11 U.S. History

Mr. Bedar

Junior Thesis

**Junior Thesis Milestone #4**

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Requirements**: JT #4 requires that you accomplish the following milestones along your journey to the Junior Thesis:

* **Thesis Statement**: Write the introductory paragraph of your thesis paper. This statement of “X is true because of A, B & C” will contain both your thesis statement itself “X is true…” and your supporting arguments, “…because of A, B and C.”
* **Outline:** Write a *preliminary* outline for your paper.
* **Note cards and working bibliography:** Provide not less than 25 note cards, from not less than five different sources, linked to your working bibliography.

1. **Sample Rough Outline**

I. Intro

- Background: "Mission Accomplished" banner

- Thesis: George W. Bush was the greatest president our country has ever seen. With unparalleled personal charisma and a strong command of the English language, he magically fixed public education, solved the nation's debt crisis, and fought two wars that were highly effective and completely justified."

II. Personal Charisma

- Rich guy acting as cowboy

- "Aw shucks!"

- Deceptive doofus act?

III. Domestic Policies

- PATRIOT Act - we are safer when gov't invades our privacy

- Education: No Child Left Behind

- Deregulation of financial industry: by the time he left office in 2008, it was clear nothing could possibly go wrong...

IV .Foreign Policies

- War = good, helpful, distracting from inability to find Bin Laden

- WMD...sounds bad...convinced ppl

- War built positive relations with Middle Eastern countries

V. Conclusion

- Greatest president ever

- Changed political landscape, pushed nation rightward

- Left Obama in perfect position

- Took up painting and painted Jay Leno

**2) Crafting a Thesis Statement:**

Since you’ve devoted the last few weeks to immersing yourself in your topic, you should have a good idea of an interesting question you want to answer within your subject. Developing good thesis questions is an acquired skill, but in general good questions:

1) Have tension (the answer to the question is non-obvious and debatable)

2) Are narrow enough to be effectively proven in 12-14 pages but broad enough to be researchable and interesting to most people, and…

3) Are extremely interesting to you, the researcher!

Your thesis will probably come out of the list of things you wanted to know more about, if you sit down and answer these questions for yourself. Formulating questions as a way of refining your topic will lead to one of the following kinds of papers:

Suggested Types of History Papers:

1. **The Conflict Paper:** This paper centers on one particular kind of conflict; between ideas and practice, between myth and reality, between historical and contemporary accounts.
2. Initial Topic: The Life of Thomas Jefferson.
3. Reworked Topic: Contradictions between Jefferson’s life and the ideas expressed in his writings.
4. **The Interpretation Paper:** This compare and contrast paper focuses on existing interpretations of an event, how they conflict, and which one makes the most sense to you based on your examination of the evidence.
5. Initial Topic: The Progressive Movement
6. Reworked Topic: The Nature of the Progressive Movement: Kolko’s Interpretation vs. Hofstadter’s.
7. **The Interdisciplinary Paper:** In this kind of paper, you use the study of another discipline (art, music, literature, etc.) to better understand the history of a particular event or era.
8. Initial Topic: American Expansionism in the 19th Century.
9. Reworked Topic: American Expansionism: The Ideology of Manifest Destiny through the Artistic Lens of Thomas Cole.
10. **The Analytical Paper:** Here you are trying to create your own interpretation of a particular event, based – possible, on an examination of primary sources.
11. Initial Topic: The Lindberg Kidnapping Case
12. Reworked Topic: The Lindberg Kidnapping Case – Was Hauptman guilty?
13. **The Excavation Paper:** In some cases researching what happened – as the sole focus of the paper – is valid and even challenging. While the resulting paper may be a general summary, still the effort was justified because of sharply conflicting accounts or because information, concerning the person or event is very hard to find.
14. Initial Topic: American Entry Into World War I.
15. Reworked Topic: The Zimmerman Telegram – What Really Happened.
16. **The Biographical Paper:** For too many students, the attempt to write a biography results in a boring “born-died” (with a few facts in between) paper that really does not advance one’s understanding of what made a particular historical figure tick. Here too, a meaningful report depends on the questions asked and the focus established. Some interesting questions might be:
17. What were the decisive experiences that shaped this person’s beliefs?
18. How did this person’s life reflect the social / cultural / political trends of the time?
19. To what extent did this person shape his/ her own times, and to what extent was he/she shaped by them?
    1. Initial Topic: The Life of Franklin D. Roosevelt.
    2. Reworked Topic: FDR: Traitor to His Class?
20. **The Non-Traditional Paper**: All historical research papers should be creative, but sometimes creativity is facilitated through the use of a non-traditional approach. Non-traditional forms include: historical fiction, oral histories, and first person accounts. Whatever form this kind of paper takes, the effort must rest on thorough historical research. Such an effort should be cleared with your teacher.