

College Composition Symposiums/Final Paper—Term 2
Aurora High School—Wesleyan Honors Academy
(Revised October 2012)

Introduction: The symposium will be conducted similar to a professional symposium where scholars present their papers or thesis to a scholarly audience. Professionals who have been invited to symposiums have been honored to do so, because they have submitted a thesis or paper that exemplifies the symposium’s theme and because they have also presented an exceptionally articulate argument. The purpose of these student symposiums is to give you an opportunity to present your academic inquiries for scrutiny. It also gives you an opportunity for public speaking in a scholarly setting. If you decide to create a mini-documentary film, this will give you an opportunity to present your work and answer questions about it. It may also prepare you for the future which hopefully includes submitting undergraduate and graduate work to conferences and symposiums. The topic for your symposium/final paper must be approved by the instructor, that is, me. This inquiry must be supported by valid and viable research; you must have evidence to support your argument. As Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz write, “You may gather an impressive amount of evidence on your topic—from firsthand interviews, from careful observations, and from intensive library and online research. But until that evidence is woven into the fabric of your own argument, it is just a pile of data. Using your evidence effectively calls for turning data into information that will be persuasive to your intended audience” (308). You must inform me of your topic choice by **Tuesday, October 23, 2012**. Of course, I realize you may decide to change direction throughout the term, but I would advise against this after the midpoint of the term!

Requirements: The argument paper must contain a thesis statement or controlling idea centered on a critical inquiry you have chosen concerning a local issue, i.e. the community of Aurora, Hamilton County, or the state of Nebraska. You must support your thesis with relevant details and examples and cite your sources. There is a separate section later addressing source materials. You are required to submit **two preliminary drafts that will be graded as a final draft copy each time**. The first final draft quality paper is due on **November 12** and the second final draft quality paper is due on **December 5**. Any late drafts will receive a **10%** deduction in points **per day** it is late.

According to the syllabus, the first day of symposiums is **December 12**. Each of you is expected to read your paper before your classmates and then be prepared to answer questions from the audience. **You are required to dress professionally for your symposium**. In addition to defending your argument before classroom peers, you are also required to ask relevant questions during every symposium. You must conduct yourself accordingly, i.e. respectful listening (including taking notes during the presentation in order to fully comprehend the argument), asking relevant and inquisitive questions, and not attacks of the speaker or the speaker’s ideas, and hearty applause when the speaker is finished. You will be **drawn at random** for the symposiums which will be held at the end of the term. We will also conduct a workshop day for each of you so that all members of the class can review your paper and provide feedback. **Workshop days are**

November 29-December 5. The final paper will be graded by a rubric in class the day of your presentation.

In English 11 you learned the MLA (Modern Language Association) style of documentation. This course will focus on learning the APA (American Psychological Association) style of documentation with these requirements:

- **6-8 pages**
- **TEN sources (at least 8 local sources and *2 national or international)**
- Typed, double-spaced, 1 inch margins on top, bottom, left and right margins
- Title page
- Brief title header and pagination in the upper right hand corner of the paper
- Documentation (parenthetical author-date citations and a **reference** list at the end).

A Word about Sources:

We will look at local newspapers to generate some ideas about symposium topics. You may use an **unlimited** amount of **local PRINT** sources for your symposium. Due to past experience, you will be **limited** to **one school survey** which may be taken only in senior English courses. Surveys must be given to me in advance for distribution. Do not create a problem for yourself by waiting until the last minute. Also, in the past student interviews with friends or social peers were **overused**, so you are limited to **TWO PEER** interviews. However, you may have unlimited interviews with local experts, that is, teachers, administrators, and community members. ***This year I also encourage you to cite one national source and one international source.**

Final Paper/Symposium Scoring: (250 Points)

Content and support of argument/thesis: 70 points

Citation of sources: 40 points

Defense of argument: 30 points

Organization: 20 points

Manuscript form: 20

Conventions: 20

Listening skills: 20 points

Questioning: 30 points

The date for each student's symposium will be selected at random. *Students who are not prepared for their symposium receive a zero.* Students must be prepared for their symposium on the date they are scheduled. The symposium paper should be in **final draft form** and should be accompanied by **copies of all of the sources** used, including notes from interviews. The symposium/final paper grade is worth 10% of the term grade because it is your term exam. As noted earlier with the preliminary drafts, **any part of the assignment that is late, i.e. works cited page, copies of sources, final draft form of paper, will result in a 10% deduction per day that it is late.**