the product component.

VII. The Portfolio Component
    A. The portfolio is the organized collection of logs, photos, copies of electronic communication, etc. that provides evidence for the creation of the product and the collaboration with a mentor.
    B. A specific rubric for the portfolio is located at the end of the rubrics section. That form, or a teacher created alternative that evaluates the same criteria with similar weighting, should be used to evaluate the portfolio component.

VIII. The Presentation Component

    A. The panel for the presentation shall be headed by each student's English IV teacher.

    B. Parents and mentors should be invited to participate as judges on the panels through a school agreed upon system such as a flyer sent home with the students or a message sent through an automatic phone system.

    C. All panel members, whether parents, mentors, or volunteer staff, except for the

English IV teacher, shall act in an advisory capacity only. They shall be provided with an appropriate rubric by the English IV teacher and their input shall be considered by the English IV teacher, but final grading decisions will be up to the English IV teacher only.

D. Every reasonable effort shall be made to find parents, mentors, and staff who are willing and able to take part in judging. Nevertheless, the only required panel member shall be the English IV teacher.

E. Unless English faculty decide otherwise, the presentations should take place during normal school hours.

IX. EC, LEP, and 504 accommodations

A. All accommodations valid for English class must be respected for the Graduation Project.
B. If those accommodations seem insufficient, either the parent or any of the teachers involved (English, EC, ESL, etc.), may request a meeting to determine if any additional accommodations are reasonable, and if so, those accommodations will be used to modify that student's Graduation Project.

X. Mentors

A. Students are responsible for finding their own mentors. Mentors must be adults and should have knowledge of the student's topic.
B. Students should record mentor contacts in a log that tracks the date and length of contact and provides a brief description of the contact or activity.
C. Mentor contacts need not be in-person. Other contacts such as phone conversations, e-mail and text chats are also acceptable.
D. Students must demonstrate through their logs and any other supporting evidence that the mentor played a significant role in the creation of the product, that is, the logs should show that the mentor spent at least one hour minimum on contacts with the student.

XI. Transfer Student Modifications

A. Transfer students must complete as much of the Graduation Project as can reasonably be expected depending on their time of transfer.
B. Students who transfer between English III and English IV will have the research paper component waived and, if necessary, be given an extension on the creation of the product and portfolio so they may present theirs later in the semester.
C. Students who transfer in having already completed all English credits will have the entire project waived.

Graduation Project Research Paper Rubric

Student: _____

<u>Basic Elements</u>

0   The paper is wholly deficient in meeting the minimum standards (more than 1 ⅓ pages short or has fewer than two sources). The paper's grade may be no more than a D-, regardless of any other merits).

1   The paper falls significantly short (by between 1 ⅓ and ⅓ of a page or by two to three sources). The paper's grade may be no more than a C-, regardless of any other merits.

2   The paper falls just short of the established minimums (by ⅓ of a page or a single source)

3   The paper meets or exceeds the established minimums of length, required sources, etc.

<u>Grammar and Spelling</u>

0   Numerous mistakes that overwhelm the reader and prevent any ideas in the paper from being taken seriously

1   Mistakes are present but not enough to seriously detract from the ideas of the paper

2   Few mistakes exist

3   Completely error free

<u>Organization</u>

0   Little discernible organization exists

1   Paragraphs often lack focus, evidence often lacks commentary, the progression of ideas seems haphazard

2   Some weakness exist in paragraph unity, commentary, and/or the progression of ideas throughout the paper

3   Each paragraph is unified around a single idea, evidence within each paragraph has supporting commentary, paragraphs are arranged in an ideal order to support the thesis statement

<u>Thesis Statement</u>

0   Thesis statement not found

1   No definite stand taken or the thesis itself is not an arguable point

2   A lack of clarity in the thesis or other awkwardness exists

3   A clearly-written thesis statement exists in the introduction that takes a definite stand on an arguable point related to the student's topic

Evidence & Documentation

0   Limited evidence, little or no documentation in paper; no works cited page

1   Limited evidence used in some body paragraphs; significant problems exist on an included works cited page (e.g., a list of URLs); missing signal phrases or parenthetical citations

2   Some paragraphs may be based around some, but limited evidence; minor errors exist within the included works cited page; signal phrases and/or parenthetical citations are used, but with minor errors

3   Multiple strong sourced evidence exists in each body paragraph that is properly cited; a works cited page is included that is entirely correct

Style (for honors and Advanced Placement classes only)

0   The writing suffers from elements such as poor word-choice, awkward expressions, passive voice, and repetitive sentence structure or length.

1   Mechanical writing that may get the job done, but little more, or writing whose moments of greatness are balanced with awkward sentences and/or other elements as listed above

2   Has sections of greatness as in #3 but inconsistent overall

3   A pleasure to read throughout due to such elements as thoughtful word choice, active verbs, sentence variety, parallel structure, etc.

Add the scores - half scores are acceptable.

$$\underline{\hspace{6cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

BE   G&S   O   TS   E&D   S

Regular		Honors
0 - 9.5	F	0 – 11.5
10.0 - 10.5	D	12.0 - 12.5
11.0 - 11.5	C	13.0 - 14.5
12.0 - 13.5	B	15.0 - 16.0
14 - 15	A	16.5 - 18

Student: _____

Basic Elements

0	The product is wholly deficient in meeting the minimum standards of ten hours. A reasonable estimate suggests that little or no time was invested in this product. The product's grade may be no higher than a 50, regardless of any other factors.
1	The product falls significantly short in meeting the minimum standards. A reasonable estimate suggests that less than 10 hours was invested in this product. The product's grade may be no higher than a C-, regardless of any other elements of merit.
2	The product meets the minimum standards of time invested.
3	The product shows evidence that the time invested significantly exceeded the minimum required.

Challenge

0	Chooses a product representing no learning over time.
1	Chooses a product representing limited learning over time.
2	Chooses a product representing sufficient learning over time.
3	Chooses a challenging product representing significant learning over time.

Critical Thinking

0	Demonstrates no creative thinking, decision-making, reasoning, and/or problem-solving.
1	Demonstrates limited creative thinking, decision-making, reasoning, and/or problem-solving.
2	Demonstrates sufficient creative thinking, decision-making, reasoning, and/or problem-solving.
3	Demonstrates significant creative thinking, decision-making, reasoning, and/or problem-solving.

Quality

0	Exhibits unacceptable results.
1	Exhibits ineffective results using talents, abilities and varied resources.
2	Exhibits adequate results using talents, abilities and varied resources.
3	Exhibits creative and exceptional results using talents, abilities and varied resources.

College-Ready Skills (for honors and Advanced Placement classes only)

0	Product demonstrates little to no analytical skills and no application of complex processes or ideas
1	Product demonstrates limited analytical skills and limited applications of complex processes or ideas
2	Product demonstrates reasonable analytical skills and/or the application of complex processes or ideas
3	Product demonstrates strong analytical skills and/or the synthesis and application of complex processes or ideas

Add the scores - half scores are acceptable.

_____ =   _____
BE   C   CT   Q   CRS

Regular   Honors
0 - 7.5   F   0 – 9.5
8 - 8.5   D   10.0 - 10.5
9 - 9.5   C   11.0 - 11.5
10 - 10.5   B   12 - 13.5
11-12   A   14 - 15

Graduation Project Portfolio Rubric

Student: _____

Basic Elements

0   The portfolio wholly fails to provide necessary documentation for either the
           collaboration with a mentor or the creation of the product or both. The portfolio's grade
           may be no higher than a 50, regardless of any other factors.
1   The portfolio provides only minimal documentation for either the collaboration with
           a mentor or the creation of a product or both. The portfolio's grade may be no higher than
           a C-, regardless of any other factors.
2   The portfolio provides sufficient documentation for both the collaboration with a
           mentor and the creation of a product.
3   The portfolio shows a detailed record of both the collaboration with a mentor and
           the creation of a product, using a variety of medium.

Organization

0   No organization structure exists
1   Minimal organization exists - information may be out of order in places,
           handwritten material such as logs may be illegible
2   Reasonable organization exists - materials arranged logically
3   Superior organization exists - materials are arranged logically and neatly making
           the documentation easy to find and understand

College-Ready Skills (for honors and Advanced Placement classes only)

0   Employs no technology or does so in a manner that is actually detrimental to the
           whole.
1   The portfolio's presentation may use technology but does so in an ineffective
           manner.
2   The portfolio's presentation delivers its information effectively using technology
3   The portfolio's presentation is sophisticated and uses multiple technological tools
           to effectively deliver the necessary information

Add the scores - half scores are acceptable.

_____ = _____

BE   O   CRS

Regular		Honors
0 - 3.5	F	0 - 5.5
4.0	D	6.0 - 6.5
4.5 - 5.0	C	7.0
5.0 - 5.5	B	7.5 - 8.0
6.0	A	8.5 - 9

Graduation Project Presentation Rubric

Student: _____

Basic Elements

0	The presentation wholly fails to meet the minimum expectations of time and content (as determined by each school). The presentation's grade may be no higher than a 50, regardless of any other factors.
1	The presentation falls significantly short of the minimum expectations of time and content. The presentation's grade may be no higher than a C-, regardless of any other factors.
2	The presentation meets the minimum expectations of time and content.
3	The presentation meets the minimum expectations for time and provides a content rich explanation of the topic.

Physical Delivery

0	The student suffers from both a weak physical presence (eye contact, posture, etc.) and numerous language issues (pacing, volume, diction, etc.) that prevent or distract the audience from understanding the content of the presentation.
1	The student suffers from either a weak physical presence or from poor language skills to significantly weaken the performance.
2	The student's physical presence and language skills work together to deliver an effective presentation.
3	The students' physical presence (eye contact, posture) works with their language skills (pacing, volume, diction) to deliver a superior presentation that keeps the audience engaged.

Professionalism

0	The student's clothing or behavior is objectionable.
1	The student dress or behavior is too informal or otherwise inappropriate
2	The student is dressed and behaves in an appropriate manner
3	The student is dressed professionally or in otherwise appropriate, authentic clothing, and acts courteously and respectfully to the audience, other presenters, and judges.

Content

0	The presentation lacks specific supporting details
1	The presentation suffers weakness in specific supporting details and/or coherency
2	The presentation uses supporting details with a logical framework to deliver a central idea
3	The presentation uses multiple specific, supporting details within a logical framework that clearly delivers on a main idea that ties the presentation together

College-Ready Skills (for honors and Advanced Placement classes only)

0	The student offers no evidence of self-reflection and/or cannot answer reasonable questions asked by the audience or judges
1	The student offer only a limited measure of self-reflection or has problems answering questions from the audience or judges.
2	The student offers some measure of self-reflection and is able to reasonably answer any questions asked by the audience or judges.
3	The student reveals a thoughtful self-reflection or self-criticism about the experiences of the Graduation Project and is able to answer any audience or judge questions thoughtfully and gracefully.

Add the scores - half scores are acceptable.

_____ =   _____
BE   PD   P   C   CRS

Regular		Honors
0 - 7.5	F	0 – 9.5
8 - 8.5	D	10.0 - 10.5
9 - 9.5	C	11.0 - 11.5
10 - 10.5	B	12 - 13.5
11-12	A	14 - 15

Checklist for Teacher Use
Graduation Project
English III & IV

<u>English III</u>

☐ Research Paper

☐ Initial Graduation Project Proposal

<u>English IV</u>

☐ Project Sign of Commitment

☐ Letter of Intent

☐ Product

☐ Project Portfolio

☐ Reflective Essay

☐ Graduation Project Speech

Research Paper Assignment
Graduation Project
English III

For the graduation project, you will need to come up with an overall idea that involves something of interest to you and demonstrates "global readiness including 21st century skills." Yeah, that's pretty broad. The state says this can be "entrepreneurship, self-enrichment, job shadowing/career exploration, volunteerism, physical product, etc." Most anything you would want to do will fall under this umbrella. I think we would have to work hard to find something that does not.

You will need to complete four parts:

1. A research paper on an arguable issue related to your project.
2. The creation of a project, physical or non-physical.
3. A portfolio where you record evidence of the process involved in the creation of the project.
4. A presentation where you explain the project and the process that was involved in its creation.

We will do the first in English III. The second and third will be done primarily on your own time in the time between English III and English IV. The fourth will be done in English IV.

You will be required to find a mentor for your project. Anyone you can have some kind of contact with (either face to face or electronic) will be fine. Keep a log of that activity.

Here's the relevant paper information:
- The topic must be arguable. This is not a report.
- It may be no less than four pages, not including a works cited page.
- It must be in MLA format with 1" margins in 12-point Times New Roman or 12-point Garamond font (if you are feeling eco-friendly).
- A minimum of five different sources are required.
- You may not cite any source repetitively.

Due: On or before _____. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Initial Graduation Project Proposal
Graduation Project
English III

Name: _____   Date: _____

Answer the following items using complete sentences.

1.   Briefly describe what you plan to do for your project.

2.   Why have you chosen this topic?

3.   What do you already know about this topic?

4.   What do you hope to learn from this project?

5.   What do you plan to do outside of school for the independent part of the project?

6.   Who do you plan to use as a mentor?

Project Sign of Commitment
Graduation Project
English IV

Create a sign that announces the subject of your research, the physical project, and your name. The sign will be graded and displayed on the front of your Graduation Project Portfolio.

Make the sign neat, eye-catching, and readable from six feet away. Graphics are an excellent way to make your poster attractive, but don't get carried away. The same goes from print. Avoid wordy title, and start the description of the physical project with an action verb.

Your sign must contain three items of information: 1) your general topic; 2) what you have DONE outside of class; and 3) your name.

123 Graduation Street
Canton, NC 28716
23 August 2013

Ms. Elizabeth Bennett
English Department, Pisgah High School
1 Black Bear Drive
Canton, NC 28716

Dear Ms. Bennett:

I have decided to do my Graduation Project on the general subject of building construction. This topic interests me because my dad works in construction, and I would like to also. In fact, I have worked for him this past summer.

I have researched new methods in metal frame construction, like the building of the new First Baptist Church. I looked at the relative cost of wood and steel and whether the advantages were worth the cost. I found several sites on the Internet and talked with Bob Johnson, the architect for the First Baptist Church.

For my independent project, I plan to design a house that I would like to build for myself and calculate the cost of materials from building it of wood and of steel framework. I expect to make my own blueprints and to determine the materials necessary to build the house. I plan to ask John Smith, a local builder who has experience with metal construction, to be my mentor.

My research paper and associated project are my own creation and are not be copied from someone or someplace else. I understand that copying someone else's work is plagiarism and that plagiarism will cause me to fail this project.

Sincerely,

Student's Name

Project Portfolio Contents
Graduation Project
English IV

When the faculty and community judges gather for their orientation meeting, they will read your project portfolio. In many cases, what they read will be their introduction to you, and for every judge, this reading will be the introduction to your topic.

Make the best first impression you can with a neatly typed, attractively bound notebook that has the name of your project and your name typed on the front cover. Think of your notebook as your representative on a job interview. You want to look professional and give every indication that you really care to make your best presentation.

Contents (in this order)

1. Sign of Commitment (on front cover)

2. Letter of Intent

3. Reflective Essay

4. Graduation Project Log Sheets and Evidence (photos, copies of electronic communication, etc.)

5. Mentor Day Report (if Mentor Day was taken)

Reflective Essay
Graduation Project
English IV

Write an essay of 1 to 2 pages reflecting on your experiences during the completion of your graduation project. In the first part of the essay, explain what you **learned** during the process. In this section, discuss the <u>relevance</u> of your research to the independent project you completed. You may also want to discuss some of the following items:

❖ Some new things you know about your topic after completing this entire project.

❖ Challenges presented to you in completing this project. You might mention physical challenges, but were there any emotional or intellectual challenges?

❖ What are some problems you encountered? How did you solve these problems?

In the last part of the essay, reflect on your **personal gains/growth** during the process. You might want to reflect on some of the following items.

❖ Describe some personal satisfactions or knowledge gained from this project experience.

❖ What was the picture in your mind of your project before you started working on it? How does this picture square with the outcome you have experienced?

❖ If given the opportunity, now that you have experience, what would you do differently?

❖ Beyond the project itself, what did you learn about yourself?

FORMAT FOR REFLECTIVE ESSAY

Last Name and Page Number

(line 1)   Your name (first and last)

(line 2)   My Name

(line 3)   English IV

(line 4)   Date (day/Month/year)

(line 5, centered)   Graduation Project Reflective Essay

Start your first paragraph on line 6. **Other reminders:**

1. Type. Use <u>12 point Times New Roman font</u>. (NO HANDWRITTEN COPIES ACCEPTED)

2. Double-space your text.

3. Use "whiteout" for last minute corrections or neatly mark through errors and rewrite.

4. Leave one inch (or 1.25") margins for all sides.

5. Your last name and the page number goes in the right hand corner of every page.

Graduation Project Speech
Graduation Project
English IV

Speech Outline:

I.   Introduce yourself and talk about your mentor

II.   Your Project: What lessons you learned from doing the Graduation Project
        For example:
        A. Example 1
        B. Example 2
        C. Example 3

III.   Your paper topic and what you learned—tell what your thesis is and give examples
        A. Example 1
        B. Example 2

IV.   Your independent/hands-on project and what you did—give examples
        A. Example 1
        B. Example 2

V.   Explain how you applied what you learned in the paper to the hands-on project
        A. Example 1
        B. Example 2

VI.   Explain how the project was a "learning stretch" or challenge for you

VII.   Thank the judges for their time and attention

Project Log
Graduation Project
English IV

Student:_____   Mentor:_____

Topic: _____

On this form keep a record of whatever you do in working on your Graduation Project. This is your documentation of the time you have spent on your project. It will help you to pace yourself. Be sure to have this form with you at each conference with your teacher or your mentor. Always have him/her sign the last column when you meet. You must have someone verify your work.

Date Time Spent	Description of What I Did	Resources Used/ People Involved	Teacher/Mentor/Adult Signature

_____ Total hours this sheet   Dates covered this sheet: _____

Absence Exemption Request Form

Graduation Project Mentor Day

English IV students must complete a Graduation Project.. An important part of the Graduation Project is working with a mentor in the community. Due to work and school schedules, some seniors may need to be released from school in order to work with their mentors. The student named below is granted permission to work with his or her mentor during regular school hours (8 a.m. – 3 p.m.) for the **one day** specified. Since this is an activity associated with the student's graduation project, the student's absence should not be counted toward the "six-day rule" on the student attendance policy. The student is responsible for his or her own transportation. The student must also make up any assignments or tests missed either in advance or within two days after the "mentor day."

The following conditions must be met in order to qualify an absence as a "mentor day":
   a. The student must make arrangements with the mentor **a week in advance** and have the mentor sign this sheet in the appropriate place.
   b. **Prior** to getting teachers' signatures, the student's parent must sign this sheet in the appropriate place.
   c. The student's Graduation Project teacher must approve and sign in the appropriate place.
   d. The student must get all other teachers' signatures **four school days in advance** of the "mentor day" and return this sheet to the senior project teacher.
   e. Student must return a completed **mentor day report** to the senior project teacher the following day.

Failure to fulfill any aspect of these conditions will disqualify the student from claiming a mentor day. The absence would then be counted as a regular absence.

Student _____ Date of mentoring _____

Mentor Signature _____ Date _____ Phone _____
                    (Mentor acknowledges that the student has made arrangements to work with him/her on the specified date.)

Parent Signature _____ Date _____ Phone _____
(Parent acknowledges the following: This activity is voluntary on the part of the student. Although the activity takes place during school hours and is connected to a school project, the student is not considered to be present at school that day. However, it is an absence that is exempted from the attendance policy. Parent also accepts financial responsibility and gives permission for any medical treatment deemed necessary for any situation arising during participation in this activity, including medical or surgical treatment recommended by medical personnel. If such a situation arises, all reasonable efforts will be made to contact the parent prior to treatment.)

Graduation Project Teacher Signature _____ Date _____

Teacher's signatures (Teacher may refuse permission based upon student's current status in class.)

_____ Period _____ Date _____

_____ Period _____ Date _____

_____ Period _____ Date _____

PHS Graduation Project Mentor Day Report

Student _____ Date _____

To the student: For each two hour block of time spent with your mentor today, indicate the timeframe and what was done.

EXAMPLE

8 a.m. – 10 p.m.: We gathered materials and supplies for making a rocking chair. We had to cut some lumber and sand it down.

We also painted some of the legs of the chair.

To the mentor: Please sign, certifying the student did as indicated above. <u>Thank you</u> for your time.

Signature _____ Date _____