

Abington Heights School District

MISSION STATEMENT

The Abington Heights School District is a diverse, dynamic and caring community whose mission is to seek excellence and individual growth by:

- Educating students to be inquisitive, independent, literate, culturally aware, lifelong learners able to think critically and creatively.
- Developing and supporting a well-trained, valued and committed staff.
- Providing a challenging, comprehensive program in a safe and nurturing environment, empowering students to achieve their full potential.
- Promoting lifelong civic engagement.
- Directing today's energies, efforts and resources toward achieving our guiding vision.

THE GRADUATION PROJECT



Introduction

The graduation project provides Abington Heights High School students an opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge gained and the maturity achieved as they have progressed through high school. The project provides an opportunity for an in-depth study of a selected and approved topic. The out-of-class research and the development of an articulate presentation offer a chance to improve the meaning of the high school experience.

The project, under the guidance and direction of a high school faculty instructor, will ensure that students can apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information and communicate, through an oral presentation, significant knowledge and understanding of a chosen topic.

The graduation project begins with the student selecting a topic of interest. The student must then determine if the topic best lends itself to further development by formal research, by the construction of a project or, by getting involved with community service.

The graduation project also includes a formal paper. The format for the paper must follow MLA (Modern Language Association) style. If the student chooses a research project, the graduation project paper will consist of a minimum of ten (10) pages and eight (8) sources. This does not include the Works Cited page or illustrations. The text must be written in a 12 point standard font, double-spaced, with one inch margins. If the student chooses to construct a project or to get involved with a community service project, the graduation project paper will consist of a minimum of three (3) pages and three (3) sources. This does not include the Works Cited page or illustrations. The text must be written in a 12 point standard font, double-spaced, with one inch margins. A minimum of twenty-five hours of documented service or time invested is required for both the community service project and construction of a project.

A presentation is also required by each student. Most presentations will occur during the second semester of the junior year. This can include a multimedia presentation using PowerPoint or similar technology and/or visuals needed to explain the project.

The **final** facet of the project is the presentation. Students are required to give a six to ten minute oral presentation of the project, accompanied by the research-oriented components – paper (research paper or reflective paper) and product. The use of slides, videos or other visual aids is encouraged. The presentation will be followed by a question/answer period. This culminating activity is intended to be a special occasion during which students show off their projects. Students are expected to dress as if reporting for a formal job interview.

Grading: Students will receive a Pass/Fail for this half credit course. **(P/F) Passing grades are required on both the paper and the presentation in order to pass the course.**

The Abington Heights High School faculty and administration believe the Pennsylvania state mandated Chapter 4 requirements provide positive learning activities for students. Students are assured that, if they follow directions, meet deadlines, and give the project their best effort, they will successfully fulfill this requirement for graduation.

The Abington Heights Graduation Requirement/
Student Project Committee

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

I. Overview of the Program

A. Goals

- to integrate curriculum
- to allow students to work in an area of their choosing
- to combine reading, writing, doing, speaking, thinking, problem solving, time management and organization
- to provide a vehicle for students to take risks, while remaining in a safe environment

B. Components

- research
 - product
 - presentation
- resume

II. Staff Involvement

- instructors
- mentors

III. Community Involvement

- mentors
- resources

Graduation Project Development

- **Students will receive information regarding the graduation project during the sophomore year**
- **Each student will be scheduled for a Junior Writers Workshop class in his/her junior year.**

MODELS OF GRADUATION PROJECTS

1. COMMUNITY SERVICE/LEADERSHIP

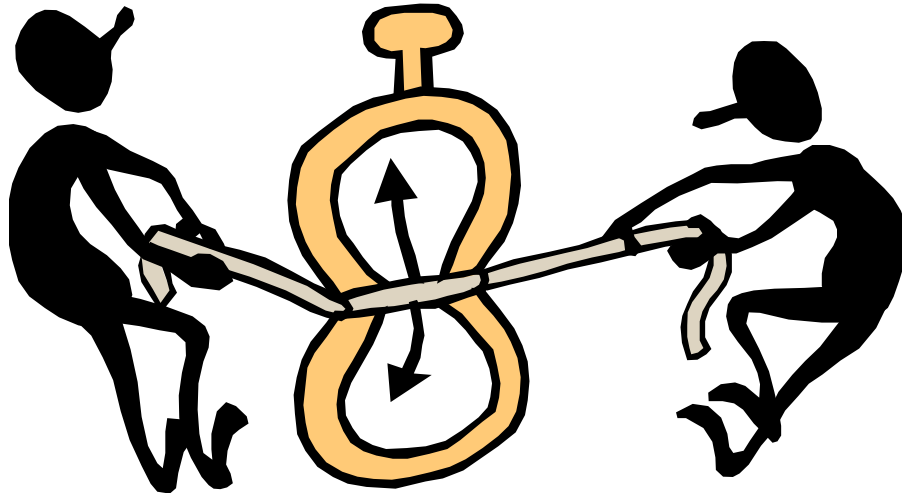
Design and implement a project which provides a valuable free service to the community. Work must include a written plan, activities which include several other people, and a formal presentation (written and oral and may include an audio-visual component) which evaluates the effectiveness of the project. Community service projects must include at least 25 documented hours of service to a worthy cause (See Appendix A for suggestions.)

2. CONSTRUCTING A PROJECT

Design and construct a project related to your research interest, such as rebuilding a car engine, constructing a scale model of a lunar module, or organizing a large scale event such as a summer camp for students with special needs. Work must include a written plan, activities which include several other people, and a formal presentation (written and oral and may include an audio-visual component) and evidence of the final product. Projects must include at least 25 documented hours from the early planning to the final product.

3. IN-DEPTH WRITTEN RESEARCH ON A TOPIC

Demonstrate your ability to think critically and produce an extensive research paper.



Selection Analysis of a Graduation Project Topic

Having brainstormed, it is now time for you to spend some time thinking about the topics you have identified on your project topic list. By answering some of the following questions you should be able to narrow your initial choices to the topic(s) you think will be most appropriate as the subject of your Graduation Project.

1. What topic(s) is/are of the greatest interest to me?
2. What topics do I like reading about?
3. What topic is most reflective of my talents?
4. What topic will most contribute to my future career choice (job, college major)?
5. What topic is the most original and will probably not duplicate other Graduation Projects?
6. Will my topic be helpful to my school and community? Explain.
7. What topic am I most able to afford considering the circumstances of time and perhaps money?
8. What topic will have ample resources (print, media, expert in the field, etc.) for my research?
9. What research have I done on my topic in the past (Junior Academy of Science, History Day, Arts Alive, Governor's School, foreign exchange program, etc.)?

Graduation Project, including the paper and presentation, will take place in the JWW (Junior Writers Workshop) class.

STUDENT STANDARDS/REGULATIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES

In order for your graduation project to be a successful learning experience and to have it represent your best effort, you must thoroughly understand and adhere to all standards, deadlines, regulations and responsibilities. The information provided on this and the following page of the manual is critically important to you. It is provided to you to ensure that you have all of the requirements at your disposal and that you refer to them as needed when working on your project. You should check with your instructor when appropriate to make certain that any questions or concerns that you may have are addressed.

REMEMBER . . . It is **your** responsibility to be aware of and follow all steps and procedures.

Project characteristics . . . your student project:

1. Shall be “original” as defined by the personal nature of the project as indicated on the contract.
2. Shall be rewritten to conform to all Abington Heights Graduation Project guidelines if its basis is a project already developed such as PJAS, Eagle Scouts, etc.
3. Shall contain the written consent of your parent or guardian and the approval of your instructor.
4. Shall adhere to all checkpoint and timeline requirements set forth by instructor.
5. Must include the following components:
 - Research
 - Product
 - Presentation (both written and oral)
 - Resume

STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Must come to every class session prepared to discuss, complete and hand in appropriate materials.
- Must narrow down ideas and chose topic.
- Must be responsible for securing the assistance of a mentor, if one is desired.
- Must turn in completed contract to instructor.
- Must complete a formal resume.
- Must complete the project self-editing sheet of the handbook and submit along with one copy of the final paper.
- Must request any technology/audio/visual needs in advance. Instructor must be informed of technology requests.
- Must make an oral presentation of their project in class. All oral presentations should be 6 to 10 minutes maximum and must consist of:
 - Introduction
 - Goals/objectives
 - Presentation of materials other than the formal paper
 - Demonstration/application, if required
 - Conclusion
- All requirements must be satisfactorily met to receive credit for this course.

TRANSFER STUDENTS must present official notification to the guidance department of satisfactory project completion at a previous school. If none exists, the student will be scheduled for the Junior Writer's Workshop class. (JWW)

ANTI-PLAGIARISM TIPS

- Documentation is very important and must be done when someone else deserves credit for the work that he/she have labored hard to accomplish. Always give credit to the person who deserves credit.
- A general rule of thumb is, if in doubt – document! However, if you have specific questions about documenting, check with your instructor or the Writer’s Center.
- Use many sources to gather your information. In this way, you will be able to contrast and compare, make associations among various sources, and draw your own conclusions in your own words.
- Generally speaking, to avoid plagiarism you must look up your own information, understand the information you have gathered, apply the information to your topic, analyze your information (how does it contrast and/or compare), organize your information to support your project, and draw your own conclusions about your research.

ABINGTON HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION PROJECT CONTRACT

STUDENT NAME _____

DATE _____

HOMEROOM _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE# _____

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR _____

PROJECT TITLE _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION _____

CLASS INSTRUCTOR _____

MENTOR (IF APPLICABLE) _____

TITLE OF MENTOR _____

TELEPHONE # OF MENTOR _____ ADDRESS _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

MENTOR SIGNATURE (IF APPLICABLE) _____

INSTRUCTOR SIGNATURE _____

INTERVIEWING RESOURCE PERSONS

NOTE: Before scheduling an interview with a resource person, you should discuss the interview with your instructor. Following that, you may contact your resource person, giving your name, the name of your school, and the reason for your call. Remember, resource people are busy people. If your resource person cannot commit to an interview, be understanding. Thank the person for his time. Then, in conjunction with your instructor, seek another resource person to interview.

Name of person to be interviewed _____ Telephone No. _____

Field of expertise of person to be interviewed _____

Date and time of interview _____

Address of interview _____

- State the purpose of the interview.

- List the objectives of the interview.

- List what you have done in preparation for the interview.

- List a minimum of five (5) questions you intend to ask during the interview. Consider the kind of information you are seeking to assist you in completing your Graduation Project.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWING RESOURCE PERSONS

- Dress appropriately for the interview
 - Gentlemen will wear dress shirts, slacks (i.e., no jeans), ties, and appropriate shoes and socks.
 - Women will wear appropriate dresses, skirts or pant suits. Shoes and stockings are also required.
 - Your total physical appearance is important to the interview process.
- Report for the interview ten (10) minutes before the scheduled time.
- Introduce yourself directly to the person you are interviewing or to the receptionist or secretary and give the name of the resource person with whom you have scheduled an interview.
- Establish rapport:
 - Introduce yourself by extending your arm and firmly shake the hand of the person you are about to interview.
 - Tell the person how much you appreciate that he/she has taken time from a busy schedule to meet with you.
 - Explain your project briefly.
 - Say, "Now, if I may, I would like to ask you some questions that will help me to complete my research for my Graduation Project."
- Give the person you are interviewing your complete attention.
- Take notes and/or record the interview with the person's permission.
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand something your resource person has said.
- Don't jump to conclusions.
- Never let your sensitivities or biases interfere.
- Listen attentively to your resource person's comments.
- Show your resource person respect.
- Be polite throughout the interview.
- At the conclusion of the interview, thank your resource person for sharing his/her expertise with you. Do extend your arm to shake the hand of your resource person.

Name _____ **PROJECT SELF-EDITING SHEET**

A. Research Content and Format

1. Is your research reflected in a research paper? Yes _____ No _____
2. Is your research reflected in a personal essay? Yes _____ No _____
3. Project thesis statement (topic) _____
4. What are the sub-topics of your paper? (Important: One sub-topic must be your project's personal and/or societal value!)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
5. Do all of the sections of your paper support and develop the project thesis statement?
6. Is your paper clearly written with well-phrased sentences and needed transitions?
7. Does your conclusion restate your project thesis statement?

Resources

1. Do you have a works cited page? Yes ___ No ___
2. Are all of your resources documented? Yes ___ No ___
3. Have you used a variety of resources?
4. Have you documented at least one parenthetical reference for each work cited in the context of your paper? Yes ___ No ___
5. Have you avoided plagiarism? Yes ___ No ___

Mechanical Details

1. Did you underline all book, magazine and play titles? Yes ___ No ___
2. Did you put quotation marks around magazine articles? Yes ___ No ___
3. Did you use the MLA writing style and have it checked by your teacher or the Writer's Center? Yes ___ No ___
4. When using a direct quote, did you put the end punctuation before the last quotation mark? (i.e., John said, "I love to write papers.") Yes ___ No ___
5. Did you check for spelling errors? Yes ___ No ___
6. Have you used standard rules for punctuation? Yes ___ No ___
7. Have you included all required information on the first page? Yes ___ No ___

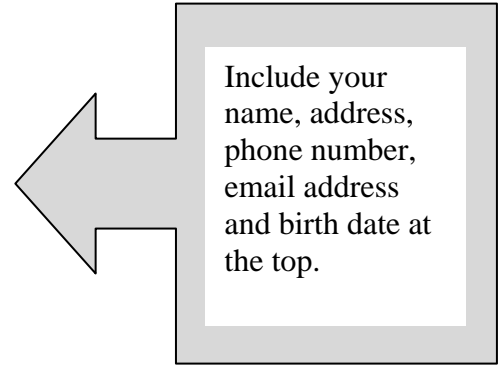
Turn in this sheet, completed, with your final paper to the course instructor.

LIST OF WORKS CITED

The written portion of your Graduation Project requires a list of Works Cited; that is, a list of the sources you have used to complete your project. A formal research paper will require at least five (5) sources, and a reflective paper will require at least three (3) sources. You should include in the list only those references you actually used. The title Works Cited should be centered at the top of the page. The items should **not** be numbered, and they should be arranged in alphabetical order.

For help with writing your citations and arranging them appropriately, you should avail yourselves of one of two sources. Your instructor has a copy of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. This text will answer all of your questions. The Writer's Center also has a copy of the guide, and teachers in the center will aid you in using it. Further help is available on line. After opening the Abington Heights page, go to the English Department homepage and click on Helpful Student Links. Then go to Writing Resources. From there, click on Citation Style Guides. There you will find a site that will take you through the MLA requirements for creating citations within the paper and for writing your list of works cited.

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DOB: 1/1/91



Grade *Activities*

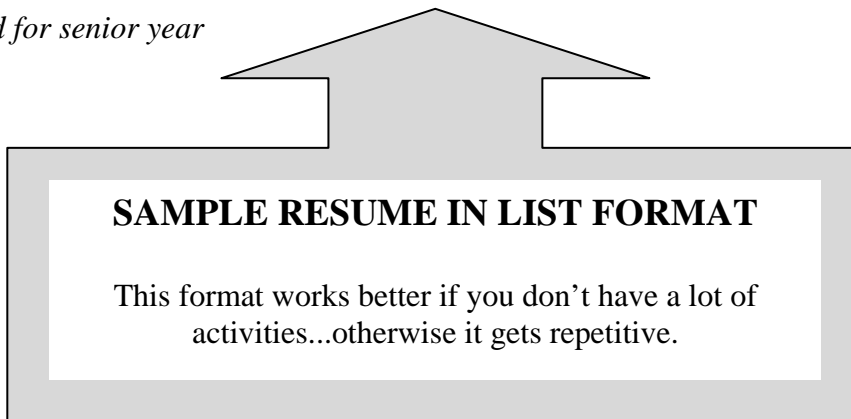
- *12th*
- a. Abington Heights Varsity Tennis; ranked #1*
 - b. School Newspaper; Special Features Editor*
 - c. Drama Club*
 - d. PA Junior Academy of Science; Participated in State Competition*
 - e. National Federation of Temple Youth; Vice President*
 - f. Our Lady of Snows Youth Group; community volunteer*

- 11th*
- a. Abington Heights Varsity Tennis; ranked #2*
 - b. School Newspaper; Contributor*
 - c. Drama Club; Lead role in spring play*
 - d. PA Junior Academy of Science*
 - e. National Federation of Temple Youth*

- 10th*
- a. Abington Heights Varsity Tennis; ranked #4*
 - b. School Newspaper; Contributor*
 - c. Drama Club; Performed monologue*
 - d. PA Junior Academy of Science*
 - e. Abington Heights Student Council*
 - f. Babysitter*

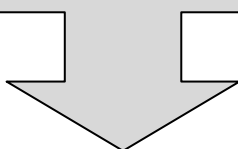
- 9th*
- a. Abington Heights Varsity Tennis; ranked #6*
 - b. Drama Club*
 - c. PA Junior Academy of Science*
 - d. Abington Heights Student Council*
 - e. Babysitter*

**Proposed for senior year*

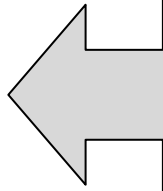


**SAMPLE RESUME IN
CHART FORMAT**

This format corresponds to the format and information asked in the Common Application (www.commonapp.org)



Emily Senior
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DOB: 1/1/91



Include your name, address, phone number, email address and birth date at the top.

Activity, Honor or Award	Description and Information	Position/Years Involved	Amount of Time
Abington Heights Varsity Tennis	3 yr Letter winner, Ranked #6 as Freshman, #4 as Sophomore, #2 as Junior, #1 as Senior; Most Improved Player Award; District Singles Tournament (11 th); District Doubles Tournament (11 th)	Co-Captain (12 th) Team Member (9 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 th)	5-10 hours per week
B'nai Brith Youth Organization	Organized over 20 chapter board meetings; Visits to St. Joseph's Center for handicapped children; Membership increase 50% under my leadership; Recipient of the Harold Spring Leadership Award (11 th) & the Jewish Community Center Brandewene Award for Leadership (12 th)	Freshman Rep 9 th , Scranton Chapter President 10 th & 11 th , Regional Fraternity Officer 11 th , Head of Chapter Membership 12 th , Regional Chair 12 th	5-8 hours per week
Local & City Newspapers	Invited to write articles for the local Suburban and Scranton Times newspapers	11 th & 12 th	15 hours annually
PA Jr Academy of Science	Participated in science competitions; Received 1 st and 2 nd Place Awards; Participated in State Competition	(9 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 th)	4 weeks annually
School Newspaper	Writer for school newspaper ; Contributed articles on politics, sports, entertainment and social issues	Special Features Editor (9 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 th)	1-2 hours per week
Drama Club	Active member; Performed improvisation for elderly; Performed monologue; Lead role in Drama Club Play	9 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 th	2-3 hours per week
Church Youth Group	Volunteer for local church gatherings and events; NAPDANSE team captain; Relay For Life Team Captain; Organized trips to NYC	9 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 ^t	1-2 hour per week
National Student Leadership Conference	Attended lectures by prominent healthcare professionals at a medical and healthcare conference at the University of Maryland	10 th	11 days

ORAL PRESENTATION RUBRIC

ORGANIZATION

	H	S	N
Has clear beginning, middle, and end			
Is controlled by a central idea or thesis			
Flows smoothly from one idea to the next			

CONTENT

Focuses on the main idea of the project			
Explains the project in sufficient detail			
Explains the value of the project			
Demonstrates sound logic			

LANGUAGE

Employs precise, accurate vocabulary			
Uses sentences that make sense			
Uses standard grammar			

SPEAKING

Maintains consistent eye contact			
Employs conversational tone appropriate for audience			
Uses appropriate volume and pace			
Avoids distracting movements/sounds			
Meets time requirements of 6 – 10 minutes			

VISUAL AID OR DEMONSTRATION

Is integrated into the presentation			
Is visible to the entire audience			

PERSONAL PRESENTATION

Student is neatly groomed and properly dressed – (0 to 2 points)

COMPOSITE EVALUATION _____

HS = HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL = 2 points
S = SUCCESSFUL = 1 point
N = NOT YET SUCCESSFUL = 0 points

Point Total Classifications
28-36 points: Highly Successful
15-27 points: Successful
0-14 points: Not Yet Successful

GRADUATION PROJECT PRESENTATION TIPS

Review the five areas of evaluation contained in the rubrics for oral presentation carefully. Be sure to consider each point of evaluation.

- Dress appropriately, as if going for an important job interview (shirt, tie for gentlemen; dress, skirt or dress slacks for ladies; never wear clothes that expose the midriff or have baggy pants).
- Be sure your demonstration materials are easy to set up and take down.
- Make sure your equipment is present in the classroom and working properly. Have a backup plan; you will not be rescheduled.
- Have a written outline so you will remember all of your important points. It is wise to work from note cards – have each outline item on a separate card.
- Do not read to your audience. Your presentation should concern your project and how you completed it. You may indicate your paper's relationship to your project but **DO NOT READ YOUR PAPER**. Your paper should **NOT** be written on your note cards. Note cards are used **ONLY** for brief reference.
- Speak with enthusiasm. Remember, the area of research was your choice. The topic should involve something in which you are very interested. You are now the expert!
- Open by greeting your audience, identifying yourself, and announcing your topic. Include a statement indicating why your topic is interesting, fun, or important to you and possibly your review committee.
- Be alive and enthusiastic by varying the rate of speech, the pitch of your voice and even the rate at which you speak.
- Good eye contact requires that you look at each member of your committee during presentation.
- Things to avoid:

Chewing gum	Pacing
Adjusting hair or clothing	Scratching
Jingling pocket change	Swaying
Giggling	Frowning
Fillers such as "like," "um," "ah."	

Your face should demonstrate your interest and enjoyment in your subject. Smile.
- The closing should be a one or two sentence overall review, summary, or statement as to how your interest in the subject has made a difference.
- You could make a statement about how you will use your interest in the topic in the future.
- Thank the panel for the opportunity to share your interest with them.
- Your presentation time is limited to 6 to 10 minutes. Give the major points and avoid details which may not be of interest to the panel. Don't beat any point to death as timing is crucial. (There are four waves of presentations each morning and homeroom must start on time.)
- Stick to your outline. Practice beforehand!! It is a proven fact that 8 times is the magic number!

Appendix

Community Service

United Neighborhood Association (Mike Hanly)

Community Intervention Center (Tara Finnerty)

The Ronald McDonald House

SCOLA Literacy Programs (Dianna Statzman)

EOTC (Sharon McCrone)

The Women's Resource Center

Salvation Army

Humane Society

Allied Special Olympics (Paula Brown)

Senior Citizens Center

Park Service

Habitat for Humanity of Lackawanna County

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