Guidelines for the Research Paper

- The paper must be **4-6 pages** in length and **750-1000 words**. The outline and Works Cited page are not counted as part of the 4-6 pages.
- The paper should include an **outline**.
- You should research information from at least **5 sources**, including non-internet sources. (**Make sure they are credible; no Wikipedia types**)
- The paper should contain a **clear introduction, body, and conclusion**, with a **thesis statement** in the introduction.
- You should cite your sources within the paper using **in-text (parenthetical) documentation**.
- The paper should include a **Works Cited page** at the end.
- The paper should follow **MLA format**. (**see PurdueOwl for details**)
- The paper should use at least one **graphic, picture, illustration, chart or graph** to explain key concepts. (**The image should not be absurdly large, and make sure to cite it in the Works Cited page too**)
- The final draft of the paper should be **typed** and **double-spaced**, using **12-point font**.

*The research essay counts as 50% of the Unit Test grade.*
Topics for Research

You will research topics related to the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The novel takes place in Alabama in the 1930s, but it was written in the 1950s and published just before the apex of the Civil Rights Movement in America. To become more familiar with the social climate of the time period in which *To Kill a Mockingbird* takes place, you will research a topic related to society during that time or during the time the book was published.

The following list give general topics. You will select a topic and narrow it for your research project. For example, if you choose to write about Harper Lee, the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, you could research a specific aspect of her life, such as her childhood or her writing of the novel. For the topic you choose, consider its relevance to the time period of the 1930s or the Civil Rights Movement.

People

- Harper Lee
- George Wallace
- Fred Shuttlesworth
- Eugene “Bull” Connor
- Emmett Till
- Medgar Evers
- W.E.B. Du Bois
- Booker T. Washington
- Langston Hughes
- Famous Women of the 1930s (choose one):
  - Gertrude Stein
  - Wallis Simpson
  - Eleanor Roosevelt
  - Pearl S. Buck
  - Amelia Earhart
Events

- Selma to Montgomery marches -- “Bloody Sunday”
- Scottsboro Trial
- Stock Market Crash of 1929 -- “Black Tuesday”

Miscellaneous

- Ku Klux Klan
- Freedom Riders (Anniston, AL)
- Jim Crow Laws
- African Americans during the Great Depression
- *Plessy vs. Ferguson*
- *Brown vs. Board of Education*
- Roles of Women during the 1930s -- careers, family roles, etc
- Movies/Hollywood Stars of the 1930s

Some of these topics may be unfamiliar to you. Before you choose a topic, it would be a good idea to read about each topic with which you are not familiar. You can also consult with others about these topics to obtain more information about them. After doing some background reading, choose the topic that interests you the most. Then, refine the topic to give it a specific focus.

**Formulating a major research question**

After choosing a topic, you should develop a major question that addresses the specific focus of your research. Be sure that the question is open-ended and is not a simple question that can be answered with a simple “yes,” “no,” or another one-word answer. An example of an open-ended research question is, “How did *To Kill a Mockingbird* reach such a high level of popularity?” An example of a closed-ended research question is, “When was *To Kill a Mockingbird* written?” Your major research question should be an open-ended question.

*(information taken from Responsive Education Solutions, English II Unit 9: Writing a Research Essay)*