A Super Cool Geography Research Project

Or

A Research Project to Examine the Demographic, Geographic, Political, and Socio-Economic Aspects of a Country or Nation-State

Objective: To use the Five Themes of Geography to learn more about a particular country and to present what you have learned in an organized, meaningful way.

Overview: You are going to use your new found geography skills to research a country of your choosing. You will then present your findings to your classmates in one of a few ways. You may:

1. Write a paper,
2. Create a web page,
3. Create a presentation, which may take one of several forms, like a television program or speech.

Regardless of what form your presentation takes, it will be organized according to the Five Themes of Geography.

Directions: Follow these directions to complete this project.

1. You will be randomly assigned a continent. Choose a country on this continent to research. Use an atlas, an encyclopedia, or the world wide web to help you make your choice. Get your choice approved by me before you begin your research.
2. Research your country. Use the Five Themes of Geography as your guide. Find out details that describe your country according to Location, Place, Human-Environment Interaction, Regions, and Movement. You should take notes organized around those five themes. Try having a page or two in your notebook labeled with each theme that you can turn to as you research your country. *Keep a list of resources* that you use so that you may create a bibliography later on.
3. Create a paper, web page, or presentation to share your research with your classmates. No matter which format you choose, you will need to organize your presentation around the Five Themes.
4. Create a bibliography listing all the resources you used for your research. You must have at least four (4) sources. *At least two (2) of them must be books or articles from a journal or magazine.* Encyclopedias and your textbook do not count. Your bibliography must be in the proper format. (We will discuss this a little later).
5. Share your final product with the class on the assigned due date.

Due Dates: All papers and web pages will be due **December 2, 2005**. Presentations will be given from **November 28 through December 2, 2005**. The day of your presentation will be your due date.

Work Days: You will have four days to work on this project in class. We will be in the technology room for these work periods, so you will have access to a computer and the internet. The in-class work days for this project are: November 7, 14, 15, and the 21st. You may also have one or two work days in the classroom (not the technology room) as needed.

Format: Regardless of the presentation option you choose, your final product should be organized according to the following outline and answer the following questions. You may not deviate from this outline, although you should feel free to be as creative as you'd like as long as you follow this structure.

I.   *Location* - What is the location of your country?
    A. Relative location
    B. Exact location - Give the location of your country's capitol in latitude and longitude.
II. *Place* - Describe the theme of Place for your country.
    A. What are some physical features of your country?
    B. What are the human features of your country?
        1. What is the economic system? Describe it.
        2. What is your country's political system? Describe it.
        3. What is the major language of your country?
        4. What are the major religions in your country?
III. *Human-Environment Interaction*
    A. Describe the natural resources of your country.
    B. What challenges face the people or the environment of your country? Why? Give examples if possible.
IV. *Movement* – Describe movement in your country.
    A. What are your country's major imports and exports?
    B. Does your country have a high or low immigration rate? Why? (You may not be able to answer all of these questions, or you may have more you wish to mention).
V.   *Regions* - Are there any regions within your country like places where specific groups of people live, or areas with unique geographic features? Maybe there are regions where a different language is favored over another. Mention things like this here.
VI. *Extra Information (Optional)* – Put anything else you'd like to say about your country here, such as unique foods the people of your country enjoy, or traditions they follow.

General Rubric: You will be given specific rubrics for each of the assignment options soon, but your project should follow these general guidelines regardless of what option you choose to use to present your research.

1. This project will assess you on the following standards (according to the standard sheets you received at the beginning of the year):
   - **Standard I, IV, and VII:** Culture, Individuals, Groups & Institutions, and Global Connections
   - **Standard III:** Geography
   - **Standard V, VIII:** Government and Civics
   - **Standard IX:** Social Studies Skills and Methods
2. Each of the above standards will be assessed separately, but the following basic rubric will apply to all standards.
   - **4 (Exemplary)** - Your work is completely free, or almost completely free, from factual, spelling, or grammatical errors and the like. Your project demonstrates research, thought, creativity, and learning above and beyond the basic guidelines. It shows independent learning and initiative on your part.
   - **3 (Accomplished)** - Your project is free of, or nearly free of errors. Your work meets or exceeds all of the basic requirements for this project. You demonstrate your new found knowledge clearly and accurately.
   - **2 (Improving)** - Your work has a few, or more than a few, errors. Your project may not meet all of the requirements mentioned above. Your work may not show your best effort. All of the required elements of the project are present, but one or more may not be complete. It does not demonstrate mastery of all the required skills, terms, or concepts.
   - **1 (Beginning)** - Your project has more than just a few errors. It does not demonstrate your best effort. There may be elements of the project that are incomplete or missing. Your work does not show mastery of the skills or concepts needed to successfully complete this project.

Bibliographies: Your bibliography will need to be in the proper MLA format that your Language Arts teachers have taught you. There are examples on how to do this in your Language Arts books. You may *not* use EZBib or any other online bibliography generators. Remember to record the following information *as you do your research*.
- Title of book, article, web page, etc.
- Author's name or names or Editor's name
- Publisher
- Copyright date
- City and State (unless it's a big city, like New York or Chicago)

You may use the attached "Research Notes" form (courtesy of Ms. Klinker) to help you. I have also included a checklist for evaluating any web sites you visit and use for your

research. Any unfamiliar web sites should definitely be evaluated before you decide to include them in your research.

Some Useful Starting Places: These resources will help you get started.
- mrkersey.org/links.shtml
- columbuslibrary.org
- atlapedia.com

Inspiration: Discovering the world around you can be a wonderful experience. As you do this project, remember that you are going to gain new knowledge and understanding. These you will carry with you the rest of your days. Maybe you'll share some of this new knowledge with your own children one day, or you might end up writing a book about it. Maybe you'll one day visit the country to research for this project and you'll already know loads of cool stuff about it. Remember, even a boring research project can change your life. Have fun and learn!

A Super Cool Geography Research Project – Important Dates

Mr. Kersey

Use these dates to guide you as you pace your work for your research project.

November 1	Project assigned
November 4	Research country must be chosen
November 7	Project work day (in technology lab)
November 11	Research check – You must show that you have made adequate progress on your research. Bring in all notes, and a list of sources that you have used to date.
November 14	Project work day (in technology lab)
November 15	Project work day (in technology lab)
November 18	Progress check – By this point you should have begun your outline or rough draft. Bring all notes, outlines, rough drafts, and a list of sources you have used to date.
November 21	Final project work day (in technology lab)
November 28 to December 2	Project Presentations – your presentation date is your due date.
December 2	All research papers or web sites are due

Specific Rubrics and Guidelines for A Super Cool Geography Research Project
Mr. Kersey

To be successful on this project just follow the guidelines and the rubric below, as well as the general rubric already given to you, to evaluate your own work. You should be able to figure out what grade you'll get before you even turn in your work.

Option One: The Paper

Guidelines for The Paper: Your research paper should meet the following requirements:
1. Your paper should be 3-5 pages typed, doubled-spaced in either a Times New Roman 12 point font, or an Arial 10 point font. You may only use black ink for the text of your paper. If you do not know what this means, please ask. You may also choose to *neatly* handwrite your paper on regular white loose-leaf notebook paper. If you decide to write your paper by hand, it must be 4-6 pages long. You may only use black or a dark blue ink. Your bibliography does not count in the above page number requirements. It is all right if you go over the length requirement.
2. If your paper is typed it must have no more than 1 inch margins all the way around the page. If you are unsure how to set margins, please ask. And yes, I will measure if necessary. If you handwrite your paper, you must use the red line on the left and write nearly to the right edge of the paper.
3. If you choose to include photographs, graphs, charts, or any other type of graphic in your paper they do not count as part of the length requirement.
4. Your paper must have a title page with a title, your name, the date, and your class.
5. No report covers or bindings please. Your paper needs to be stapled in the upper left-hand corner.
6. Your paper must be organized according to the outline given to you previously.
7. There should be no spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors anywhere in your paper or the bibliography. Errors will count off your grade in all standard areas. Please proofread your paper. Have me proofread your paper, or your language arts teacher - someone. I'm not kidding here. Really. Proofread.
8. You must turn in a properly formatted bibliography, or works cited page, as the last page for your paper. It must be in the same font, color, etc. as the rest of your paper. You may also include a list of photo or graphic credits if you decide to use any in your paper.
9. Did I mention you need to proofread your paper? Seriously. Proofread. Really.

Option Two: The Web Page

Guidelines for The Web Page: Your web page should meet the following requirements:

1. Your page must be about the same length as a typed 3-5 page double spaced paper using a 12 point Times New Roman font. Graphics and photographs, as well as the bibliography do not count toward this length requirement. If you are unsure about the length of your project, check with me.
2. Your web page must follow the principles of good web design. The text should be easy to read on the background. You should not use distracting images, animations, sounds, or graphics. All elements of your page should directly support your topic.
3. Your page should be organized coherently. If there is more than one "page" to your site, then all pages must be linked together. Your web page should be organized according to the outline given to you earlier. If you have separate, linked pages, then they must be labeled clearly with proper headings that correspond to the Five Themes.
4. There should be no spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors anywhere on your web page. Errors will count off your grade in all standard areas. Please proofread your work. Have me proofread your web page, or your language arts teacher - someone. I'm not kidding here. Really. Proofread.
5. You must include a properly formatted bibliography in your web page. You may also include a list of photo or graphic credits if you decide to use any in your web page.
6. Do not put your full name anywhere on your web page. Please use only your first name and last initial. This is for your own safety.
7. You must turn in your web page to me on disk or you may email it to me as an attachment. Please give me the files in *.html* format.
8. If you have no idea what any of this means then please don't do a web page.

Option Three: The Presentation

Guidelines for The Presentation: Your presentation should meet the following requirements:

1. You should feel free to be as creative as you like if you choose to do a presentation, but it must be organized according to the outline provided for you. You may do a speech, a Power Point, a video, or a skit, as long as it is organized according to the five themes of geography.
2. Your presentation should be no longer than about ten minutes. Make sure you answer all the necessary questions and address all the required topics in that time.
3. Your presentation must include visual aids. A video or Power Point count as a visual aid. If you give a talk on your country, you should include some kind of poster, such as a map or other materials. The more interesting the better. Visual aids should support your topic and demonstrate thought and effort.
4. You should use good public speaking and presentation skills. Make eye contact with your audience. Speak clearly, and don't mumble. Do not just stand there and read from a sheet of paper. Don't giggle uncontrollably.
5. Be prepared to answer reasonable questions about your country.
6. You must turn in a properly formatted bibliography to me on the day of your presentation. It may be typed or neatly handwritten. You should also include a list of sources for any music, photographs, or graphics you use in your presentation.
7. If you use any notes or note cards for your speech, you must turn those in as well after your presentation. Please make sure your name is on them.
8. Your notes or note cards and bibliography must not contain any spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors. Please proofread these items.

Rubric for The Paper, The Web Page, and The Presentation:

Mark → Standard ↓	4 (Exemplary)	3 (Accomplished)	2 (Improving)	1 (Beginning)
Culture, Individuals, Groups & Institutions, and Global Connections (I, IV, VII) *(Includes religion, etc.)*	You completely follow all guidelines. You describe and explain elements of culture etc. thoroughly and in detail above the basic requirements and level of mastery.	You completely follow all guidelines with few, if any, errors. You describe and explain elements of culture etc. thoroughly and in detail according to the requirements of this project.	You follow almost all of the guidelines, but there are errors or omissions. You describe and explain elements of culture etc. but not completely or entirely accurately.	You follow some of the guidelines, but there are omissions or excessive errors. You do not completely or accurately describe and explain elements of culture etc.
Geography (III) *(Includes physical geography, location, etc.)*	You completely follow all guidelines. You describe and explain elements of geography thoroughly and in detail above the basic requirements and level of mastery.	You completely follow all guidelines with few, if any, errors. You describe and explain elements of geography thoroughly and in detail according to the requirements of this project.	You follow almost all of the guidelines, but there are errors or omissions. You describe and explain elements of geography but not completely or entirely accurately.	You follow some of the guidelines, but there are omissions or excessive errors. You do not completely or accurately describe and explain elements of geography.
Government & Civics (V, VIII) *(Includes political systems, governments, etc.)*	You completely follow all guidelines. You describe and explain elements of government thoroughly and in detail above the basic requirements and level of mastery.	You completely follow all guidelines with few, if any, errors. You describe and explain elements of government thoroughly and in detail according to the requirements of this project.	You follow almost all of the guidelines, but there are errors or omissions. You describe and explain elements of government but not completely or entirely accurately.	You follow some of the guidelines, but there are omissions or excessive errors. You do not completely or accurately describe and explain elements government.
Social Studies Skills and Methods (IX) *(Includes organization, research checks, & your bibliography).*	Your project is organized according to the outline provided with no errors or omissions. Your bibliography is complete and correct. You demonstrate excellent progress and organization of your research and materials.	Your project is organized according to the outline provided with no errors or omissions. Your bibliography is complete and correct with few, if any errors. You demonstrate adequate progress throughout the research process.	Your project is organized according to the outline provided but with one or more errors. Your bibliography may contain more than two errors. You do not demonstrate reasonable research progress.	Your project is not organized according to the outline provided or contains multiple errors. Your bibliography contains multiple errors. Your research progress is not acceptable.