11 AmStud

Mr. Bedar

**Junior Thesis (JT) Milestone #1**

**Due Date:** Wednesday, 11/13

**Assignment:** Typed proposal for three distinct topics.

Junior Thesis Milestone #1 is the first step in this ten-week process. If you get it right, the rest of the process becomes much easier and you’ll enjoy reading about a topic you find interesting. You have been asked to create three potential subjects to write about. This document should consist of a detailed paragraph for each potential topic, describing:

1) the topic (background and general information)

2) what you already know about the topic

3) why the topic interests you and why your believe it would be a good choice for the thesis

4) a list of five (5) things about the topic you want to know more about/possible research questions on this topic

I will comment on these ideas and return them. You may then proceed to Junior Thesis #2. You will not be allowed to proceed with any part of the process unless the previous step is complete.

**How Do I Pick Potential Topics?**

This is a U.S. history research paper, so the only major constraint on your initial topic is that it must be related to U.S. history, and focus on events before 1992 (events more recent than this date are getting dangerously close to “current events” for a history course). My advice:

* Choose something you are passionate about. It’s easier to work hard on something you love, and which is already a part of your life. (sports, activism, politics, music, technology, relationships, etc)
* Narrow it down 🡪 what *time period* in American History or *group/person* in American History interests you most? Is there a topic you love?
* Seek a topic that is neither too broad nor too narrow. Broad topics are usually boring and impossible to do well in 10-14 pages (“The Causes of the Civil War,” or “Women in the 20th Century.”) But be equally cautious of being too narrow, as quality resources may be hard to find. For example, focusing on a family relative might prove difficult to do well. In general, your topic will evolve from being “too broad” to “just right.”
* This is an argumentative essay, in which you are, in the end, advocating that “X is true because of A, B & C.” *Your thesis must be one about which reasonable people can disagree, given the evidence available.*