Oral History and Culture Project



Your oral history and culture project is one of the most special writing projects you will complete as a sixth grader this year. While it is a difficult and complicated project, it is worth all of the blood, sweat, and tears (well, hopefully no blood or tears... just a some hand sweat) ☺. I am excited to start working on such a neat project with each and every one of you!

Project Expectations:

You must complete each of the following parts of the project. Your final project will be on display in your museum exhibit in front of lots of people! ☺

* You complete a great interview with one family member, relative, or older friend (30 points)
* You work with enthusiasm, and focus with your teammates throughout the project (10 points)
* You write a well-written, 3-5 paragraph essay with a clear introduction and conclusion (60 points)
* \*Above and Beyond\* You can create a scrapbook that shows off your interview or family members

Your Essay Will:

* Be **100% focused** on your family’s history and culture.
* Have an **introduction** that is inviting, interesting and states the main topic.
* Have a **conclusion** that shows you really understand where your culture comes from and the history in your family.
* Organize and connect ideas with great and varied **transition words**
* Have **rich details** that really show where YOUR culture comes from. Your details should reveal HOW that tradition started, WHEN it started, WHY it started, WHO started it, etc.
* Will have **no errors in grammar or spelling** that distract the reader.

While we draft our oral history and culture papers, I will teach you a specific strategy each day to help you achieve these writing goals.



#2: Our Rubric- Since this essay is a paper of our larger exhibit project, you will have to get a majority of these skills in order to earn a particular score.

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|  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| **Oral History Essay** | * Essay is **100% focused** on family’s history and culture. * The **introduction** is inviting and states the main topic. * The **conclusion** shows the author understands where his culture comes from. * Author uses lots of **transitions** to move from one idea to another. * Essay has **rich details** that explain. * Writer makes **no errors in grammar or spelling** that distract the reader. | * Essay is **mostly focused** on family’s history and culture. . * The **introduction** clearly states the main topic, but isn’t very inviting. * The **conclusion** ties up almost all the loose ends. * **Transitions** show how ideas are connected, but there is **little variety**. * Essay has **details** that mostly explain family’s history and culture. * Writer makes **1-2 errors in grammar or spelling** that distract the reader. | * Essay is **somewhat focused** on family’s history and culture. * The **introduction** states the main topic, but isn’t very clear or inviting. * The **conclusion** is there, but doesn’t tie up all loose ends. * Some **transitions** work well; but some connections are **fuzzy**. * Essay has some **details** but they don’t explain much for the reader. * Writer makes **3-4 errors in grammar or spelling** that distract the reader. | * Essay is **not focused** on family’s history and culture. * There is **no clear introduction** of the main topic paper. * There is **no clear conclusion**, the paper just ends. * The **transitions** between ideas are **unclear** or nonexistent. * Essay has few or no **details** that explain the information. * Writer makes more than **4 errors in grammar or spelling** that distract the reader. |

Your Essay: This is the rough outline of what your paper can be about. This is very flexible. I want the essay to capture YOUR family’s culture and history, not just fill in the blanks I’ve created. Do what works best for you.

1. **Introduction: 1 paragraph**
   1. Thoughts about your culture and history BEFORE the interview
      1. How much thought had you given your own identity and culture before this project?
      2. *Prior to the day of the interview, I’d never given much thought to my family’s history or culture before*
   2. Description of your interview and interviewee
      1. Personality, physical description, emotions, etc.
      2. *My grandfather is a very talkative man, so I knew he’d enjoy speaking with me*
   3. Your main idea
      1. What did you learn or take away from the interview?
      2. *After speaking with my grandfather, my head was packed of new information about my family I had never heard of before. I knew I had a lot to share with others*
   4. Other suggestions: A story about how the interview started, Factual information*,* Surprising Information, A rhetorical question (*Have you ever wondered where you came from*?)
2. **Body: 1-3 paragraphs**
   1. Explanation of where YOUR culture and history comes from.
      1. Write about **one** family tradition you have and the history of how it started, who started it, when it started, why it started, etc.

**OR**

* + 1. Write about **two or three** of your family traditions and the history of how it started, who started it, when it started, why it started, etc. Just make sure there’s a connection between them that shows the reader why this is your culture.

**OR**

* + 1. Write about your family history and ancestry. Perhaps a special tradition is in your family now based on your family’s immigration or migration to the United States.
  1. Whichever path you take, just remember your DETAILS and TRANSITION WORDS.

1. **Conclusion: 1 paragraph**
   1. A touching statement or thought that shows you really understand **your** culture and history
      1. What does this new information mean to you? Your family?
      2. *I never thought a school project like this would make my family and especially my grandfather so proud.*
   2. Explanation of what this experience means to you and your life
      1. How will it shape your identity as you grow up? Will it change the way you interact with your family? Will it change the way you raise your children?
      2. *Now that I know my family’s story, I know I won’t be the same. My responsibility is to honor my family’s past by keeping the traditions alive for generations to come.*

Analyze Interview and Verify Facts: Compare your interview notes with the essay outline. Did you get what you need? What further questions do the interview results suggest?

|  |  |
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| Information I still need: | Information I am still curious about: |
|  |  |

Calendar: Our goal is to finish this project by the end of the quarter, January 20th. There are 13 school days between now and then.

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| **Day 1: Tuesday** | **2: Wednesday** | **3: Thursday** | **4: Friday** |
| Project Introduction | Analyze Interview | Begin Introduction | Finish Introduction  Begin Body |
| **Day 5: Monday** | **Day 6: Tuesday** | **Day 7: Wednesday** | **Day 8: Thursday** |
| Finish Body  Start Conclusion | Finish Conclusion  Start Revising | Continue Revising | Continue Revising |
| **Day 9: Friday** | **Day 10: Tuesday** | **Day 11: Wednesday** | **Day 13: Thursday** |
| Start Editing | Continue Editing | Start Publishing | Continue Publishing |
| **Day 14: Friday** |  |  |  |
| Finish Publishing |  |  |  |

DRAFTING Paragraph #1: Introduction

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Paragraph #2 (#3, #4): Body

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Paragraph #3 (or #5) Conclusion:

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**Revising Checklist:**

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| **Check** | **Revision Criteria** |
|  | **Focus and Coherence**: Are all the events focused on a single experience? |
|  | **Focus and Coherence**: Is my introduction and conclusion effective? Do they really tell the reader why your interviewee is special and why their story means something to you? |
|  | **Focus and Coherence:** Do I include only important events? |
|  | **\*\*\*Organization:** Does the topic sentence of each paragraph match the closing sentence? |
|  | **Organization:** Have I reorganized parts that were out of place? |
|  | **Organization:** Have I used at least five transitions to show the order of events? |
|  | **\*\*\*Development of Ideas:** Are there any unclear sentences or sections? |
|  | **Development of Ideas:** Do you repeat the same word? If so, change it! |
|  | **Development of Ideas:** Do you start your sentences the same way? If so, change it! |
|  | **Development of Ideas:** Do I include all the important details and answer the questions: who, what, when, where why? |
|  | **Development of Ideas:** Do I include enough describing details (sensory details)? |
|  | **Voice:** Does my voice sound natural? |
|  | **Voice:** Do I sound interested in my topic? |
|  | **Voice:** Does the dialogue fit the interviewee’s personality? |

**What are some questions you have for the author after reading the essay?**

**What is one of the strongest parts of this essay?**

**What would you like to learn more about?**

**What do you think the author should change or add?**

**Editing Checklist:**

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| **Check** | **CAPITALIZATION** |
|  | **Grammar:** Do I use adjectives to describe nouns? |
|  | **Grammar:** Do I use adverbs to describe the action or verbs? |
|  | **Capitalization/Punctuation:**  Have I used correct punctuation in my sentences? |
|  | **Capitalization/Punctuation:**  Do I use commas after items in a series? |
|  | **Capitalization/Punctuation:**  Do I use commas in my compound sentences, especially before ‘but’ or ‘and’ |
|  | **Capitalization/Punctuation:**  Do I use correct punctuation for dialogue (“quotation marks”)? |
|  | **Sentence Structure:**  Do I have varied sentence lengths (aka are my sentences different lengths)? |
|  | **\*\*\*Sentence Structure:**  Have I combined sentences using compound sentences? |
|  | **Sentence Structure**: Did I indent the beginning of each paragraph and skip a line? |
|  | **Spelling:**  Have I spelled my words correctly? *(see spelling list on back)*  A LOT, DIFFERENT, THERE/THEIR/THEY’RE, YOUR/YOU’RE, ITS, IT’S |
|  | **Title:**  Have a created a title for my oral history essay? Is it creative? (“A Weird and Wonderful Artist” or “My Little Buddy Kenny”) |

**Publishing Checklist:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Check** |  |
|  | **Perfecting☺:** Did you fix all of your errors you discovered in revising and editing? Please fix EVERY MISTAKE! |
|  | **Presentation:** Have a created a creative title? |
|  | **Presentation:** Did you center your title, skip a line, and start your writing? |
|  | **Presentation:** Is your heading written the top right hand corner of page one |
|  | **Presentation:** Did you write neatly in your best handwriting in pencil? OR Did you use an easy-to-read font for both the title and essay? |
|  | **Presentation:** Did you indent the beginning of each paragraph? |
|  | **Presentation:** Did you double check your spelling and correct all of your mistakes? |
|  | **Graphics:** Did you create a map to go inside of your scrapbook? |
|  | **Graphics:** Are the locations on your map clearly labeled? Is it easy to see where your interviewee immigrated or migrated from? |
|  | **Graphics:** Have you added details to your map (names of cities, states, compass rose, legend, etc.) |